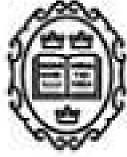

THE SOFT HEART OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE: INDIAN RADICALS IN EDWARDIAN LONDON

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THE SOFT HEART OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE: INDIAN RADICALS IN EDWARDIAN LONDON

In 1908 several of the principal leaders of the Indian nationalist movement migrated to London. Of the three leading 'extremist' politicians, 'Lal, Pal and Bal', the two still at liberty, Lal and Pal, had left India in the hope of escaping police harassment. 'My life is a constant misery on account of the close espionage kept on me', wrote Lal (Lala Lajpat Rai, leader of the Arya Samaj, Punjab).[1] Bipin Chandra Pal (leader of the swadeshi and anti-partition movements in Bengal) had also arrived to alert the British public to the repression now under way in India.[2] The third leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (journalist and leading political activist, Poona), had been sentenced to six years' transportation for sedition, but his lieutenants G. S. Khaparde and Vishnu Karandikar moved to London in September 1908 to lobby for his early release. Other arrivals included Har Dayal, the Punjabi revolutionary, who moved to Oxford the same month, and a clutch of other prominent student agitators, including M. P. T. Acharya (from Madras), Haidar Raza (from Delhi) and Basudev Bhattacharji and Hemanto Kumar Ghose (from Bengal). They joined the group of student radicals that included Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Senapati Bapat based at Shyamji Krishnavarma's student hostel India House, in Highgate, north London, which was now led by one of

[1] Lajpat Rai to G. K. Gokhale (founder, Servants of India Society, Poona), 20 Aug. 1908; Lajpat Rai to Jaswant Rai (manager, *The Panjabee*, Lahore), n.d. [second half of 1908], both in *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, ed. B. R. Nanda, 15 vols. (New Delhi, 2003–10), iii, 153–5. The British used the words 'extremist', anarchist' or even 'terrorist' to describe this group, but these terms do not accurately describe their beliefs and methods, which were always nationalist, anti-imperialist and anti-mendicant, but divided over choices of strategy, which ranged from passive resistance and dissociation, through various forms of coercive agitation, to the advocacy of revolutionary violence against the Raj. I have therefore used 'radical'.

[2] Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, *Bipin Chandra Pal and India's Struggle for Swaraj* (Calcutta, 1958), 117.

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Tilak's younger protégés, the Bombay revolutionary and law student V. D. Savarkar.[3]

This choice of destination was interesting in itself. London had been a home for revolutionary exiles since the 1840s. At various times in the following decades it had housed revolutionary nationalists such as Garibaldi and Mazzini, anarchists like Malatesta and Kropotkin, and socialists including Louis Blanc, Marx, Alexander Herzen and Lenin.[4] But their movements had been centrifugal, away from the centres of European repression. The Indians, by contrast, had moved centripetally, to the heart of the empire that repressed them. So the first puzzle is why they saw the centre of British imperialism as a haven.

Revolutionary exiles from Europe, Bernard Porter has suggested, were attracted by the tolerant political culture. A confident liberal state like Britain felt unthreatened by their activities, which tended to be non-violent, were not much directed at British power, were believed to be uninteresting to Britons and which might even be used by the government in small ways against Britain's European rivals.[5] It is arguable, of course, that to accept what is unthreatening is not really tolerance at all. The test of tolerance is whether Britain accepted those it perceived as undesirable. In this respect, the Indian radicals form a useful contrasting case to the European revolutionaries. None of Porter's explanations much applies. Britain did have reason to feel threatened by their activities, which were directed at ending British rule over India. While most of them were careful not to advocate political violence publicly, this was certainly not true of all. A second puzzle, therefore, is whether, and if so why, the imperial metropole tolerated anti-imperialism at its heart.

[3] The activities of the extremists in London have been the subject of several descriptive and celebratory studies, including Arun Coomer Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905–1922: In the Background of International Developments* (Patna, 1971), ch. 1, and Tilak Raj Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad, 1905–1921* (New Delhi, 1979), ch. 1. Biographies of the main figures include Indulal Yajnik, *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Life and Times of an Indian Revolutionary* (Bombay, 1950); V. N. Datta, *Madan Lal Dhingra and the Revolutionary Movement* (New Delhi, 1978); Harindra Srivastava, *Five Stormy Years: Savarkar in London, June 1906 – June 1911. A Centenary Salute to Swatantrayaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (b. 28 May 1883, d. 26 February 1966)* (New Delhi, 1983).

[4] Bernard Porter, *The Refugee Question in Mid-Victorian Politics* (Cambridge, 1979); Sabine Freitag (ed.), *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England* (New York, 2003).

[5] Porter, *Refugee Question in Mid-Victorian Politics*, chs. 1 and 5.

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The activities of the Indian radicals and responses to them also cast light on further debates concerning, respectively, late colonial rule and anti-colonial resistance. First, it has been argued that the relative weakness of the British state before 1914 was predicated on the construction of a compliant, liberal subject through 'invisible disciplines' created and sustained not so much by the state as by civil society working mostly through internalized norms and expectations.[6] Such an approach, it is suggested, had little difficulty in justifying the unfreedoms of imperial rule. Precisely because freedom was understood to work through the possession and cultivation of capacities for self-government, those deemed not to possess the latter (women, children, the colonized) could not meaningfully enjoy the former. British citizens were thereby to be made distinct from colonial subjects, according to a 'rule of colonial difference'.[7] In India, therefore, as Gyan Prakash has suggested, the possibilities of a liberal mode of rule were heavily restricted, or dislocated, by the perceived lack of an appropriate structure of civil society and the unwillingness of the state to release its grip sufficiently to allow one to grow up unregulated. The mode of governmentality in India was intermittently liberal, but reverted easily to 'police' mode, characterized by disciplinary techniques of close surveillance and regulation laced with displays of even older modes of rule through 'spectacle'.[8]

The Indian radicals deserve attention because they challenged this boundary by trying to cross it. In doing so, I suggest, they exposed a dilemma concerning the application of the rule of

[6] Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, 'Governing Economic Life', *Economy and Society*, xix (1990); Peter Mandler, 'Nation and Power in the Liberal State: Britain *c.*1800–*c.*1914', in Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005); Peter Mandler (ed.), *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2006); Simon Gunn and James Vernon (eds.), *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain* (Berkeley, 2011).

[7] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, 1993); David Scott, 'Colonial Governmentality', *Social Text*, xliii (1995); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago, 2002).

[8] Gyan Prakash, 'The Colonial Genealogy of Society', in Patrick Joyce (ed.), *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences* (London, 2002); Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India', in James Manor (ed.), *Rethinking Third World Politics* (London, 1991); Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On the Construction of Colonial Power: Structure, Discourse, Hegemony', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds.), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India* (London, 1994).

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colonial difference at the metropole. Such a rule could not be applied as a matter of geography (one rule for Britain and another for India) without having to accord the visiting Indians the same rights and responsibilities as resident British citizens. But to insist on a crude racial differentiation of citizens and subjects, however attractive it sometimes seemed to the rulers of the Raj, was deemed incompatible with certain aspects of liberal imperialism as it was practised at the metropole. Here it had at least to be possible to overcome difference. Colonial rule at the metropole could be neither comfortably left to the working of 'invisible' self-discipline, nor governed by the racial differentiation employed in India. No stable solution was found to this dilemma, and various solutions to it were attempted. The most significant, I argue, defined colonial difference in terms not simply of racial identity but of behaviour or conduct, and required that special attention be paid to judging it. The effect was to make citizenship possible for Indians, but a matter of a protracted, even indefinitely deferred, probation, rather than entitlement. It positioned them as candidates, distinct from both the 'self-disciplining' British citizenry and also the externally disciplined colonial subject.

Such differentiation, however, could not be carried out by the state alone. This matters for our understanding of the mechanisms of late colonial rule. Policing an indelible geographical or racial border could be attempted by a suitably competent state. Indeed, we know, from historians of the British state and its security apparatus, that there was a considerable investment in state surveillance and control in the years before the First World War, some of it directed against colonial 'subversion'.[9] Such accounts have perhaps not fully explained how easily this was reconciled with metropolitan understandings of freedom, or with wider imperial projects. It seems possible that they exaggerate both the ease with which such differentiation was made, and its effectiveness. For a liberal state to resort to these methods at home was a sign of weakness, not strength. But, in any case, differentiation on the basis of character and conduct was not the same as policing a border. It could not be done by the state alone because it required

[9] Richard J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904–1924* (London, 1995); Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London, 2009), 91–4.

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expertise, judgement of nuance and attention to innumerable repeated, everyday transactions. The state therefore relied on British civil society — its universities, editors, writers, intellectuals, public figures, charitable trustees, among others — to make judgements of character and conduct. It was these figures, as much as state officials, who applied the 'rule of difference'.

India House also offers a way of rethinking strategies of anti-colonial resistance. The celebratory accounts of resistance that dominate the secondary literature go wrong in part because they assume that colonial rule at the metropole was simply racially discriminatory, and opposition to it fully formed before arrival. This makes resistance explicable, even assured, but at the cost of flattening what is complex about the political choices involved. Because colonial rule at the metropole held out the possibility of acceptance, however conditionally, it placed Indians in a dilemma too. Even those who journeyed to London to oppose the empire therefore found themselves subject to temptation. The probationary nature of colonial freedom at the metropole also complicated alliance work. London has been described as a 'junction box' of anti-imperialism, in which travelling nationalists and local anti-imperialists made connections, shared ideas and perspectives, and built mutual confidence.[10] It has been suggested that such transnational connections constituted a 'voyage in': a challenge to imperial attempts to define and categorize spaces and peoples, a refusal to accept these definitions and a self-assertion in defiance of them.[11] They may even have been early strands in the construction of cosmopolitan networks of friendship and solidarity, stretched across the barriers erected by imperialism.[12] Such accounts have uncovered many little-known connections and have been sensitive to the awkward positioning of visiting Indians. But they have been perhaps less nuanced in their

[10] Jonathan Schneer, *London, 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, 1999); Nicholas Owen, *The British Left and India: Metropolitan Anti-Imperialism, 1885–1947* (Oxford, 2007), 197.

[11] Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley, 1998), 10–11, 14, 32, 189–92.

[12] Elleke Boehmer and Bart Moore-Gilbert, 'Postcolonial Studies and Transnational Resistance', *Interventions*, iv (2002); Pheang Cheah and Bruce Robbins, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis, 1998). For historical treatments, see Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920* (Oxford, 2005); Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC, 2006).

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depictions of the local anti-imperialists, and consequently of the nature of the alliances that were formed with them. The British anti-imperialists engaged in these networks were, I argue, doubly positioned, certainly as friends of the colonized, but also, in complicated ways, as their advocates and probation officers.

In this respect, India House throws a sidelight on a final debate: that concerning the relationship between nineteenth-century liberalism and a co-emerging, even coexistent, imperialism. It is now broadly accepted that liberalism was not in any simple sense a tool of empire. Its principles could be invoked by advocates of an expansionary, missionary imperialism, but also by their opponents.[13] Indeed, C. A. Bayly has argued that liberalism could be appropriated by Indians through 'analogy, incorporation, translation, circumvention and rejection'.[14] In India, he suggests, politicians 'cannibalised, modified and reworked' liberal ideas before deploying them as 'battering rams' against imperial rule.[15] But could this work in London? The radicals of India House did invoke liberal authorities, and even approached some of them in person for help and advice. Tracing the responses they got and what they learned from them therefore provides a test both of what practical use could be made of 'global liberalism' at the heart of the empire, and also of how reflexive this reconstituted liberalism was. Did its porosity and flexibility enable it to be 'played back' strategically at the metropole, as its advocates hoped, or was it in practice a Western export, not permitted for reimportation?

I

Before the autumn of 1907, the work of India House was dominated by Krishnavarma's Indian Home Rule Society. Krishnavarma offered scholarships for Indian students to come

[13] This large literature is usefully surveyed by Andrew Sartori, 'The British Empire and its Liberal Mission', *Jl Mod. Hist.*, lxxviii (2006), and Jennifer Pitts, 'Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism', *Ann. Rev. Polit. Science*, xiii (2010).

[14] C. A. Bayly, 'Afterword', in *An Intellectual History for India*, special issue of *Mod. Intellectual Hist.*, iv (2007).

[15] C. A. Bayly, 'South Asian Thought at the Dawn of the Liberal Age', 7, and 'Imagining a Sociology of South Asia', 2, both in 'Liberalism at Large: South Asia and Britain, *c.* 1800–1947', The Wiles Lectures, Queen's University, Belfast, May 2007. I am grateful to C. A. Bayly and Queen's University for permission to read these lectures. See also C. A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, 2012).

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and study in Britain, on condition they promised not to enter government service thereafter. He also edited a weekly newspaper, the *Indian Sociologist*, which denounced British rule and the Indians who co-operated with it. The Indian Home Rule Society rapidly attracted about a hundred to a hundred and fifty members.[16] Krishnavarma was a fairly cautious revolutionary, who undertook little active work beyond the pages of the *Indian Sociologist*. His intellectual strategy was to alert British liberalism to the suppressed contradictions in its treatment of India. For example, British writers argued that resistance to tyranny, even violent resistance if necessary, was a duty when it involved free-born Britons like Cromwell and Milton, but were reluctant to extend the same logic to Indians pitted against the Raj. Krishnavarma also used the positivist sociology of Comte and Spencer to justify armed revolt against an imperialism that retarded individual and national growth.[17] Even after moving to Paris in 1907, Krishnavarma continued to publish the *Indian Sociologist* from London and to invite fellow radicals such as Pal to come and lecture there. Once in London, Pal also recruited Indian students and attacked the Raj in print and from the platform. After Krishnavarma left, India House was taken over by Savarkar. Where Krishnavarma had sought to appropriate and rework liberal thinking, however, Savarkar largely ignored it in favour of a straightforward clash of nationalisms.[18] His Free India Society aimed to recruit students in London, teach them the arts of revolutionary organization, bomb-making and the underground press, and then send them back to India to prepare for an

[16] *Indian Sociologist* (Apr. 1906), 16; (Mar. 1907), 11.

[17] For references to Herbert Spencer, see *ibid.* (June 1906), 21–2; (Nov. 1909), 41–2; to Edmund Burke, *ibid.* (Sept. 1908), 33–5; to Oliver Cromwell, *ibid.* (Dec. 1908), 45; to John Milton, *ibid.* (Jan. 1909), 2; (Feb. 1909), 9–11; to James Mill, *ibid.* (Dec. 1913), 47; to P. B. Shelley, *ibid.* (Mar. 1914), 3. See also Shruti Kapila, 'Self, Spencer and *Swaraj*: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism, 1890–1920', *Mod. Intellectual Hist.*, iv (2007).

[18] Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, 8 vols. (Poona, 1963–5); Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Satrucya Sibiranta* (Mumbai, 1965). See also H. M. Korgeonkar, 'Information about the Revolutionary Party in London', Jan. 1910: British Library (hereafter BL), Oriental and India Office Collections (hereafter OIOC), L/PJ/6/986/349; Savarkar to his brother, 15 Jan. 1909: copy in OIOC, L/PJ/6/939/1849; 'Statement of Chanjeri Rao, Convicted at Bombay of Importing Arms, Ammunition and Seditious Books', 1 Feb. 1910: OIOC, L/PJ/6/993/860: court statements and examinations of three members of India House in the trial of V. D. Savarkar — Chaturbhuj Jhaverbhai Amin, Harischandra Krishna Korgaumkar (*sic*) and Chanjeri Ram Rao, 24–25 Jan. 1911: OIOC, L/PJ/6/1069/778.

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armed struggle. It printed and posted to India vernacular propaganda, including *O Martyrs!* (1908), Savarkar's panegyric to the memory of the Indian revolt of 1857,[19] as well as smuggling revolutionary training manuals and pistols later used in the assassination of officials. The group's London activities culminated in July 1909, when, probably on Savarkar's instructions, an Indian student, Madan Lal Dhingra, shot and killed the India Office official Sir Curzon Wyllie.

The India Office found it could do very little about what the secretary of state John Morley termed 'these nests of *diablerie*'.[20] In London basic liberal freedoms of movement, expression and association and the right to a fair trial could not be suspended for Indians. This was not just because a liberal political culture was so strongly entrenched in Britain; it was also because aspects of such a culture were unavoidable features of a certain evolving vision of empire.

The freedom of movement enjoyed by the Indian revolutionaries was almost wholly unchecked. Before 1906 there were no limits on the entry of foreigners to Britain, and the restrictions introduced in the Aliens Act that year did not apply to imperial subjects such as British Indians. Passports were needed for travel to Britain, but there was no provision for refusing them to Indians, it being too politically controversial to restrict the rights of imperial subjects to travel freely in the empire, even if their purpose in doing so was to undermine it. Deportation was only possible after conviction for a criminal offence, not on grounds of general 'undesirability'. Wider imperial interests blocked any revision of these rules. A precedent that a government could deport at will was risky, as became evident in 1914, when a group of British workers was summarily expelled from South Africa for political reasons.[21]

Movement between London and continental Europe was also unregulated, and the India House radicals made good use of it. Once Krishnavarma had moved to Paris, he was entirely out of reach. Extradition from France was only possible for a limited list of serious crimes, and was subject to the provision of asylum for

[19] Copy in 'Leaflet Entitled "Oh Martyrs"': National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereafter NAI), Home Political, ser. A (hereafter HPA), Dec. 1908, 19.
[20] Sir Arthur Hirtzel (Private Secretary to the Secretary of State), Diary, 25 May 1908: BL, OIOC, MS Eur. D1090.
[21] *Hansard*, 5th ser., lviii, col. 313 (12 Feb. 1914).

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political offences. Extraditing Krishnavarma would be 'quite hopeless', Morley wrote to the viceroy of India, Lord Minto; 'we should certainly be asked to remember John Bull's shelter and encouragement to Poles, Hungarians, Italian Carbonari and other swarms of political refugees for the last eighty or a hundred years'.[22] It was also decided not to ask British embassies in Paris and other European foreign capitals to monitor the activities of dissident Indians: the Foreign Office and the police feared reciprocal demands for reports on European exiles in London.[23] The government of India was angered when the India Office issued identity certificates to two members of India House, which enabled them to visit Morocco to undertake military training. But again nothing could be done. The provision of such certificates was a privilege for British Indian subjects that neither Parliament nor even the India Office were willing to curb.[24]

Money moved easily as well. The authorities in India thought about seizing funds held in India by radicals based abroad, but even the wealthier ones had almost nothing in India to seize.[25] There was never the slightest possibility of seizing funds in London. Indeed, even after leaving for Paris, Krishnavarma kept funds there, on the grounds that 'although [the] British were vagabonds . . . their commerce and banking were very safe and sound'.[26] The authorities had no powers to seize them, or prevent their use for anti-imperialist purposes.

On the face of it, extraditing criminals and defendants back to the colonies was easier. The Fugitive Offenders Act 1881, which applied to the empire, had few of the protections governing extradition to foreign states and made it relatively simple for colonial

[22] Morley to Minto, 26 Aug. 1909: BL, OIOC, MS Eur. D573/4; Hirtzel, Diary, 5 July 1909.

[23] Sir Charles Hardinge (Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office) to Sir Richmond Ritchie (Secretary, Political Department, India Office), 27 Mar. 1909; Sir Edward Henry (Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, London) to Ritchie, 1 Apr. 1909; J. E. Ferard (Assistant Secretary, Political Department, India Office) to Sir Harold Stuart (Secretary, Home Department, Government of India), 8 Apr. 1909: NAI, Home Political, Deposit series (hereafter HPD), May 1909, 21.

[24] Note by C. J. Stevenson-Moore (Officiating Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India), 5 Sept. 1909: NAI, HPD, Oct. 1909, 20.

[25] Reports of the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India (hereafter DCI Reports), May 1910: NAI, HPA, May 1910, 133–5.

[26] Quoted in *Buried Alive: Autobiography, Speeches, and Writings of an Indian Revolutionary, Sardar Ajit Singh*, ed. Pardaman Singh and Joginder Singh Dhanki (New Delhi, 1984), 71–2.

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officials to extradite those who had escaped custody into another part of the empire.[27] However, the Fugitive Offenders Act was not a reliable instrument for dealing with India House. It only applied to fugitives, which meant those who had fled India after warrants for their arrest had been issued.[28] This was not even true of Savarkar, who had not fled to Britain but simply moved there to study and plan an Indian revolution. None of those recruited by him in Britain was vulnerable. The legislation did allow non-fugitive Indians to be returned to India if they were suspected of offences that could be tried in both Britain and India, but in such cases the courts had to consider whether it would be in the interests of justice to do so. In India many legal rights, such as those concerning bail, jury trial, cross-examination, admissibility of evidence and appeal, were suspended or qualified by the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908. It was therefore far from clear that British judges would agree to return suspects there. Even if they did so, a case against India House for offences committed in London, government lawyers advised, would rest on hearsay evidence of a 'fragmentary and unsatisfactory character' which witnesses might not repeat in full court, and which would be vulnerable to cross-examination.[29] 'The members of this group seem to know precisely the legal value of the evidence against them', wrote one official bitterly.[30] Worse still, the India Office would not allow the government of India to employ spies to gather better evidence in London. It would provoke local outrage and probably prove inadmissible in court.[31] Offences committed in Britain would therefore have to be tried in Britain. The trouble with British courts, the India Office concluded, was that they would be too soft-hearted, applying British precedents, concepts and sentiment.

[27] Fugitive Offenders Act 1881 (44 & 45 Vict.); Home Office, *Home Office Practice in Extradition Cases, Cases under the Fugitive Offenders Act, and Commissions Rogatoires* (London, 1907); Paul O'Higgins, 'Extradition within the Commonwealth', *Internat. and Comparative Law Quart.*, ix (1960).

[28] Note by DCI, 1 June 1909: NAI, HPA, Jan. 1911, 52–64.

[29] J. H. Du Boulay (Secretary to the Government of Bombay) to DCI, 8 Feb. 1910; Du Boulay to Government of India, 4 Mar. 1910, both in NAI, HPA, May 1910, 133–5.

[30] Note by H. C. Woodman (Additional Secretary, Home Department, Government of India), 27 Jan. 1910: NAI, HPA, May 1910, 133–5.

[31] Note by H. G. Stokes (Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Government of India), 3 June 1909; Secretary of State to Viceroy, 5 July 1909, both in NAI, HPA, Jan. 1911, 52–64; Hirtzel, Diary, 5 July 1909.

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After much effort, the government of India did manage to extradite Savarkar for gun-running to India and other offences.[32] But even this almost failed twice amid judicial disagreement. The first magistrate to consider the case thought he should be tried in Britain, on the grounds that he might not get a fair trial in India, but the lord chief justice overruled him.[33] However, this was not a unanimous view, another senior judge, the former Liberal MP Bernard Coleridge, arguing that the suspension of jury trial in India made it potentially oppressive to return suspects there.[34] Even after this controversial ruling, another legal loophole almost permitted Savarkar's escape. En route to his trial in India, he escaped from British custody in Marseille harbour, demanding asylum from a bemused gendarme before recapture. The India Office argued that the French had surrendered their right to offer him asylum when they agreed that he be held in their joint custody while passing through France. But Winston Churchill at the Home Office, perhaps recalling his own escape from Boer imprisonment a decade earlier, disagreed. 'The utmost respect must be shown for the principles of international law especially when those afford rights and advantages to individuals', he insisted. 'The petty annoyance of a criminal escaping may have to be borne'.[35] The Foreign Office was anxious not to irritate the French, who had been much more activated by the principles involved than their British counterparts. Accordingly, the case was put to an international tribunal at The Hague. It did not accept the British claim that the French had surrendered their right to offer asylum, but ruled that Britain was under no obligation to return Savarkar once he had been handed over in error. Had the gendarme spoken English, therefore, or the international

[32] See Janaki Bakhale, 'Savarkar (1883–1966), Sedition and Surveillance: The Rule of Law in a Colonial Situation', *Social Hist.*, xxxv (2010).

[33] *Times*, 4 June 1910; see also 25 May, 3, 17, 18, 21, 22 June 1910. The law is discussed in Sir A. P. Muddiman, *The Law of Extradition from and to British India* (Calcutta, 1914), 49–50, 92–106. On the judiciary, see Robert Stevens, *The English Judges: Their Role in the Changing Constitution* (Oxford, 2002), 14–21. The official record of Savarkar's case can be traced in BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/994/847, L/PJ/6/1060/359, L/PJ/6/1069/778.

[34] This point was also made by Vaughan Williams J. when Savarkar appealed: *Times*, 22 June 1910.

[35] Minute by Churchill, 29 July 1910: The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA), PRO, HO 144/1063/189349.

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tribunal ruled differently, Savarkar would almost certainly have escaped. While Savarkar's case therefore showed that extradition was possible, officials could not be confident of winning.

Freedom of expression was also largely guaranteed. The British press was not merely free to publish what it wanted about India, but did so to a degree that would have led to prosecution for sedition in India. The *Times*, for example, printed Krishnavarma's letters unedited, even when they advocated political assassination. When government ministers complained, the editor replied that it was the paper's policy 'to give even the devil fair play'.[36] The law of sedition, in Britain as in India, made it an offence to attempt to excite disaffection against government.[37] In India judges instructed juries that this turned on whether the natural consequence of the nationalists' writings and speeches was to excite any form of disloyalty, or even negative feeling, with the authorities, regardless of whether violence had been intended or occurred.[38] However, in Britain the interpretation was looser and sedition law had effectively fallen into disuse.[39] Thus, when it received complaints about the *Indian Sociologist*, the India Office doubted the value of prosecution. Twice, in July 1907 and June 1908, Morley rejected parliamentary demands for action.[40] In the September 1908 number of the *Indian Sociologist*, Krishnavarma argued that Indians should feel free to choose 'dynamite, the knife, or the rifle, or parliamentary agitation . . . as the opportunity presents itself'.[41] In India a few weeks earlier, merely arguing that violence was bound to follow repression had earned Tilak a six-year sentence. But the India Office still thought it 'extremely doubtful' that a similar prosecution could succeed in Britain, and Morley refused to allow one.[42] Advice confirmed that the India Office would not have any legal standing. Prosecution would be a matter for the Home Office and the

[36] G. E. Buckle (editor of the *Times*) to Herbert Gladstone (Home Secretary), 22 July 1909: BL, Herbert Gladstone papers, Add. MS 46047, fo. 97.

[37] David Williams, *Keeping the Peace: The Police and Public Order* (London, 1967), 197–204.

[38] Seen most clearly in *Emp.* v. *Tilak* (1908) 10 *Bombay Law Reporter* 848–903.

[39] *R.* v. *Burns* (1886) 16 *Cox's Criminal Cases* 355.

[40] 'House of Commons Question Regarding a Seditious Newspaper Named *The Indian Sociologist*': BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/822/2559; *Hansard*, 5th ser., clxxix, cols. 757–8 (30 July 1907); Rees to Hirtzel, 1 June 1908: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/871/1956.

[41] *Indian Sociologist* (Sept. 1908), 34.

[42] Note by Morley, 16 Sept. 1908: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/891/3430.

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director of public prosecutions. Neither was willing to undertake such a tricky case.[43] In early 1909, presented with fresh evidence that violence was being planned at India House, a reluctant Morley was persuaded by his officials to approach the Home Office again, but, one official wrote, only 'to be able to say we have tried to do something than because he thinks any good will come of it'.[44]

After the Wyllie assassination, Morley reluctantly agreed that the attorney-general should prosecute the printer of the *Indian Sociologist*.[45] A British anarchist who advocated open violence in India was also successfully prosecuted.[46] But none of this touched the London Indians. An article written by Pal in London entitled 'The Aetiology of the Bomb in Bengal' earned its publisher in India a prison sentence for sedition.[47] But Pal could not be prosecuted in London for it.[48] 'You s[houl]d cultivate stolidity', Morley snapped at an official when he suggested it, 'and no man will ever find it more difficult'.[49] There was 'no chance whatever' of proceeding, not least because the British editor W. T. Stead had also published Pal's article in London and would have to be included in the prosecution.[50] The India Office's legal adviser confirmed that, while Pal would be readily convicted of sedition in India, a British court or jury might regard the article 'merely as strong criticism'.[51] Such a failure would be worse than not trying, for if Pal were acquitted in Britain, the state's bluff would have been called. The following year, the government of India asked London to screen critical British newspapers in advance and telegraph India in time for import

[43] Legal adviser's opinion, 22 Apr. 1909: BL, OIOC, L/L/1/30.

[44] Hirtzel, Diary, 15 and 19 Feb. 1909.

[45] *Ibid.*, 5 July 1909; *Times*, 19 and 24 July, 27 and 28 Aug. 1909; depositions in *R.* v. *Horsley* (seditious libel), 1909: TNA, PRO, CRIM 1/114/1; Herbert Gladstone to Morley, 16 Sept. 1909: Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. d. 3570.

[46] *Rex v. Aldred: London Trial, 1909, Indian Sedition. Glasgow Sedition Trial, 1921*, ed. G. A. Aldred (Glasgow, 1948).

[47] Bipin Chandra Pal, 'The Aetiology of the Bomb in Bengal', *Svaraj*, i, 6–7 (n.d. [summer 1909]).

[48] Note by Stuart, 21 May 1909: NAI, HPA, Dec. 1909, 92–105.

[49] Hirtzel, Diary, 5 July 1909.

[50] Bipin Chandra Pal, 'The Aetiology of the Bomb in Bengal', *Review of Reviews* (Oct. 1909). Notes by Morley, 18 Aug., 23 Sept. 1909: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/955; notes by Stuart and Sir H. H. Risley (Secretary, Home Department, Government of India), 10 Nov. 1909: NAI, HPA, Feb. 1910, 132–5.

[51] Legal adviser's opinion, 27 Aug. 1909: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/955.

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bans to be imposed.[52] But Morley refused this too. In liberal Britain, he lectured the viceroy, the 'sufficient penalty for a false and mischievous use of the liberty of the press . . . is enforced by public opinion'.[53]

Freedom of association was also protected. Political meetings on Indian questions were sometimes attended in an ad hoc fashion by India Office officials, but were not subject to the surveillance or bans used in India. Pal addressed many meetings in Britain. After witnessing him hijack a meeting of retired officials and British liberals to discuss the 'Indian student problem', Wyllie wrote that his activities among students were promoting public sentiments of disloyalty.[54] Yet nothing could be done to curb Pal's activities. 'We knew this meeting was being held', Wyllie wrote after Pal addressed further groups of students in Cambridge and London, 'but we saw no means of stopping it'. 'It is a pity', he wrote later, 'he cannot be deported'.[55]

Even policing was light by comparison with India. This was partly because the Metropolitan Police was slow to develop the capacity to monitor Indian radicalism.[56] Its officers did not speak Indian languages and stuck out when attending political meetings.[57] But the principal difficulty was not incapacity but contrary liberal expectations. Indian nationalists had noticed this for themselves. In England, Lajpat Rai wrote, 'people are always agitated about their political rights, and are extremely jealous of interference with or suppression of popular . . . privileges'.[58] Pal too wrote in surprise how, even when investigating the assassination of Wyllie, the police showed 'wondrous patience [and] . . . scrupulous regard for the sanctities of private relations and personal freedoms'. They did not search premises without evidence, open the Indians' letters or harass them, provided they remained

[52] 'Prevention of the Importation into India of Seditious and Inflammatory Pamphlets and Newspapers Published in England': NAI, HPA, July 1910, 55.

[53] Secretary of State to Government of India, 16 Sept. 1910: NAI, HPA, Oct. 1910, 116; Morley to Minto, 26 Aug. 1909: BL, OIOC, MS Eur. D573/4.

[54] Notes by Sir W. H. Curzon Wyllie (Political Aide-de-Camp to the Secretary of State for India), 5 and 9 Nov. 1908: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/903/4223.

[55] Notes by Curzon Wyllie, 14 and 29 Dec. 1908: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/908/4600.

[56] Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, 126.

[57] Morley to Minto, 4 June 1908: BL, OIOC, MS Eur. D573/3.

[58] Lala Lajpat Rai, 'Need for Substantial Change in Methods of Agitation', Oct.–Nov. 1905, in *Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, ed. Nanda, ii.

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within the law.[59] One member of India House, arrested after assaulting a political opponent, was startled merely to be asked for his name and address rather than taken down to the cells. 'I am not against views, for in England you are free', the detective told him; 'my business is to prevent crime'.[60] The printer of the *Indian Sociologist* offered to stop the work if the police disapproved of its contents, only to be told that the police could not and did not object provided what was published was lawful.[61] The inspection of the mail was permitted, but easily evaded: only packets and unsealed letters were opened, and a brief experiment in opening letters sent from Highgate to India was discontinued after an MP complained that his letters had been opened. In any case, the radicals had already sent their letters from other postal districts.[62]

Some India Office officials, especially those such as Sir William Lee-Warner who had governed in India itself, itched for a more imperial style of policing, using surveillance and close control. But the Metropolitan Police now employed the self-restraint and 'subtle reciprocities' of policing by consent.[63] Morley refused to allow the infiltration of India House or the shadowing of students.[64] Lee-Warner wrote privately to India in 1907 to ask the government of India to go behind Morley's back, but they did not dare.[65] At the start of 1909, the government of India demanded special measures be taken in London to restrict the flow of seditious material and the suborning of students.[66] Morley remained

[59] Bipin Chandra Pal, *Nationality and Empire: A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems* (Calcutta, 1916), 259–60.

[60] M. P. T. Acharya, *Reminiscences of an Indian Revolutionary*, ed. Bishamber Dayal Yadav (New Delhi, 1991), 94–5, 97.

[61] Depositions in *R.* v. *Horsley* (seditious libel), 1909.

[62] 'Interception of Postal Articles Passing between Various Revolutionaries in India and Those in London, Paris and America': NAI, HPA, June 1909, 132–4; 'Complaint from Sir William Wedderburn that his Correspondence Has Been Tampered with by the Indian Post Office': BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/847/382; Government of India response: NAI, HPA, Apr. 1908, 40–1; court statement and examination of Chaturbhuj Jhaverbhai Amin.

[63] Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), 111.

[64] Hirtzel, Diary, 31 May, 3 June 1907; Morley to Gladstone, 31 May 1907: BL, Herbert Gladstone papers, Add. MS 46019, fo. 60.

[65] Sir William Lee-Warner (Member of the Council of India) to Stuart, 20 Aug. 1907; Risley to Stuart, 2 Oct. 1907: NAI, HPD, June 1909, 30.

[66] 'Proposal to Check the Manufacture of Sedition in England': NAI, HPA, Mar. 1909, 148–50.

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reluctant to agree, but policing was stepped up, and it became clear to many at India House that they were being followed by detectives, and their associates, employers and tutors questioned about their activities.[67] Nevertheless, the Metropolitan Police remained the despair of the India Office.[68] From 1909 the Indian CID seconded its own intelligence officer to London to reduce the need to rely on the Metropolitan Police, and even placed an informer inside India House.[69] While this undoubtedly marked a change, the difficulties were still very real. The students managed to turn at least one of those sent to spy on them, and seem from their own accounts almost to have enjoyed evading policemen, who appeared so much more hamstrung than their Indian equivalents.[70]

Very little could be done to counter the influence of India House over students. An India Office inquiry, chaired by Lee-Warner in 1907, showed that a majority of Indian students in Britain were politically discontented, and that these views tended to intensify as a consequence of their studies.[71] But, much though it disliked this, the India Office found itself powerless.[72] In its view, it would be 'politically disastrous' for British universities to close their doors to Indian applicants. Indeed, the India Office wanted to keep them open in the wider interest of imperial unity.[73] The universities refused to make Indian students a special case or subject them to surveillance. The Inns of Court, the India Office was told, could 'exercise no preventive control' over Indian students; 'nor could this be done unless the whole system of the Inns of Court were remodelled'.[74] Even when it was presented with evidence that Savarkar and one of his recruits were planning violence, Gray's Inn refused to take the India Office's word for it, insisting that it hold its own inquiry with every

[67] *Hansard*, 5th ser., ii, col. 512 (11 Mar. 1909); Savarkar, newsletter, 9 Apr. 1909, in Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, iv, 96–100.

[68] Hirtzel, Diary, 8 and 13–14 July 1909; Hirtzel to Morley, 13 July, 26 Aug. 1909: Bodleian Lib., MS Eng. d. 3591.

[69] Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, 130, 132–4, 136–41.

[70] Srivastava, *Five Stormy Years*, 131–5.

[71] *Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Committee Appointed by the Secretary of State for India to Enquire into the Position of Indian Students in the United Kingdom*: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/845 (hereafter Lee-Warner Report), 56–61.

[72] *Times*, 17 May 1907.

[73] Hirtzel, Diary, 12 Mar. 1909.

[74] Lee-Warner Report, 78.

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possible protection for those charged.[75] At the first hearing, the charges against the recruit were dropped straight away. Savarkar's hearing was interrupted by the Wyllie assassination, but even then the Inn refused to expel him as the India Office wished, ruling instead that the case was not proven but had raised suspicions sufficient to justify postponing a call to the Bar for the present.[76] Rather than use its findings to justify closer regulation of Indian students, therefore, the India Office suppressed the Lee-Warner Committee report. Instead of a system of surveillance, it set up a tentative and voluntary scheme for advice and guidance.[77] Their appointed adviser spent his time on maintenance and financial support, not monitoring political activity. The universities refused to report on it either, or to discipline those of whom the India Office complained, and students evaded the authorities' gaze easily enough.[78]

II

In sum, as Tilak told Krishnavarma, the 'freer atmosphere of England gives you a scope which we can never hope to get here [in India]'.[79] Yet within a few years this scope had been permanently given up. To explain why, we need to consider how power was exercised over the Indian radicals in Britain.

If a colonial 'rule of difference' were to be applied, boundaries had to be established and policed. The natural place for such a border lay between Britain and India. Morley and his fellow Liberals had therefore reluctantly accepted numerous serious restrictions of civil liberties in India while refusing to extend them to London. The problem with the Indian radicals was that they crossed this border. The government of India contemplated two solutions: containment and discrimination. First, it

[75] Gray's Inn Library, London: 'Book of Orders', xxii, 28 Apr. 1909, fo. 473; 5 May 1909, fo. 479; D. W. Douthwaite (Under Treasurer, Gray's Inn) to Wyllie, 29 Apr., 6 and 13 May 1909: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/939/1849.

[76] Gray's Inn Lib.: 'Book of Orders', xxii, 12 May 1909, fo. 485; 9, 21–23 June, 14 July 1909, fos. 494, 526, 530, 533, 534; 16 Mar., 6 Apr. 1910, fos. 638, 643.

[77] Lee-Warner Report, 56–61; *Report of the Committee on Indian Students, 1921–22* (London, 1922): BL, OIOC, W1757.

[78] Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880–1930* (London, 2000), 127.

[79] Tilak to Krishnavarma, 10 July 1905, in *Letters of Lokamanya Tilak*, ed. M. D. Vidwans (Poona, 1966), 255–6.

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tried to reduce border-crossing to a minimum, and to seal India off from the contaminating influences of the rest of the world, as a park for good governance. This was why it disliked the Labour and Radical MPs and journalists who travelled to India quite as much as the Indian nationalists who sought refuge in London.[80] Secondly, since some people would not stay put, it wanted to redraw the border to lie not between Britain and India but between Briton and Indian. Such a line could not be crossed unless identities themselves dissolved. The Indian radicals would carry it with them wherever they went.

Neither strategy was easy for the Raj to achieve. The first, containment, clashed with a different, no less imperial, strategy of integration. For liberal imperialists such as Morley, empire was only justified if it extended opportunities for the colonized to learn the skills necessary for self-government. This meant that ideas, print and individuals must flow. But even imperialists who were not liberals found themselves obliged to agree. The reason lay in their worry that India might get forgotten in plans for the closer integration of the white dominions through tariff reform and imperial federation.[81] The economic development of India, necessary to counter nationalist claims that the Raj was holding the country back, required access to the trading and professional networks dominated by Britain and the dominions. Even if India were to remain an agricultural economy, it needed modern scientific research to raise yields and more rapid communications to speed up trade. But the dominions wanted to restrict access to Indian migrants and trade, and this meant that they urgently needed to be persuaded of the value of India. Since India was not itself a destination for economic migrants from other parts of the empire, the only ambassadors for these ideas were educated, travelling Indians.

There is no better example of this conflicted desire for integration than Minto's predecessor, Lord Curzon. In 1909, back in Britain after his early retirement from the viceroyalty, Curzon was busying himself with all manner of integrative projects with the aim of bringing India into 'organic relation with the rest of the empire'.[82] As chancellor of Oxford University, he argued for it to

[80] Owen, *British Left and India*, 28–9.
[81] Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 2007), 8–10, 171–8.
[82] 'Lord Curzon on India', *Times*, 20 Oct. 1909.

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become a great imperial university, attracting the brightest and best Indians.[83] Again as chancellor, the same year he welcomed journalists from across the empire, in Britain to attend the first Imperial Press Conference, as visitors to Oxford. Curzon told the delegates that they should form part of a 'perpetual stream circulating between the Colonies and England'.[84] In September he spoke in Parliament in favour of a state-subsidized School of Oriental Languages in London. Institutions promoting mutual cultural understanding were the 'necessary furniture of empire'.[85] None of this meant that Curzon had softened in his dislike of the unrepresentative 'babus' of Congress. But, despite himself, he found himself advocating the opening of flows that could not be controlled. The bright Indian undergraduates who came to Curzon's Oxford included Har Dayal, who wrote for the *Indian Sociologist* and recruited his fellow students as agitators. The delegates attending the 'Parliament of the Empire's Press' included Curzon's old opponent from Calcutta, Surendranath Banerjea of the *Bengalee*. Banerjea could not be prevented from meeting British Radical editors like W. T. Stead or using the platform to appeal to his fellow editors' sense of fair play. He did both.[86]

The government of India's second strategy required discriminatory legislation on British soil of a kind the Liberals would not accept. Although the India Office had a free hand concerning internal affairs in India, the Home Office and the law officers had no interest in making their own parliamentary and political lives difficult by adopting illiberal methods in Britain. Even if there were a way of confining its effects to resident Indians, it would set a dangerous precedent. J. A. Hobson and other liberal writers had already warned them about the way that despotism in the empire returned home to poison the tree of liberty.[87]

[83] Curzon of Kedleston, George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess, *Principles and Methods of University Reform: Report of the Hebdomadal Council* (Oxford, 1910), p. xli.

[84] Curzon of Kedleston, George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess, 'Oxford and the Empire', 15 June 1909, in *Subjects of the Day, Being a Selection of Speeches and Writings by Earl Curzon of Kedleston* (London, 1915).

[85] Curzon of Kedleston, George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess, 'Oriental Studies', 27 Sept. 1909, in Curzon, *Subjects of the Day.*

[86] Thomas H. Hardman, *A Parliament of the Press: The First Imperial Press Conference* (London, 1909), 93, 164–5, 205; Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making, Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life* (London, 1925), 241–2.

[87] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London, 1902).

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More importantly, however, such discrimination could simply not be delivered by the state. In London the radicals encountered a world quite unlike India. Power was not concentrated in the hands of the state, but dispersed among many non-state institutions, actors and associations that stood apart from (though still in a certain relation with) the state. The most relevant for the Indians were the parliamentary lobby, the press, the Inns of Court and the legal profession, and the universities and the public intellectual arena. The autonomy of these institutions was considered essential to a liberal mode of governance, in creating and shaping self-governing individuals, in permitting supposedly natural social and economic processes to occur without distortion, and in providing locations from which a critique of the state and its actions could be made. Although the state did not control them, they were nonetheless governed by internally enforced codes of behaviour. They defined for themselves what constituted fair use of the freedom they possessed, thereby controlling the practical delivery of civil liberties. Being a 'reasonable litigant' in court, a 'respectable lobbyist' at Westminster, a 'responsible journalist' in Fleet Street or a 'good chap' at university was a necessary condition for equal treatment. Furthermore, full entitlement to civil liberties could not be obtained by Indians directly, but only via British intermediaries whose right to them was undisputed. These were the people who mattered: the MPs who might raise their cases in Parliament, the editors who might publish their letters and articles, the college tutors who might protect them against the India Office, the lawyers who might admit them to the Bar or take their cases. A very large part of the radicals' activities and correspondence was directed towards these people, in terms that ranged from formal lobbying to begging letters. Everything therefore turned on what these intermediaries did. Would they align in solidarity with their fellow professionals or discriminate according to a rule of colonial difference?

III

Closest to the state, although still distinct from it, was the law. Formally, Indians had equal access to legal remedy in London. The appeals procedure was another channel which, in the interests of imperial cohesion, imperialists like Joseph Chamberlain had fought to preserve, even though anti-imperialists might

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use it for leverage.[88] But although the scope for civil liberties was greater in Britain than in India, they were guaranteed not by legislation, but only patchily by the common law. This left them vulnerable to unsympathetic judges.[89] Tilak's associates Karandikar and Khaparde, who travelled to London in 1908 to appeal to the judicial committee of the Privy Council, were therefore much too hopeful about their chances.[90] The case was hawked around London's barristers, several of whom refused to pick it up, probably because they thought it unlikely to succeed. When one was finally identified, the case had to be handed over to him completely: 'his word must be final', Khaparde wrote to Tilak, 'for he knows the Court, has moved in the atmosphere'.[91] When the appeal finally reached court, it was dismissed in a few minutes without reasons being given. This only left the possibility of an appeal to the House of Lords, which depended on finding a friendly peer to support it. Several were approached by the Indians but none would act.[92] The wider political campaign Tilak hoped for did not materialize either. The MPs approached were too busy or unsympathetic to take up the case.[93] 'There is no justice in a pure sense administered in the British courts', complained Tilak's London solicitor. 'It is all subordinated to policy'.[94] This may be why Tilak's appeal case was the last of

[88] David B. Swinfen, *Imperial Appeal: The Debate on the Appeal to the Privy Council, 1833–1986* (Manchester, 1987), 11–16.

[89] K. D. Ewing and C. A. Gearty, *The Struggle for Civil Liberties: Political Freedom and the Rule of Law in Britain, 1914–1945* (Oxford, 2000).

[90] Legal adviser's opinion, 11 Feb. 1909: BL, OIOC, L/L/1/30; Note by Judicial and Public Committee, 22 Feb. 1909, and S. G. Sale (legal adviser, India Office) to Sir Charles Lyall (Secretary, Judicial and Public Department, India Office), 5 Mar. 1909, both in BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/877/2346; A. Wood Renton, 'Imperial and Colonial Appeals to the Privy Council', *Jl Soc. Comparative Legislation*, i (1899).

[91] Khaparde to Tilak, 10 Feb. 1909, in Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Samagra Lokamanya Tilaka*, 7 vols. (Pune [Poona], 1974–6), vii, 695–6. For the full correspondence between Tilak and Khaparde, see Tilak, *Samagra Lokamanya Tilaka*, vii, 706–7, 711–17, 731–2, 1037–43; *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, 11 vols. (Bombay, 1957–92), vii, *Correspondence and Diary of G. S. Khaparde*, 112–16, 120–2, 381–6; Raghunath Pandurangh Karandikar, *R. P. Karandikar's Letters from England, 1908* (Satara, 1935).

[92] Khaparde to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 6 Sept. 1909; Lord Lytton (second earl of Lytton) to Khaparde, 25 Sept. 1909, both in West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, Blunt papers, box 32.

[93] Owen, *British Left and India*, 93.

[94] Eduardo Dalgado (member of the British Committee of Indian National Congress) to Khaparde, 25 Apr. 1913, in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vii, 126–7.

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its kind. In 1922, when M. K. Gandhi was prosecuted under the same law as Tilak, and received the same sentence, he made no appeal to the Privy Council, which he regarded as an expensive and demeaning approach to a well-qualified but politically biased court.[95]

Tilak and the other radicals also hoped that the British Radical press would respond to their demand for justice. It was a small world: perhaps only fifty or so editors and writers really mattered, and they almost all regarded themselves as sympathetic to Indian aspirations.[96] However, this was qualified in two ways. Some of the Radical press had detached itself from public controversy and now sought private influence among policy makers.[97] A. G. Gardiner, of the *Daily News*, and J. A. Spender, of the *Westminster Gazette*, were close to the Cabinet and especially to Morley, who enjoyed a semi-legendary status among Edwardian journalists.[98] They were prepared to act as intermediaries between the Indians and the government, but no more. After Morley complained about the 'nagging' criticism made by H. W. Nevinson in the *Daily News*, Gardiner rewrote the offending editorials.[99] In 1907 W. T. Stead, of *Review of Reviews*, proposed that he, Spender and Gardiner should visit India and publish articles in defiance of the press laws alongside Indians as 'confrères, members of the same profession'.[100] But they worried about the 'explosive possibilities' of sharing a platform with Indians.

[95] Gandhi to C. F. Andrews (friend and missionary), 11 June 1919, in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 100 vols. (Delhi, 1958–88), and e-book (2000), xvii, doc. 88. References to the e-book edition are given in the form *CWMG*(e), followed by the volume and document numbers. References to the slightly more complete printed edition are given as *CWMG*(p). See also 'The Lahore Judgment', 23 July 1919, *CWMG*(e), xviii, doc. 185; '5000 Miles Away', 18 Feb. 1926, *CWMG*(e), xxxiv, doc. 37; 'Justice from Six Thousand Miles', 12 Aug. 1926, *CWMG*(e), xxxvi, doc. 208.

[96] See Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c.1880–1922* (Manchester, 2003).

[97] George Boyce, 'The Fourth Estate: The Reappraisal of a Concept', in George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London, 1978); Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Basingstoke, 1998), 130–3.

[98] Stephen E. Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (London, 1981–4), ii, 100, 105; J. A. Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics*, 2 vols. (London, 1927), i, 134, 139, 147.

[99] Henry W. Nevinson, Diary, 7 May, 23 Dec. 1908, 1 Mar., 23–24 May, 15 June 1909: Bodleian Lib., MS Eng. misc. e. 615/1–3.

[100] W. T. Stead, 'A Suggestion to the Native Press', enclosed in Stead to Gokhale, 20 July 1906: BL, Gokhale papers, Microfilm OIOC NEG 11706.

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'I own I don't like the idea of Englishmen joining in', Spender told Gardiner.[101]

The second qualification was more subtle. The British Radical press had responded to commercial competition by reinforcing its 'educational ideal'. It championed the 'sacredness of fact' and sober analysis with which to counter the sensationalism of the cheap press.[102] Editors concerned with detached, neutral reporting thought the Indians too close to events to be reliable witnesses. Surendranath Banerjea acted as an unofficial correspondent for the *Daily News* until 1907, when the relationship was terminated by Gardiner, probably on the grounds that Banerjea's agitation against the Raj was compromising the paper's independence.[103] C. P. Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*, sent Nevinson to India to verify the stories reported by Indians, but warned him not to be captured by Congress politicians while he was there.[104] Editors relied on liberal-minded ex-official Britons, a tendency that was to continue practically until independence. As in the other arenas, therefore, formal legal restriction was insignificant, but self-restraint was a powerful force.

The result was that, while the voices of the Indian nationalists were audible in London, they were not unmediated, but were validated by British editors and journalists after suitability checks. Although Banerjea was invited to the Imperial Press Conference in 1909, it was only after soundings had been taken from responsible British pressmen.[105] This was the significance of the various mechanisms of gatekeeping the editors employed: the letters of introduction the Indians needed for access, the luncheons at which their British sponsors invited them to make their case and the topping and tailing of their articles with editorial explanation. The Indians were invited to supply the 'native perspective' (important evidence if India were to be treated

[101] Spender to Gardiner, 25 Sept. 1907: British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, Gardiner papers, 1/34.

[102] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana, 2004).

[103] Banerjea to Gardiner, 11 July 1907: British Lib. of Political and Economic Science, Gardiner papers, 1/3.

[104] Scott to Nevinson, 9 Sept. 1907: John Rylands Library, Manchester, Manchester Guardian archive, A/N12/5.

[105] 'Mr Surendranath Banerjea and his English Experiences', *Mod. Rev.* (Sept. 1909), 280–8.

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fairly) but denied the universal reach of the British Radicals' own judgements. The clearest instance was the weekly paper *India*, the newspaper of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. This was firmly controlled by British Radicals, the committee believing that an Indian editor would be a liability in achieving a reputation for reliable coverage.[106] When the Indians produced their own work, it was generally ignored. 'Do you think anyone will read it?', an Indian radical complained. 'A lot of niggers writing, you people will say'.[107]

W. T. Stead was the only ally the Indians really had. Against the trend towards the 'sacredness of fact', his forte was muckraking exposés of government failure, human interest stories, insider interviews and alarmist campaigning. It is arguable that these techniques, drawing on the reports of repression now emerging from India, could have served the Indians better than the thin and cautious endorsements they got elsewhere. Stead had, as already noted, republished one of Pal's articles in Britain, thereby making a prosecution in Britain impossible.[108] This and other acts of solidarity were praised by Gandhi as examples of the kind of cosmopolitan gesture that he thought British Radicals should emulate.[109] Stead was keen to get Pal to take his place alongside other emerging imperial statesmen, to some of whom he introduced him.[110] But although Pal could be induced to consider wider imperial perspectives, he quarrelled badly with Stead's assumptions of progress under white leadership. 'The more we come to know of your civilisation', he told Stead, 'the more we come to know that there is some virtue in our barbarism'.[111] Stead tried to get Pal to moderate these arguments in the interests of getting better coverage.[112] But Pal refused, and was left depressed

[106] S. R. Mehrotra, *A History of the Indian National Congress*, i, *1885–1918* (New Delhi, 1995), 94–5; Owen, *British Left and India*, 40–1.

[107] *New Age*, 11 Feb. 1909, 320.

[108] *Review of Reviews* (Oct. 1909), 348–9; (Dec. 1909), 542–3.

[109] There are at least six such endorsements, from 'How to Work Non Co-operation', 5 May 1920, *CWMG*(e), xx, doc. 84, to 'Harijan', 13 Jan. 1940, *CWMG*(e), lxxvii, doc. 239.

[110] W. T. Stead, 'Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: Nationalist-Imperialist', *Review of Reviews* (Oct. 1911).

[111] DCI Reports, 8 and 22 Nov. 1910: NAI, HPA, Dec. 1910, 8–9.

[112] Saint Nihal Singh, 'Bepin Chandra Pal: Reminiscences of the Patriot in Voluntary Exile', *Mod. Rev.* (July 1932).

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and penniless, threatened by his creditors and barely surviving on small portions of rice and dal.[113] 'He can do no work at all, only sits in a chair, brooding', his secretary wrote desperately to India. 'We have nobody here. Nobody seems to care whether we starve'.[114] Pal's retreat into isolation left Stead 'genuinely distressed' at his 'obstinacy and obtuseness' in refusing to write for the British press. Pal had 'never once . . . experienced the slightest discourtesy, nor . . . any disability on account of his nationality or his colour', Stead insisted.[115] But he had 'a notion that all our editors are in league against India' and 'There is no shaking him from that opinion'.[116] By 1911 Pal had suffered a complete mental collapse and was pleading to be given the funds to permit a passage to India.[117] Once there, he was returned directly to prison for the allegedly seditious article Stead had republished, concerning which the authorities in London had not dared to bring a prosecution, but which the Raj had little difficulty in using to convict him. What had defeated him in London, however, was not legal action, but the workings of the free press.

As these events suggest, the Indian radicals did form working alliances with British anti-imperialist thinkers and writers, but they tended to be brittle. This was partly a matter of divergent priorities. The Indians cared most about India for itself. The metropolitan anti-imperialists worried most of all about what imperialism in India meant for wider imperial interests, or for European foreign relations, or for liberty and progress at home.[118] There were also difficulties over the relative positioning of British and Indian critics. For the British critics, empire was to be judged not so much by universal liberal principles as by

[113] DCI Reports, 4 Jan. 1911: NAI, Home Political, ser. B (hereafter HPB), Feb. 1911, 1; 7 and 28 Feb. 1911: HPB, Mar. 1911, 1, 4; 11, 18, 25 Apr. 1911: HPB, June 1911, 1–3; 6 June 1911: HPB, July 1911, 1.

[114] Eva Willis (secretary to B. C. Pal) to Khaparde, 21 Apr., 1 May 1911, in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vii, 180–2.

[115] Stead, 'Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal'.

[116] Singh, 'Bepin Chandra Pal', 37.

[117] Pal to Khaparde, 21 Apr., 12 May, 9 June, 14, 21, 28 July, 18 Aug. 1911; Willis to Khaparde, 19 May, 17 June, 4 Aug., 15 Sept. 1911; Khaparde, Diary, 9 June 1910, all in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vii, 160–9, 181–8, 387–8.

[118] Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850–1920* (Cambridge, 2010).

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considerations of 'true Englishness'.[119] Indian nationalists had long been aware that this was a test that their imperial governors could easily fail. This was why they criticized the 'un-Britishness' of British rule in India. But the problems of the test were clear. A complaint against un-Britishness could only be the basis for a request to the colonizers to live up to obligations under which they had placed themselves. This could prompt self-criticism on the part of the British, and was locally effective when it did. But it could not be made the basis for common action because it did not base itself on commonly owned values.

Universal liberal values, by contrast, theoretically belonged to everyone, and as such could be made the basis of demands by anyone. But the attempt to invoke 'global liberalism' in London was mostly a failure. This was largely because the same differences of positioning applied as when 'un-Britishness' was invoked. Liberalism, British thinkers insisted, was the product not just of abstract rational reflection, but of a particular socio-historical experience, which had, not by chance, happened first in Britain, and had yet to happen in India. Freedom was, after all, not just the liberty demanded by a subject people, but a discipline in itself: the art of governing people primarily through their exercise of their own capacities. British liberals were themselves divided over how quickly such freedom could develop in India, and welcomed Indian contributions to that debate. But even those British liberals who believed that liberalism in time could stretch to include everyone did not think that this meant that it belonged to everyone. The very stretchiness of liberalism, which, as Bayly suggests,[120] was what allowed it to be reworked to meet Indian needs, also meant that it needed interpretation and expert handling.

This limited the practical use that could be made of liberal ideas by the Indians. British liberal authorities could be implored. Rash Behari Ghose, the Congress president in 1907–8, for example, urged Morley not to forget that 'we too may claim to have kindled our modest rush-lights at Burke and Mill's benignant lamps'.[121] But this approach faltered when Indians abandoned

[119] Mira Matikkala, *Empire and Imperial Ambition: Liberty, Englishness and Anti-Imperialism in Late Victorian Britain* (London, 2011).

[120] Bayly, 'South Asian Thought at the Dawn of the Liberal Age', 7.

[121] *Congress Presidential Addresses*, ii, *1901–1911*, ed. A. M. Zaidi (New Delhi, 1986), 341.

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deference for claims to unmediated authority. Morley was himself the leading authority on Mill, who had been a personal friend and mentor, as he reminded Indians who dared to quote Mill against him.[122] Even Lajpat Rai had to acknowledge, when accusing the government of 'drag[ging] . . . the noble cult of liberalism . . . in the dust', that Morley was 'the greatest living exponent of that cult'.[123]

This reasserted authority was applied with a vengeance to Indian demands for consistency between liberal professions and imperial practice. Krishnavarma's claims, for example, were met with neither censorship nor indeed reply, but with attempts to undercut authorial competence. Krishnavarma was the product of British education, the *Times* wrote on publishing one of his letters, 'and the contemplation of his heart and mind, as he reveals them this morning, must somewhat chasten the self-satisfaction with which we habitually regard the greatest of our achievements as a nation'. His 'puerile travesties of history' and 'intellectual feebleness' showed the 'disastrous effects of contact with "advanced" Western doctrines upon Oriental minds wholly unfitted by tradition or by discipline to try them by a practical standard'.[124] The *Times* did not bother to contest Krishnavarma's citation of liberal texts, though there was, of course, plenty of material it could have used. Rather, it questioned his qualifications as an authority on them, thereby denying him even the status of an intellectual adversary.

Not everyone dismissed the Indian challenge so abruptly. Some liberals wanted to find out what was going on in India, and especially whether liberal ideals were taking root in Indian soil. They were also prepared to be critical of the Raj, often precisely for its failure to nurture liberalism. Yet this was combined with a strong sense that, whatever India had to learn of liberalism, liberalism had little to learn from India. '[He] knew nothing of

[122] John Morley, 'To Constituents, Arbroath', 21 Oct. 1907, in Viscount Morley, *Indian Speeches, 1907–1909* (London, 1909), 29–47.

[123] Lajpat Rai, letter to *India*, 18 Dec. 1908, in *Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, ed. Nanda, iii, 179–80.

[124] *Times*, 20 Feb. 1909. See also *ibid.*, 23 May 1908, 23 and 29 June 1908; *Indian Sociologist* (Aug. 1908), 30; Sir Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, 1910), 146; G. K. Chesterton, 'The Indian Nationalist Movement', *Illus. London News*, 18 Sept. 1909.

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India', wrote Khaparde after meeting the leading New Liberal J. A. Hobson in 1909.

> He is proud that England has done a great deal of good in India and that Gokhale is very ardent and asks for too much. So there was no use telling him much. Ignorance here is so tremendous and people are so self-satisfied, that it appears to me hopeless to get them to do anything.[125]

The following year, Hobson and his fellow liberal Gilbert Murray addressed a conference entitled 'Nationalities and Subject Races', at which India was represented by Pal and Lajpat Rai.[126] 'We come to hear grievances', Murray announced, 'to consider what errors we have committed, to think of mending the faulty points of our Empire . . . If this nation is to do its work well, some self-criticism is absolutely necessary'.[127] Hobson argued that the wrong mixture of motives was driving imperial policy, with capitalist profit taking precedence over the civilizing of the 'lower races' by the British with their superior grasp of truth and justice. To maintain a suitably high standard, imperial rule should be regulated by an international tribunal of other 'civilized' states.[128]

Pal sharply challenged this purely internal self-criticism. 'When civilisation enters the confessional and admits to the world at large its multitudinous sins, committed and omitted, I begin to get a little suspicious', he told the conference. According to Hobson, the empire's problem was its failure to live up to its own high standards. To Pal, it was the imposition of those standards on others. Speaking 'with the humility that befits a barbarian' who was 'not civilized, and . . . not ashamed to say so', Pal refused to concede 'the right to a civilized nation to impose its forms on us'. The civilized and liberal Britons present were judging the Indian nation not by Indian standards, or even by universal ones, but by those of 'white humanity'. As Khaparde had noted of Hobson, what was irritating was the self-satisfaction of the liberal anti-imperialists. 'I do not say that Great Britain is evil-minded; I admit her people are generous', Pal commented, 'but

[125] Khaparde, Diary, 3 Apr. 1909, in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vii, 381.

[126] N. F. Dryhurst (ed.), *Nationalities and Subject Races: Report of Conference Held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, June 28–30, 1910* (London, 1911).

[127] Professor Gilbert Murray, opening address, 28 June 1910, *ibid.*, 4.

[128] J. A. Hobson, speech, 30 June 1910, in Dryhurst (ed.), *Nationalities and Subject Races*, 117–26. See also Peter Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism, and Finance, 1887–1938* (Oxford, 2002), 152–5, 158–60.

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they are more conceited than they are generous'. '[The British] have educated the Indians', he continued. 'Personally I am thankful for that education, as otherwise I could not have abused their civilisation in their civilised country'.[129] It was 'exceedingly doubtful' that any movement guided by whites, no matter how humanitarian and cosmopolitan they thought themselves, could be an effective critic of imperialism.[130] 'The European is the spoilt child of modern humanity', Pal later wrote. 'He criticises every other culture and civilization, few have the temerity to criticise his'.[131] When his British friends suggested that he should participate in the following year's Universal Races Congress, Pal refused. 'The whole thing is pure humbug', he wrote.[132]

India House did establish some loose connections with British socialists, but they too broke easily, or bore little weight. As Gregory Claeys has recently argued, a growing number of Edwardian socialists thought that a rededicated empire might offer a better framework for the pursuit of socialist organization and international brotherhood than one abandoned by its rulers to fragmentation and decay.[133] This did not put them entirely at odds with Indian nationalists, because the first items on their respective charge-sheets, the political repression and economic exploitation of British rule, were sufficiently similar. British socialists including H. M. Hyndman and Keir Hardie therefore regularly spoke at Indian nationalist meetings. But while familiarity with Indian nationalism could breed mutual understanding, it also raised difficult questions. On the surface, many Indian nationalists almost fitted too well into metropolitan civic life: they dressed, spoke and even agitated in the manner of the Victorian public association. Up close, however, Indian nationalism looked different. Those British socialists who visited India (they included

[129] Mr B. Chandra Pal, speech, 30 June 1910, in Dryhurst (ed.), *Nationalities and Subject Races*, 137–41.

[130] Bipin Chandra Pal, 'Problem of Nationality and Empire', July 1910, repr. in Pal, *Nationality and Empire*, 16.

[131] Bipin Chandra Pal, *The Soul of India: A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals* (Calcutta, 1911), 35b–36.

[132] Pal to Khaparde, 28 July 1911, in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vii, 168. See also N. Ramanujaswami, *My Trip to England, 1911* (Madras, 1912), 107–8; Robert John Holton, 'Cosmopolitanism or Cosmopolitanisms? The Universal Races Congress of 1911', *Global Networks*, ii (2002); and the articles in the 'Forum' section on the Universal Races Congress of 1911, *Radical Hist. Rev.*, xcii (2005).

[133] Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics*, 8–9, 208, 224–34.

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Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald and the Webbs in 1907–11) were startled to witness political mobilization by means of caste pressures and employer power, and a considerably less secular language. Far from being displaced by Western political development, it seemed that these regressive tendencies were actually growing. Some of this was also visible in London, especially at India House once Savarkar's Indocentric challenges replaced Krishnavarma's liberal philosophizing. For British socialists, what had been familiar now looked inauthentic, and what was authentic looked unfamiliar.[134] Proximity, at least in this sense, therefore had complex and contradictory effects on solidarity, in a manner perhaps under-appreciated in 'junction box' theories.

Some representatives of India House, hoping to exert international pressure on the British socialists, attended the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907, though not as delegates from India but as guests of the French delegation, there being no Indian section of the International. They accordingly had no right to speak or vote. Of the 884 delegates present, indeed, only twenty-eight came from outside Europe, twenty-two of them from the United States.[135] The majority resolution on colonial policy, which condemned capitalist colonial policies but left open the possibility that a socialist colonial policy might be civilizing, was narrowly defeated by an amendment that condemned colonialism *tout court*. But the debate revealed how many European socialists believed that colonial 'savagery' needed taming through education, economic development or force.[136] Although Hyndman's small Social Democratic Federation contingent supported the amendment, the much larger Labour Party and Independent Labour Party delegations cast all but one of their votes against it, claiming that British rule was 'beneficial and necessary' for India for the present.[137] The Social Democratic Federation's resolution on India, which argued that British rule was tyrannical, was, at the Independent Labour

[134] Nicholas Owen, 'British Progressives and Civil Society in India, 1905–1914', in Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2003).

[135] *VIIe Congrès socialiste international tenu à Stuttgart du 16 au 24 août 1907* (Brussels, 1908), 65, 323.

[136] *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents, 1907–1916, the Preparatory Years*, ed. John Riddell (New York, 1984), 9–15.

[137] *Times*, 23 Aug. 1907; *Justice*, 31 Aug. 1907.

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Party's insistence, neither debated nor voted on.[138] When, three years later, the International met in Copenhagen, there was no greater Indian representation. Two members of India House tried to attend, but the British delegation prevented them from gaining accreditation.[139] Savarkar thought the effort irrelevant. 'You can't get a piggy back on persons like Hyndman', he told India House. 'You must learn to stand on your own two feet'.[140]

For the students of India House, the most immediate forum was the university. British universities, in contrast to those in India, were, if not exactly tolerant of Indian radicalism, opposed to policing it. The Oxford and Cambridge colleges were almost entirely self-governing institutions, hostile to outside instruction, protected from the state by their financial independence and their own carefully nurtured traditions. In return for their independence, they had accepted that their role was to train men to be leaders in church, state and empire.[141] Certain freedoms necessarily followed, since the training of leadership required increasing opportunities for students to exercise choice.[142] Discussion of politics was therefore not controlled as it was in India. On the contrary, confidence in political argument was one of the skills a university education was now supposed to impart. The relevant skills were those needed to govern a society still not fully democratic: the ability to take soundings, to 'manage' or 'handle' awkward elements and then point the way forward.[143] This was what made Oxford and Cambridge such a useful training ground for the home, and indeed Indian, civil service. For Indians with governing ambitions of their own, university education in Britain was very often enjoyable and profitable. If they allowed

[138] H. M. Hyndman, *The Ruin of India by British Rule, being the Report of the Social Democratic Federation to the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart* (London, 1907). See also *VIIe Congrès socialiste international tenu à Stuttgart*, 324–5; DCI Report, 21 Sept. 1907: NAI, HPB, Oct. 1907, 47; *Indian Sociologist* (Aug. and Sept. 1907).

[139] *Huitième Congrès socialiste international tenu à Copenhague du 28 août au 3 septembre 1910: compte rendu analytique pub. par le secrétariat du Bureau socialiste international* (Copenhagen, 1911); DCI Reports, 20 Sept. 1910: NAI, HPB, Oct. 1910, 5; 11 Oct. 1910: HPB, Nov. 1910, 19; *Social-Demokraten,* 1 Sept. 1910, trans. in BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/1030.

[140] Savarkar newsletters, 20 Dec. 1906, 8 Feb. 1907, in Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, iv, 19–23, 29–34.

[141] Reba N. Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford, 1994), 1–6, 16–21, 205–10.

[142] *Ibid.*, 27.

[143] See Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1965), 332–4.

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themselves to be moulded by the university, acceptance was reasonably easy. The university made them its protégés and protected them against any demand, even from the India Office, that they be treated differently.

Even nationalists, especially those whose relationship to the Indian masses was, as Partha Chatterjee terms it, 'pedagogical', might also gain from university training in the leadership of men.[144] But such gains were compromised by the need for outward loyalty to an imperial framework that they privately rejected. Debate in the universities only considered how Indians might best continue to be governed by others, and on the precise mix of repression and liberal reform needed for the task. The academics, as Reba Soffer notes, were 'attracted more to those attitudes of mind . . . protected by abiding traditions and institutions than to those encountered in doubt and struggle'.[145] Their minds were open to conviction, the only difficulty being, as one satirist put it in 1908, that 'so many convictions have already got inside, that it is very difficult to find the openings'.[146] The Cambridge academic J. R. Tanner complained that Indian students were thrown off balance when they made the mistake of applying British liberal theory to India. 'The abler the man, the more quickly he imbibed political views and the more keenly he felt it all', he lamented, and so 'the best of them (in other respects) were the most disloyal'.[147] That the Indians might have thrown the political theories off balance does not seem to have occurred to him.

Among the student body, assumptions and expectations were hardly less patronizing, and informal codes reinforced them. 'When once an Indian was known to be a good fellow he was treated very much like anyone else', a (white) Cambridge student told the India Office in 1907.[148] The authorities looked to such students to 'rag' Indians who expressed anti-imperial views.[149] A dissenting Indian before 1914 could therefore expect neither

[144] Partha Chatterjee, 'On Civil and Political Society in Postcolonial Democracies', in Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds.), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge, 2001).

[145] Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 210.

[146] F. M. Cornford, *Microcosmographia Academica, Being a Guide for the Young Academic Politician* (Cambridge, 1908), 4.

[147] Lee-Warner Report, 179.

[148] *Ibid.*, 188–90.

[149] Notes by Hirtzel, 2 June 1908, and Morley, 3 June 1908: BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/897/3787.

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silencing nor sanction, these being incompatible with the liberal ideals of the university, but could certainly expect to be regarded as a disappointment to his tutors, and as an outsider by his fellow students, and to be deprived of the patronage that went to the more compliant. Radical opinions were therefore rarely expressed publicly, except in the defensive space of the majlis, the university Indian society. The authorities viewed this retreat into what they termed 'aloofness' with dismay, though it resulted from the lack of any alternative shared forum.

More significant than any external discipline was the often paralysing weight of parental and community expectation. Nearly all the Indian students came from 'respectable' backgrounds, their families loyal and ambitious for their children. This did not rule out moderate nationalist pride, but even the children of nationalists were advised to steer clear of radical opinion. The most famous examples are the letters between Motilal Nehru and his son Jawaharlal (known in Britain as Joe; Cambridge undergraduate, 1906–10), who did indeed steer clear of India House.[150] The local Indian community also tended to reinforce parental values, disciplining the students into the necessary civilities of being members of a subordinate but respected body. Savarkar, who did not come from the same background, soon worked out that breaking these primary loyalties was necessary for success in Britain.[151] But it was not easy. He estimated that 90 per cent of the Indian students were too anxious to fit in to be any use for revolutionary work.[152]

Where parental letters and community influence did not work, retired Indian civil servants turned the screw. William Coldstream (Indian Civil Service, Punjab, 1861–94) used the full force of communal and familial connections to pressure Harnam Singh into apologizing for his India House activities. He wrote to him

> as one who . . . learned to love [Punjab] & its people, to beg of you to consider your ways & retrace your steps into the path of . . . loyalty which

[150] Correspondence in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, ed. Sarvepelli Gopal, 1st ser., 15 vols. (New Delhi, 1972–82), i, 34–100; *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, ed. Ravinder Kumar, D. N. Panigrahi and H. D. Sharma, 7 vols. (New Delhi, 1982–95), i, 60–174.

[151] Savarkar, newsletters of 14 Aug. 1908, 5 Sept. 1908, in Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, iv, 70–1, 73–6; Savarkar, *Satrucya Sibiranta*, 92.

[152] *Kal*, 14 Aug. 1908; *Kesari*, 8 Sept. 1908, both in BL, OIOC, L/R/5/163, Native Newspaper Reports, Bombay, 15 Aug., 12 Sept. 1908, respectively.

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> your father & your people have been accustomed to follow. It is very sad to think that a Punjabi & a Sikh should have been betrayed into such regrettable and reprehensible conduct.

'You cannot expect to prosper in any honourable future if you enter it under the shadow of insubordination & disloyalty', Coldstream insisted. 'I give you this advice as a friend & one who has been asked to befriend you'.[153] This was, revealingly, friendly advice, not instruction. The point is not that it was successful. It was not. Harnam Singh buckled briefly, agreeing to meet Coldstream out of respect and distancing himself from India House. But he did not break. Instead, to the irritation of the India Office, he continued to agitate, first at Cambridge and then at Gray's Inn, duly qualifying for the Bar.[154] The episode confirmed how little control the India Office had over the educational opportunities open to dissident Indian students, and its reliance on the softer pressures that might or, as in this case, might not influence their free choices.

IV

The radicals of India House therefore worked within a field of soft power, the same as neither that in India nor that in which Britons operated. The play of forces in this field was momentarily illuminated, with important effects, when Dhingra shot Sir Curzon Wyllie. Violence threw light on the positions and relationships from an unexpected angle, refracting them into a revealing spectrum. Dhingra's act was a pure expression of what Savarkar had been preaching: the bleak claim that, as long as Britain remained in India, the only future was one of conflict and death. It was therefore understandable to those who saw empire in terms of irreducible struggle. These included Winston Churchill, for whom Dhingra and Savarkar were honourable opponents and truer Indian patriots than mendicant politicians such as Gokhale, with their unconvincing claim that India was developing politically on Western lines. Dhingra's action, Churchill said privately, 'will be remembered 2,000 years hence, as we remember Regulus, Caractacus and

[153] Coldstream to Harnam Singh, 6, 14, 24 June 1908; notes of their meeting on 13 June 1908, all in BL, OIOC, L/PJ/6/897/3787.
[154] Harnam Singh History Sheet, copy in NAI, HPA, Aug. 1909, 135–7.

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Plutarch's heroes'. His trial statement was 'the finest ever made in the name of patriotism'.[155]

But to liberal imperialists, liberal anti-imperialists and loyal Indians the assassination was inexplicable in political terms. They were bemused by the murder of a man 'with his large store of kindly sympathy for all things Indian' who had only ever tried to help Indians.[156] Some supposed that the intended target must have been the wielder of hard viceregal power Viscount Curzon, rather than Sir Curzon Wyllie.[157] Others moved quickly and unscientifically to explain Dhingra's act as a result of madness or personal affront. At first, it was argued that he was a socially frustrated loner.[158] When the evidence gathered for his trial made that view untenable, it was claimed that he was either mentally ill or that he had been rendered senseless with bhang (cannabis) by Savarkar and others before pulling the trigger.[159] This too proved hard to sustain as Dhingra's history and demeanour at the assassination and the committal proceedings showed no sign of insanity and he made no effort to deny his guilt.

However, given the perspectives I have described, Wyllie was an understandable victim. In India some thirteen years earlier, acting as adviser to the maharana of Udaipur, he had judged Krishnavarma unsuitable for a political appointment, a judgement of personal character seriously damaging to the latter's official career.[160] In 1909 Wyllie was the most visible face of the soft disciplining of the Indian students. The location of his

[155] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: A Personal Narrative of Events, 1888–1914*, 2 vols. (London, 1919–20), ii, 288.

[156] Sir Lawrence Jenkins to Morley, 4 July 1909, quoted in Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India, 1906–1910* (Berkeley, 1967), 124.

[157] This mistake in titling was sometimes made, even by Savarkar in his newsletters from London, which refer to 'Sir Wedderburn' and 'Sir Cotton'. But the Indian students were already well aware of who Curzon Wyllie was, so it seems very unlikely that Dhingra mistook his target.

[158] *India*, 9 July 1909; DCI Reports, 31 July, 7 Aug. 1909: NAI, HPB, Aug. 1909, 117, 120–9; *Times*, 3, 5, 8, 12 July 1909; G. S. Khaparde, MS Diary, 2 and 5 July 1909: NAI, Khaparde papers.

[159] *Times*, 3 and 5 July 1909; *Tribune*, 7 July 1909; 'Assassination of Sir William Curzon Wyllie': NAI, HPA, Sept. 1909, 66–8; Datta, *Madan Lal Dhingra and the Revolutionary Movement*, 50. Although Dhingra's loyalist family, desperate to save him from a death sentence, provided evidence of eccentricities and tried to insist that he was the pawn in a conspiracy, medical reports on Dhingra's state of mind after his arrest gave no indication of insanity. See TNA, PRO, CRIM 1/113/5.

[160] Yajnik, *Shyamji Krishnavarma*, 35 and ch. 7.

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assassination was, moreover, exactly one where such power was exerted. He was killed at a welcome party for Indian students, organized to help them to assimilate into British life.

London, more even than India, had therefore taught Indians that the gaps between liberal principle and imperial practice could not be used for leverage. The most important convert to this view was another visitor to India House, who arrived a few days after Dhingra's assassination of Wyllie. This was Gandhi, in Britain to lobby the British government in the interests of the Indian community in South Africa.[161] Gandhi was becoming dissatisfied with the technique of polite petitioning, and the lengthy debates he had with Savarkar and the students of India House during his four-month stay precipitated a decisive break in his approach. At first, Gandhi condemned Dhingra as a dishonourable coward, and his actions as motivated by 'ill digested reading of worthless writings'.[162] This was because he assumed that Dhingra was motivated by Krishnavarma's 'sociological' justification of assassination, which he had encountered on a previous visit in 1906. However, in a series of meetings over the late summer of 1909, Gandhi fought out his opinions with the new thinking represented by Savarkar. It was a losing battle. 'We revolutionaries used to sit on one side of the table and Gandhi and his followers on the other side', Savarkar recalled. 'Day by day Gandhi's followers deserted him and joined our side, until a day came when Gandhi sat alone'.[163] Gandhi was shocked that practically all India House members thought India could not be free without violence, a stance which his whole life and ethics conditioned him to oppose.[164] They also believed, as Gandhi had begun to suspect himself, that petition and mendicancy were inherently demeaning and could not be made the basis of the national struggle.[165] Their willingness for self-sacrifice rested now, it seemed, not

[161] James D. Hunt, *Gandhi in London* (New Delhi, 1978), 136–9.

[162] M. K. Gandhi, 'Curzon Wyllie's Assassination', after 16 July 1909, *CWMG*(e), ix, doc. 245; M. K. Gandhi, 'Dhingra Case', 23 July 1909, *CWMG*(e), ix, doc. 252; Gandhi to Hermann Kallenbach (friend, and co-founder, Tolstoy Farm, South Africa), 7 Aug. 1909, *CWMG*(p), xcvi, doc. 15.

[163] Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, iv, 407–8.

[164] Gandhi to Oliver Villiers Russell, second Baron Ampthill (former Governor of Madras), 30 Oct. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 133; Gandhi to Gokhale, 11 Nov. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 151.

[165] *Young India*, 18 May 1921, *CWMG*(e), xxiii, doc. 170.

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on the 'worthless writings' admired by Krishnavarma but on readings of Indian history and literature.[166]

In *Hind Swaraj* (1909), written a few weeks after his meetings with India House, Gandhi engaged directly with such arguments. But, in doing so, he also showed a new appreciation of the nature of the empire that they were fighting. Gandhi argued that Britain held India not by the sword, but through the cultural and mental dependency it had fostered among Indians themselves. He also insisted that this power was not concentrated in the state, but dispersed among 'civilizing' institutions, including Western education, a partisan press and a legal system indifferent to truth.[167] To fight it, Gandhi thought Indians should move the battle to new terrain. Rather than make a frontal attack on coercive power, Indians should refuse subordination in each and every setting in which attempts were made to dominate them. They should, as he put it, 'cease to play the part of the ruled'.[168] Gandhi's *swaraj* (meaning both home rule and self-rule) was thus a direct reply to the 'invisible disciplines' by which the British formed themselves and by which they sought to shape Indian candidates. It involved a personal, experimental search for truth rather than earning one's place through submission to the 'slavery', as Gandhi termed it, of modern English freedom.[169]

Gandhi also firmly rejected London as the locus of this struggle. The Indian masses, untouched by the shaping of British 'civilization', were India's best guides. Under his leadership, Indian nationalist campaigns after 1920 drew back to India itself and to the bilateral conflict between Congress and the Raj.[170]

[166] DCI Reports, 13 and 20 Nov. 1909: NAI, HPB, Dec. 1909, 47; Savarkar, *Samagra Savarakara Vanmaya*, iv, 144–6; M. K. Gandhi, 'Ethics of Passive Resistance', after 8 Oct. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 106; M. K. Gandhi, 'Vijaya Dashami', after 24 Oct. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 124; Gandhi to Henry S. L. Polak (friend and fellow campaigner, South Africa), 29 Oct. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 130; Gandhi to Ampthill, 30 Oct. 1909, *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 133; *M. Asaf Ali's Memoirs: The Emergence of Modern India*, ed. G. N. S. Raghavan (Delhi, 1994), 70.

[167] M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony J. Parel (Cambridge, 1997), 32–3, 58, 103–5, 114; Ronald J. Terchek, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy* (Lanham, 1998), 142–3, 148–9.

[168] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Parel, 114. This edition omits 'the part of', which is present, however, in other editions, including *CWMG*(e), x, doc. 160.

[169] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Parel, 33, 37–8.

[170] Owen, *British Left and India*, 297–8.

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Indeed, what is most striking about the trajectories of almost all those who passed through India House is that they rarely went back to London. The reasons varied, but not the reasoning. Savarkar, who had so successfully exploited the 'liberal' mode of governmentality in London, was returned to the 'police' mode. Rather than the two-year sentence he could have expected in Britain, he was given two life sentences of transportation, with an expected release date of 1960. His prison, indeed, in a final Foucauldian twist, was British India's punitive panopticon: the newly constructed cellular jail on the Andaman Islands.[171] The other senior leaders voluntarily returned to India: Lajpat Rai to renewed police harassment and Pal to a prison cell.[172] The students of India House followed various paths, most of them obscure. Of eighty of those who are mentioned in intelligence records as habitués of India House, probably about sixty had no further association with revolutionary politics after returning to India.[173] Of the rest, about half continued revolutionary work in India, several of them joining Savarkar in the Andamans. A similar number formed a diaspora in various European capitals: first in Paris, Berlin and Geneva, and later in the Ghadr revolutionary movement in Japan and America, and later still in Moscow.[174] Indeed, this evolving, multi-nodal network, centred nowhere unless India itself, might be seen as an attempt to resist the dangerous gravitational pull of the metropole. At any rate, none made Britain a base. The only one to stay was Sukhsagar Datta, who abandoned revolutionary politics for a medical career in Bristol, where he became a pillar of the community.[175] Indian students still went to Britain and remained politically active. But they never again organized in the manner of India House.

[171] Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Story of my Transportation for Life* (Bombay, 1950); Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands* (New Delhi, 2000).

[172] Lajpat Rai to J. Ramsay MacDonald, 9 and 16 Mar. 1911, in *Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, ed. Nanda, iv, 147–50.

[173] James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India, 1907–1917* (Delhi, 1973).

[174] Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'Indian Nationalism and the "World Forces": Transnational and Diasporic Dimensions of the Indian Freedom Movement on the Eve of the First World War', *Jl Global Hist.*, ii (2007).

[175] Rohit Barot, *Bristol and the Indian Independence Movement* (Bristol, 1988).

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V

How, then, should we answer the questions with which I began? First, we should note that the tolerance for refugees identified by Bernard Porter had indeed been conceded to Indians too, even anti-imperialist ones. However, it was not proffered by the state freely, but extracted, sometimes without its knowledge, and often without its approval, as a consequence of existing commitments, some of them intrinsic to imperialism itself. The routes that empire needed to keep open in order to sustain itself were pathways along which anti-imperial ideas and actors could be smuggled, or even travel freely. Furthermore, the logical necessity for this forced tolerance also suggests that the late Edwardian intensification of imperial state surveillance has been misunderstood. That more time and money was spent on such surveillance need not be doubted. But the evidence presented here suggests that resort to it was a sign of weakness, not strength; that it was hard to combine with other seemingly indispensable aspects of having an empire; and that, as a consequence, it was not very successful.

Nonetheless, despite its many legal freedoms, Britain had turned out to be more a stifling than a supportive place. True, only Savarkar had been removed in handcuffs. But the rest had been shaped and directed by power of a softer kind, exercised in multiple and dispersed ways, and only loosely co-ordinated, if at all, by the state. It had worked through a large and diverse group of Britons, including many who were not regarded as wielders of imperial power. Nor had they so recognized themselves, since their actions — the editing of Pal's articles, the return of Tilak's legal brief, the friendly advice of MPs, university tutors and 'friends of India' — were each small ones, and almost always believed to be in the Indians' best interests. The resident Indian community was neither exactly included nor excluded, but conditionally accepted, which made it anxious to prove its value, and, as Pal and Savarkar had both observed, mostly unwilling to risk what it had. In Britain civil liberties were not enforceable rights, but privileges which, for their full value, required endorsement by British intermediaries. Parts of British civil society were prepared to offer such endorsement, but it came at a price: submission to the moulding processes by which the British made themselves. This acceptance was, moreover, always provisional

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and revocable, and the codes under which it was offered reserved final judgement to the British intermediaries. The Indians were therefore not excluded on grounds of race, but were admitted as such.

This in turn suggests the need to supplement accounts of global liberalism to acknowledge how much it could be inflected by the effects of power. In India, as Bayly argues, Indians could 'turn . . . the defence witnesses' by citing Britain's own liberal authorities against the Raj.[176] This could indeed provide a dramatic moment in court proceedings. One such was supplied by Tilak, under trial in India in 1908, as, to the delight of his supporters, he quoted British authorities, including Mill, in defending himself against a charge of sedition.[177] But, literally and metaphorically, the Indians remained plaintiffs in a British court. Litigation — the demand for equal rights as imperial subjects — could, in principle, be considered by such 'courts'. British liberals were even willing to convene them, as Hobson and Murray did in Caxton Hall in 1910. They were prepared to put imperial government on trial, and hear the evidence of the litigants. But the wrong of being (only) a litigant, and not a judge, was not admissible in such a 'court'. When Pal pointed out that the standards British liberals applied were neither Indian, nor universal, but those of 'white humanity', his claim was unintelligible within the idiom of the 'court', and could therefore only be met with incomprehension or embarrassment on the part of the liberals, and a feeling of 'queerness', as he put it himself, on the part of Pal.[178] The value of liberalism, whether in justifying or in criticizing empire, was thus a matter not just of what its complex and meaning-laden texts said, but also of who got to interpret them. It was a matter of textual belonging, as well as meaning. Indians could appeal to liberal principles, but they did not get to define or apply them, and increasingly that was what mattered most.

[176] Bayly, *Recovering Liberties*, 196.

[177] *Full and Authentic Report of the Tilak Trial (1908): Being the Only Authorised Verbatim Account of the Whole Proceedings with Introduction and Character Sketch of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, together with Press Opinion*, ed. N. C. Kelkar (Bombay, 1908).

[178] Pal, 'Speech', 30 June 1910, in Dryhurst (ed.), *Nationalities and Subject Races*, 137–8. For the limitations of such 'courts', see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis, 1988), esp. 9–13, 27.

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Finally, this account invites a reconsideration of anti-colonial strategies. For the Indian radicals, the colonial metropole was not simply a nexus of useful interconnections, as 'junction box' theories have proposed. It was also a troubling place, made so not through coercive policing and surveillance, but through the temptations and shapings that it exerted on those to whom it offered probation. The cultural dislocation of the 'English-returned' had long been a source of anxiety to Indians.[179] But it is evident that even those who had more or less consciously broken with imperialism as a form of government for India experienced strain at the metropole. The wider perspectives that the 'junction box' is supposed to have offered nationalists were not only anti-imperial ones; they were also those of a presumptive and confident liberal imperialism. Even so determined a nationalist as Pal found himself embracing such empire-wide perspectives, though not without some anguish. The friendships that were undoubtedly formed in defiance of imperialism thus had their ambiguities and their counter-examples. When Coldstream appealed to Harnam Singh as a friend of the family and of Punjab, he raised powerful conflicting loyalties. This was perhaps why Har Dayal argued that anti-imperial action required not just making friends, but also 'the suppression of . . . natural filial, fraternal, conjugal and paternal feelings'.[180] The friendship of British allies was also a mixed blessing. The fact that the strongest mode of metropolitan anti-imperialism was self-criticism, of the British by the British, and that this was essential for it to be effective with British audiences, weakened the possibilities of a friendship of equals.

However, this meant that the metropole was also a place for decisions and breaks of trajectory: a critical juncture more than a junction box. Several important crises had, one way or another, been resolved there. For some of the Indian radicals, the freedoms of the metropole had been surrendered in favour of a straight fight with the more obviously coercive state in India. Others had left for international work largely free of the complications of British liberty. Gandhi had departed to imagine an India free not merely of British rule, but of British concepts of freedom. A few had

[179] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi, 1983).

[180] Har Dayal to S. R. Rana (Vice-President, Indian Home Rule Society), 13 June 1910, quoted in E. Jaiwant Paul and Shubh Paul, *Har Dayal: The Great Revolutionary* (New Delhi, 2003), 74.

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stayed, and both they and visitors continued to try and interrupt the circuits of power through transgressive gestures and performances, though usually to little immediate observable effect.[181] As a consequence, the metropole was, in the last decades of imperial rule, strangely quiet, isolated in certain ways from the collapsing empire of which it believed itself the centre. It was thereby deprived of the political convulsions and reassessments that might have been forced by a confrontational anti-imperial challenge at its heart. Instead, Britain formally decolonized with surprisingly little metropolitan reappraisal, the challenges mostly occurring far away, leaving, battered but still standing, the complex mix of attitudes to freedom, difference and government that had sustained empire.

The Queen's College, Oxford *Nicholas Owen*

[181] See Shompa Lahiri, *Indian Mobilities in the West, 1900–1947: Gender, Performance, Embodiment* (Basingstoke, 2010).

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