

Dadabhai Naoroji: India's Representative in Parliament

June of 1917 saw the passing of Dadabhai Naoroji, a patriot and politician fondly known as the 'Grand Old Man' of India. His death was marked with holidays and mourning throughout British India, but as time passed the importance of this man and his work have become overshadowed by others such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas Gandhi. Retrospectively, however, it is possible to look back at what Naoroji accomplished politically, and to see his impact from the early, moderate era of Indian nationalism on the later, more radical era which achieved Indian independence in 1947.

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in 1825 to a family of Parsi priests in Bombay, India.¹ After his education, he became a mathematics professor at a local college, and during this time he became interested in the government of India and the extreme poverty of the majority of the population, which later resulted in his most well-known work, *Poverty and un-British Rule in India* (1901). He viewed the extreme poverty of India as a result of the British reneging on their promise of prosperity and modernization through the colonial system. In *Poverty*, he claims that the dominant issue is the drain of British administrators' pensions on the Indian economy, an idea that he pursued throughout his political career.² These concerns and criticisms led him to become a leader in the emerging, though still moderate, movement of Indian nationalism. In fact, he was voted President of the newly formed Indian National Congress for their second session in 1886. He strongly advocated that the best way to make the Indian voice heard in Britain was to seek a position in the Imperial government and the Congress agreed; Naoroji was selected to represent and advocate for India's interests in Britain as an effective leader and because of his familiarity with the politics of Britain.

Dadabhai Naoroji spent time in England throughout the early period of his career, but from 1885 to 1907 he lived almost exclusively in London and began either joining or creating many groups whose missions were to aid and/or represent Indian interests for those Indians living in Great Britain.³ One of the most influential groups he worked with was the British Committee for the Indian National Congress (BCINC). He also was an advisor and mentor for the small though growing number of Indian students who came to England to study; Gandhi was among the students whom he advised and supported during this period.⁴

Naoroji spent three years in Parliament; he won the 1892 election and then losing in his 1895 attempt to keep his seat in the London borough of Central Finsbury. His connections,

¹ Bombay is now called Mumbai in modern India. Parsi is a religion of India, though their population is much smaller than that of the Muslim and Hindu populations; ethnically they are not originally from India but instead migrated to the country from Persia and Turkey. The modern spelling of the religion is usually Parsi; out-dated variations include Parsee.

² These pensions were seen as a 'drain' because the administrators who received them were all British, and once their time in India working was over, they would return to Britain with all of their money. In this way, the money that was dispersed to pay for the wages was never circulated back into the Indian market.

³ Jonathon Schneer, *London 1900*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 185.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

through friends such as Sir William Wedderburn, a Scottish MP, and William Digby, secretary to the National Liberal Club, aided him in joining the party and selecting constituencies that were open for a liberal candidate. Central Finsbury was one such open seat, and there was the hope that the members of this urban community would be liberal-minded enough to elect an Indian to Parliament.

The road to Parliament was long and complicated, and ultimately ineffective in its direct impact on the nationalist movement. That is not to say that it is not worth considering as a moment of historical importance. In many ways, his failure to advance the interests of India defined the generation to follow. The tenure of Dadabhai Naoroji, as the first Indian member in the Imperial Parliament, demonstrates the successes and pitfalls of Indian attempts at reform through a political process. His mission to change British rule in India for the better through constitutional agitation represents a turning point for the Indian nationalists, as the Parliamentary election itself exemplifies the type of problems that would hinder the moderate nationalist movement as a whole. In the years after, there was a shift from moderate demands of political agitation within the British governing system to a more confrontational policy partly as a result of the issues thrown into relief by Naoroji's full Parliamentary experience.

The works of Munni Rawal, R.P. Masani, Shompa Lahiri and Antoinette Burton are useful in understanding the desire by the colonial Indian to become or at least emulate British culture and politics. Even a disappointing or negative experience in England seemed not to diminish their fascination with Britannia and their hope that political campaigning could create a better situation for all involved. Through this trend in the small class of Anglicized Indians, the development of the ideologies of the moderate era in Indian nationalistic politics can be divined; the 'Britishness' of the men involved led to a very conciliatory policy through which they hoped the British system could be manipulated to achieve desired reforms.

In Munni Rawal's biography, *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Prophet of Indian Nationalism (1855-1900)*, there is little scholarly analysis though it is clear that Rawal felt the need to illuminate the life of an often overshadowed figure in the Indian nationalist movement. The biography celebrates the achievements of the man, which were considerable, but makes little effort to place them in a larger context or to analyze how these affected later nationalist movements. This is the main weakness of the biography, as it puts out a positivist view of history that would be challenged in the next decades by modern socio-cultural historians. Rawal, however, is most careful of his explanation of how Naoroji had to defend his choice to run for Parliament for both the Indian and the British public.⁵ The legitimacy of this decision and the result are still questioned, perhaps, and Rawal must work to justify his belief that Naoroji had a great effect on politics with his work during this period.

R.P. Masani offers two books on the subject, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* and *Builders of Modern India: Dadabhai Naoroji*, the first of which is a biography much in the same vein as Rawal, while the latter focuses more on the political roles that Dadabhai Naoroji played during his lifetime. Masani does not extol any critiques of the methods used by Naoroji, though it is little expected in the context of the biography. He does say, however, that Naoroji may have 'mattered' more in Parliament than he may have under normal circumstances because the Gladstonians only had a majority of forty *with* the Irish Nationalists when he was elected in 1892, and so every vote counted for the ruling party.⁶ This is one of the few instances

⁵ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Prophet of Indian Nationalism (1855-1900)* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1989) 40-41.

⁶ R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man on India* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1968), 107.

where Masani comments on how Naoroji's political maneuverings functioned in the larger context of Parliament. Because of the lack of literature on this subject, however, these rare bits of insight are welcome. Masani also does a fine job of presenting the reader with the words of the man and giving them context and meaning which one would lack in a printed collection, including one interview where he acknowledges that not all Indians are or will be as moderate in their aims as he is:

Do not misunderstand me, there is an immense gratitude in India to England. The present generation feels the benefit it has derived from education... But succeeding generations will not feel that. However improved the conditions in which they find themselves, they will demand more, and if they do not get it, they will rebel.⁷

Also included in this book is an appendix featuring a selection of Naoroji's vast correspondence. These letters, as well as examples such as the excerpt of the interview above, are useful in creating a historical understanding independent from Masani's text, and more in line with the historiographical understanding of the modern historian. Naoroji is obviously aware of his conciliatory attitude towards the British, though Masani does not explore exactly what this meant for the nationalist movement in his text since he focuses exclusively on the work of Naoroji alone.

Masani's second book on Naoroji is part of a series published by the Indian government on men who shaped modern India. The focus lies on his political work, especially his three tenures as President of the Indian National Congress.⁸ His influence is present in the early nationalist movement, and his attitude of indebtedness to the British was shared by the other (often British educated) men who made up the leading class of India. Naoroji's position as a father figure to the Indian Nationalist movement is clear in this book, and his willingness to take the brave step of running for Parliament is celebrated in India as a move requiring remarkable intelligence and bravery. In hindsight, it is clear that this step did not make the sort of momentous leap forward in Indian politics as the results-minded Rawal and Masani would lead us to believe; as in any struggle there are moments when the effectiveness of a strategy must be reconsidered, which is what eventually happened to the conciliatory policy promoted by Naoroji.

It is not as though Naoroji's policies were wholly flawed, for the Irish were trying a similar route towards independence during this period. This is one point which seems evident but is not really explored by Rawal or Masani; they make it appear that Naoroji came into Parliament and supported the Irish Home Rulers for obvious reasons, but in truth Naoroji and many of the other early Indian Nationalists took their entire *modus operandi* from the Irish Nationalists. They were in similar positions in many ways, and so it is logical that the Indians would learn from the experiences of those who were already involved in a similar sort of endeavor.⁹ Missing here, however, are the reasons why these methods for home rule ultimately failed, though this oversight is understandable given that Rawal and Masani know that India won

⁷ Ibid., 120.

⁸ R.P. Masani, *Builders of Modern India: Dadabhai Naoroji* (Delhi: Government of India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1960).

⁹ Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998). 68-69.

its independence eventually, and they are principally interested in explaining, in a rather celebratory way, why Naoroji was so key to making this happen.

Learning to be like the British was a game of sorts to many of the Indians who traveled to London, as they came to the understanding that the best way to change the system could be from within. Shompa Lahiri, in her book *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian encounters, race and identity, 1880-1930*, nicely demonstrates the paradoxical relationship between the visiting colonial and their colonizers, where there was a fascination and adoration, but also an earnest desire for change:

Dadabhai Naoroji's speech entitled 'England's duties to India', list[ed] the benefits of British rule in 1867... 'law and order', 'university education', 'material progress', 'social elevation', and, above all, political freedom. To early liberal nationalists such as Naoroji and the other founding fathers of the Indian National Congress, who had all met in England, the West and particularly Britain was India's 'significant other'. Although British rule was often the subject of criticism, nevertheless it was Britain that provided the yardstick by which to measure India's achievements and aspirations.¹⁰

This conveys the process by which early nationalists could create a moderate political policy in their quest for a type of rule that was more 'fair.' If the future leaders of India were being molded into Englishmen as an obligatory part of their ascension, then they would inevitably become the middlemen who translated and transmitted British rule, culture and society for the rest of India.

Lahiri's discussion is very narrow in its focus, however, as it mainly looks upon the lives of the Indian student population in Britain, many of whom Naoroji would have known. While they make up a large number of those in Britain during this era, there were many others who shifted in and out of the imperial center, especially London. This is where Antoinette Burton's book fits in, proving useful to explore the various experiences of other Indians in Britain, including politicians, tourists, *ayahs*,¹¹ and even settlers. *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* explores the arduous journey that it was to go between England and India, physically as well as figuratively, and what kind of reactions that experience engendered.¹² These discussions are useful in understanding the attitude and work of Naoroji, as he spent much of his time in England serving on various committees working toward Indian interests both in India and abroad.¹³

¹⁰ Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, race and identity, 1880-1930*. (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 35.

¹¹ An *ayah* is an Indian woman hired as a nanny to British children; they often traveled back and forth between the two countries many times during their various jobs.

¹² Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain*

¹³ Another issue that often enters into political discussions by Indians in this period is the treatment of Indians who lived in South Africa. Though there were many of Naoroji's contemporaries who joined into this discussion, this issue was not one on which he spent any time during his time as a Member for Parliament. This does not mean there was silence on the subject; in September of 1895, Naoroji wrote to the *Times* to mention the make-up of a committee that had brought evidence concerning "the grievances of the British Indian subjects in South Africa..." What is perhaps more in important in this expert is the list of members he provides: "[the deputation] consisted of four Hindus...two Mohamedans...and two Parsis..."; the point Naoroji is making here, and which he would continue to attempt to make, was that despite British beliefs to the contrary, the diverse peoples of India could work together. *Times* (of London), "Letter to the Editor," *Times Digital Archive*, 2 September 1895.

In the section "The Voyage In," Indians coming to Britain are conveyed as seeking out an ideal, and what they found was, naturally, often very different than what they expected. This however spurred them on to complete an English education or to promote reform to make British rule in India live up to the preconceived standard of 'Britishness' that these Indians held. This explanation of the paradox of early Indian nationalism is proposed by several of the historians, though done especially well by Burton. This is essentially because she covers such a wide variety of peoples, especially in the first section of her book. The memoirs of Indian travelers and the reactions recorded in papers, both Indian and English, serve to give a wide range of voices through which one can ascertain the struggles and education that came with being in England itself. Burton is clear in her understanding that there were many different peoples in India, and their experiences varied according to their backgrounds. For the Hindu, a traditional taboo on travel of this kind made a significant impact on their numbers and experiences in Britain and upon their return. The Parsis, another religious group of which Naoroji was a part, often called the 'Jews of India,' were usually members of a merchant class that had strong connections with the British as 'middle men' and part of the imperial trade network. The Parsis came to India from modern-day Turkey, and are thus ethnically different and often lighter skinned, a fact that becomes important in later British debates of Indian racial divisions.¹⁴

The next couple sections of the book do focus upon specific groups, including women training to be doctors and male travelers. The section on the male traveler, "A Pilgrim Reformer," gives an interesting glimpse into the Indian eye on nineteenth century London life through the travel diary of Behramji Malabari, a Parsi man visiting the imperial capital. One of his key experiences is that of his meeting with a few women on the street, who examined his person and proceeded to request a picture of or with him.¹⁵ This example provides ample opportunity to reflect upon the fact that the Indian traveling in Britain was perfectly conscious of the imperial gaze placed upon him. There was a realization with Malabari that these British women wanted to make him into an object, a possession, just as they had so many other things during the imperial project. He does not want to become an object, but wants to instead be a participant in the project. Burton uses this account to explore the feminizing of the native man, and the stereotypes that had to be confronted upon entering the foreign territory of London. The educated Indian in London is consequently presented by Burton as an individual capable of acknowledging the symbolic complex built up around him by his captivated colonizers, and that he could actively work to subvert that. For him, it was the reluctance to become what he knew his colonizers wanted him to be; in this instance it was pressure to become both an object and an effeminized colonial male. These tendencies by the British, so often used in their justification for their rule, are thus seen by Burton as fully recognizable to the colonial Indian traveling in Britain.

Antoinette Burton deviates from this social and cultural aspect to look at these themes as they were effected by politics in her article "Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's 'Black man' and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy."¹⁶ Here, the imperial culture of race and politics intersects over an incident just before Dadabhai Naoroji's second attempt to earn a seat in Parliament, a feat he would achieve shortly after this episode. The insight gained from the books presented above about the nature of the relationship between Indian and British men connect

¹⁴ Burton, 68-69.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

¹⁶ Antoinette Burton, "Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's 'Black Man' and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (2000).

with this article, which uses this episode as an example to explain the nature of imperial tension in the late-Victorian era. Lord Salisbury, the Tory Prime Minister at the time of Naoroji's first electoral attempt, commented during a speech, that he "doubt[ed] if we have yet to go to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man."¹⁷ The underlying premise of the essay is that much of the public support Naoroji thereafter obtained came out of the reactions against this comment by Lord Salisbury, as recorded in letters and articles of numerous British newspapers. Thus, the election of Naoroji could be read as not so much a vote for the Indian, but a vote against the conservatives by a public that was willing to be *that* Liberal if it meant not being a Tory (read: aristocrat). The furor over the comment developed into a matter of class and racial interests, instead of over the simple phenomenon of an Indian running for a seat in the British Parliament. Burton uses several political cartoons to her advantage here, showing that the British were willing to distinguish between types of Indians (here, Naoroji, as a Parsi, is far lighter skinned than many of his Indian counterparts), and that part of this reaction was a function of the protective, "chivalric" response of the British for the feminized native male.¹⁸ Clearly this all functions in accordance to the social and cultural histories that explain the moderate phase of Indian nationalism as a direct function of the Anglicization of the contemporary group of Indian leaders who were working in late-Victorian England.

An important analysis of the nature of 'moderate nationalism' during the period in which Dadabhai Naoroji was active is offered by Sanjay Seth in his article "Rewriting Histories of Nationalism: The Politics of 'Moderate Nationalism' in India, 1870-1905." Seth argues, in part, that nationalisms in their various degrees cannot be divorced from their contexts, which is important to keep in mind when dealing with the earlier Indian Nationalists. Though it may seem to some that Naoroji and others in his camp were 'selling out' to the British in the way they pursued political reforms, Seth argues that their British education and ingrained sense of British superiority would have inevitably led them to develop just this sort of moderate policy. Naoroji, in particular, was most interested in improving the state of India's economy, which had been 'drained' by England. Clearly this is the whole point of the colonial system from the British perspective, but the suffering of his own people led Naoroji to seek to overcome the economic injustices, and to make British rule live up to its ideals of Britishness: benevolence, freedom and modernization.¹⁹ The surest way to be able to emulate these positive characteristics was through education, "Because education transformed people and not only institutions, and because its reach was very limited rather than universal..."; thus, it was through education that a new class of leaders would be formed, and could lead the mass of India to a better future.²⁰

Though this is not to be expected of the later books and articles on the Indian experience in late-Victorian Britain, it is surprising that the biographies mentioned earlier often skim over the parliamentary career of Dadabhai Naoroji's life. Much more emphasis is placed on his book, *Poverty and un-British Rule in India*, and on his tenures as President of Indian National Congress. If the session in Parliament is discussed, it is primarily the incident where Salisbury made the 'black man' comment, or, more rarely, the Royal commission committee on which he served. He ran for Parliament three times, but only won once, a fact that is perhaps exaggerated

¹⁷ Ibid., 633.

¹⁸ Burton, "Tongues Untied," 640-642.

¹⁹ Sanjay Seth, "Rewriting Histories of Nationalism: The Politics of 'Moderate Nationalism' in India, 1870-1905" *The American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 105-106.

²⁰ Ibid., 113.

to mask the other two failures. He was thoroughly Anglicized, but then so were the other men and women from India who had gone through a similar experience.

The theory that this Anglicization immediately affected Nationalist policy has been clearly demonstrated. It is perhaps this apparent Anglicization and the fact that service in Parliament was in essence service to the British that has caused biographers to overlook the period in favor of his work in India. Given the eventual triumph of more radical figures such as Gandhi or Tilak, they would be loath to emphasize the actions that ultimately undermined the moderate nationalist policy. In the wave of nationalist fervor experienced after independence, the Indian scholars might view all nationalist work as teleologically leading to independence, without regard for the intrinsic flaws and/or failings of earlier policies that become evident through the works of scholars such as Burton, Seth and Hunt.

Naoroji's politics were more about expectations than reality, which is clearly evident in the designs set out during his long years of political work, as well as the work of his followers. The problem is, as said above, that none of these texts adequately cover the years he actually sat in Parliament (1892-1895) or aid our understanding of what he did or could have done during his tenure, or use this example to apply the theories on moderate Indian nationalism to a historical example. This period therefore warrants a closer look, to determine what sort of impact Naoroji's election and tenure in Parliament actually had upon colonial action and legislation in the period, as well as upon Indian nationalism generally.

Naoroji moved to England semi-permanently in 1885 to pursue a seat in Parliament. He was entering into a complex world; the British government in the late nineteenth century was an institution in flux, and a series of measures throughout the century had radically changed the nature of the House of Commons. The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884-5 had extended suffrage to nearly all males, eliminated rotten boroughs and redistributed the representative districts and their numbers of Members for Parliament (hereafter, MP).²¹ The rotten boroughs were a particular problem; the term refers to a borough which at one time sustained a population high enough to garner the granting of enfranchisement, but had, since its creation, declined in population and consequently fallen into perpetual corruption. The most common way a rotten borough was created was that it had been formed in the Middle Ages but by the late 19th century only had a small population left in it. Thus the British government became more democratic than it had ever been, and the hope was that these reforms would also reduce corruption in the electoral process. Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 1887, marking 50 years on the throne and a reemergence into public life since the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861. The government, however, largely worked without the monarch during this time and the power of Parliament and the Empire expanded in tandem significantly.

The late-Victorian era produced a profound increase in the size and power of the British Empire, though it had not yet reached its fullest extent. But with the expansion came a greater number of unwieldy problems. As British education and social reforms began to seep slowly into colonial societies, some colonials began demanding change. This shift in the attitudes of the colonized towards their colonizers marked the beginning of the end for the British Empire in many ways. In Ireland, arguably England's first colony, the debate over Home Rule was ever-present in the Imperial Parliament of the late nineteenth century and resulted in a division of the Liberal Party, when the Liberal Unionists (those who considered themselves Liberals but did not support Irish Home Rule) broke away and joined the Tories (the Conservatives) to bring in Lord

²¹ James B. Conacher, ed. *The Emergence of British Parliamentary Democracy in the Nineteenth Century: The Passing of the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884-5*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971).

Salisbury as Prime Minister to replace Liberal leader William Gladstone in 1886.²² Irish Home Rule remained an extremely important and contentious issue in the government, though the strength of the Liberal party was waning during this period, especially once Salisbury formed his Tory government. The ongoing issue of Irish Home Rule is useful in recognizing where the germ of the idea for political campaigning originated for the Indian National Congress; the Irish had been attempting for years to reform policy in Ireland through a direct appeal to the Imperial Parliament.

This was also a moment of change for India, as the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, joining together a diverse group of educated Indians to monitor the problems in India and create a voice for Indians who served in the vast civil service of India's government.²³ As mentioned earlier, Dadabhai Naoroji sat as the elected President of the Indian National Congress three times, in 1886, 1893 and 1906. Through his work in India during the time before, as well as after, he lived in England, he became an influential leader in an era of moderate policies pursued by Indian nationalists. It was nevertheless evident to the Congress that the most direct way of changing India for the better would be to send a native Indian to run for a seat in Parliament. The idea had been brought before the Bombay Presidency Association before, but almost as soon as the INC was created, they began considering whether it would be in their interest to attempt to gain a seat in Parliament.²⁴ The emerging educated middle-class Indian public sought changes that would make British rule live up to the ideals that they had been taught; in other words, they wanted India to become the grand and enlightened country it, in their view, should have become under British rule and modernization. Naoroji was chosen and first ran for Parliament in the London suburb of Holburn in 1886 before returning for another attempt, one that would see him succeed in becoming the first Indian Member of Parliament and is the primary concern of this paper.²⁵ Upon hearing of his victory in his second attempt in Central Finsbury, the British Committee for the Indian National Congress and INC both expressed their excitement at the prospect of someone advocating within Britain for their concerns, with the INC passing a resolution that commended Naoroji for his "services" while expressing their "unshaking confidence in him" as "India's representative" in the House of Commons.²⁶

Dadabhai Naoroji thus returned to England after the INC session with the expressed intention of once again running for a position as Member of Parliament. He moved into the North London neighborhood of Finsbury about four years before the election, working to fulfill the residency requirement to run.²⁷ His decision was supported by politicians in India as well as

²² Jonathon Parry. *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 318. The group of Liberals who remained supportive of Irish Home Rule were sometimes referred to as 'Gladstonians.'

²³ P.J. Marshall, ed. *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 71.

²⁴ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji*.

²⁵ As in the example of Central Finsbury, it is logical to assume that Holburn was chosen with the help of the Liberal Party as a constituency that Naoroji was likely to find some success in. Issues to consider for the Liberals would have included how liberal the atmosphere of the area was, and that the seat was not already being taken by an existing Liberal candidate.

²⁶ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, pg. 57, footnotes 11-14.

²⁷ The Reform Acts of the decades preceding this time opened up voting to nearly all males in England. As a rent paying resident of the constituency, Naoroji seems to be fulfilling any requirement needed for enfranchisement and for running for Parliament. Not all people agreed that he should be allowed to run; an Evelyn Cecil wrote to the *Times* in response to the election of Naoroji that "Mr. Naoroji, is duly elected – a point upon which I do not venture to express an opinion (sec 31 and 32 Vict., c. 125, s. 11, subss. 13, 15, 16, and s. 14, and s. 41 of the Act of

in England, and they in turn aided him in acquiring the necessary contacts that would enable him to find success in the 1892 election. He was initially assured that the Liberal Party was in full support of his electoral pursuits, and led to a constituency which was currently conservative and needed a liberal opponent. This, however, was not entirely the case. As Naoroji soon found out, the Liberal Party had yet to confirm officially his candidacy for Central Finsbury upon his return to England in 1889 after the Congress session. Through his correspondence with William Digby, secretary for the National Liberal Club, Naoroji expressed the fears and frustrations that would develop into a three-year ordeal to gain official candidate status in the eyes of the party; this correspondence represented not only the underlying attitudes of the British involved but also the audacity and savvy political disposition of Naoroji himself.

Beginning in June 1889, Naoroji wrote to Digby concerning Indian recruitment for the Indian Civil Service, but by August his problems with the Liberal Party overtook these earlier concerns. Writing from the National Liberal Club in London, Naoroji makes his first complaint about the vacillations of the Party. After a comment about his candidacy in the press, the founder and President of the National Liberal Association, Francis Schnadhorst,²⁸ wrote to Digby that “although a Parsee is much handicapped in an English constituency, Naoroji is...the best man...Naoroji will become liked the better he is known.”²⁹ This underlined an obvious difficulty; though some men may have believed that, Indian or not, Naoroji was the best man for the job, the key problem was creating a situation in which the voting public would be able to overcome their prejudices as colonizers and white Europeans to vote for a native colonial. This problem alone served as a major distraction to the work Naoroji was trying to do and to his serious intentions in his campaign; it was inherent to the process of being the first Indian to run for Parliament that the issue of never being able to escape the racial, religious and imperial labels that would be placed upon him would be a hindrance throughout the electoral process.

This problem of racial prejudice and stereotype was only aggravated, as Naoroji clearly felt, by the Liberal Party’s irresolution on his official position. He knew enough about politics and his own unique position as an Indian to realize that full, official support from the party would be a key element of being accepted as a viable candidate by the British public. Schnadhorst wrote to Naoroji that “You have been fairly selected and it is my duty to support you. I will do anything I can.”³⁰ That this promise remained unfulfilled became quite clear as

1883)...” Obviously he was venturing an opinion here; the case for his not being allowed to run and serve was obviously not very strong, or much more would have been made of the illegality of the election by his political enemies. I would venture to guess that since there were so few minorities in England at this time the laws did not explicitly restrict them from voting, just as this sort of oversight allowed widows to vote in certain times in English history. An educational article online (<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PR1883.htm>) entitled “1883 Reform Act” states that the Act Cecil is referring to is one of eliminating corrupt practices via candidates use of wealth to gain seats, and thus has nothing to do with race in any case. However, a quote from Naoroji in another book alludes to another Act of 1883 which seems to have concerned the equality of Indians with the British, which the author Munni Rawal says “did not come into force in true spirit.” So, Cecil is likely referencing the accusations that Naoroji used bribery and secret funds from India to conduct his campaign (a featured argument against Naoroji in the Scrutiny case), and not to his race as a disqualification for office.

²⁸ This should not be confused with Schnadhorst being leader of the Liberal Party as a whole; he was merely leader of the Association that bound together all the various Liberal Clubs throughout the country. The National Liberal Club, in turn, is based in the capital.

²⁹ William Digby Correspondence, (In the Asian and African Studies Collection, British Library, St. Pancras), 11 August 1889.

³⁰ Digby Correspondence, 18 August 1888. Presumably by ‘fairly selected’ Schnadhorst means to say that Naoroji was approved by the Party and did nothing against the law to become a candidate for Central Finsbury (which is important, since Naoroji would face many accusations of corrupt practices throughout the election).

1891 passed and 1892, the election year, began without Naoroji having any clarification on his formal position. On April 22, he wrote to Digby that “Mr. Schnadhorst does not reply yet. One word from him may enable me to stop all the mischief in the Club and yet he allows all this unnecessary harm to the cause. I do wonder whether they want the result to be against the Liberal cause.”³¹ This is an important note because the Liberals were trying vigorously to rebound from their defeat in 1886. For the most part, however, Naoroji focused on his own problems, instead of worrying about the party as a whole; on 20 May, 1891, Naoroji wrote to Digby “I see that this delay by Mr. Schnadhorst is likely to do me much harm...and I shall have my difficulty largely increased”³² This letter was followed by two others on 23 and 25 May that reveal the continuing frustration at the Liberal Party and Schnadhorst’s apparent hypocrisy. Naoroji was very aware of this situation and knew that, however great a man the people of India thought him, he would have to earn his votes without the benefit of an established reputation and, for much of the process, official party endorsement, all the while battling prejudices and stereotypes.

At the beginning of 1892, the problem remained. Naoroji wrote to Florence Nightingale in early March, responding to some queries from her that obviously related to the election:

About my candidature...I have got the enclosed pamphlet ready for the Electors at Central Finsbury and the Public. But Lord Ripon³³ has [involved] himself in the matter, and I have to wait until I received final news of it from him...if it is satisfactory, there will be no need for issuing this pamphlet. It will give you some idea, though not fully of the...worry...If you can in any way help...I have an idea they [the Indian public] are all most anxious about the result of my efforts.³⁴

This letter conveys well the determination of Naoroji to overcome the difficulties of his position and come out victorious in this attempt to gain a seat in the House, which included finding supporters who could lobby on his behalf to prominent men in the government and Empire. However, in the case of this problem between Naoroji and the party, it seems that his ally Lord Ripon could do little to persuade the Party (or Schnadhorst), for the pamphlet that is alluded to in the letter to Mrs. Nightingale was soon distributed. “Mr. Naoroji and Mr. Schnadhorst” was published sometime after this letter was written. It gave Naoroji a voice to the wider public, and demonstrated not only his unfair treatment by the Liberals, but his own intelligence and political savoir-faire.

The pamphlet begins with a quotation from the letter of support written by Francis Schnadhorst to Digby which Naoroji had cited earlier noting Schnadhorst’s belief that Naoroji would be liked eventually. Naoroji goes on to explain the extent of the situation, mentioning how this indecision must be injurious to the Liberal cause. Naoroji’s accounts of his conversations with Schnadhorst are fascinating, and it is easy to see why Naoroji and his allies

³¹ Digby Correspondence, 22 April 1891. The mischief Naoroji refers to is obviously all the bad press coming out of this problem with the Liberal Party not officially endorsing him as a candidate, and the resulting negative reactions of his peers within the Club and the Party.

³² Digby Correspondence, 20 May 1891.

³³ Lord Ripon, also known as George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquis of Ripon, was Viceroy of India and Secretary of State for the Colonies among other positions during his life. He was a Liberal and supported Naoroji throughout his political efforts.

³⁴ Florence Nightingale Correspondence, (In the Manuscripts Collection, British Library, St. Pancras), 15 March 1892.

become confused as Schnadhorst fluctuated the tone and message with every letter. Schnadhorst would at one meeting pledge to support him, then almost seem to push him away, while all the time warning that if Naoroji did back out "I [Naoroji] would be not in the slightest degree worthy of my opponents, that I had no backbone to fight for my rights or that I had not any sense of honour towards those who had so staunchly and loyally supported me..."³⁵ Naoroji responds to this confusion by commenting

I cannot understand how a gentleman [Schnadhorst] entrusted with such tremendous powers, and with the organization, preservation and union of a great political party – the party of truth and justice – should ever think that he could make pledges and then break them at his own will without doing serious harm to the party.³⁶

Perhaps this thought could be seen as naiveté on the part of Naoroji, but he knows that this sort of action, where it involves others in the government (here, Digby), could be used against Schnadhorst to the advantage of his own political goals. Digby was also conscious of the wrongs that Schnadhorst was committing against Naoroji, and could therefore support him.

Also noteworthy is Naoroji's small compliment to the party, dashed-off in the middle of a tirade against the injustices of Schnadhorst. This sort of maneuver would reappear numerous times as the election and his tenure in Parliament would wear on; with each criticism by Naoroji would come a balancing statement about the greatness of the government, Britain or the Empire. He understood the precariousness of his situation, and that subtle attacks upon the government or the Empire could do much to further his own political ambitions.

There is thus a subtle threat emanating from his efforts. Naoroji bluntly states "I hope the party organizers will desist from their suicidal opposition to me, and fulfill the pledges given to me with honour" and then he continues on to say that he has had his share of difficulties in Indian politics and was not afraid to take on the task of defending his rights.³⁷ To end, he includes the Resolution passed in the Indian National Congress in support of his candidature that includes their thanks for the British who aided him.³⁸ In this way, he not only alludes to the people within British politics and high society who were behind his election, but he also appeals to the authority of the millions of people in India who were supporting his appointment, thereby hinting at the displeasure that could come with their knowledge of how the Liberal party had treated Naoroji. This threat of undermining the good faith the educated Indian public had in the abilities of the British to rule India was a serious one, as was any hint of dissent after the Indian Rebellion of 1857.³⁹

³⁵ "Mr. Naoroji and Mr. Schnadhorst" from *Tracts 1892-1893*, (In the Asian and African Studies Collection, British Library, St. Pancras), 10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁷ "Mr. Naoroji and Mr. Schnadhorst" from *Tracts 1892-1893*, (In the Asian and African Studies Collection, British Library, St. Pancras), 15.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁹ The 1857 Rebellion, or Mutiny as the British would call it, was sparked off within an army of Indian soldiers in the northern parts of the colony. A rumor of animal fat being used to grease the gun cartridges spread amongst the Indian soldiers, causing a furor since both Hindus and Muslims have dietary restrictions that could be threatened by said animal fat. Violence and upheavals by the soldiers and unhappy civilians ensued and though the British eventually restored order, the event created a significant paranoia that such an event may happen again.

Meanwhile, Naoroji worked to build a support base for his election both inside and outside of his chosen constituency of Central Finsbury in order to, as Schnadhorst suggested, become “more known.” One of the most interesting support groups he acquired during his campaign was that of British suffragettes. Women at this time were seen as politically impotent in a similar manner to how most politicians viewed colonial natives. They could not vote, but they nevertheless voiced their opinions and put support – social and economic – behind politicians who voiced the concerns of this officially politically silent group. The link between the colonial male and the British female has been studied before, as the political and social positions of these two groups in relation to the enfranchised British male were similar.⁴⁰ The women who supported Naoroji’s campaign undoubtedly saw themselves as supporting another group who sought enfranchisement within the British political system. The women whose names show up in the letters and other materials are those of women intent on reform: Rosalind Howard, Countess Carlisle, wife of a Liberal MP and prominent reformer and suffragette; Countess Alice Kearney, another early suffragette; and Florence Nightingale, the famous British nurse and creator of the Red Cross. In their support of Naoroji, they were able to simultaneously support the Liberal party, who supported many of the issues with which they were concerned, and a Native male who was in many ways in a similar position politically and socially (though not culturally) within the Empire.

Many of his women supporters were publicly active in their support of his election. Countess Carlisle and Countess Alice Kearney spoke at a rally for his election held in early July 1892.⁴¹ The London Correspondent for *The Bombay Gazette* commented on these women supporters, saying “Mr. Dadabhai’s friends are working most energetically; and as his friends include a goodly number of the fair sex, the ‘sirens of the Primrose League’ have not [had] it all their own way in Central Finsbury as they have in some other parts of the metropolis.”⁴² Lady Carlisle was especially radical, though she criticized the more militant suffragettes in their illegal activities; it seems therefore that she would have respected Naoroji’s desire to push for reform in entirely political and rational manner.⁴³ These women would have also sympathized with the problem of being ‘different’ while trying to work in Victorian politics; no matter the tactics the primary concern of those both supporting and opposing them would be the obvious fact of their being female, just as Naoroji was continually seen first and foremost as an Indian.

In order to attract these supporters, Naoroji had purposely decided early which policies he would support. As a professor of mathematics and author of many economic treatises about India, his main concerns were those of fair labor laws and support of the poor.⁴⁴ In choosing

⁴⁰ Antoinette Burton, “Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian Travellers in Fin-de-Siècle London,” *History Workshop Journal* 42 (1996), 127-146. The native male was often effeminized, thereby justifying and legitimizing the ‘protection’ of the British on the behalf of their colonial populations.

⁴¹ “Election Report,” *The Daily Chronicle*. (Microfilm Edition, The British Library, Colindale), July/August 1892.

⁴² *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament: A Collection of the Main Incidents Relating to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament*. (Madras: Addison and Co., 1892), 116. The Primrose League was a group committed to supporting the Conservative cause.

⁴³ Charles Roberts, *The Radical Countess*, (Carlisle: Steel Brothers Limited, 1962), 122. Lady Carlisle said of the illegal activities of some suffragettes that “...it is we, the law-abiding, patient, constitutional all-round reforming women, who are winning the day, and the impatient, lawless, scolding women; with hate in their hearts are only setting our cause back.” (as quoted in *The Radical Countess*; there are no footnotes in the book so it is unknown where the quote came from originally).

⁴⁴ Despite the fact that several important suffragettes supported Dadabhai Naoroji during his campaign, women’s rights were not a concern he promoted. Mohandas Gandhi would later examine the suffragette movement in England, and take from them examples of non-violent protest.

between joining the Liberal or Tory parties, it would seem that the Liberal Party was an obvious choice for an Indian regardless of specific political doctrine, though this assumption is discounted by the fact that only a few years later, in 1895, another Indian gained a seat in Parliament, this time as a Tory.⁴⁵ In any case, Dadabhai Naoroji entered the British political world as a Liberal, and chose to side with the 'Gladstonian' Liberals as he also supported Irish Home Rule in addition to issues of reform on currency, trade and labor laws in Britain.

Paradoxically, his support of Irish Home Rule did not extend to support of Indian Home Rule, though his expressed opinion on this matter shifts throughout his time in Parliament. He often would speak in public and in interviews in a veiled and/or contradictory manner. In an interview for *Pearson's Weekly*, when asked about Indian Home Rule, he replied "Home Rule is scarcely the word, for we [the Indian National Congress] don't ask for anything in the least like what the Irish want"⁴⁶ Naoroji, at this point in his political career, was careful to insist that though both the Indians and the Irish were pursuing change through political means, the Indians were not seeking to end British rule in India. He continues in the interview by suggesting that he is willing to start slowly, emphasizing the fact that a reform of the Civil Service, with which he was particularly concerned, would create a great deal of change in India itself. When pressed about removing British rule in India, the exchange took a different tone:

(Naoroji) ...we know we cannot get on without [British Rule]. You have done away with the old despotic governments of India and have taken their place yourselves. If your government were withdrawn, anarchy would undoubtedly result...

(Interviewer): "Do you think India is better off under England than she would be under Russia?"

(Naoroji): "The British Rule in India is an Oriental despotism, and a very oppressive one...But if you satisfy the aspirations of the Indians, you will find them the most valuable allies against Russia...A timely concession, and justice, and fair play, will make the Indians your friends and your allies, but if we have to wait until we can extort our rights, you must not expect gratitude from us."⁴⁷

This interview sways from conciliatory to aggressive in a short time; Naoroji displays some considerable amount of skill here in emphasizing his support of British rule in India while making sure that the grievances of Indians are expressed. It was a precarious situation to say the least; Naoroji was in a way undermining his own point, since the creation of an Indian representative body and his own initiative to run for Parliament show that it could be possible for the natives to take control of their country much sooner than Naoroji suggests. Though he does not claim this right at present, it is clear that the aspirations of the Indians would soon become an issue in British political life.

Naoroji makes many similarly ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory, statements during his campaign. Many of these concern his status as the first Indian to run for Parliament;

⁴⁵ Antoinette Burton, "Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's 'Black Man' and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (2000), 661. Sir Mancherjee Bhownagge won a seat as a conservative (Tory) in 1895, just as Naoroji was leaving Parliament. He was not admired in India.

⁴⁶ Interview, from "An Open Letter to Queen Victoria" in *Political Tracts 1855-1894*. (In the Asian and African Studies collection in the British Library, St. Pancras), 23.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

The most obvious issue in the election was, of course, race. Nineteenth century racial theory, predominately Social Darwinism, would have prescribed Naoroji and his fellow Indians to a low racial ranking. The most infamous example of this during the campaign of Dadabhai Naoroji was the comment made by Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, in reaction to Naoroji's loss in his attempt at Holburn in 1886. Salisbury said that he saw no foreseeable future in which a 'black man' would be elected to Parliament. Most historians believe that this comment, and the public backlash against it, was a large reason why Naoroji was able to win in the 1892 election in Central Finsbury. This is a reasonable assumption, as it ignited Liberal support both out of sympathy for the ill-treatment of Naoroji and out of a desire to prove Lord Salisbury, the Tory Prime Minister, a fool. The *Manchester Guardian* responded, "Of course a Parsee is not a 'black man' at all, but a man of Aryan race and light olive complexion."⁵² The *Leicester Daily Mercury* added that "To flout an intelligent representative of the Parsee community, who could scarcely be distinguished from any English gentleman...was as bad as comparing the Irish to Hottentots"⁵³ These reactions both show how sympathy for an Indian running for Parliament could be garnered, but also proves how deeply entrenched the idea of racial gradations was within the late Victorian consciousness. The *Daily Mercury* comparison using the Irish is also significant, and this simultaneous defense of the Indian with the Irish helps to convey how the Indian nationalists of the period thought using the same methods as the Irish would help them to gain favor in the eyes of the British, thereby giving them more of a voice in their own nation. The writer at the *Guardian*, on the other hand, seeks to make the connection of the Parsis to an Aryan ethnic past, thereby classing them as having the same ancestors as the Europeans and therefore better able to assume a political role. It thus divides the Indian population into racial hierarchies; there was no 'India' as one working group, only a mass of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and others who lived together in varying states of precariousness until the British arrived and implemented peace and control.

The issue of race blended into the issue of religion, and the issue of whether a Parsi could, in fact, represent all of India. The Indians who responded to the 'black man' comment seemed to believe that Naoroji could represent all India, though the British, as referenced above, could not believe this to be true. Perhaps this came not only out of their own desire to keep the Indian population segregated, but also out of their own experience with the difficulty of the relationships between the English, Irish and Scottish. A letter to the editor of the *Morning Post* protested the idea of Indian unity: "The election of Mr. Naoroji for Finsbury has given rise to the idea...that he represents the people of India. Far from it. Mr. Naoroji is a Parsee, a race as alien to India as a Russian Jew in Whitechapel is to England."⁵⁴ This comment on the racial disunity of India is followed by a more violent view of the conflict: "[The Parsees are] a race of mere traders, none of whom ever drew a sword or pulled a trigger, either for us or against us, a people who, if we left India, would be massacred to a man by the fighting races."⁵⁵ This additional comment serves to convey several more ideas, the most prominent of which is that the Parsis had done nothing for the British in their conquest of India, an idea which had been taken by this man, a Major General, to be carried to the point of almost becoming a 'with us or against us'

⁵² *Lord Salisbury's Black Man*, (Lucknow: GP Varma and Co., 1892), 16.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁴ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament: A Collection of the Main Incidents Relating to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament*, 123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.

because of this unprecedented situation he in many ways had to set the ground rules for how it would work and what it would mean for an Indian to be in the Imperial Parliament. In an address at a rally to celebrate his success in Central Finsbury, he told the crowd

When I first came among you, more than four years ago, I promised that, if elected, the interests of Clerkenwell⁴⁸ will always receive my first and principle consideration... You have in electing me generously and nobly helped India to obtain a voice in the Imperial Parliament, and I offer you, on behalf of my countrymen, our most sincere and heartfelt thanks⁴⁹

Here it thus becomes apparent that throughout his term in Parliament there would exist the fundamental paradox of his being a member for Central Finsbury but in practice a member for the whole of India. His time in Parliament was consumed with Indian issues, and though he supported bills and other actions that would have concerned the people of Central Finsbury at the time, his true intentions in sitting in the House of Commons lie with the improvement of the plight of Indians. It is evident that this really was the only way in which he could reconcile his two interests; he had a set of political principles that could work for both Indian and English working class constituencies, but in addition he had his specific concerns for India. As Antoinette Burton has noted, though he was the member for Central Finsbury, men inside and outside of Parliament nearly always referred to him as the "member for India."⁵⁰ The separation of the ethnic identity from the political identity was impossible, both for Naoroji and for the British public.

In other instances, it is not just his own position as a candidate that is ambiguously represented, but also his very opinion on the British in general. He was able to be sentimental and appeasing when the time came, but underneath there nevertheless existed some of the criticisms of Britain that were shown earlier in the *Pearson's Weekly* interview. In defense of his mission to participate in Imperial politics, he responds

All I can say at present is that I have simply tried to do that duty which my English education taught me both towards my country and my rulers; and why I did my duty towards my rulers was because I was convinced that we had a nation ruling over us whose fundamental idea of rule was based on justice and the welfare of the people.⁵¹

Here Naoroji conveys the belief of many of his contemporaries in that they were not yet desirous of total independence from Britain, but they wanted the colonizers instead to live up to the principles of British rule that their Anglo education had taught them. The promise of democracy, wealth and peace was appealing to the Indians, but these promises had only been fulfilled for the small class of anglicized, educated Indians of which Naoroji was a part and, even then, only partially.

⁴⁸ Another name for Central Finsbury.

⁴⁹ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament: A Collection of the Main Incidents Relating to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament*, 16.

⁵⁰ Antoinette Burton, "Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's 'Black Man' and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (2000), 650.

⁵¹ *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament: A Collection of the Main Incidents Relating to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament*, 88.

mentality. The British grew to respect those in India whom they saw as strong and as good soldiers as they exhibited bravery and strength in military pursuits.

This alignment with British ideals for the colonizing male served to lead them to favor some Indians over others, and the stereotype of the Parsi obviously did not correspond to these ideals. Some saw their lack of predilection for violent action as positive, saying “[Mr. Naoroji] is representative of the most highly cultured and exclusive native religions in India...”⁵⁶ In either of these cases, the stereotypes assigned to the Parsis seemed to make them fit for political office in Britain, even if they debated Naoroji’s appropriateness as *the* person to represent India. The *Spool Courier* remarked about a political meeting which was attended by a Mr. Abas Tyabji, who “was a legitimate representative of India,” with his “dark colour and native costume.”⁵⁷ The contradictions at work here are confusing at best; on one hand, the British conceive their colonial mission as a way to improve the people they colonize, then on the other they view the Anglicized Naoroji as an illegitimate representative of India because he *is* so unlike their stereotypical view of an Indian. Here is, then, the double standard that Naoroji most desired to fight against: the British claimed to want to reform and help the Indians to become more ‘civilized’ and yet when they attempted to claim higher positions and education (and therefore a higher social standing), the British refused to allow them this. Obviously the British would not want the native peoples of their colonies to become equal to the British; it would undermine the legitimacy of the colonial system. For Indians such as Naoroji, however, they refused to believe that they should not be allowed equal footing, that it was not possible for Indians to be equal in some ways to the British and the British still hold some amount of control over their colony. Some self-rule would be ideal, but, as we have seen, at this point Naoroji did not support total independence.

A dialogue about Parsi as a religion naturally followed the dialogue about Parsi as a race. *The Spectator* claimed that Parsis “have no relation, either in race, creed or social customs, to the Hindus, and are regarded by the Mussulmans with an acute traditional dislike...” The article continues on to claim that the Parsis are extremely culturally advanced and very loyal to the British, but that they are ill suited to represent India as a whole.⁵⁸ This argument is essentially the same as those promoted by the commentators focusing on race, a fact which is logical since, to the British mind, the connection between race and religion in India was very strong. Others used crude stereotypes to make jokes at Naoroji’s expense, with *The Bristol Times* printed the following: “What is them?” “Parsees; they worship the sun” “Do they? Then they must have a precious easy time of it over here [in England]!”⁵⁹ Those who responded in Naoroji’s defense against such attacks were also mocked; one political cartoon depicts Gladstone painting a black statue of Naoroji with whitewash.⁶⁰ Perhaps there was a strong tendency by the liberal supporters of Naoroji to emphasize his light skin and thoroughly English behavior, but this was necessary to legitimize his position as a candidate in an English constituency. Even if he would come to be viewed always as the ‘representative for India,’ he also had to run a campaign in England for English constituents. There had to be some sort of link there, some sort of legitimate reason for the people of Central Finsbury to feel that Naoroji did have their best interests at heart.

⁵⁶ *Daily Chronicle*, 8 July 1892.

⁵⁷ *Lord Salisbury's Black Man*, 88.

⁵⁸ *Lord Salisbury's Black Man*, 111.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

Through all this, Dadabhai Naoroji pushed on to conduct an ultimately successful political campaign. Though his election seems, in hindsight, a seminal moment in British colonialism, the press attention during the election itself is nothing out of the ordinary. This fact signals a major problem: the electoral discussions of race, religion and imperialism faded away after the race was won by Naoroji, signaling a lack of interest in his actual participation in the government. The *Times*, a conservative paper, and the *Daily Chronicle*, a liberal paper, both make hardly more than passing comments on the event. On 7 July the *Times* is completely silent on the subject, merely recording that D. Naoroji defeated a Captain Penton 2959 to 2956.⁶¹ On 10 July, a commentator noted that “The native press is jubilant at the news... The Anglo-Indian papers show less enthusiasm, but all admit that his steady person and pluck deserved success, and that it would be difficult to find a native of India better suited for the position...”⁶² Though they admit that he is a worthy enough candidate, the *Times* does not go out of its way to express pleasure at Naoroji’s election. The *Daily Chronicle* expressed more interest: “Turning for a moment from the splendid results in London, not the least import of which is the return at last of a ‘Member for India’ with a trifling constituency of 250,000,000 souls under his charge...”⁶³ Here the more liberal paper shows more excitement at the prospect of Naoroji winning the seat, not the least because it was an additional victory, literally and psychologically, against the Tories. The comment also brings to light the trend that would begin here and continue throughout his time in Parliament, meaning the references to Naoroji’s as ‘Member for India.’ His own mixed opinion as to who was his true constituency was only further muddled by the opinions of the English press and public. Thus, the opinion of the press at the moment came down to whether or not the commentator felt that having a representative voice for India, and all that was implied socially and politically in the event, was a positive or a negative thing. The *Times* clearly thought it was a positive for the Indians themselves, asserting that “India rejoiced at the fact that the British people were willing to recognize Indians as their fellow-subjects and as fellow-citizens.”⁶⁴ The tone here is one that conveys the *Times* feels as though the Indians are lucky that the British have allowed the Indians to have this opportunity at all, and that it was not the Indians making a concerted effort that got them into this position, but the British *willingness* to allow it to happen.

The election was followed closely by additional problems, particularly as Captain Penton, the Tory candidate running against Naoroji, decided to call a Scrutiny to question the results of the election.⁶⁵ One cannot be surprised that he chose to do this; it created a possibility that some of the advantage the Liberal party had gained in the election could be reduced, as well as the natural desire to question a result that turned on a margin of only three votes. Once the Scrutiny was called, the *Times* merely reported that the recount had increased Naoroji’s majority from three to five.⁶⁶ The petition stated that Naoroji was to be accused of bribery and threats, and the

⁶¹ *Times*, 7 July 1892.

⁶² *Times*, 10 July 1892.

⁶³ *Daily Chronicle*, 7 July 1892. In the 1892 election, the Liberal Party captured a vast majority of the seats in the capital, and ended in creating a new government led by Gladstone as Prime Minister.

⁶⁴ *Times*, 21 July 1892.

⁶⁵ A Scrutiny is the term used in the British political system when a court case is called by one of the electors to question the results of the election. This could be as a result of illegal practices, missing votes, or any number of other causes that might change the outcome in the event of a recount.

⁶⁶ *Times*, 9 August 1892.

votes were, at the very least, unintentionally miscounted.⁶⁷ This, therefore, could also be another way in which the Indian candidate could be defeated, derided and kept out of a Parliamentary seat. The Tories wanted not only to regain the seat, for if Naoroji were to win it would be a major embarrassment to the Tory leader, Salisbury, after his infamous comment. And it was not as though the Scrutiny would be an obvious attempt at any of these objectives; according to the Return of Working Regulations for 1893, there were quite a few scrutinies called in the aftermath of the 1892 elections.⁶⁸ Therefore, though this was an extraordinary circumstance, the practice of calling a Scrutiny in such cases should not be construed here as an elaborate plan to foil the ambitions of Naoroji; instead it was a way in which Captain Penton would naturally argue such a close race, although his reasons for doing so would have certainly been tainted by his own opinion of an Indian liberal gaining the seat. Whatever the underlying motive, Captain Penton withdrew the charges after the recount in progress showed the candidates to be tied; it seems rather pointless for Penton to back out at this stage in the proceedings, but he must have felt that he was going to fail. This would be a supreme embarrassment, as it would essentially amount to his losing to the Indian candidate twice.

Thus, Dadabhai Naoroji won the seat and became the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament. The next three years, however, turned out to be uneventful in comparison to the drama of his candidature and eventual election. The interest in his work continued to grow amongst the men involved in the nationalist movement in India, but interest in England about this lone Indian member and his concerns about the nation he was truly representing were minimal. During his tenure in office he sat on a few committees, including the Standing Committee on Trade and, eventually, a Royal Commission. The Royal Commission committee worked outside of the Parliament, and their work finished some time after he had lost his seat in 1895.

While in Parliament, Naoroji continued to advocate for Indian issues while supporting ones which would be more pertinent to his actual constituency. His main committee duties concerned the Standing Committee on Trade. As part of this, Naoroji was involved in legislation concerning railway servants which limited their hours, new restrictions on the trade of fertilizers, and discussions on ways in which to help the poor and unemployed.⁶⁹ He seems to have at least been a conscientious MP; he is nearly always listed as present at committee and House meetings, and so participated in voting a majority of the time. His voting record reflects that he maintained the beliefs that he expressed initially, that he was interested in helping the poor and underprivileged in England as much as he was interested in the financial plight of those in India. Interestingly, he was also involved in a Bill that reduced the qualification time to vote for an election to only three months of borough residency.⁷⁰ Though his work was worthwhile, these pieces of legislation are not as pertinent to this discussion as far as concerns the intent of Indian nationalists, but they serve to demonstrate that Naoroji was a serious member in Parliament and stuck to his initial commitment on what he would like to change. This speaks well for him as a person, perhaps, but it also illustrates the inefficiency of this method for achieving change in India.

⁶⁷ "Scrutiny" from *The First Indian Member of the Imperial Parliament: A Collection of the Main Incidents Relating to the Election of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament*, 19-20.

⁶⁸ "Return of Working Regulations for carrying out Prosecution of Offenses Acts, 1892," *House of Commons Digital Archive*, <http://gateway.proquest.com>.

⁶⁹ "1893 Royal Commission on Labor, 1893 Committee Reports on Railway Servants, 1893 Standing Committee Bill on Fertilizers, Standing Committee Special Report on Plumbers 1894," *House of Commons Digital Archive*.

⁷⁰ "Bill to Reduce Period of Qualification 1895," *House of Commons Digital Archive*.

Even if there were some in the House of Commons who would not take him seriously, he nevertheless took the job he had won as a perfect opportunity for change despite his detractors. In August of 1893, he wrote a Letter to the Editor of the *Times* concerning the new bill to change the examinations for the Indian Civil Service. At the end of this letter comes a key statement, where Naoroji states that "India is following the good lessons which England has taught her-to agitate constitutionally and persistently for any just cause, and that we are determined to continue to do."⁷¹ This conveys not only Naoroji's opinion, but that of many of his supporters in the Indian National Congress and its sister organizations in England itself. Like the Irish, they would attempt to solve the problems between India and England within the English political system, in a way that they saw as being most palatable to the British themselves.

The reformation of the Indian Civil Service was an important issue for Naoroji, and one on which he gained some ground while in Parliament. Though in August it looked as though a bill had been passed through the Commons to make it so examinations for the Indian Civil Service would take place in both India and London, a motion was put in by Naoroji that was noted as being "Put by for the present 28 Nov [18]93" and seemed to address a similar issue.⁷² The bill for the change in Indian Civil Service examinations was the sole piece of major legislation that Naoroji explicitly supported which passed during his time in office. As this was one of the issues involving the INC, it was also a great success in their eyes.

Another major issue which concerned Naoroji during his time in Parliament was the escalating financial crisis in British India, which resulted in terrible poverty throughout the country. A report in the *Times* reported that "He contended...that in its present administration India was governed more for the material benefit of the British than the Indian people." Once again, it seems he is purposely ignoring the fact that this sort of benefit for Britain was exactly the point of colonialism in the eyes of most British. He then confidently made the claim that "...the British people were bound, in return for the benefit they derived [from India], to take a share in the cost of obtaining that benefit (Hear, hear)."⁷³ This is the ideal situation, in which India and Great Britain would mutually benefit from their relationship, but any significant change in the policies on expenditure and finance in India were never realized while Naoroji sat in Parliament.

At the very end of his time as MP, Naoroji was appointed to a Royal Commission on Expenditure in India. Though this sounded promising, hopes of true reform were soon dashed as the committee leader assured the group that no policy changes would be considered at that time.⁷⁴ The committee was a perfect time for Naoroji and others to bring to the fore the problems with the economy of India, and many of these dilemmas would reappear in his later economic treatises.⁷⁵ The lack of change resulting from the Royal Commission serves as another way in which the INC's attempts to change colonial policy would be frustrated despite the presence of an Indian MP. It also conveys a sort of superficiality in the relations between the British and the small group Indians who were pursuing government positions, whether through the newly created INC or in England itself. Though Naoroji and a few other Indians were appointed to the committee, the fact that it produced no result (and, perhaps, was not truly

⁷¹ *Times*, August 10 1893.

⁷² *Parliamentary Notice*, Indian Office Records, British Library, St. Pancras.

⁷³ *Times*, August 10, 1893.

⁷⁴ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 65. Rawal feels that this appointment was Naoroji's greatest achievement, but one questions this belief as the Commission did not result in any great changes.

⁷⁵ "Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Administration of Expenditure in India-1900," *House of Commons Digital Archive*.

allowed to) gives off a sense of appeasing the Indians without actually conceding anything. A separate report was compiled at the end of the proceedings by Naoroji and Sir William Wedderburn, in which they stated that "At an early stage of the proceedings of the Commission the difference between our colleagues and ourselves became apparent."⁷⁶ This difference mainly centered on what they felt actually needed to be changed, i.e. the entire system. In other words, the Commission was viewing the problem on a local level, whereas Naoroji and his allies were seeing it on a global level. It was not the bookkeeping and departmental organization that needed to be changed, but the government as a whole.⁷⁷ This disagreement transcends the problems Naoroji had as an Indian in the British government; it shows the deep apathy on the part of the government in England to really change their policies concerning India even if it was clear that they were injurious to the people they had colonized.

In 1895, Naoroji once again ran in Central Finsbury, but failed to maintain his seat as he lost 3588 to 2783. Clearly, the tide had turned against him. Perhaps the people in Central Finsbury did not feel that he had done enough for them, or Indian politics no longer concerned them as it had in 1892. He continued his work in England and India, returning to India to serve in the INC on several occasions.

Interestingly enough, Naoroji's tenure in Parliament, because of the low numbers of Indians in Britain at the time, made it so "per head of population ethnic minorities were better represented in 1892" than they are at present in England.⁷⁸ Despite this, no mass movement for an increase in Indian representation occurred at this nascent stage; as mentioned before, Sir MM Bhowmagree sat as an MP for the conservatives beginning in 1895, and then only one other Indian MP sat between Bhowmagree's tenure and the election of the next "non-white" in 1987.⁷⁹ The fact that there was no longer a push to place an Indian in the Parliament signals a change in the objectives of the INC and other Indian nationalists groups. Like the Irish in the coming decades, they too would find fault in the pursuit of constitutional agitation or reform through political demands, and would therefore seek alternatives to achieving their ends.

Though Naoroji made another effort at a seat in Parliament in 1888, the effort appears halfhearted. It must have seemed as though his failure to accomplish much in his first (and only) time in Parliament, and the loss of interest in taking the political route to change made the idea null. Munni Rawal feels that Naoroji largely failed in Parliament because of a lack of support for Indian issues in the government; while this is certainly true, the issues of race and imperialists attitudes also appear to have had a great effect on his relatively unsuccessful run in Parliament.⁸⁰ Even those who were supposed to have supported him, like Francis Schnadhorst, had second thoughts.

He returned to India for another term as President of the Indian National Congress in 1906, and continued to work on Indian issues until his death in 1917. Certainly the INC was a large step for the Indians to have taken, but the negative attitudes towards Indians in politics was reflected in English press attitudes towards the Congress as a whole. In reaction to their holding

⁷⁶ Ibid., 151.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 152.

⁷⁸ "Parliament's Uncolorful Past," BBC, 27 June 2002. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/2041043.stm.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Radical MP Shapurji Saklatvala, who was accused of having close ties with the British Communist Party, sat as MP from 1922 to 1929. After that time, there was no "non-white" representatives. The key difference, it should be noted, is that after 1947 the situation would have changed radically because an Indian running for a seat would presumably be most concerned with representing the Indian population within Britain, since British India was now independent.

⁸⁰ Rawal, 101.

a meeting on Boxing Day, one paper called it “the Great Indian Pantomime.”⁸¹ Though these men formed a successful enough representative body, it was imperative upon the British to not take them seriously, as any real acknowledgement of their work would force them to face the fact that the Indians could very well run their nation without the colonial power. Their very Indianess made the issue of forming a separate political body a difficult achievement to accomplish, and they had to overcome the continual stream of jibes at their existence, such as the one quoted above. It was similar, then, to the difficulties Naoroji had in Britain except they were removed from the colonial power, far away from the administrative base that was Westminster and thereby better able to carry on without having to worry about public opinion as they obviously had an more receptive community within their own country.

The complexity of the racial, religious and colonial mores in the late-Victorian era were therefore key to Naoroji’s relative lack of success as an MP, as was his limited time in which he had to work. It was as though the British viewed his win as a sort of anomaly, unless of course they were among the select group who fully supported his efforts. In Parliament, he may have given India a voice, but as the lone non-white he had no real power. For historian Jonathon Schneer, the British would not worry about this one Indian man, but they would become concerned if he had joined forces with non-Indian groups of colonized people.⁸² The threat of a mass uniting of the colonized people of Britain’s empire was a threat to be taken seriously; luckily for the Empire this never occurred in any meaningful way. Even the Irish, who Naoroji supported in their quest for Home Rule, would not move to support the liberation of other colonies within the Empire.

All of these factors resulted in a change in Indian Nationalism in the coming decades. *Gandhi in London* by James Hunt is useful in exploring how the transition progressed. Gandhi belonged to the class of Indians who found the promise of success through British education, and this background disposed him to follow in the footsteps of Naoroji in the beginning of his political career. In later years, however, Gandhi and the other Indian nationalists turned away from the Anglicization of their early years and developed a more radical political policy. Hunt cites one Indian newspaper, explaining that “The article appeared in the November issue, and accused Naoroji of being ‘ever ready to oblige his Anglo-Indian friends at the cost of his country’” and was therefore a liability to the new direction of the cause.⁸³

These changes were gradual, however, and the reputation of Naoroji weathered the change fairly well, even after his death in 1917. In his later years, even Naoroji turned against the cooperation with the British that he had formerly supported. In some ways, his comments mirror those he made in earlier years, except the terms within them have become stronger, and more defiant. He began to find the British disinterestedness in Indian affairs that was so apparent during his tenure in Parliament to be a greater threat, saying that “this constant violation of pledges, this persistent opposition to Indian interests and the deterioration and impoverishment of the country by an evil administration, must lead, sooner or later, to a rebellion...”⁸⁴ The threat of rebellion, as said above, was one which had to be taken seriously by the British, and Naoroji clearly worried about not only what sort of impact it would have upon

⁸¹ Rawal, 106. Rawal also notes that Naoroji’s “absence was more than compensated by the presence” of Sir William Wedderburn in the Parliament as a result of the 1895 election. Though he does not state it outright, Rawal must feel that Naoroji was rather ineffective and that it was to no great advantage that he sat in the Commons.

⁸² Jonathon Schneer, *London 1900*, 202.

⁸³ James Hunt, *Gandhi in London*, (New Delhi: Promilla and Co. Publishers).

⁸⁴ As quoted in Rawal, 80.

British administration, but also the effect it would have upon his own people. In *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, published in 1901, he asserted that "Owing to this one unnatural policy of British rule of ignoring India's interest, and making it the drudge for the benefit of England, the whole rule moves in a wrong, unnatural and suicidal groove."⁸⁵ Gone now is the belief that England may be working for India's mutual benefit, replaced by a more cynical view of the present situation. In this there is therefore a marked change in the conciliatory tone of his earlier writings and speeches, to one that looks forward to the changes that would come in the next few decades for the Indian nationalist movement.

It seems appropriate, then, to mention those who would carry on the struggle between Britain and India. Gandhi never did forget the foundation laid for him in his later years; R.P. Masani's biography of Naoroji features a forward written by Gandhi himself.⁸⁶ Interestingly enough, Gandhi also used the suffragettes in England as an inspiration, sensing how they too were seeking to change the government by civil disobedience and other actions, though this emulation of the suffragettes furthers the colonial habit of equating the British female with the Native male on the social scale.⁸⁷ The main point to be taken from this change as portrayed through Gandhi's work is that Naoroji's tenure in Parliament came at a critical time; it served to demonstrate to the INC that little progress could be made within Parliament through quasi-direct representation. As their aspirations changed, the religious/racial unity and loyalty to Britain that Naoroji envisioned for an improved India gave way to the radical politics that would lead to independence.

⁸⁵ As quoted in Rawal, 86.

⁸⁶ R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*. iii-iv.

⁸⁷ Hunt, 103.

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