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## ABSTRACT

This history thesis analyzes the economic, political, and social ideas of Dadabhai Naoroji, Aurobindo Ghose, and Bipin Chandra Pal, as shown through their writings and speeches. Dadabhai Naoroji was part of the generation of nineteenth-century nationalists who petitioned the colonial government with economic policy critiques, including his own drain of wealth theory. Ghose and Pal were extremist leaders of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal who advocated for boycott of the colonial system and independence from Britain. My paper looks at the similarities and differences between the ideas of Naoroji, Pal, and Ghose and analyzes Pal and Ghose's use of Naoroji's arguments and their evaluation of the early nationalist period. I seek to answer questions over the linear progression of Indian nationalism and the relationship between economic critiques and social reform. By further analyzing early Indian nationalists, one can better understand the course of the nationalist movement as well as the ideas that were central to the latter part of the movement led most notably by Gandhi.

Through analysis of primary sources as well as historical scholarship, I conclude that the relationship between Naoroji, Pal, and Ghose shows the selective appropriation, modification, and rejection of different ideas by each nationalist generation. I also propose that the Swadeshi Movement holds a central position in the combination of economic and social critiques into a comprehensive political movement during the course of Indian nationalism.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL PROTEST IN INDIAN  
NATIONALISM: WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF DADABHAI NAOROJI,  
AUROBINDO GHOSE, AND BIPIN CHANDRA PAL

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## INTRODUCTION

Dadabhai Naoroji and his early moderate contemporaries, including Mahadev Govind Ranade, Romesh Chunder Dutt, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, are figures whose names are found throughout books and articles on Indian nationalism and are accorded a central position in the development of Indian nationalism and critiques of colonial rule. However, historiography on Indian nationalism tends to only briefly discuss the early period of moderate nationalist critiques of colonial economic and political policy. Those historians who treat nineteenth century nationalism often concentrate for the most part on social reform movements, as is the case with Amiya Sen, Sanjay Seth, and Partha Chatterjee. Historians who do discuss early economic and political critiques of colonial rule often touch on the period only briefly, acknowledging its role in the course of nationalism but focusing their analysis on different topics, as seen in most analyses that focus on the twentieth century. Bipin Chandra's *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* stands out as one of the few books to concentrate specifically on the critiques of early moderate nationalists.

The Swadeshi Movement from 1903 to 1908 in Bengal is accorded the position of the first mass nationalist movement in India, as it attempted to bring together various members of society to collectively agitate against the Partition of Bengal and the colonial administration overall. Historians who discuss and analyze this movement often consider it in the context of something larger, such

as Bengali history or class relations, as Rajat Kanta Ray and Subho Baso do. Each analysis of the Swadeshi Movement includes some discussion of its economic inspiration and the relationship between preceding moderate economic critiques and Swadeshi Movement ideology, but the amount varies. Of literature dealing with the Swadeshi Movement, Sumit Sarkar's detailed analysis entitled *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* as well as the books of Haridas and Uma Mukherjee present the most information on the period.

### **Three Early Nationalists**

I will be focusing on the relationship between the economic and political ideas of three early Indian nationalists from these time periods: Dadabhai Naoroji, Aurobindo Ghose, and Bipin Chandra Pal. Dadabhai Naoroji, the "Grand Old Man of India," presented one of the first formal nationalist critiques of British colonial policy in India, and his ideas influenced subsequent nationalist generations. Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal, leaders of the "extremist" group of the Swadeshi Movement, advocated for complete independence for India, which would be achieved through a program of boycott and self-development.

I am analyzing these three figures because of their specific nationalist viewpoints and their place in the trajectory of Indian nationalism. While Naoroji was only one of a number of early moderate nationalists critiquing colonial

economic policy, his theories of the drain of material and moral wealth from India were beliefs that played a particularly crucial role in later nationalist thought. Subsequent Indian leaders referenced his economic and political ideas more than any of those of the other early moderates; in Pal and Ghose's writings, he was the early moderate nationalist whose contributions and nationalist role were discussed the most. Naoroji remained active in Indian politics as he became older, holding the Congress presidency from 1906 - 1907. He represented the older, moderate generation of nineteenth century nationalists who strongly criticized colonial policies but believed that British rule could be beneficial for India. Yet at the same time, his call for self-government in his 1906 presidential acceptance speech tied him more closely with Pal and Ghose than some of his other contemporaries.

Pal and Ghose were leaders of one ideological group in the Swadeshi Movement, a movement that brought together moderates, social reformers, and extremists. Out of the varied participants, I have chosen to focus on these extremist leaders because they represent the new generation of nationalists frustrated by British rule and highly critical of the basis of the colonial system. Pal and Ghose also propounded the most comprehensive agitation program; although they took much of their inspiration from the social reformers and had the support of the moderates for the boycott of British goods, their vision for India's future and techniques for achieving this were borne out of their specific situation, in addition to presaging many aspects of the nationalist movement later on.



The intersection between early nationalist critiques and the Swadeshi Movement presents an interesting topic for historical study. Not only did Naoroji's economic critiques lay the basis for subsequent nationalist critiques, but many of the ideas implemented by Pal and Ghose in the Swadeshi Movement—such as boycott of British goods and governance systems and self-development—were important aspects of Gandhi's later nationalist program. It reveals that Indian nationalism relied on the appropriation, modification, and rejection of prior nationalist critiques during each stage of the movement.

### **Economic and Social History**

The relationship between economic critiques and social reform also merits analysis. Nineteenth-century Indian nationalism consisted of social reform movements and formal critiques of colonial economic policy. These two trends remained largely separated during the nineteenth century, and historians continue to treat them separately, with scholars like Partha Chatterjee focusing on social reform movements and Bipin Chandra analyzing economic policy critiques of the colonial government.

Though the analyses of these two scholars adds much to the historiography of early Indian nationalism, they both fail to make strong connections between economic critiques and social reform. Chandra discusses the connection between economics and politics but does not tie in social reform and

the role it played in Indian thought and mobilization. Chatterjee's focus on social reform provides no explanation for the importance of economic critiques for early official nationalism, when figures like Naoroji focused solely on India's economic situation with discourses that were devoid of discussions of social reform or separation of "inner" and "outer" domains. Like Chandra, he is also unable to explain how social reform and economic critiques came together into the nationalist political program. Manu Goswami adds to the body of knowledge with her discussion of the welding of a geographically bounded economy with imaginings of the nation as a particular social entity, lending her own interpretation to the combination of the economic critiques that Chandra discusses with the social reform movements analyzed by Chatterjee.

By the Swadeshi Movement, economic policy critiques had combined with social reform ideas, so bringing these two threads of nationalism together and understanding their relationship becomes very important. I have therefore tried to combine analysis of economic, political, and social ideas to understand the views of Naoroji, seen primarily as an economic thinker, toward social issues, as well as Pal and Ghose's combination of these three types of ideas into one nationalist program.

## Course of Indian Nationalism

When considering the trajectory of economic and political nationalist critiques, the relationship between nationalist critiques is a contested subject. While “moderate” and “extreme” viewpoints often existed concurrently during Indian nationalism, belief in petitioning and support for the British Empire were eventually replaced by desire for complete political independence and stronger agitational methods. A number of scholars and individuals believe that this course was inevitable and view the development of Indian nationalism as a linear progression from the first critiques of colonial rule to independence. This belief has certain implications for understandings of the nationalist movement.

In his short biography about Naoroji, R. P. Masani recounts a conversation between himself and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1931 regarding Naoroji’s moderate stance and its relationship to later nationalist beliefs:

“Don’t you think”, I asked, “Dadabhai’s policy, which the present generation ridicules as a mendicant policy, was the right one, considering the circumstances then prevailing?”

“Yes”, he replied.

Then, promptly anticipating my second question, he added: “And I believe that if he were alive today he would follow the same policy that I have been pursuing for the last few years”.<sup>1</sup>

While Gandhi does not deny Naoroji’s support of constitutional agitation methods, he positions them as the natural precursor to subsequent methods, indicating that the course of Indian nationalism had progressed logically from the

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<sup>1</sup> Masani 1957, xii.

methods and goals of Naoroji to those of Gandhi. In doing so, Gandhi justifies the progression of Indian nationalism, despite the differences between its early and later manifestations.

This theory can be found in the works of contemporary scholars, such as economic historian Bipin Chandra. Discussing the role of early moderate nationalists like Naoroji in the greater trajectory of Indian nationalism, Chandra writes:

All of the nationalist leaders sowed in the land the seeds, if not of sedition, at least of disaffection. Perhaps the only real difference between them was that while some were consciously 'disloyal', others professed, preached, and protested their loyalty and their desire to perpetuate British rule, i.e., remained subjectively loyal to the end of their days, though objectively they too cut at the roots of the empire they considered Providential—they were in fact the fountainheads of 'disloyalty'.<sup>2</sup>

Chandra argues that intentional or unintentional, early moderate nationalists laid the basis for later nationalists who called for independence. The moderate aspects of early nationalists are thus pushed aside and the legacy of these individuals becomes that their ideas laid the beginning of nationalist critiques that led to independence.

In opposition to this linear portrayal of the progression of Indian nationalism, however, close analysis of the writings and beliefs of individual nationalists shows them to be often quite disparate. The relationship between early nationalist thinkers therefore requires greater study, to determine the

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<sup>2</sup> Chandra 1966, 744.

similarities and differences between these figures who played a seminal role in the development of Indian nationalism and influenced its subsequent course in India. My research attempts to look at the similarities and differences between Naoroji and Pal and Ghose, to understand what their shared beliefs were, what their differences were, and whether or not nationalist thought can be considered a progression from one leader in one time period to another leader in a later time. Through analysis of writings and speeches of these three men, as well as the use of secondary literature, I propose that Naoroji's economic and political critiques greatly influenced Pal and Ghose's nationalist views, but that despite Naoroji's call for colonial self-government in 1906, these three men would never have agreed on the same goals and techniques for colonial India because of their views about the intentions of the British government.

### **Methodological Notes**

To analyze the viewpoints of Naoroji, Pal, and Ghose, I have referred to their published writings and speeches. For Naoroji, a prolific writer, I refer primarily to *The Poverty of India*, his 1901 book which brought together his most important papers, letters, and speeches from 1876 to 1901. For his later views, I use *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji*, first published in 1906 with a second edition in 1917. Much of Naoroji's writing consisted of tables and economic arguments to prove the drain of wealth from India, but he then used

those figures to make arguments about India's situation and recommendations for its future.

I gained a clear understanding of the events of the Swadeshi Movement and the various viewpoints within the Bengali community through analysis of the newspapers *Bande Mataram*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and the *Bengalee* at the India Office Archives of the British Library. Though nearly impossible to obtain original copies of *Bande Mataram*, Ghose and Pal's newspaper, outside of a few libraries worldwide, a large number of their editorials from the two years of the paper's existence have been compiled into books, along with other speeches and writings by the two leaders. I referred primarily to Ghose's *Bande Mataram*, Pal's *Swadeshi and Swaraj*, and selected editorials contained in Haridas and Uma Mukherjee's *'Bande Mataram' and Indian Nationalism*.

I have limited myself to sources written by Naoroji, Pal, and Ghose themselves and not any of their contemporaries because I am analyzing their beliefs about Indian society, economics, and politics. I therefore run the risk of encountering propaganda in their writings, but I believe that this also shows a great deal about their beliefs, and I have used secondary sources to analyze their arguments and ideas.

For secondary sources, I have referred to Sumit Sarkar, Bipin Chandra, Partha Chatterjee, and Manu Goswami, as well as a variety of other authors, including Bikhu Parekh, Sanjay Seth, and Amiya Sen. I have attempted to

compare these authors to each other, as well as analyze their arguments about this period of Indian nationalism.

When discussing Pal and Ghose, I often refer to them as “extremists,” the term most commonly used in secondary literature. However, it is important to note that Pal and Ghose are not extremists in the modern sense of the word—their ideas and beliefs were extreme because they believed that India and colonial Britain were incompatible and advocated for full independence at a time when moderate beliefs and techniques had dominated the nationalist scene. Pal and Ghose themselves were ambiguous about the term, pointedly rejecting it in one *Bande Mataram* editorial, while using it to refer to themselves at other points.<sup>3</sup> In general, they preferred to be referred to as the “New School” or “Nationalists” because they believed that contemporary characterizations of the “extremists” misrepresented their beliefs.

When writing the words “swadeshi” and “swaraj,” I have chosen not to italicize them. Although *swaraj* translates to “self-rule” and *swadeshi* translates loosely to “self-manufactures,” neither of these English terms captures the true meaning of *swaraj* and *swadeshi*, which were not just words but highly nuanced programs for Pal and Ghose.

Finally, when discussing India as an entity, I refer to it as a nation and a country. This reflects the terminology used by Naoroji, Pal, and Ghose. Colonial

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<sup>3</sup> For Ghose’s discussion of the Extremists, see Ghose 1972, 297.

India, though a dependent colony and not an independent nation, can and should be considered a nation and country because of its geographically bounded economy and the sense of nationhood felt by nationalist leaders.

I have organized my paper into four chapters, the first focusing on Naoroji and the following three looking at Pal and Ghose. In the first chapter, I analyze Naoroji's economic and political arguments about British policy in India to show his economic argument about the drain of wealth as well as his support for British rule. The second chapter introduces Pal and Ghose through an analysis of the inspiration for their political beliefs, which consisted of reinterpretation of Naoroji's theories, frustration over the continuation of drain policies, and the nationalistic experiences of other nations. I turn to Pal and Ghose's tactics in the third chapter to evaluate their program of passive resistance, which consisted of a combination of boycott and self-development. In the fourth and final chapter, I look at Pal and Ghose's goals for India's future to analyze the interaction of politics, economics, and society in their vision of the Indian nation and to bring to a close my discussion of these two leaders.



## CHAPTER 1

### DADABHAI NAOROJI'S ECONOMIC CRITIQUE OF BRITISH RULE

Dadabhai Naoroji compiled his most important writings and speeches from 1876 to 1901, including papers, letters, journal articles, commission statements, and speeches, into his 1901 book, *The Poverty of India*. Naoroji's drain of wealth and moral drain theories were central to all subsequent nationalist understandings of colonialism in India, including those of the leaders of the Swadeshi movement. Sumit Sarkar, Bipin Chandra, and Manu Goswami affirm the fact that although nationalists differed in views toward British rule and India's future, they all subscribed to the economic critiques presented by Naoroji and other early moderate nationalists.<sup>4</sup>

Naoroji presented his economic critique of colonial rule through petitioning, personal correspondence, academic and newspaper articles, Congress resolutions, and speeches. Naoroji was part of the first generation of Indians who were critical of British governance of India. These early moderates were characterized by praise of British rule and support for modernity. Naoroji criticized the specific colonial policies that Britain followed in India yet supported British governance. His critique of British rule was characterized by its constitutional nature, economic approach, and modernist attitude.

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<sup>4</sup> Chandra 1966, 737; Goswami 2004, 210 - 1; Sarkar 1994, 97.

### **Moderate and Modernist**

Naoroji's critique of colonial rule was complex and often seemingly contradictory. The way that he presented and argued his economic drain theory shows that he had to balance his support for the ideals of Britain with the realities of poverty and inequality that he saw around him in India. Naoroji resolved his support for British governance and his critique of their economic policies by declaring colonial rule to be "un-British." In the introduction to *Poverty and Un-British Rule*, he wrote: "The title of the book is "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India," i.e., the present system of government is destructive and despotic to Indians and un-British and suicidal to Britain."<sup>5</sup> This terminology served to both reaffirm his support for British rule and also appeal to the ideals and values of the British people and lawmakers. He opposed neither the idea nor the premise of British rule but rather was "against the system adopted by the British Indian authorities in the last century and maintained up til now."<sup>6</sup>

Naoroji and other early moderates supported British rule because of the gains that they saw as the result of the introduction of Western civilization. Chandra states that early nationalists, "dazzled by the initial impact of Britain on India," welcomed things like "law and order and political administration" that Britain had brought to India.<sup>7</sup> In his study of colonial education, Sanjay Seth

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<sup>5</sup> Naoroji 1901, v.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>7</sup> Chandra 1966, 737.

writes that nationalists like Naoroji “often singled out western education as one of the most important and valuable instruments through which the British were transforming India.”<sup>8</sup> Naoroji’s comments throughout *The Poverty of India* show his allegiance to an early moderate mentality. In the introduction to his book, he discussed the benefits of British governance, praising Britain for the establishment of law and order, freedom of the press, humanitarian influence on social issues like sati, and the introduction of English education and science.<sup>9</sup> Naoroji had great respect for Britain’s representative political system and the ideals upon which that nation was founded, writing that Indians supported “British honour, good faith, righteousness, and justice” in India.<sup>10</sup>

Naoroji also welcomed the introduction of modernity to India. Bikhu Parekh writes that Naoroji had “profound modernist tendencies.”<sup>11</sup> Modernists, according to Parekh, welcomed secular democracy, a strong state, and scientific, technical, and literary education, all as a replacement for India’s failing society.<sup>12</sup> While Naoroji’s critique was an economic, not social, discussion of India, his references to India’s past, present, and future show that he welcomed Western civilization as a solution to India’s past problems. Naoroji wrote that the goal of British rule was to raise Indians from “misery and superstition” to “prosperity and

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<sup>8</sup> Seth 2007, 159.

<sup>9</sup> Naoroji 1901, vi.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>11</sup> Parekh 1999, 332.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

civilisation.”<sup>13</sup> He believed that Western civilization offered a model for India’s future. He supported continued British rule of India, believing that “a real regeneration, civilisation, and advancement of India materially, morally, and politically, depends upon a long continuance of the British rule” due to the “combination of high civilisation, intense love of liberty, and nobility of soul in the British.”<sup>14</sup>

In his critique of colonial rule, Naoroji strongly criticized British policies but continually reaffirmed his support for British ideals. Naoroji attributed Britain’s “wrong, unnatural, and suicidal” colonial policy to misunderstanding and misguidance.<sup>15</sup> He argued that Britain would naturally choose just governance of India, once it properly understood the situation. “When Englishmen as a body will *understand* their their duty and responsibility,” he wrote, “the Natives may fairly expect a conduct of which theirs is a sample—a desire, indeed, to act rightly by India.”<sup>16</sup> Naoroji saw the positive aspects of Western civilization and believed that British rule could and should be a beneficial influence for India. Stating that “a connexion [sic.] that *can* be made great and good to both countries is blindly being undermined and destroyed with detriment to both,” he urged Britain to change its policies for the benefit of both.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Naoroji 1901, 237.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 125, 209.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>17</sup> Naoroji 1901, 465.

### Criticism of Colonial Policy

Although Naoroji continually reaffirmed his support for British ideals and the potential benefits of British rule, he sharply criticized current colonial policies. Evaluating critiques from Naoroji and other early nationalists, Chandra argues that “even when their political demands were moderate, their economic demands were radically nationalist.”<sup>18</sup> He believes that although moderate nationalists supported British rule, their opposition to colonial policies provided a strong critique of the fundamentals of colonial relationships.

Naoroji believed that economic and political policies were unjust and that there was no excuse for the continuation of such policies. The rhetoric that he used to denounce contemporary British policies was sharp. He referred to the economic drain as the “bleeding of India” and revealed the hypocrisy of British rule, stating that “the English rulers stand sentinel at the front door of India, challenging the whole world, that they do and shall protect India against all comers, and they themselves carry away by a back-door the very treasure they stand sentinel to protect.”<sup>19</sup>

Naoroji also did not allow his support for British ideals to overshadow the realities of current colonial policy. He warned Britain that its rule in India was

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<sup>18</sup> Chandra 1966, 746.

<sup>19</sup> Naoroji 1901, 211 - 2.

“descending and degenerating to the lower level of Asiatic despotism.”<sup>20</sup> He wrote that:

It is useless for the British to compare themselves with the past Native rulers. If the British do not show themselves to be vastly superior in proportion to their superior enlightenment and civilisation, if India does not prosper and progress under them far more largely, there will be no justification for their existence in India. The thoughtless past drain we may consider as our misfortune, but a similar future drain will, in plain English, be deliberate plunder and destruction.<sup>21</sup>

Although Naoroji wanted the British to reform their ways for the benefit of both India and Britain, he did not hesitate to declare that a continuation of current policies would leave no justification for colonial rule.

### **Indian Political Economy**

Naoroji’s critique of British governance in India centered on the economic policies of Britain in India and the resulting relationship between the two nations. Naoroji approached the subject of British colonial policies—which had social, moral, and economic aspects—from an economic viewpoint. Coverage of a 1901 speech of his stated:

It was not necessary that he should attempt to describe the horrors of the famine. The descriptions of the misery and tortures suffered by millions of the Indian people, which had already appeared in the English Press, must have sufficiently lacerated their hearts. He would go direct, therefore, to the causes of the famine.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Naoroji 1901, 214.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>22</sup> Naoroji 1901, 654.

Naoroji's position as a secular modernist played a very important role here: he did not propose reforms of Indian society or traditions but rather urged better economic policy as a way to build a strong and prosperous nation. Similarly, he approached India's situation from an economic and mathematical background, choosing not to dwell on humanitarian or social discussions and focusing instead on methods for changing India's situation, which he felt rested on policy changes by the colonial government.

Naoroji approached India's economic situation from a modernist mentality that accepted dominant economic theory of the day. His views toward India's economy were products of contemporary economic theories and analysis of India's particular economic situation. In his writings, he did not reject mainstream ideas of classical political economy but instead showed how economic policy in India was misconducted. He accepted a capitalist economic framework, something that Chandra shows was characteristic of early moderates.<sup>23</sup> His solution for each of India's economic problems was to either change policies to reflect accepted economic laws or adapt them to match India's slightly different situation. Naoroji spent the majority of his efforts in *Poverty and Un-British Rule* arguing the existence of the drain of wealth from India to Britain and then urging the British to realize the realities of the situation and "restore India to her *natural* conditions."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Chandra 1966, 753.

<sup>24</sup> Naoroji 1901, 201.

While Naoroji often supported theories of classical political economics, he believed that in certain situations these theories could not be applied to India. Chandra labels this reworking of classical political economy by early nationalist leaders “Indian Political Economy.” Many of the economic arguments in Naoroji’s writings became part of an economic mindset shared by early nationalists, which included the belief that the British did not follow rules of classical political economy in India, that India’s economic situation sometimes warranted a reworking of economic ideas, and that classical political economics was ill-equipped to apply to developing economies.<sup>25</sup> Naoroji’s economic views were a combination of support for a capitalist and industrialized framework as presented by classical political economics and belief that India’s experiences as a colony required some reworking of these ideas.

The influence of classical political economy upon Naoroji is evident throughout his writings, where he referred to “natural” economic laws and theories and contrasted current economic policy in India with accepted economic theory. In an 1880 memorandum to the Secretary of State for India, Naoroji summarized the crux of his argument when he referred to colonial policy in India as the “pitiless *perversion* of economic laws.”<sup>26</sup> To demonstrate how economics in India did not function according to classical economic theory, he compiled statistics and figures that showed the drain of wealth from India through a number

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<sup>25</sup> Goswami 2004, 212.

<sup>26</sup> Chandra 1966, 709 - 13.



of different ways: the deficit of imports to exports, India's tribute to Britain, improper capital investment, remittances and spending in Britain by British officials in India, and poor employment opportunities for Indians. Using references to theories of classical political economy and dominant contemporary economists, Naoroji tried to show that the British in India were not following the economic theories that they claimed to support. "Why blame poor Nature when the fault lies at your own door?" he wrote. "Let natural and economic laws have their full and fair play, and India will become another England."<sup>27</sup>

Naoroji referenced classical political economists and theories to support his argument that Britain's colonial economic policies in India ran contrary to accepted economic laws. He contrasted John Stuart Mill's theory on the relationship between capital and industry with the realities of economic policy in India, citing Mill's statement that "industry is limited by capital;" capital consisting of money, production materials, and food to sustain workers and being the result of savings and money-generating initiatives. He argued that in light of this theory of classical political economy, India's economic drain was unsurprising, as the nation was unable to generate any savings due to the constant drain of capital to Britain through the exploitation and neglect of its economy.<sup>28</sup>

When discussing free trade, however, Naoroji reaffirmed his support for the principles of classical economics but argued that free trade in the Indian

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<sup>27</sup> Naoroji 1901, 216.

<sup>28</sup> Naoroji 1901, 55 – 6.

context needed to be reconsidered. In his analysis of trade policies for India, Naoroji stated that while “I like free trade . . . Free trade between England and India in a matter like this is something like a race between a starving, exhausted invalid, and a strong man with a horse to ride on. Free trade between countries which have equal command over their own resources is one thing. . . .”<sup>29</sup> Classical free trade theories therefore needed to be reevaluated when occurring in colonial situations that were very different from the ideal interaction between two equally industrialized trading partners. Naoroji thus balanced his support of free trade theories with the realities of India’s colonial trade relationships.

Naoroji also adapted classical economic theories of investment for India’s situation. He described the way that British investment in India occurred: instead of utilizing Indian raw materials, manpower, and technology, British investment in India was carried out by British firms who employed British workers and worked for British benefit. The Indian economy was not involved in the process of this investment, with benefits gathered by those who were part of the British economy. Furthermore, final products like railroads that were the result of these investments invariably produced profits only for Britain.<sup>30</sup> Naoroji’s ideas were in sharp contrast with those of classical political economists, who would have disagreed with the idea of favoring the less experienced and less skilled workers, technology, and capital of one country over the more experienced counterparts of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>30</sup> Naoroji 1901, 54.

another. Naoroji argued, however, that for countries like India that needed assistance with investment, help should be given in the form of loans, not in the form of outside direct investment, which in the end only benefits the outside power and not India. He believed that India needed to be judged on different terms than the industrialized countries of Western Europe. “Let the British Indian Administration fulfil its sacred pledges and allow plenty to be produced in British India, and then will be the proper time and occasion to compare the phenomena of the conditions of Western Europe and British India,” he wrote.<sup>31</sup>

### **Colonial Status**

For Naoroji, India’s status as a colony fundamentally shaped its economic and political aspects. Goswami argues that the development of the idea of India as a national space with a territorially bounded economy was central to laying the foundation upon which nationalist ideology could develop.<sup>32</sup> The ways in which Naoroji discussed India and its economy show that he thought of India as a national economic space. He referred to India as a single “country” and wrote of its collective interests, people, and situation.<sup>33</sup>

Naoroji thought of India’s economy as not only a national economy but also a colonial one. He believed that India and Britain could have a mutually

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>32</sup> Goswami 2004, 209.

<sup>33</sup> For specific examples, see Naoroji 1901, 203 - 210.

beneficial relationship within the Empire but that this required reform of existing economic and political policy. Chandra argues that the economic and political proposals of early nationalist leaders were “basically anti-imperialistic” since they believed that the current exploitative relationship between Britain and India needed to be replaced by a more just relationship that would benefit India as well.<sup>34</sup> Goswami points out that early Indian nationalists were developing their critiques of British rule at a moment in history when the differences between colonial and national economies were becoming very apparent.<sup>35</sup> Naoroji was very conscious of the unjust nature of the relationship between India and Britain:

The drain of India's wealth on the one hand, and the exigencies of the State expenditure increasing daily on the other, set all the ordinary laws of political economy and justice at naught. Owing to this one unnatural policy of the British rule of ignoring India's interests, and making it the drudge for the benefit of England, the whole rule moves in a wrong, unnatural, and suicidal groove.<sup>36</sup>

Naoroji framed his criticism in terms of corruption of natural economic laws, harm brought to both Britain and India, and the unjust nature of such self-serving policies.

Naoroji was also very conscious of India's colonial identity and role in the British Empire, contrasting India's economic and political situation within the Empire with the status of other British colonies, especially Australia, British North America, and Ireland. He looked to Britain's white settler colonies as

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<sup>34</sup> Chandra 1966, 746.

<sup>35</sup> Goswami 2004, 210.

<sup>36</sup> Naoroji 1901, 125.

examples for India's position in the British Empire because he believed that they held shared experiences. He did not see any differences between the status of white settlers and Indian inhabitants. Naoroji firmly believed that Indians were equal to Europeans in characteristics and rights.

Do the British Indian authorities really think that the Indians are only like African savages, or mere children, that, even after thousands of years of civilisation, when the Britons were only barbarians; after the education they have received at the blessed British hands, producing, as Lord Duffering said, 'Native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence' (Jubilee speech); they do not see and understand these deplorable circumstances of their true position of degradation and economic destruction?<sup>37</sup>

Although Naoroji believed that Western civilization had been beneficial to India, he did not subscribe to Orientalist notions of European moral and cultural superiority.<sup>38</sup> While he had asserted the role of British rule in raising Indians from "misery and superstition" under despotic rulers, he believed that Indians deserved the same respect as other members of British colonies. He also argued against presentations of Indian history as a continuous course of degradation from the classical period onward, stating that instead "we have abundant testimony to prove that, at that date [of the first Muslim conquest], and for centuries before it, [India's] people enjoyed a high degree of prosperity, which continued to the breaking up of the Moghul Empire early in the eighteenth century."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Naoroji 1901, 363.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the Orientalist mindset, see Sen 2003, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Naoroji 1901, 584.

Believing in equal standing between India and other British colonies, Naoroji compared the situation of different colonies to show India's poverty and unjust treatment as a member of the Empire. "Every other part of the British Empire is flourishing except wretched India," he declared. In contrast with England at £41 per head, Canada at £26.9 per head, and Ireland at £16 per head, India garnered only £2 per head.<sup>40</sup> This difference in income levels was the result of unequal governance policies for India and other British colonies, wrote Naoroji. Analyzing trade balances, he showed that while India had a deficit of imports compared to exports, British North America and Australia both had excesses of imports and thus gained profit from trade, while India lost profit in its situation.<sup>41</sup>

The large gap between India and other British colonies was no mere coincidence, argued Naoroji, presenting facts and figures to show how India was required to contribute much more to the Empire than Britain's other colonies. Discussing the burden of colonial administrative costs, he noted that India paid for all expenses incurred by the colonial government in India, while the other British colonies were not expected to contribute in any way to the costs of Empire. While India paid for the entire cost of both the British administration in India as well as the India Office in London, its colonial counterparts were not required to contribute to their respective administrative expenses. Furthermore,

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 246 - 7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 32 - 3.

India financed initiatives that were of interest only to Britain and not to Indians, such as the Afghan Wars, ongoing military efforts to keep away Russian influences, and continual training and upkeep of British troops in India.<sup>42</sup>

Employment of Europeans instead of Indians was one of the chief sources of the material as well as moral drain of wealth from India, Naoroji repeatedly argued. He stated that “Europeans occupy almost all of the higher places in every department of Government directly or indirectly under its control. While *in* India they acquire its money, experience, and wisdom; and when they go, they carry both away with them, leaving India so much poorer in material and moral wealth.”<sup>43</sup> He urged Britain to fill government positions with Indian instead of European workers.<sup>44</sup> Not only would this retain more material and moral wealth in India, but it was the correct policy for a colonial nation. “The Europeans are not the natural leaders of the people,” he wrote. “They do not belong to the people; they cannot enter their thoughts and feelings; they cannot join or sympathise with their joys and griefs.” Even though British rule had the strong potential to be beneficial to India, Naoroji believed that employment of Indians was crucial for this success. This quote again reiterated his belief in European and Indian equality. Naoroji’s argument about the type of governance most suited for

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<sup>42</sup> Naoroji 1901, 657.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

India was clearly nationalist, even if he believed that India should be under the greater governance of Britain.

Naoroji argued that not only were specific British policies harmful to India but also that such imperialistic policies could never benefit Britain as much as fair policies would. The policies that Naoroji proposed to better India's economic situation were to allow India to keep what it produced, to decrease public debt and administrative costs, and to limit expenses accrued by Europeans living in India. He stated that "Britain must pay its proper share for its own interests" and expenses.<sup>45</sup> Naoroji believed that these measures would allow the material wealth of India to increase, as well as establish a just and sound administration.<sup>46</sup>

Naoroji believed that the best scenario for both India and Britain was to give India the same status in the Empire as other colonies. He wrote:

Let India have complete share in the *whole* imperial system, including the Government of this country, and then talk of asking her to contribute to Imperial expenses. Then will be the time to consider any such questions as it is being considered in relations with Ireland, which enjoys, short of Home Rule, which is vital to it, free and full share in the whole Imperial gain and glory—in the navy, army, and civil services of the empire. Let all arrangements exist in India as they exist here for entrance into the Imperial Services here and elsewhere, and it will be time and justice to talk of India's share in Imperial responsibilities.<sup>47</sup>

Naoroji believed that economics and politics were inherently connected and that both of these areas needed to be justly governed in order for India to become

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<sup>45</sup> Naoroji 1901, 142.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>47</sup> Naoroji 1901, 352.



prosperous and successful as a colony. Referencing Ireland, he argued that India should be given the same status within the Empire as Britain's other colonies. Interestingly, though, this proposal of an ideal colonial relationship ignored the realities of the Irish situation and the turbulent relationship that existed between Britain and Ireland.

Naoroji explained the economic and political benefits that England would derive from giving Indians control over their economic and political governance: "A natural and just policy will make India with its teeming population one of the, if not the best customer for England and the best field for England's enterprise . . . Under a natural and just policy, it will gain from India's *plenty*, and Manchester may have its free trade to its heart's utmost content."<sup>48</sup> Naoroji stressed the trade benefits that Britain would gain from a prosperous trading partner, declaring at one point that "England might derive ten times more benefit by trading with a prosperous people than she was doing now."<sup>49</sup> He also argued that these measures would be politically beneficial to Britain, since a prosperous and successful India would be a country full of subjects loyal to British rule. Although Naoroji's proposal was radically different from the basic tenets of imperialism, he believed that this policy would allow for the most possible benefits for both partners.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 284.

### Warnings to the British

Naoroji recognized the negative effects of harmful British policy upon the loyalty of Indians and used this as a tool to urge Britain to change its governance. Naoroji spoke of the development of nationalist sentiment within this Indian educated class, stating that the British were creating a class of Indians with a common “sympathy of sentiment, ideas, and aspirations” that was being created by the “deprivation and the degradation and destruction of their country” and had the potential to develop into a political force.<sup>50</sup> Writing about Indian songs that criticized English industry for the destruction of native goods, Naoroji wrote:

We may laugh at this as a futile attempt to shut out English machine-made cheaper goods against hand-made dearer ones. But little do we think what this movement is likely to grow into, and what new phases it may take in time. The songs are at present directed against English wares, but they are also a natural and effective preparation against other English things when the time comes, if the English in their blindness allow such times to come.<sup>51</sup>

Naoroji warned the British of the negative political effects of a continued drain of Indian wealth. His warning foreshadowed the subsequent course of nationalism in India, including the Swadeshi Movement, which saw the unification of educated Bengalis against British goods and British institutions.

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<sup>50</sup> Naoroji 1901, 206 - 7.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

### “Self-Government”

Throughout *The Poverty of India*, Naoroji concentrated his efforts on proving the economic drain of wealth from India and urging the British to discard old policies in favor of specific more beneficial ones. He made the same arguments and presented complementary sets of facts and figures throughout the different writings and speeches of the book, which spanned over thirty years. Naoroji’s argument and presentation techniques thus remained consistent throughout the course of his political career.

In 1906, Naoroji was elected to the year-long presidency of the Indian National Congress for the third time, following his two previous appointments in 1886 and 1893. In his Presidential Address, he presented his goals for India’s future and the reason that India deserved such rights. He maintained that the economic drain of wealth from India was one of the main problems of India’s current situation but brought together the remedies under one idea: self-government:

This meddling wrongly with economic things is the whole evil from which India suffers—and the only remedy for it is—“Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.” And these political principles are summed up in self-government. Self-government is the only and chief remedy. In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness.<sup>52</sup>

The various specific proposals that Naoroji had presented throughout *The Poverty of India*—including increased employment of Indians in the civil service,

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<sup>52</sup> Naoroji 1917, 95.

reduction of the public debt, and an end to remittances back to Britain—thus came together as part of one plan. Self-government according to Naoroji consisted of three basic aspects, which he referred to as the “rights” of British Indians: “Employment in the Public Service;” political “Representation” for Indians, such as seats in Parliament and extension of the franchise; and “Just Financial Relations” between India and Britain.<sup>53</sup> He argued that India deserved these basic rights because of their “Birthright” as British citizens, the “Pledged Rights” given to Indians by the British government, “Reparation” needed for the decline of India under British rule, and British “Conscience” which should not tolerate the continuation of the current situation. Naoroji’s vision of self-government was a culmination of his earlier specific criticisms and proposals into one program that would provide India with its rights and just status in the British Empire. Naoroji believed that India should hold a position in the British Empire where they had control over all areas of their governance, “as in the United Kingdom and the Colonies.”<sup>54</sup>

In this speech, which was given at the height of Swadeshi agitation, Naoroji also commented on the political situation in Bengal. Declaring that “the Bengalees have a just and great grievance,” Naoroji supported agitation, calling it “the civilised, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 74 - 83.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

physical force when possible.”<sup>55</sup> However, Naoroji defined agitation as “meetings, demonstrations and petitions to Parliament” with a goal to “inform the British people of the rights of the Indian people,” a definition that was very different from Pal and Ghose’s understanding of the methods and goals of anti-partition agitation.<sup>56</sup> Naoroji declared his support for swadeshi industry, reiterating his belief that economic laws such as free trade could not function in an economy that was still developing, but he did not comment on or support boycott tactics in any way.<sup>57</sup>

In 1906, Naoroji had been urging the British to change their policies in India for over three decades yet had seen few changes in India’s situation. He recognized this fact, stating that “since my early efforts, I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel.”<sup>58</sup> However, instead of being discouraged and losing faith in Britain because of these disappointments, Naoroji concluded that “we have not petitioned or agitated enough at all in our demands.”<sup>59</sup> He reaffirmed his belief in the benevolent and just nature of British ideals, stating that he was hopeful for change because of the present “‘revival’ of the old true spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions.”<sup>60</sup> Naoroji’s comments in his

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<sup>55</sup> Naoroji 1917, 89.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 89 - 90.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>59</sup> Naoroji 1917, 90.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

Presidential Address, therefore, can be seen as a compromise between the continued neglect of Indian rights and lack of response to protest with his long-standing moderate beliefs. The goal of self-government within the British Empire was a combination of the criticisms and proposals that Naoroji had made throughout his political career and an increased sense of frustration that he felt after years without change by the colonial government, yet he remained tied to the fundamental beliefs regarding the relationship between Britain and India that he had propounded in the first of his writings in *The Poverty of India* from 1876.

### **Naoroji's Legacy**

The complex and often contradictory nature of Naoroji's arguments makes it difficult to assess his view toward British rule and his place in the trajectory of Indian nationalism. During his lifetime, more extreme nationalists like Pal and Ghose criticized Naoroji for being too supportive of British rule, though they heralded his 1906 Presidential Address as a declaration of support for independence. British officials were visibly threatened by what they viewed as a sharp critique of colonial policies. Describing the contemporary British response to Naoroji, Chandra writes: "Dadabhai Naoroji, whose professions of loyalty to British rule were loudest of all and whose faith in British goodness was deepest of all, was condemned as a visionary, an extremist, and perhaps even a hypocrite

who was hiddenly disloyal.”<sup>61</sup> Yet, out of all the early moderates, he adds, Naoroji was the one that remained the most respected throughout the nationalist movement.<sup>62</sup>

In Chandra’s opinion, Naoroji’s economic critique was “revolutionary” because it necessarily implied major political change; the drain theory, he wrote, “proposed solutions which would cut at the very roots of British rule in India, and posed a contradiction that could not but result in the emergence of an extremist political outlook, a total political clash between the government and the people, and, finally, the revolutionary demand for the overthrow of British rule.”<sup>63</sup> Therefore, for Chandra, Naoroji was one of the first nationalists in a succession that culminated in Indian independence. This conclusion looks past Naoroji’s support for British rule and focuses instead on the role of the drain theory for following generations. Naoroji’s 1906 Presidential Address clearly shows that although he was frustrated by the continuation of the drain of wealth, he was unable to give up his faith in British ideals and his moderate tactics. However, the drain theory laid down by him combined with continued colonial policies and created the conditions in which subsequent frustrated nationalists, like Pal and Ghose, launched their more critical attack on the roots of British colonial rule.

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<sup>61</sup> Chandra 1966, 707.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 708.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 705, 707.

## CHAPTER 2

### INSPIRATION FOR THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT

When I appeared for the first time on the platform of the Congress in 1887. . . I declared that I was a democrat, a democrat of democrats, a radical of radicals; yet I said that neither my democracy nor my radicalism took away in the least measure from my loyalty to the British Government. That was 1887 and I said it in all sincerity and earnestness. . . In those days, we had faith in the British nation.

—Bipin Chandra Pal, *The New Movement*

Although he had supported British rule and the ideals of British government in 1887, by the beginning of the Swadeshi movement in 1905 Bipin Chandra Pal had lost all faith in the British government in India and advocated passive resistance with a goal of complete independence. Pal and Aurobindo Ghose were editors of the newspaper *Bande Mataram* and two of the strongest advocates for boycott and agitation in the Swadeshi Movement.

The Swadeshi Movement was sparked by a plan from the Government of India to partition the state of Bengal, but reflected a greater general state of discontent toward the British administration in India. Pal and Ghose reinterpreted and expanded upon existing nationalist ideas to develop new tactics and goals for India's future. The inspiration for Pal and Ghose's new ideas can be seen as a combination of three things: frustration over the lack of response from the colonial government to nationalist criticisms and recommendations, as well as moderate nationalist techniques themselves; reinterpretation of economic ideas to



justify a different nationalist path; and understanding of the political experiences of other countries.

### “New Politics”

Pal and Ghose were leaders of what they called the “New Party” in nationalist politics. They followed a plan of passive resistance and were referred to as political extremists, in comparison to other nationalists of the time period. Sumit Sarkar divides the members of the Swadeshi movement into followers of one of four groups: the moderate tradition, which advocated petitioning and reasoning; constructive swaraj, which supported self-help; political extremism, or passive resistance; and terrorism, a trend that emerged toward the end of the movement as it weakened. Followers of the first three groups came together to collectively agitate against the Partition of Bengal, but there were substantial differences and conflicts between them.<sup>64</sup>

In “The Doctrine of Passive Resistance,” a series of newspaper articles in *Bande Mataram* from April 11 to 23, 1907, Aurobindo Ghose identified the different philosophies that existed within the nationalist movement, showing that the groups that Sarkar identifies match the differences in opinions recognized by nationalists themselves at the time.

There are, we pointed out, only three possible policies: petitioning, an unprecedented way of attempting a nation’s liberty, which cannot possibly

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<sup>64</sup> Sarkar 1994.

succeed except under conditions which have not yet existed among human beings; self-development and self-help; and the old orthodox historical method of organised resistance to the existing form of government.<sup>65</sup>

In Ghose's opinion, neither moderate petitioning nor self-help held the means necessary to achieve any form of self-government. Ghose believed that self-help and self-development were important elements in the path to self-government, but that a larger, more comprehensive program was needed. This program was passive resistance, achieved through a combination of boycott, self-development, and organized political agitation.

The "New Party" was referred to by a number of different names throughout Pal and Ghose's writings, including the "Nationalist Party," "New Politics," and "New Thought." They contrasted their beliefs with those of moderates and loyalists. Pal and Ghose rejected the term "extremist" and criticized depiction of their beliefs as stemming from frustration and despair. Describing the "New Party," Ghose wrote that "it is not a cry of revolt and despair, but a gospel of national faith and hope. Its true description is not Extremism, but Democratic Nationalism."<sup>66</sup> He emphasized the "New Party" belief that Indians could and should govern themselves independently of Britain, in contrast with the belief of loyalists and moderates that Indians were either

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<sup>65</sup> Ghose 1972, 85. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 298. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 26, 1907.

incapable of self-government or that self-government within the British Empire was the best choice for India.<sup>67</sup>

### **Criticism of Moderate Nationalism**

Pal and Ghose were very critical of early nationalists and rejected moderate nationalism because of its goals and methods, although they recognized the contributions made by early moderates to the nationalist movement. Pal and Ghose were frustrated with moderate petitioning tactics and believed that moderate nationalists were unable to be critical of colonial rule because of their ties to British education and government. Their view toward early moderates was shaped by their fundamental belief in the inherent incompatibility of colonial Britain and India.

Pal and Ghose attributed the ineffectiveness of moderate agitation to the political inexperience and colonial upbringing of early moderates. According to Ghose, it was “political inexperience” that prevented these first politicians from realizing that their efforts “were not only paltry and partial in their scope but in their nature ineffective.”<sup>68</sup> Pal and Ghose believed that the early moderates had completely wasted their time on ineffective strategies with limited goals. Ghose declared that moderates were unable to have anything more than limited goals for India’s future because they were brought up within the system of British

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>68</sup> Ghose 1972, 90. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

education and governance, learning about English politics and history and the glory of the British nation.<sup>69</sup> Pal stated that the early moderates were “under the spell of Europe,” basing their goals for India upon the experiences of Western countries, such as the French Revolution, the American War of Independence, and the English Rebellion.<sup>70</sup>

With statements such as these, Pal and Ghose did not excuse the early moderates for their limited methods and objectives, but they shifted the blame away from the individuals themselves towards greater social and political factors. The ideas of the early nationalists were not seen as homegrown, carefully developed ideas but rather as the automatic result of dominating external influences. The politicians themselves were not without blame, since they were willingly complicit with the British colonial system, but Pal and Ghose provided an explanation for their beliefs and actions.

When writing about the legacy of the early moderates, Pal stated that while their “agitations have done us good, as instruments of political training,” they did not bring any advances to the Indian cause.<sup>71</sup> In fact, in terms of British education and administration, Pal believed that early moderate actions had only led to the “strengthening and tightening of the bonds of British servitude.”<sup>72</sup> By making British education and government responsible for the limited successes of

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 92 – 93.

<sup>70</sup> Pal 1954, 17 – 18. Originally published in 1905.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. Originally published in 1902.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 55c. Originally published in 1906.

early moderates, Pal and Ghose clearly indicated what were, in their opinion, the true sources of the current Indian situation. As long as Indians remained guided by British education and complicit and active within the colonial administration, India's situation would not improve. For Naoroji and other early nationalists, British education had been something to be thankful for, since it had given them greater knowledge and access to European opportunities. Pal and Ghose's critique of British education marked a clear break from these moderate views toward British education and government.

### Opinions on Naoroji

Out of all the early moderates, Naoroji was viewed the most positively by Pal and Ghose. While they faulted him for having many of the same limitations as other early moderates, they believed that he was also different; Ghose wrote in 1906 that "Mr. Naoroji is not one of them [the moderates], though he may not go the whole way with the advanced school [Pal and Ghose's 'New Thought']."<sup>73</sup> Naoroji's economic ideas on topics like the drain of capital and natural resources, famines, and lack of administrative representation informed Pal and Ghose's views toward the relationship between Britain and India.

Pal and Ghose recognized the importance of Naoroji's economic theories to the nationalist cause and used his ideas and statements to support their own

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<sup>73</sup> Ghose 1972, 169. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 13, 1906.

beliefs. They differentiated him from other early nationalists because of his determination to prove the increasing poverty of India under British rule.

Discussing the role of the drain of wealth theory in nationalist thought, Ghose stated:

It was necessary for the nation but to realise its increasing poverty under British rule; only then could it take the next step and take to heart the fact that British rule and increasing poverty stood in the relation of cause and effect; last of all comes the inevitable conclusion that the effect could only be cured by . . . the substitution of autonomy in place of a British or British-controlled Government.<sup>74</sup>

Ghose supported a linear progression of Indian nationalism; he believed that nationalism could only progress from Naoroji's economic critique to Indian independence. Therefore, while admitting that Naoroji did not make any declarations in support of independence, Ghose argued that his contributions to nationalist thought naturally led the Indian nation closer to independence. Speaking about Naoroji's political stance, Ghose went so far as to say that Naoroji's decision not to support independence was a result of his desire to be politically moderate and did not necessarily reflect his own beliefs:

It is true that he has not been able to proclaim the third of these three connected truths consistently and frankly; especially have those of his utterances, which were meant for purely Indian consumption, been marred by the desire to qualify, moderate and even conceal a plain fact, which, though it was necessary, it might yet be dangerous to proclaim.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ghose 1972, 199. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Dec. 26, 1906.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

Ghose was thus able to resolve the conflict between Naoroji's contribution to nationalist thought and his continued proclamations for Indian participation within the British Empire. He reiterated his belief that British education and colonial government were responsible for the moderate beliefs of early nationalists. Arguing in this manner, Ghose tied Naoroji's beliefs more closely to his own and was able to use Naoroji to support his own beliefs.

Naoroji's call for self-government in his 1906 Presidential Address gave Pal and Ghose the opportunity to connect Naoroji even more closely with their own beliefs. Discussing Naoroji's speech, Ghose wrote that "the Congress has declared Self-Government on Colonial lines to be its demand from the British Government and this is only a somewhat meaningless paraphrase of autonomy or complete self-government."<sup>76</sup> Pal termed Naoroji's word choice "extremely significant" and said that self-government in both instances gave the right to self-taxation and self-legislation, therefore "self-government in the Colonies is the same as self-government in the United Kingdom."<sup>77</sup> For Pal and Ghose, complete independence was the only option for India, so support for any type of self-government was seen as support for complete independence. While Naoroji did call for self-government, the vision that he detailed was self-government within the British Empire and used Britain's colonies as examples. He also reaffirmed his belief in moderate tactics. However, his clear call for colonial self-government

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<sup>76</sup> Ghose 1972, 203. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Dec. 31, 1906.

<sup>77</sup> Pal 1954, 149, 157. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

brought his ideas much closer to those of Pal and Ghose than his previous beliefs had been.

### **Economic Prosperity and Political Independence**

Pal and Ghose's beliefs differed from those of moderates on two fundamental topics: the relationship between Britain and India and the best methods for nationalist agitation. Although Pal and Ghose based many of their ideas on the same colonial economic theories propounded by the moderates, they saw very different implications of those theories than their predecessors.

Naoroji's drain theory and economic theories of other early moderates underpinned Pal and Ghose's perceptions of the colonial relationship between Britain and India. Unlike moderates who believed that the economic relationship could be remedied by specific policy changes, however, Pal and Ghose viewed the drain as symptomatic of a larger economic and political incompatibility between the two nations. In their opinion, India's situation could only be improved by ridding the country of colonial rule altogether. Ghose wrote:

The Congress insistence on the Home Charges for a long time obscured the real accusation against British rule; for it substituted a particular grievance for a radical and congenital evil implied in the very existence of British control. The huge price India has to pay England for the inestimable privilege of being ruled by Englishmen is a small thing compared with the murderous drain by which we purchase the more exquisite privilege of being exploited by British capital. The diminution of Home Charges will not prevent the gradual death by bleeding of which exploitation is the true and abiding cause.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ghose 1972, 91. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.



The economic theories of early moderates had very different implications in the minds of Pal and Ghose. For them, India and Britain were economically and politically incompatible; Pal wrote that “our economic interests are in perpetual conflict . . . our loss economically is England’s gain; our gain economically is England’s loss.”<sup>79</sup> Because of this, the economic changes necessary to make India prosperous ran contrary to the interests of Britain and would never be allowed while the country was under British governance. Colonial rule, therefore, could never lead to the developments needed for India to flourish economically.

For India to prosper, Indians needed to be the ones in charge of the basic tools of governance. Responses like increasing the appointment of Indians to the civil service, Ghose wrote, would not decrease the drain that was caused by British capital. Real progress could only come by giving Indians control of their own government, allowing them to control taxes, executive power, and the economy.<sup>80</sup> He believed that the only cure for India’s economic problems was to hand control of taxation over to the Indian people and away from the British government, which did not hold itself accountable to the people of the country or work in their benefit.<sup>81</sup> Other basic rights that needed to be in the control of Indians themselves were the right of self-administration, the right to self-

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<sup>79</sup> Pal 1954, 174. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>80</sup> Ghose 1972, 91. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

legislation, and the ability to grant and refuse entry to outsiders.<sup>82</sup> Pal and Ghose believed that these areas were exactly those that Britain would never be willing to give up because Britain benefited from its current control over them.

Pal argued that colonial self-government under Britain would never be possible for India because all aspects of governance were related, so for example, if Britain wanted to retain control over India's foreign relations only, they would not be able to do so without controlling all other aspects of the country. Control of India's foreign relations, he declared, would require the assistance of a national army, which would in turn require control of India's economy in order to support the army and its endeavors. At that point, India would no longer control taxation or any of the other basic aspects of self-governance. Pal argued that Britain would never be willing to relinquish control of foreign policy, yet they would also never be willing to maintain their army in India at their own expense.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, colonial self-rule in India within the British Empire was a paradox that would not be possible. With arguments like these, Pal and Ghose reinterpreted Naoroji's economic arguments about the colonial relationship between Britain and India to show that the solutions he proposed to these issues could never satisfy both parties involved.

Pal and Ghose also viewed years of ineffective petitioning as proof that Britain had no desire to change its colonial policies. Disillusioned with ideas of

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<sup>82</sup> Pal 1954, 150 - 1. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>83</sup> Pal 1954, 150 - 1. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

British goodness and fairness that the moderates held so dear, Pal and Ghose believed that Britain governed India to advance its own interests. Pal asked:

How can you expect that the nation which holds supreme authority over you now, will, however good and generous, commit economic suicide, intellectual 'harikeri' and moral self-immolation with a view to advance your intellectual life, or with a view to advance the spiritual and moral culture of your nation? No, Sir.<sup>84</sup>

In this quote, Pal reiterated his belief that Britain's priorities lay with economic self-advancement. Since Britain and India could never be in a mutually beneficial economic relationship, Britain would naturally continue to choose policies that benefitted itself. Any British qualities of fairness and freedom would be overrun in the face of economic self-advancement.

### **India's Colonial Situation**

Like Naoroji, Pal and Ghose were deeply aware of India's position as a colony. Unlike him, however, they believed that colonial self-government could never be possible because India's situation was very different from those of Britain's white colonies. Pal and Ghose argued that settler colonies were simply extensions of the mother country, and their relationship was therefore mutually beneficial:

England sends out her surplus populations to the Colonies, and the Colonies receive with open arms the migrants from the mother-country, because they help the Colonies to develop their own resources; they help the Colonies to exterminate the native races; they help the Colonies and the Mother Country to

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<sup>84</sup> Pal 1954, 175 - 6. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

strengthen the white power in distant parts of the globe. Therefore, England is interested in the upkeep of the Colonies.<sup>85</sup>

Therefore, Britain benefitted because the Empire was being strengthened, and the colonies benefitted because they were protected and assisted by the mother country. This argument lent credit to Pal's belief that Britain's policies and actions were driven by self-interest.

Pal and Ghose contrasted the positive relationship between Britain and its white colonies with those between Britain and its other, non-white colonies.

Commenting on British claims that they ruled Egypt for the benefit of the Egyptians, Ghose wrote:

We can understand why Egyptian aspirations must be stifled in the interests of the 'protectors' of Egypt; but to say that this must be done in the interests of the children of the soil is indeed monstrous. . . . whenever it is a question of Egypt or India where British interests are at stake, British greed overpowers British conscience and all sorts of monstrous arguments are fabricated to justify the suppression of popular movements.<sup>86</sup>

Once again, Britain's actions were seen as the result of its own self-interest, and the interests of Britain and its non-white colonies were naturally in opposition.

Ghose believed that Britain ruled India, Egypt, and other non-white colonies for its own enrichment and personal benefit and justified this rule with paternalistic ideas of superiority.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>86</sup> Ghose 1972, 267. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 18, 1907.

In the eyes of Pal and Ghose, Britain's self-interest was tied in with belief in British racial superiority. Ghose wrote that Britain and the Anglo-Indian press were proud of the introduction of "Western civilization" to the colonies but that when those colonies begin to demand democracy and the political aspects of this Western civilization, they were condemned as "damned wretches" deserving to be jailed and killed.<sup>87</sup> Pal put it bluntly, stating that "England would do a great deal for white peoples. . . . But she would not do it for a non-white people."<sup>88</sup> This identification and condemnation of British racism was a new addition to the debate surrounding British rule. Moderates like Naoroji never mentioned the possibility of British racism when discussing the colonization and governance of India, most likely due to their belief in British moral goodness. However, Pal and Ghose were much more frustrated with colonial rule and more critical of British policies. Arguing that Britain believed itself to be racially superior also supported Pal and Ghose's argument of the inherent incompatibility between Britain and India.

Pal and Ghose felt solidarity between the experiences of India and other British colonies. The Irish situation was commonly referenced by Pal and Ghose. While Naoroji had argued for home rule using the example of Ireland, these two men instead highlighted that colony's continued conflict with Britain, to lend support to their own program. As with India, Pal and Ghose believed that colonial

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<sup>87</sup> Pal 1954, 152. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>88</sup> Ghose 1972, 242. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 8, 1907.

self governance in Ireland presented the people with an option that was too limited; Ghose wrote, “It is much better that Ireland should have to wait longer for any measure of self-government, than that she should commit political suicide by accepting [home rule].”<sup>89</sup> For him, colonial self-government within the British Empire was not an option for colonies like India, Ireland, and South Africa that desired effective government that would serve the people. While in the British Empire, these colonies would never have more than an ineffective government subservient to the wishes of the mother country, so they could not settle for anything less than independence.

Pal and Ghose also saw many parallels between the nationalist movements in Britain’s other colonies. Egypt and the Transvaal were favorite examples for Pal and Ghose. They believed that the experiences of the nationalist movement in Egypt were very similar to the Indian nationalist experience, with goals of complete independence and the development of national spirit.<sup>90</sup> Pal and Ghose were inspired by two separate movements in the Transvaal. First, they saw many similarities in the political program of the Boers, who, like the Irish, refused to accept anything less than complete independence.<sup>91</sup> In addition, they found inspiration and solidarity in the tactics of the struggle of Indians in the Transvaal. Although Ghose noted that their goals were “less vast than those of the movement

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<sup>89</sup> Ghose 1972, 367. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 24, 1907.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 721. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 3, 1908,

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 367. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 24, 1907.

in India,” their tactics of passive resistance, which by 1908 were being used successfully for political agitation, validated the program of passive resistance that Pal and Ghose supported in India.<sup>92</sup>

### “Asian Resurgence”

In a 1908 editorial in *Bande Mataram*, Ghose wrote that “the political ideals of the West are not the mainspring of the political movements in the East, and those who do not realise this great truth, are mistaken; for they suppose that the history of Europe is a sure and certain guide to India in her political development.”<sup>93</sup> Pal and Ghose drew a clear difference between European politics and Asian politics and viewed the development of India as part of the rise of Asia. Asian nations presented examples of national development methods, as well as proof that non-Western countries could become strong and prosperous.

Discussing the development of understandings of India’s national economy and society, Manu Goswami writes that Japan was often a source of inspiration for Indian nationalists. While nationalists often misinterpreted the situation and implications of Japan’s national development, they used their understanding of its development to highlight an example for India’s future.<sup>94</sup> Pal and Ghose believed in the “resurgence of Asia” and tried to connect “Asian”

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 753. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 13, 1908.

<sup>93</sup> Ghose 1972, 756. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 16, 1908.

<sup>94</sup> Goswami 2004, 254.

nations in every way possible. In a newspaper editorial from March 1908, Ghose wrote:

We are assisting now at the birth of a new Asia and the modernisation of the East. . . . This time there have been three currents,—insurgent nationalism starting from South Africa, Asiatic revival starting from Japan, Eastern democracy starting from Russia; and the centre of disturbance covers a huge zone, all Eastern, Southern and Western Asia, Northern or Asiaticised Africa and Russia which form the semi-Asiatic element in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

By labeling all non-European countries as “Asian,” Pal and Ghose connected India’s development to those of other countries, including those who had very different political situations and geographic locations. Pal and Ghose favored above all else national development, downplaying the less appealing political aspects of other nations, such as elite despotism in Russia and racial conflicts in South Africa. They instead focused on aspects of the development of other countries that matched their own beliefs about India and its future. Writing about the methods of national development in other countries, Ghose attributed the success of Asian monarchies like those in Japan, China, and Persia to involvement of the people and policies of “popular emancipation.”<sup>96</sup> These popular aspects provided inspiration for the inclusive mass nationalism advocated by Pal and Ghose.

“Asian” nations above all represented the possibilities that India could achieve if it became independent of Britain. Ghose wrote in a 1907 editorial that

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<sup>95</sup> Ghose 1972, 259. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 18, 1907.

<sup>96</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 42. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 29, 1907.



“here in India we lag behind and lose the race [to other Asian nations] not because the other Eastern nations are naturally more gifted than we are but because there is that benevolent despotism which like a leaden extinguisher puts out all the fire of our genius.”<sup>97</sup> Ghose and Pal’s arguments thus returned to their central belief that colonial rule was preventing India from being a strong and prosperous nation, the main idea underscoring all of their beliefs and differentiating them so much from the early moderates.

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<sup>97</sup> Ghose 1972, 528. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 3, 1907.

## CHAPTER 3

### PASSIVE RESISTANCE AGITATION TACTICS

In April 1907, Aurobindo Ghose wrote that there were three methods for organized national resistance: organized passive resistance; organized aggressive resistance, or assassinations and riots; and armed revolt.<sup>98</sup> Ghose believed that organized passive resistance was the proper course for India and wrote that “the passive method is especially suitable to countries where the Government depends mainly for the continuance of its administration on the voluntary help and acquiescence of the subject people.”<sup>99</sup>

Pal and Ghose’s program of organized passive resistance was a combination of boycott and self-development and would be achieved through mass agitation. Although basing its origins in economic critiques of the government, their program included much more than simple economic agitation. Pal and Ghose’s critiques of other areas, such as education, did however follow the same logic and format as their economic beliefs. In addition, their views toward change were very different from Naoroji’s; while Naoroji believed that reforming a system would lead to improvements on the ground in a top-down fashion, Pal and Ghose believed that change could only come when it occurred at both the institutional and the individual level. Furthermore, these two men

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<sup>98</sup> Ghose 1972, 97. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

advocated for unified agitation that would include both the educated and working classes, a clear departure from Congress politics up until that point. Passive resistance, therefore, can be seen as a clear departure from previous dominant nationalist thought.

### **Mass Nationalism**

The mass nationalism of passive resistance was a clear departure from the elite politics of early moderates like Naoroji. Ghose criticized Congress members for being “dictatorial” autocrats with an “open scorn for public opinion.”<sup>100</sup> Pal and Ghose, although members of the educated Bengali middle class, or *bhadralok*, championed a mass nationalist program that involved all segments of society. Ghose explained that the shared situation of every Indian under British rule gave them common goals: “Brahmin and Sudra, aristocrat and peasant, Hindu and Mahomedan, all are brought to a certain level of equality by equal inferiority to the ruling class. The differences between them are trifling compared with the enormous difference between all of them and the white race on top.”<sup>101</sup> Pal and Ghose wanted to use the collective power of Indian society to agitate against the colonial government and render its existence impossible.

In his book about worker resistance in colonial Bengal, Subho Basu discusses the relationship between the Bengali *bhadralok* and the working classes,

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<sup>100</sup> Ghose 1972, 246. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 10, 1907.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 315. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 2, 1907.

arguing that the two groups were often at odds with one another. The Swadeshi Movement saw a stronger attempt to align the interests between groups, he claims, but the *bhadralok* were ultimately unable to create a strong or sustainable partnership.<sup>102</sup> Basu's analysis of the conflict between middle- and working-class interests and the inability of Swadeshi leaders to create any lasting connections between the two groups is merited, but he does not properly recognize the advancements of the movement. By lumping the Swadeshi Movement in with the prior decades marked by middle class-worker hostility, Basu fails to recognize the fundamental shift in mentality that occurred for middle class leaders. Members of the Bengali intelligentsia like Pal and Ghose recognized that mass cooperation was needed for the advancement of nationalists interests and believed that the middle and working classes could unite on a common platform; although the tactical outcome of this union may not have been strong, the shift from elite politics to mass nationalism was a significant change.

Pal and Ghose's view toward mass nationalism was affected by both their desire for a comprehensive nationalist program and their allegiance to the educated class. They recognized the difficulties and poor conditions faced by Indian laborers and supported labor strikes in British factories, every one of which they viewed as a "blow aimed at British rule."<sup>103</sup> Writing about the success of a factory strike in Madras, Ghose labeled the event "a victory for Indian labour

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<sup>102</sup> Basu 2004, 131.

<sup>103</sup> Ghose 1972, 727, 753. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 4, 1908.

against British capital” and praised it for its successful use of united passive resistance from both the educated and working classes.<sup>104</sup>

At the same time that Pal and Ghose embraced the idea of mass involvement of all members of society, they were limited by their middle class allegiances. In a *Bande Mataram* article from May 1907, Ghose emphasized the necessity of involving of all groups but also highlighted the central role of the middle class in the movement. Calling traditional rulers, landed aristocracy, and peasants “helpless and disorganised,” he maintained that the middle class intelligentsia, with its institutions of “the Press, the Bar, the University, the Municipalities, [and] District Boards,” made it uniquely qualified to lead India in its struggle against colonial rule.<sup>105</sup> “Everything depends on the success or failure of the middle class in getting the people to follow it for a common salvation,” he wrote.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, Ghose recognized the necessity of mass involvement and wanted working class involvement, but only in a movement that would be guided by the middle class and dominated by middle class interests. He justified this by claiming that the middle class represented the shared interests of all aspects of society.

Ghose’s advocacy of ideal unity often clashed with the existing realities of diversity within Indian society. An editorial from December 1907 revealed the

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<sup>104</sup> Ghose 1972, 752 - 4. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 13, 1908.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 316. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 2, 1907.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 317.

tensions and disagreements in his view of Indian unity. Writing about the mobilization of particular social groups—the Muslims and lower-class Namasudras in Bengal, as well as nationalist awakenings in Gujarat and Orissa—Ghose welcomed these events, saying that all instances of self-awakening were beneficial for the nationalist cause. However, the goals of these groups were not only very different from those of Swadeshi leaders, but were also often contrary, such as the support of the Partition of Bengal by the Muslims and Namasudras.<sup>107</sup> Ghose therefore welcomed the assertion of these groups while arguing that their goals were misled. He criticized the political leader of Orissa, calling his “political attitude mistaken” and declared that the demands of the Namasudras were “under existing circumstances, impracticable from Hindu society.”<sup>108</sup> Therefore, in order to create unity from diverse groups while still maintaining the supremacy of their specific nationalist vision, Ghose and Pal had to subvert the particular goals of other groups in order to advance their own.

### **Boycott and Self-Development**

Pal and Ghose’s program of passive resistance consisted of two parts: boycott and self-development. Bipin Chandra notes that calls for boycott and swadeshi had occurred in India from 1875 onward, and Sumit Sarkar agrees with this when arguing that boycott was not a new idea in India during the Swadeshi

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<sup>107</sup> Bandyopadhyay 1997, 64 - 66.

<sup>108</sup> Ghose 1972, 645. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Dec. 17, 1907.

Movement.<sup>109</sup> Calls for boycott and self-development were therefore not new to the Indian political landscape for Pal and Ghose. Boycott was notable in their political program because it combined with self-development efforts to form a mechanism for complete removal of colonial government.

The goal of boycott within Pal and Ghose's plan was to paralyze the colonial government and thus force its end, since Pal and Ghose believed that India's future lay not in reforms within the British Empire but in complete freedom from it. The boycott aspect of the Swadeshi Movement began as a decision to consciously avoid British goods, though this was only one small part of the boycott plan. Pal believed that economic boycott was necessary as a form of protectionism. Since Indian industry could not grow or survive in the face of competition from strong British industry, he argued that "by refusing to buy foreign articles, we can indirectly protect our own industries by this Boycott Movement."<sup>110</sup> Summarizing the mechanism of economic boycott, Ghose wrote: "we refuse to help the process of exploitation and impoverishment in our capacity as consumers, we refuse henceforth to purchase foreign and especially British goods or to condone their purchase by others."<sup>111</sup> Such arguments show how Pal and Ghose translated their beliefs about the incompatible economic relationship

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<sup>109</sup> Chandra 1966, 122 - 144; Sarkar 1994, 96 - 7.

<sup>110</sup> Pal 1954, 229, 230. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>111</sup> Ghose 1972, 101 - 102. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram* Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

between Britain and India into tactics to achieve an end to the negatives of British control.

Self-development, or self-help as it was also called, was the second part of Pal and Ghose's plan, and its goal was creation of new Indian institutions to replace the British ones being boycotted as well as development of strength and spirit of Indians and the envisioned Indian nation. Not only did Pal and Ghose rethink the forms of systems like the economy and education that Naoroji had also critiqued, but their proposed mechanism for change was very different.

Pal and Ghose advocated self-development to create "practical self-government running parallel" to the current British administration, which would support their efforts to paralyze the colonial government.<sup>112</sup> Boycott alone would not work without alternatives to British institutions, pointed out Ghose; promoting the purpose of swadeshi enterprise, he wrote that "if we refuse to supply our needs from foreign sources, we must obviously supply them ourselves; we cannot have the industrial boycott without Swadeshi and the expansion of indigenous enterprises."<sup>113</sup>

Pal and Ghose believed that economic swadeshi was necessary because of the infant state of Indian industries. Justification for swadeshi enterprise was based on their belief that India's industries required protection against Britain's. Pal and Ghose also realized the complexity of national and economic

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<sup>112</sup> Pal 1954, 217. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>113</sup> Ghose 1972, 103. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.



development. Ghose wrote that substantial and long-lasting advancements could only happen by parallel development of many different aspects of the economy: “There are three departments of Swadeshi which have to be developed in order to make India commercially independent,” he wrote, “first, the creation of manufactures, secondly, the retail supply, thirdly, the security of carriage from the place of manufacture to the place of supply.”<sup>114</sup> During the Swadeshi Movement, therefore, swadeshi enterprise was attempted by “promoting [sic.] the production of indigenous articles, by organising joint stock companies, by opening shops and stores, and by encouraging the use of indigenous products in preference to foreign imports.”<sup>115</sup>

Development of individuals, not just larger systems, was a central aspect of Pal and Ghose’s plan. “Organisation of the forces and the resources of the people” was necessary for any lasting change to occur.<sup>116</sup> This idea was a very different understanding of the method for improvement than Naoroji’s. Naoroji argued that institutional reform would naturally ameliorate India’s economic situation. Pal and Ghose did not support a top-down approach, however; they advocated that structural reform of institutions be paralleled by personal development of each individual in the Indian nation. The goal of such initiatives was to “get rid of the fatal dependence, passivity and helplessness in which a

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<sup>114</sup> Ghose 1972, 803 - 4. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 30, 1908.

<sup>115</sup> Pal 1954, 225. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>116</sup> Ghose 1972, 103. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

century of all-pervasive British control has confirmed us.”<sup>117</sup> Pal and Ghose therefore proposed various developments targeting village life, to build up the strength and spirit of their inhabitants and increase their available resources.

### **Comprehensive Program**

Economics thus provided a framework for the beliefs of Swadeshi leaders and inspiration for agitation techniques but held only a supporting role in the comprehensive program developed by Pal and Ghose to paralyze the British government and build an Indian nation. Pal and Ghose themselves recognized the holistic nature of the Swadeshi Movement, as have modern historians. Analyzing of the nature of the Swadeshi Movement, Sumit Sarkar writes about “the new politics of passive resistance, of which economic boycott and the promotion of indigenous industries formed just a part and no more.”<sup>118</sup> Although stating that the Swadeshi Movement was more than an economic movement, Sarkar attributes the origins of its holistic program to economic issues, arguing that extremists like Pal and Ghose developed a more comprehensive plan of passive resistance after realizing that economic boycott and promotion of indigenous industries alone would not be able to achieve change.<sup>119</sup> Pal and Ghose did indeed reject notions

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<sup>117</sup> Ghose 1972, 88. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>118</sup> Sarkar 1994, 99.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

of “constructive swadeshi,” or swadeshi without boycott, claiming that “it can bring no safe and permanent national gain.”<sup>120</sup>

Though the Swadeshi Movement began as a combination of politics and economics—using economic tactics to place political pressure on the government while improving the economic situation of the nation—for Pal and Ghose, non-economic issues were just as important as economic ones. Ghose stressed the importance of a comprehensive program of boycott and self-development for India, writing that “it is not by any mere political programme, not by National Education alone, not by Swadeshi alone, not by Boycott alone, that this country can be saved.”<sup>121</sup> It is therefore important to understand these two leaders and the Swadeshi Movement in the trajectory not only of economic nationalism but also of social reform. Sarkar gives due attention to the subject of national education in the Swadeshi Movement, and Sanjay Seth and Haridas and Uma Mukherjee discuss the development of critiques of the colonial education system, whose timeline paralleled economic critiques.<sup>122</sup>

Boycott as a political weapon meant boycott not only of economic institutions but also of political, judicial, and educational systems, as well as those who supported them. Pal wrote that economic boycott should be paralleled by refusal to hold government posts and membership in governance boards and

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<sup>120</sup> Ghose 1972, 96. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 659. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Jan. 19, 1908.

<sup>122</sup> Sarkar 1994, 149 - 181; Mukherjee and Mukherjee 1957, 1 - 13.

councils.<sup>123</sup> He and Pal also supported a social boycott of individuals who continued to patronize the colonial government and were thus “guilty of treason to the [Indian] nation.”<sup>124</sup> They further envisioned the boycott extending to government schools, law courts, and the executive administration, presaging the later and larger non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi.<sup>125</sup>

Self-development was a similarly holistic program. Swadeshi enterprise and national education, the most important self-development initiatives during the Swadeshi Movement, were only two small parts of larger development goals that consisted of “national defence, national arbitration courts, sanitation, [and] insurance against famine or relief of famine.”<sup>126</sup> Pal and Ghose turned their attention to the Indian village as the starting point for development of Indian strength and self-sustainability.<sup>127</sup> The goal of these efforts was to effect change at both the institutional and individual level.

### **National Education**

While economic nationalism played only a small part in the comprehensive program of Pal and Ghose, the logic behind their other critiques paralleled that which they developed when thinking about India’s economic

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<sup>123</sup> Pal 1954, 51. Originally appeared in *New India*, Aug. 12, 1905.

<sup>124</sup> Ghose 1972, 112. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 102, 120.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>127</sup> Pal 1954, 217. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

situation. This can best be seen through national education, which along with economics garnered the most attention in their program.

In his book on Western education in colonial India, Sanjay Seth separates critiques of the colonial education system into two overarching arguments that led the discussion: first, the idea that Western education was failing to produce positive effects as a vehicle for modernity; and secondly the belief that Western education was in fact negatively affecting Indian society by alienating Indian society from its roots. These two ideas were not mutually exclusive, however; although many nationalists believed only in the first idea and felt that the existing education system could be fixed by reform, other nationalists believed that both critiques were valid and could be addressed by improving and nationalizing education.<sup>128</sup> These two strains of thought clearly paralleled nationalist debates over economic issues, where moderates like Naoroji believed that the system could be reformed from within while a later generation of extremists believed that British and Indian interests were inherently contradictory. Seth's identification of these two beliefs and their overlap reveals many similarities, but he unfortunately fails to connect them because of his concentration on educational change only.

Sarkar, for his part, spends significantly more time detailing the national education movement but still does not make outright comparisons between economic and educational agitation to show any of the similarities. He

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<sup>128</sup> Seth 2007, 161 - 2.

emphasizes the use of the national education platform as a tool to gain political support for the Swadeshi Movement, focusing on the role of education in agitation efforts and not analyzing its ideological roots.<sup>129</sup>

As with economic critiques of British policy, nationalist discussions of colonial education began with praise of the institution as a whole and calls for reform of its shortcomings. Members of the Bengali educated middle class, or *bhadralok*, welcomed British education with the opportunities for learning and advancement that it offered. The *bhadralok*, including Ghose and Pal, were themselves products of the colonial education system and realized the benefits and opportunities it had given them. Naoroji and other contemporary moderates like Surendranath Banerjea praised the effects of English education throughout the late 1800s and into the Swadeshi Movement. At the same time that Indians welcomed the positive aspects of British education, however, they became more aware of its shortcomings and engaged in the same tactics of letter-writing and resolution-making to influence the government to change its policies.<sup>130</sup> They criticized aspects of the education system, arguing that its curriculum was flawed and limited and that it failed to create intelligent and well-rounded graduates.<sup>131</sup> Arguments such as these became staples in Pal and Ghose's discussion of education.

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<sup>129</sup> Sarkar 1994, 157.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 150 - 1.

<sup>131</sup> Mukherjee and Mukherjee 1957, 5-9.

Inspiration for Pal and Ghose's proposed curriculum for national education was based on these widely accepted nationalist critiques of colonial education. Ghose described the system as "vicious and defective education—utterly unsuited to modern needs—academic, scrappy, unscientific, unpractical, unideal."<sup>132</sup> Pal believed that the educational curriculum should consist of three parts: a general liberal arts branch, to include language, history, philosophy, and the arts; a middle branch of pure science; and a third technical branch, to teach the production of tangible material items.<sup>133</sup> Pal also criticized the curriculum for being too far removed from India and life there, ineffectively teaching Indian pupils about the botany, literature, and history of foreign Western countries, which had no connections to the realities of their lives in India.<sup>134</sup> None of these ideas were new additions to the education debate but rather reaffirmations and reiterations of existing critiques.

As with the development of nationalist economic critiques, changing mentalities of Indians over time led to questioning of not only the nature of British education but of its entire purpose. Pal and Ghose concluded that in addition to having a flawed curriculum, colonial education as a whole ran contrary to Indian nationalist interests. The education system was seen as a vehicle for Britain's political dominance of India. Explaining the bond between

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<sup>132</sup> Ghose 1972, 479. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, July 13, 1907.

<sup>133</sup> Pal 1954, 265. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

political control and the education system, Ghose wrote: “The control of the young mind in its most impressionable period is of vital importance to the continuance of the hypnotic spell by which alone the foreign domination manages to subsist . . .”<sup>135</sup> When discussing the effects of colonial education, Pal wrote that “it has divorced our mind, our heart, our spirit, our character, and our manhood from our national life.”<sup>136</sup> He also recognized that one of the chief goals of the British government was to create an educated class of Indians who would work for and support the interests of the colonial government.<sup>137</sup> At the same time, he claimed that deficiencies in the curriculum of the colonial education system were deliberate attempts to limit to development of Indian intellect and desire for political autonomy.<sup>138</sup> These beliefs reflect the same conclusions Pal and Ghose came to about the economic relation between Britain and India: that the system was being used as a political tool and that the interests of the two groups were opposing and incompatible.

The program that Pal and Ghose proposed to replace the colonial education system attempted to rectify poor curriculum and Western influence by creating national schools and colleges run by Indians with reformed curriculums. Although they criticized many aspects of colonial education, Pal and Ghose did

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<sup>135</sup> Ghose 1972, 95 - 96. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>136</sup> Pal 1954, 257. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 261 - 2.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.



not reject the fundamentals of modern education as established by Western institutions. They instead wanted national education to combine the benefits of Western education, especially science, with study of Indian history and culture. Detailing the nature of national education, Ghose wrote: “We must therefore save for India all that she has stored up of knowledge, character and noble thought in her immemorial past. We must acquire for her the best knowledge that Europe can give her and assimilate it to her own peculiar type of national temperament.” This desire to improve Indian civilization by reforming current society and combining the positive aspects of Western civilization place them squarely in Parekh’s category of critical traditionalists.<sup>139</sup>

Believing that education played a very important political role, one of Pal and Ghose’s main goals for national education was to use it as a tool to support the nationalist cause. Explaining their program, Ghose wrote: “We advocate national education not as an educational experiment or to subvert any theory, but as the only way to secure truly national and patriotic control and discipline for the mind of the country in its malleable youth.”<sup>140</sup> The union between political boycott and education was particularly important because students played a large role in mass agitation of the Movement. Along with the use of newspapers and speeches, Ghose believed that student involvement was necessary to gather

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<sup>139</sup> Parekh 1999, 74.

<sup>140</sup> Ghose 1972, 96. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

support for their cause and spread mass nationalism.<sup>141</sup> He stated that student activity was necessary to enthusiastically implement agitation and create a “Swadeshi *atmosphere*.”<sup>142</sup> By politicizing education, Pal and Ghose were able to mobilize large numbers of students to support their entire agitation program.

### **Larger Self-Development Program**

Pal and Ghose’s two-pronged plan of boycott and self-development was to be applied not only to economics and education, but also to all other government institutions. These again had the goal of both rendering government systems useless and creating strong and sustainable Indian alternatives. Although boycotting these systems supported paralysis efforts, Pal and Ghose focused mainly on developing their Indian alternatives as a tool for building the strength and spirit of the Indian people. Through development efforts, wrote Pal, “we shall offer conclusive proof to all these people of the capacity of the Indian population to organise their forces with a view to administer their affairs themselves faithfully.”<sup>143</sup>

The program that garnered the most attention after national education was judicial reform. Declaring that “the control of the judiciary is one of its [the colonial state’s] chief instruments of repression,” Pal and Ghose advocated for the

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<sup>141</sup> Ghose 1972, 357. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 22, 1907.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>143</sup> Pal 1954, 249. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

development of national arbitration courts to replace government ones.<sup>144</sup> As with economics and education, Pal and Ghose realized how law courts were used by the British government to retain their power and control over Indians. They called for support of national legal development to “diminish [sic.] the curse of litigation that impoverishes us.”<sup>145</sup> Pal argued that national arbitration courts were better than government legal systems because they would allow Indians to seek “justice at their hands and for their civil complaints [to be] heard by a man of their own choosing who will adjudicate their claims.”<sup>146</sup> Ghose added that they would also contribute to the development of the strength and spirit of the Indian nation, since they would “provide a practical field in which our capacities can be tested.”<sup>147</sup>

Pal and Ghose envisioned a comprehensive set of Indian initiatives running parallel to and eventually replacing British systems. In a newspaper article from March 1907, Ghose wrote that some of the most pressing self-help issues were “the necessity of Organised Self-protection and the necessity of Prevention of Famine by self-help.”<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Pal outlined plans for national doctors who would distribute medicine and be funded by voluntary self-taxation efforts. He also envisioned nationalists creating their own public works departments and police force. Initiatives such as these would “strengthen the

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<sup>144</sup> Ghose 1972, 96. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 224. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 29, 1907.

<sup>146</sup> Pal 1954, 248. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>147</sup> Ghose 1972, 95 - 9. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 12, 1908.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 223 - 4. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 29, 1907.

manhood of the nation, create in the community the determination to work out their own salvation themselves, and give them the training in the art of civic life, cooperative work for public good, in the art of self-government.”<sup>149</sup> Tactics like boycott and self-development would thus develop India into an economically and morally strong nation that matched Pal and Ghose’s vision of the country’s future.

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<sup>149</sup> Pal 1954, 249. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

## CHAPTER 4

### PAL AND GHOSE'S VISION OF INDIA'S FUTURE

Pal and Ghose's economic, political, educational, and historical critiques of the British Raj and India's current situation combined to form their vision of India's future. Explaining the purpose of their program of boycott and self-development, Ghose wrote:

The double policy we propose has three objects before it:—to develop ourselves into a self-governing nation; to protect ourselves against and repel attack and opposition during the work of development; and to press in upon and extrude the foreign agency in each field of activity and so ultimately supplant it.<sup>150</sup>

Pal and Ghose referred to their goal for India's future as "swaraj," which combined a basis of economic and political independence with three key components: self-development, democracy, and development of a national spirit. These ideals were essential for the development and continuation of Indian society; Ghose wrote in a 1907 *Bande Mataram* editorial that "the choice is not between autonomy and provincial Home Rule or between freedom and dependence, but between freedom and national decay and death."<sup>151</sup> Pal and Ghose's goals for India's future were clarified and brought together under the central idea of swaraj after the adoption of that term by Naoroji at his Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress (Congress) in December 1906; however,

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<sup>150</sup> Ghose 1972, 120. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 11 - 23, 1907.

<sup>151</sup> Ghosh 1972, 298. Originally published on April 26, 1907.

many of the ideas that were central to this program were developed by the two men before that time and expanded upon in their writings about swaraj.

### **Swaraj**

Pal and Ghose adopted the term “swaraj” after Naoroji’s 1906 Congress presidential acceptance speech. Commenting in *Bande Mataram* after the event, Ghose stated: “[Naoroji] once more declared Self-Government, Swaraj, as in an inspired moment he termed it, to be our one ideal and called upon the young men to achieve it.”<sup>152</sup> Following this speech, Pal and Ghose began to use the term “swaraj” when talking about their vision and goal for India’s future. For them, swaraj was not a broad reference to self-government but a specific vision of a completely independent India based on self-development, democracy, and national spirit.

Swaraj, which translates to “self-rule,” held a double meaning of both political autonomy and control of the self. Pal and Ghose’s program of swaraj therefore combined national freedom with self-betterment into a program that was both political and personal. “This New Movement is not a mere political movement. It is essentially a spiritual movement,” declared Pal in 1907.<sup>153</sup> Although Pal and Ghose cited Naoroji for the introduction of the idea of swaraj into Indian society, they did not accord economics the centrality that it had in his

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<sup>152</sup> Ghose 1972, 204. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Dec. 31, 1906.

<sup>153</sup> Pal 1954, 148. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

writings. “The new movement in India is not, essentially, an economic movement, though it does seek to reconstruct Indian society upon a sound economic basis,” wrote Pal.<sup>154</sup> Although political and economic development were crucial parts of swaraj, their program was a combination of the political and economic critiques of early nationalists with the ideas of early social reformers.

### **Development of Inner Spirit**

At the beginning of the Swadeshi movement in the summer of 1905, Pal wrote that it was necessary for India to develop “those mental and moral qualities which constitute really the inner life and strength of every nation.”<sup>155</sup> In a speech two years later, he declared that Indians needed to “develop the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of self-reliance, and the spirit of self-determination in the people, and by this means we hope to attain the ideal of Swaraj.”<sup>156</sup>

This focus on the development of “mental and moral qualities” and the “inner life and strength” of India reflected a trend of Indian social reformers to differentiate between political and spiritual development. In *The Nation and its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee propounds that faced with Orientalist claims of ethnic superiority and inherent differences between Europe and Asia, Indians responded by separating culture into two distinct realms: the material and the

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<sup>154</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 93. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, June 14, 1908.

<sup>155</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 47. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 29, 1907.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 179.

spiritual.<sup>157</sup> In the material or outer realm, India had become dominated by Britain because of that country's superior material culture. The spiritual or inner world was the area that Indians could control themselves; therefore, Indian society's preservation could only come by the cultivation, development, and protection of this inner spirit or true self. This separation allowed Indians to retain dignity and faith in their own culture while being politically dominated by a foreign government.<sup>158</sup>

This importance of developing the inner self is clear throughout Pal and Ghose's writings. Pal wrote that "there can be no reform [sic.], social or economic or political, that can be got from outside. You must gradually acquire your right; and in the acquisition of your right you develop character."<sup>159</sup> Likewise, Ghose wrote that "if the individual is given free room to realise himself, to perfect, specialise and enrich his particular powers and attain the full height of his manhood, the variety and rapidity of national progress is immediately increased."<sup>160</sup>

Under British rule, India had become "a nation politically disorganised, a nation morally corrupted, intellectually pauperised, physically broken and stunted."<sup>161</sup> This picture of India, a country weak and "degraded," showed the

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<sup>157</sup> Sen 1994, 173.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 174 - 5.

<sup>159</sup> Pal 1954, 198. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>160</sup> Ghose 1972, 307. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 29, 1907.

<sup>161</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 74. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 12, 1908.



contrast between India and the strong and independent nation that Pal and Ghose ideally imagined.<sup>162</sup> Ghose wrote that the responsibility of nationalists was “to awaken the boldness in a nation which has lost the sense of honour and self-respect.”<sup>163</sup>

The majority of Pal and Ghose’s discussions about the inner self focused on the importance of its development for a strong and successful nation. At times, however, they did emphasize the importance of developing the inner self along authentic “Indian” lines instead of copying the West. In 1908, Ghose wrote that the goal of nationalism must be “a Swadeshi Swaraj and not an importation of the European article” and stated that this swadeshi was directed “not merely against foreign goods, but against foreign habits, foreign dress and manners, foreign education, and sought to bring the people back to their own civilization.” Pal also emphasized the foreign nature of colonial rule, stating that “even our mind, our mental ideals, our spiritual aspirations, all these had been got hold of by this foreign Government, this foreign culture, this foreign civilisation.”<sup>164</sup> These quotations reflected a major concern of early nationalists and social reformers who wanted India to become a modern civilization that would retain its unique cultural aspects and not become a replica of its European colonizer.

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<sup>162</sup> For references to the “degradation” of India and its subjects, see Mukherjee 1957, 74 and Pal 1954, 170 - 1.

<sup>163</sup> Ghose 1972, 276. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 24, 1907.

<sup>164</sup> Pal 1954, 191. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

Pal and Ghose attempted to combine the outer and inner worlds by linking social and political advancement under swaraj. They believed that both social and political advancement were necessary for India. However, as Amiya Sen shows in *Social and Religious Reform*, the two men disagreed about the order in which social and political development should occur, with Pal emphasizing social reform and Ghose favoring political independence.<sup>165</sup>

In an early lecture from 1889, Pal criticized Indian nationalists who sought political independence while defending social wrongs, claiming that this showed “that we have yet to realize the truth of the principle that the growth of political institutions in a nation absolutely depends upon the growth of ideas, and the progress of thought and culture in all the departments of the nation’s life . . .”<sup>166</sup>

In contrast, Ghose declared that “Liberty is the first requisite for the sound health and vigorous life of a nation.”<sup>167</sup> He criticized moderate programs that believed in delaying political agitation until social reform was complete and wrote that “if a healthy social development is to be aimed at, it is more likely to occur in a free India when the national needs will bring about a natural evolution.”<sup>168</sup>

Despite their difference of opinions on this timeline, both men were in agreement about the necessity for spiritual development of the self for independence, and Ghose wrote: “It is only the growth of a mighty and moral

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<sup>165</sup> Sen 2003, 25 - 6.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 133. Originally appeared as a lecture by Pal, Dec. 5, 1889.

<sup>167</sup> Ghose 1972, 300. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 27, 1907.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 312 - 3. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 1, 1907.

power among the people . . . that will alone secure the reforms that we so sorely want, and remove the grievances that we suffer under at present.”<sup>169</sup>

### “Critical Traditionalism”

Social reformers and nationalists held greatly varying views about society, religion, and politics in colonial India. Although there was overlapping and interaction between various ideas and views, Bhikhu Parekh proposes a general four-fold classification for understanding Hindu social reformists and nationalists: “modernism,” “critical modernism,” “traditionalism,” and “critical traditionalism.” Core beliefs of critical modernists, the group in which he classifies Pal and Ghose, included selective appropriation of European ideas and values, rejection of universal judgement of society, and belief that Indian civilization mainly consisted of Hindu culture and religion.<sup>170</sup> Unlike traditionalists, critical traditionalists critiqued Indian society and attempted to improve the problems they saw. Critical traditionalists also believed that politics and religion were intertwined, something visible in Pal and Ghose’s emphasis on development of the self.

Pal and Ghose’s critique of caste reflects Parekh’s classification of critical traditionalists. Social reform had a central role in swaraj; both development of individuals and of Indian society in general were necessary. When they critiqued

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<sup>169</sup> Pal 1954, 43. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram* on July 29, 1905.

<sup>170</sup> Parekh 1999, 66 - 80.

the injustices of the caste system, however, Pal and Ghose attempted to dissociate Hinduism from the contemporary form of the caste system. In an editorial titled “The Unhindu Spirit of Caste Rigidity,” Ghose argued that the caste system was “inconsistent with the supreme teaching, the basic spirit of Hinduism.”<sup>171</sup> While recognizing the inequality in the system, he exculpated Hinduism from blame by claiming that “the caste system was once productive of good” and had become corrupted through “degenerate perversions.” He explained this belief in a subsequent editorial, reasoning that Hinduism, being based on spiritual and moral ideals not material ones, could never support such an unequal system.<sup>172</sup> Ghose also appropriated caste reform as an idea that was naturally Indian and not a response to British calls for change, writing that Indians needed to be educated in the nation’s spiritual ideals and then reforms would naturally follow.<sup>173</sup> This declaration once again reflects the idea of the inner domain as an area that needed to be controlled by Indians, not by Westerners. In this case, Ghose advocated for caste reform while upholding an idealized view of Hinduism and claiming Indian ownership of reform initiatives.

Parekh also emphasizes the Hindu nature of critical traditionalism. Critical traditionalists believed that the Indian state and Hinduism were inseparable, and that Hindus were the creators and had the most important impact on the

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<sup>171</sup> Ghose 1972, 533. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 12, 1907.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 537. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 22, 1907.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 535. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 20, 1907.

development of Indian society. They strongly criticized those areas of contemporary Hindu society that they felt needed to be reformed, like caste, while looking to the Vedantas and other early Hindu religious texts as inspiration and guidance for the ideal Indian society.<sup>174</sup>

### **Swaraj as a Religion**

When discussing swaraj, Pal and Ghose adopted a religious tone that referenced many Vedantic ideals. Pal and Ghose characterized their program of swaraj as a religion. “Nationalism is a religion that has come from God,” wrote Ghose in January 1908. “Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live . . . you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God.”<sup>175</sup> Pal and Ghose created a full vision of swaraj as a religion, giving it a religious history and often idealizing many aspects. Swaraj was transformed in many ways into a created belief system that pushed factual information aside to give it a larger-than-life characterization.

Pal referred to the program for complete independence as the “Gospel of Swaraj.”<sup>176</sup> Along similar lines, Ghose named Pal the “prophet of nationalism” and spoke of martyrdom and religious persecution in an editorial in March 1908. Ghose also wrote that the nationalist song “Bande Mataram” was the *mantra* of

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<sup>174</sup> Parekh 1999, 73 - 80.

<sup>175</sup> Ghose 1972, 652. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Jan. 1, 1908.

<sup>176</sup> Pal 1954, 149. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

the nationalist movement. Not only did he give it religious terminology, but he also claimed that it was an old *mantra* that had been lost to the world and given back to them by God during an earthquake in 1897.<sup>177</sup>

Pal and Ghose highlighted the Sanskrit roots of the term “swaraj” and referenced Vedantic ideas. Ghose wrote that Indians should seek the idea of “The Universal” from Vedantic literature, and to do this, individuals and the nation should “be impressed with the dignity of one’s own self, to realise its identity with The Universal.”<sup>178</sup> Pal wrote along similar lines that Indians need to cultivate the “self” (*swa*) and ignore the “not-self” (*para*).<sup>179</sup> This detailed analysis of the term “swaraj” and its origins equated the term’s Sanskrit origin with Vedantic ideals.

In Pal and Ghose’s Vedantic-based discussions of India’s current situation, Britain was characterized as *maya* and *para*. Drawing his arguments from Vedantic ideas about the self and not-self, Pal claimed that in the context of swaraj, Indians needed to develop the self (*swa/raj/rashtra*, themselves) and not develop the not-self (*para/para-rashtra*, the British government). Pal argued that it was essential to realize that “there is a natural, a fundamental conflict between the self and the not-self in the political affairs of this country.”<sup>180</sup> Pal and Ghose consistently equated British rule with an increase in *maya*, or illusion, again emphasizing the material nature of Britain. Pal claimed that the colonial

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<sup>177</sup> Ghose 1972, 701. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Feb. 19, 1908.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 513. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Aug. 19 - 20, 1907.

<sup>179</sup> Pal 1954, 190. Originally appeared as a speech in 1907.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 182 - 3, 193. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

government was responsible for the “hold of maya” on Indians and that this *maya* would only continue to increase until India attained complete self-government. Ghose similarly wrote that self-government within the British Empire was an illusion and *maya*, and that complete independence was the only way for the end of “intellectual and moral bondage.”<sup>181</sup> Knowledge of the conflict between India and Britain, the “self” and “not-self,” was the first step for India’s spiritual advancement and future, claimed Pal and Ghose.<sup>182</sup>

### **Idealization of Hinduism**

Pal and Ghose’s spiritual program of swaraj presented a glorified view of Hindu culture and history. While historians like Parekh and Ashis Nandy emphasize the critical tone of Pal and Ghose’s evaluations of Hinduism, the two nationalist leaders were critical only of contemporary Hindu society and idealized the values and history of Hinduism before it had declined to its contemporary form.<sup>183</sup> For this reason, they constantly referred to the Vedantas and other early Hindu texts, often misinterpreting them and simply using them to provide support for their arguments about the role and importance of Hinduism in Indian society.

Pal and Ghose believed that India was a nation based on natural spirituality that was a necessary component of her character. “We are Hindus and

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<sup>181</sup> Ghose 1972, 491. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, July 29, 1907.

<sup>182</sup> Pal 1954, 193. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>183</sup> Parekh 1999, 77; Nandy 2004, 95.

naturally spiritual in our temperament,” wrote Ghose.<sup>184</sup> Pal emphasized the “general training of the Indian people in the past” and the “spiritual emphasis of the Hindu character and the generality also of the Indian character.”<sup>185</sup> In another editorial, Ghose stated that “our civilisation has always been preponderatingly spiritual and moral.”<sup>186</sup> By characterizing India as a nation based on inherent spirituality—spirituality that was naturally Vedantic—Pal and Ghose justified and elevated the Hindu-centrist elements of their program.

Pal and Ghose’s unquestioning view of India’s natural spirituality and Europe’s materialism reflected dominant Orientalist mindsets. The British propounded a clear dichotomy between the scientific and material West and the spiritual East to justify their colonial actions.<sup>187</sup> These classifications seem to have not been questioned by Pal and Ghose, who often used very similar terminology and explanations to support their spiritual-based swaraj. Ghose wrote:

The genius of India is separate from that of any other race in the world, and perhaps there is no race in the world whose temperament, culture and ideals are so foreign to her own as those of the practical, hard-headed, Pharisaic, shopkeeping Anglo-Saxon. The culture of the Anglo-Saxon is the very antipodes of Indian culture. The temper of the Anglo-Saxon is the very reverse of the Indian temper . . . In such a civilisation, India can have no future. If she is to model herself on the Anglo-Saxon type, she must first kill everything in her which is her own . . . It is sheer political atheism, the negation of all that we were, are and hope to be. The return of India on her eternal self, the restoration

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<sup>184</sup> Ghose 1972, 799. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 28, 1908.

<sup>185</sup> Pal 1954, 201. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>186</sup> Ghose 1972, 536. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 22, 1907.

<sup>187</sup> Raghuramaraju, 93.



of her splendour, greatness, triumphant [sic.] Asiatic supremacy is the ideal of Nationalism.<sup>188</sup>

Generalizations like these were the hallmark of Ghose and Pal's analysis of Europe, India, and Asia. Ghose's description of Britain applied not only to that nation but to all of Europe. Characterization of European nations as countries that had "carried material life to its farthest expression" and were "preponderatingly material" were common throughout his writings.<sup>189</sup> Ghose did not believe that Christianity was responsible for the rise of materialism in the West; instead, European materialism came from loss and separation from original Christian values. By identifying this as the cause of European materialism, Pal and Ghose also advanced their own argument about the necessity of spirituality in political development.

Swaraj was also necessary, wrote Ghose, so that India would live "not as a slave for the material and political benefit of a single purse-proud and selfish nation, but as a free people for the spiritual and intellectual benefit of the human race."<sup>190</sup> This quote shows generalizations about British materialism and once again underscores the distinction between outer material life and the inner spiritual realm. In addition, this quotation shows Ghose's idea of India's spiritual and political development was necessary not only for itself but also for the rest of

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<sup>188</sup> Mukherjee , 85 - 6. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 3, 1908.

<sup>189</sup> Ghose 1972, 842. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 9, 1908; *Ibid.*, 537. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Sept. 22, 1907.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 464. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, July 3, 1907.

the world. In an editorial from July 1907, Ghose stated that “since the spiritual life of India is the first necessity of the world’s future, we fight not only for our own political and spiritual freedom but for the spiritual emancipation of the human race.”<sup>191</sup> Ghose also claimed that India “has the undisputed right to extend spiritual sway over the world.”<sup>192</sup> This idea corresponded with Ghose’s belief in the material nature of Europe.

England with her practical intelligence, France with her clear logical brain, Germany with her speculative genius, Russia with her emotional force, American with her commercial energy have done what they could for human development . . . Something is wanting which Europe cannot supply. It is at this juncture that Asia has awakened, because the world needed her. . . . [India’s] all-embracing intellect, her penetrating intuition, her invincible originality are equal to greater tasks.

Ghose argued that not only was India’s spirituality different from European materialism, but it was necessary for the world. Pal and Ghose’s discussions of India’s “spiritual nature” and the “materialism” of the West were marked by generalizations and polarization that elevated the Indian nationalist cause and separated the vision of India’s future from Western examples.

### **“Composite Patriotism”**

Bikhu Parekh emphasizes the desire that critical traditionalists had for an Indian state that would be based on a Hindu nation. Though they recognized the

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<sup>191</sup> Ghose 1972, 489. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, July 25, 1907.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 428. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, July 19, 1907.

large number of minorities in India and their important effects upon Indian history and society, critical traditionalist leaders believed that India was above all else a product of Hindu origin. Parekh attributes the limitations of critical traditionalism to this belief, which overlooked the diverse nature both of Indian society and also of Hinduism, which was not a strict set of beliefs.<sup>193</sup> Analyzing Parekh's classifications, Amiya Sen argues that the idea of a universal religion and desire for shared characteristics between different religions could be found in the thoughts and writings of critical traditionalists, not only limited to moderate reformers as Parekh posits.<sup>194</sup> Analysis of Pal and Ghose show that they did believe Hinduism could act as a universal religion that could incorporate belief systems of other religions; though, as Parekh argues, their emphasis on Hinduism resulted in alienation rather than assimilation.

Bipin Chandra Pal termed his vision for India's political future "Composite Patriotism," which would consist of Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Parsee, and aboriginal elements.<sup>195</sup> Ghose subscribed to the ideas of this program as well and wrote in an editorial in 1908:

Both Christianity and Islam have come to stay in India, and form essential elements in her present life and thought. . . . The Hindu culture, however, on account of its age and its superior numerical strength, will always form the ground work of this composite Indian culture and civilisation. The dominant

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<sup>193</sup> Parekh 1999, 79.

<sup>194</sup> Sen 2003, 53.

<sup>195</sup> Pal 1954, 12. Originally published May 27, 1905.

note of Hindu culture, its sense of the spiritual and universal, will, therefore, be the peculiar feature of this composite, Indian Nationality.<sup>196</sup>

Although recognizing the diversity of Indian society and the importance of the nation's minorities, Pal and Ghose believed that India's future organization lay naturally as a Hindu-dominated society in the future. While they gave Hindu culture the central position in Indian society, Pal and Ghose also attempted to incorporate the other religious groups into their future vision. Unity was a central idea, and although the two leaders structured Indian society around a dominant Hindu element, they tried to bring together the similarities of all religious faiths.

Pal and Ghose believed that India's religious groups could survive and thrive in a Hindu-dominated society because they felt that Hinduism was a broad and accepting religion with many universal elements. To show the universalism of Hinduism, Ghose referred to the experiences of other religions throughout his writings, to show the similarities between the experiences of those religions and Hinduism. In one editorial, he likened the persecution of Jews and Christians to the oppression of Hindus under British rule.<sup>197</sup> At another point, he wrote that "social freedom was part of the message of Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak and Kabir and the saints of Maharashtra." Underscoring the importance of faith in nationalism, Ghose recounted a story about Guru Nanak to illustrate this quality, "the first condition of success in every great undertaking."<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 94. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, June 14, 1908.

<sup>197</sup> Ghose 1972, 740. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Mar. 10, 1908.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 289. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 25, 1907.

Pal and Ghose also tried to connect the beliefs and tenets of each religion with those of Hinduism:

In [the program's] universal aspect, it means a promise for such a reconstruction of economic life in India upon a supremely spiritual basis as will offer a valuable object lesson to the sociologists and statesmen of the world, such as will enable them to realise the ideal of the Kingdom of God on earth, that New Jerusalem, after which Europe and Christendom generally have been striving in vain for the last two thousand years.<sup>199</sup>

By reducing religious beliefs down to common desires like “the Kingdom of God on earth,” Ghose focused on the similarities of different religions and characterized Hinduism as an accepting religion that could incorporate all other faiths into it, thus legitimizing its position as the dominant religion in their program. However, arguments like this attempted to find religious universals, but they ignored the differences between religions and effectively destroyed any need for different religious faiths at all. In the end, Pal and Ghose’s insistence on the centrality of Hinduism led to a greater distance between Hindu and Muslim nationalists instead of the “composite patriotism” that they had hoped for.

### **Hindu-Muslim Unity**

Pal and Ghose’s relationship with Islam was ambiguous. While recognizing the “contributions” of Islam to Indian society, Pal and Ghose incorporated Christianity and Sikhism much more successfully than they did Islam into discussions about religious universalism. They made many connections

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<sup>199</sup> Mukherjee 1957, 91. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, June 14, 1908.

between the specific religious beliefs of Christianity and Sikhism with Hinduism. Pal mentioned the need for Hindus and Muslims to unite but never brought the ideals of the two religions together.<sup>200</sup> While it seems that Pal and Ghose were unable to link the two religions together in discussions of religious ideals and experiences, they focused primarily on Hindu-Muslim relations when writing about the necessity for political unity between different faiths.

The two men attempted to bring together Hindus and Muslims by highlighting their shared experiences under British rule, experiences that were shared by members of all religious and all socioeconomic groups. "Brahmin and Sudra, aristocrat and peasant, Hindu and Mahomedan, all are brought to a certain level of equality by equal inferiority to the ruling class," wrote Ghose.<sup>201</sup> By claiming that Hindus and Muslims were experiencing the same political oppression, Ghose and Pal circumvented discussions of religion by subverting Islamic religious autonomy to issues of politics and political freedom. Pal and Ghose also attributed conflict between Hindus and Muslims in politics to divisive measures by the British government, not to any differences in the concerns or opinions of the two groups. Declaring that the difficulty between Hindus and Muslims "was not in existence thirty or forty years back," Pal claimed that it was "the system of the Administration that [the British government has] introduced

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<sup>200</sup> See Pal, 1954, 5 - 6. Originally appeared in *New India*, 1902.

<sup>201</sup> Ghose 1972, 315. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, May 2, 1907.

that is responsible for this conflict.”<sup>202</sup> Ghose similarly discussed how purposely divisive government policy created conflict between the two groups.<sup>203</sup> By identifying British policy as a major factor in creating conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities, Pal and Ghose avoided a discussion of the real relationship between the two religions.

Despite their arguments about created differences and division between Hindus and Muslims, Pal and Ghose themselves did not challenge the belief in inherent differences between the two faiths. Unity was a necessary but ultimately temporary part of the nationalist movement. Wrote Ghose in 1908:

Unity is at present a means and not an end in itself. . . . There is an idea in many minds that our salvation lies in the removal of all differences, religious, social and political, but we may wait for many millenniums before such an Utopia can be reached in this world. Differences of religion, social status and political opinion there must be.<sup>204</sup>

Ghose argued that Indian religious communities needed to work together to achieve common political goals; afterwards, they could retain their individual religious and other beliefs. It did not occur to him or he did not acknowledge that religious groups might not be willing to work toward political freedom that had the ultimate form of a nation based on Vedantic ideals. For Pal and Ghose, Hindu culture and Indian politics were inseparable; other religious groups could keep

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<sup>202</sup> Pal 1954, 171. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>203</sup> Ghose 1972, 887. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 26, 1908.

<sup>204</sup> Ghose 1972, 867. Originally appeared in *Bande Mataram*, Apr. 22, 1908.

their own specific beliefs, but they needed to unify under the greater program of spiritual nationalism.

### **The Indian Nation**

Pal and Ghose viewed India as a nation, a nationalist belief that was shaped by an understanding of India as a geographically bounded economic space, as Goswami shows.<sup>205</sup> The two men's vision of the purpose of the political nation was based on that nation's economic and moral life. "What is a nation?" asked Pal. "A nation is not a mere collection of individuals. A nation is an organism; it has an organic life; and like all organisms a nation has an end unto itself."<sup>206</sup>

Goswami argues that Pal and Ghose combined the premise of a bounded economic space with a religious-philosophical schema to produce the idea of the nation as an economic and spiritual organism.<sup>207</sup> Parekh also emphasizes the moral role played by the state in the view of critical traditionalists: the state was seen as the caretaker of not only the political and economic aspects of the nation, but of its moral and spiritual ones as well.<sup>208</sup> Writing about the differences between Indian democracy and democracy in Europe, Pal wrote: "The ideal of Swaraj that has revealed itself to us is the ideal of Divine Democracy. It is the

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<sup>205</sup> Goswami 2004, 251.

<sup>206</sup> Pal 1953, 253. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

<sup>207</sup> Goswami 2004, 256 - 7.

<sup>208</sup> Parekh 1999, 75.



ideal of democracy higher than the fighting, the pushing, the materialistic, I was going to say, the cruel democracies of Europe and America.”<sup>209</sup> These ideas once again emphasized the inherent differences between India and the West, conforming to dichotomies of India as a “spiritual” place in contrast with the “material” West. The importance of national spirit and development of the self also remained, separating Pal and Ghose’s vision of the nation and its purpose from Naoroji’s, in which the nation was seen as a vehicle for economic and political policy that would move the nation toward modernity.

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<sup>209</sup> Pal 1954, 201. Originally given as a speech in 1907.

## CONCLUSION

On May 3, 1908, toward the end of the Swadeshi Movement, Bipin Chandra Pal commented on the role and importance of the movement in the development of Indian Nationalism. Pal began his article in *Bande Mataram* by stressing the “preparation of the national mind” as the “first necessity” of the Swadeshi Movement, whose main effects upon Indian nationalism had been of a “preparatory character.” Discussing earlier nationalists, he wrote that their only contribution to the struggle had been “to prepare the way for the new thought by giving a full trial to the delusions that then possessed the people and demonstrating their complete futility.” Pal then emphasized the importance of the Swadeshi Movement as a successor to such moderate nationalism, declaring its preparatory role to be “a necessary and salutary stage of the movement, because the nation, after the long pauperisation of its energies and enervation of its character by a hundred years of dependence and mendicancy, would have been unequal to the sacrifices the real struggle demands.”<sup>210</sup>

With these comments, Pal connected the efforts of the Swadeshi Movement with preceding criticisms of colonial policy by moderate nationalists. While condemning the ineffectiveness of early moderates, Pal recognized the limitations of a people subjected to a century of economic, political, and moral drain, indirectly invoking Naoroji’s theories about colonial India’s situation. He

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<sup>210</sup> Mukherjee and Mukherjee 1957, 80 - 1.

also asserted the natural progression of Indian nationalism from petitioning for economic policy change to a “great revolution” based on the preparation of the Indian mind to act upon their knowledge of their country’s situation. The combination of existing economic and political critiques with social reform and personal development were thus vital for the continuation and effectiveness of the nationalist struggle.

Pal’s remarks lend insight into one of the major points of analysis of this paper about the relationship between early moderate economic critiques and the political, social, and economic program of Pal and Ghose. Whether or not and how these two sets of ideas can be seen as connected is a central question among historians and informs our thinking about the Indian nationalist struggle. Analysis of Pal and Ghose shows their ideas to be related to Naoroji’s through their adoption of the drain of wealth theory about the colonial economic relationship between India and Britain. While Naoroji gradually endorsed a viewpoint that was increasingly connected to the beliefs of Pal and Ghose, as demonstrated by his call for colonial self-government in 1906, he never espoused many of their other beliefs, such as desire for complete independence from the British Empire and support for boycott techniques. Historians analyzing the progression of Indian nationalism must therefore take care to identify the adoption, adaptation, and rejection of specific existing nationalist critiques by subsequent generations and evaluate whether it was simply a figure’s critiques, or both his critiques and goals,

that connected him to later nationalist leaders. Analysis of Naoroji demonstrates that in his case, his critiques of colonial rule were carried on by subsequent nationalists, although Naoroji's goals for India's future remained rooted in a more or less moderate mentality.

Pal's comments on early moderate critiques and development of the national mind, as well as the combination of these areas within the program of passive resistance, also draw the historian's attention to the welding of economic nationalism and social reform movements. While historians like Chandra and Chatterjee treat economic and social critiques as separate movements, Pal identifies the combination of these as the starting point for the true nationalist struggle and characterizes everything before that as simply "preparation." The possibility that the Swadeshi Movement was a political movement that was produced by the first major combination of social and economic critiques gives the period new significance in the historiography of Indian nationalism. The combination of social, economic, and political beliefs can be seen in the ideas of Gandhi and other later nationalists, and Goswami argues that in the blending of a bounded economy with social ideas about the nation lay the roots of modern-day Hindu nationalism in India. To better understand the course of Indian nationalism as well as the nature of the current Indian state, the Swadeshi Movement should be revisited and analyzed as a period that held a crucial role in producing a combined political, economic, and social form of nationalism.

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