



## BEING INDIAN IN BRITAIN DURING 1857

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AS the sudden and shocking news of the bloody events of 1857 in north India reached Britain, the thousands of Indian men and women of all classes living there faced new challenges in their ongoing negotiations with the surrounding society. Lurid rumours and reports poured into the British media and popular discourse, about mutinous sepoys and treacherous oriental princes, who were both suddenly notorious for betraying, assaulting and assassinating British women, children and men. In this heated atmosphere, Britons expected Indians living among them in the metropole to proclaim and demonstrate their submission to Britain and to distinguish themselves in word and deed from their disloyal countrymen in the colony. Most of the diverse Indians in Britain, whatever their personal feelings towards the anti-British fighting back in India, felt compelled to protest their loyalties to the British crown, but nonetheless endured considerable hostility from the host society, with long-term repercussions. Thus, 1857 marked a key moment in the history of Indians in Britain.

Certainly, the tens of thousands of people from India living in Britain over the preceding 250 years had experienced—and partially shaped—many shifts in attitudes toward them. While some Britons had regarded all Indians as collectively ‘Black’, like people from Africa and the Caribbean, many other Britons had differentiated among them. In particular, the social class, religious community, gender, individual circumstances and historical era of each Indian in Britain shaped his or her possible roles there. European fantasies about the exotic ‘Oriental woman’, especially the members of the regal harem, as sensually desirable but enticingly inaccessible, added a gendered aura to these images. Overall during the early nineteenth century, British attitudes towards Indian women and men had hardened as the British Empire asserted authority and gained cultural confidence over colonised Indians collectively. The events of 1857 accelerated and altered these patterns, catalysing new British formulations that combined all Indians together based on hereditary race. In particular, the Indian man became perceived as threatening to the putative purity of white women.

Conversely, living in Britain had provided particularly perceptive Indians with the vantage point to apprehend the larger patterns of global imperialism, something more difficult to do from India. Overall, a sense of themselves as collectively Indian and an early patriotism had developed among some as they bonded to their fellows from different regions and/or religious communities. Yet, when word of the 1857 conflict reached Indians in Britain, virtually all recognised that they had to make visibly pro-British gestures, whatever their private sentiments. Some vainly hoped to use this crisis to their own political or personal advantage, or at least to mitigate its disadvantages. Some, on returning to India, faced accusations of treason and arrest and interrogation by British authorities. Indeed, some of the most prominent insurgents who fought against the British in India had been embittered by prejudice and injustice that they personally experienced while in Britain.

After the immediate crisis of 1857 ended, British attitudes towards Indians in Britain softened somewhat, but did not completely revert to earlier modes. Subsequent British stereotypes largely rendered all Indians as unalterably alien, reinforced by popular understandings of biological 'race', pseudo-scientific 'social Darwinism' and 'Black-White' conflicts in Jamaica in 1865 and in New Zealand lasting until 1872. Yet, British Raj policies favouring Indian princes as the 'natural leaders' of India actually gained for them more favourable policies and guaranteed access to the British monarch. Hence, the later lives of Indians remaining or newly arrived in Britain continued to be affected by the reverberations of 1857.

In order to trace changes in Indian roles in British society during the mid-nineteenth century, this essay concentrates on the especially significant mission sent to London by Wajid Ali Shah (r. 1847–1856, d. 1887), the recently deposed King of Awadh. Over the years, this dynasty, more than any other, despatched diplomatic delegations to London—in 1822–1823, 1824–1825, 1835–1837, 1837–1838 and 1856–1863. Awadh had been one of the largest and wealthiest Indian princely states; the British annexation of Awadh in 1856 proved to be the last major act of British aggression ever in India and one of the most controversial; hotly debated at the time and subsequently on legal, political and moral grounds by Indians and Britons in both India and Britain. Immediately thereafter, this final diplomatic delegation from Awadh went to London to try to reverse the annexation. The largest and arguably most significant of the thirty Indian embassies to London to date, it included 113 Indian men and women of all classes, from the Queen-Mother and heir apparent, through courtiers and translators, to servants and slaves. Various Indians of each socio-economic class already in London bonded in solidarity with their counterparts in this mission. Britons viewed it, and particularly its female leader, variously sympathetically, sceptically or voyeuristically. Following news of the outbreak, however, the Awadh delegation suffered fissuring stresses.

In India, Awadh emerged as a crucially central cockpit of the conflicts of 1857. Virtually all schools of historiography—including British imperialist, bourgeois Indian and Pakistani nationalist, Marxist and neo-Marxist Subaltern Studies—have found in Awadh a class to highlight, condemn or celebrate. For many Britons, the British defence of the besieged Residency in Lucknow, Awadh's capital, remains a prime and enduring symbol of their heroic pluck against almost overwhelming assaults by Indians. The landholding taluqdars of Awadh were seen by the British as among their fiercest opponents during the conflict and among their staunchest supporters subsequently. Indian and Pakistani nationalists have remembered Wajid Ali Shah's wife, Hazrat Mahal, and young son, Birjis Qadr, as heroic leaders who roused and led the people against British colonialism. Many of the sepoys who formed the core of the Bengal Army, but then fought the British across north India (as 'mutineers', 'freedom fighters' or 'peasants in uniform') were born in Awadh. The rise of Awadh peasants as a class, of and for themselves, formed a major part of the resistance against both feudal elite landholders and royalty as well as the British; fighting persisted in the Awadh countryside long after most other areas had fallen back into British control. Gramsci-inspired scholars have identified various rebels among the peasants, bandits and other *lumpenproletariat* of Awadh.<sup>1</sup> We can extend understanding of the significance of 1857 by considering closely the dynamics and history of this particularly prominent embassy as revealing many of the experiences and attitudes faced by virtually all classes of Indians in Britain during the transitions around 1857.

## Awadh's Last Royal Diplomatic Delegation

The unrealistic goal of the final diplomatic mission from Awadh was to convince the authorities in Britain to reverse the recent annexation of their kingdom carried out by Governor General Dalhousie in India. In 1856, after being dethroned, Wajid Ali Shah determined to go to London personally to petition Queen Victoria, Parliament and the East India Company Court of Directors, protesting this immoral and illegal act, which violated longstanding treaties. As did many Indians, he believed that he could obtain redress for injustices suffered in India if he could only present the truth of his position in London. When the British blocked him from travelling, he diplomatically reported illness and instead despatched a delegation officially headed by his mother, dowager queen Janab-i-Aulia Taj Ara Begum (1795/1803–1858), supported by his son and proclaimed heir, Mirza Muhammad Hamid Ali Mirza Bahadur (1836/38–1874), and one of Wajid Ali Shah's younger brothers, General Mirza Sikandar Hushmat Bahadur (1822–1858). As British newspapers frequently reported, the Queen-Mother was personally attended by nine of her 'daughters' (probably including younger relatives and ladies-in-waiting); twenty-one

other female servants and slaves; seven eunuchs (including a nearly seven-foot tall 'Nubian' slave); her personal interpreter, Englishman Captain John Rose Brandon; her personal hakim (doctor); and numerous other aides and courtiers. Similarly, the heir apparent and the general each had entourages. Most prominent among the diplomats assisting the Queen-Mother was Maulwi Muhammad Mussehood-Deen Khan Bahadur (b.1804), whom Wajid Ali Shah appointed to carry out the actual negotiations with the British on behalf of the royal principals.

Mussehood-Deen's family had long served the Awadh rulers, but for the last three generations had worked for the British as intermediary officials and judges.<sup>2</sup> Mussehood-Deen himself had been employed by the British for twelve years, receiving from them the title 'Khan Bahadur' and rising to the high office of Mir Munshi (chief secretary) in the Persian Department in Calcutta, the peak in his profession. After someone leaked a confidential British document to the Awadh ruler, the British accused and fired him in 1844, with none of the charges against him ever proven, or even made explicit. After this dismissal, he found employment with the Awadh ruler, despite British insistence that he be dismissed.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, other Indians, expert in British ways, but resentful of their mistreatment at British hands, supported this mission.

Even before the Awadh envoys disembarked in Britain, Wajid Ali Shah's hired British agent there, Major Robert Wilberforce Bird, the former Assistant Resident to Awadh who had been transferred for allegedly supporting the Awadh dynasty against the policies of his superiors, made sure that news of this distinguished embassy circulated in Britain. This news excited both Indians and Britons because of the nature of the mission, its size and opulence, and its composition. For example, the thirteen-person delegation headed by the claimant as Nawab of Surat, Mir Jafar Ali Khan Bahadur (which had already been in London since 1854 on his second visit), reportedly enthused at the prospect of their arrival; its diplomats later conveyed to the Awadh mission their hard-earned experience dealing with British authorities and the British public. An English missionary, Joseph Salter, who had attached himself to the Surat embassy, echoed their anticipation by hyperbolically declaring, 'The visit of a Mohammedan Queen to London was the most extraordinary event our Indian empire had ever witnessed.'<sup>4</sup> Similarly, an Indian scholar, author and official, Syed Abdullah of Pushkar (who had married and settled in London), reported himself delighted that there were 'upwards of 12 learned Moulvees, Moonshes, Poets, Authors, etc. in the suite of H.M. the Queen Dowager of Oude.'<sup>5</sup> He had already presented the East India Company's Directors with his translation of an Urdu poem by Wajid Ali Shah, called 'Ocean of Love'.<sup>6</sup> Later, Syed Abdullah met with and advised this mission (as he did others), serving as a translator for it; his appeal to Wajid Ali Shah for a regular salaried position, however, failed.<sup>7</sup> Thus, when the Awadh delegation reached Southampton via Alexandria on 20 August 1856 with a grand display, it attracted fascination from other Indians already in Britain and also the British public.

By this point, British popular opinion had well-established, but not consistent, expectations about 'oriental' royalty, especially royal women, and how they should be regarded. In this environment, the British press reflected competing efforts by supporters and opponents of this mission to put their own 'spin' on its particular significance. Initially, in the tone of a British royal court calendar, for example, the *Times* listed by name and title the mission's leading dignitaries.<sup>8</sup> This early article assured the British public that these dignitaries would receive 'every accommodation' and noted that as its ladies observed seclusion, the embassy would therefore hire entire hotels so as not to have to share with other guests. A subsequent *Times* article announced:

The disembarkation of these illustrious individuals has excited the greatest curiosity, and a vast number of people congregated in the docks to witness it. The *suite* and attendants are most gorgeously attired in the Oriental costume. The Queen-mother was brought on shore in a sedan-chair, closely veiled, and the same seclusion was observed in reference to the landing of her daughters.<sup>9</sup>

This article also indicated their vast and easy wealth by recounting that jewels worth £50,000 had fallen overboard in the Red Sea. A few days later, the *Times* publicised some of the many British personages who paid their respects to the delegation: 'the Earl and Countess of Hardwicke, Lady St. John, the Ladies Yorke, Sir George Pollock, Sir George Wombwell, Admiral Ayscough, Viscount Royston ...'.<sup>10</sup> While not even these aristocrats could approach the Queen-Mother, Southampton's Mayor Andres was permitted by the delegation to shake a female hand extended from behind the *purdah*; British newspapers debated whether this hand was truly that of the Queen-Mother or else merely that of a servant, who had sacrificed her modesty as a concession to British importuning.<sup>11</sup>

Some British sentiment soon shifted against this final Awadh delegation, however, despite the lobbying of its hired British publicists. The *Times* marked the Awadh nobles for their exotic display, but depicted their attendants as dirty drugged loafers who alienated the space in Britain that they occupied:

Although the appearance of the Princesses and principal attendants is most superb by reason of the elaborate and costly dresses with which they are attired, the mass of the inferior servants present an unusually filthy and unsightly group. Ranging on the basement floors of the hotel are large numbers continually to be seen lounging in the most careless manner, or squatting before a charcoal fire either cooking some article of food or indulging in the fumes derived from a dirty opium pipe. The entire floor of this portion of the hotel is strewn with the clothing of the inhabitants, and in appearance much resembles the back premises of an extensive rag merchant, the whole being rendered more unpleasant by the quantity of dirt which each article of dress apparently contains.

We can contrast these mid-nineteenth century images with those of earlier periods, when even Indian servants were considered exotic rarities by most

Britons. At the same time, the *Times* described British commoners as mesmerised by this insubstantial oriental luxury and veiled sexuality:

[A]t present the interest excited is one of mere vulgar curiosity on the part of the multitude, who desire only to see the dresses and appointments of the servants and followers, and greedily drink in the absurd tales of the fabulous wealth and jewels belonging to the Royal party, which have been industriously circulated. Besides the usual rabble of boys consequent on such occasions, numbers of respectably dressed persons, with now and then a carriage filled with occupants, are to be seen intently gazing at the exterior of the Royal York Hotel, where the illustrious party is located, and great pains are frequently taken to secure a sight of the ladies of the Royal party, who sometimes take a sly peep from the upper apartments upon the congregated numbers assembled in the streets below.

Thus, some British newspapers recorded the British masses and Indian visitors observing each other.

The *Globe* newspaper depicted vulgar British delight in the Awadh delegation as a 'raree-show'.<sup>12</sup> This newspaper also ridiculed the obsession with seclusion by its women. It compared the members of the mission to the Shakespearian monster Caliban, and called them 'charlatan'; the mission's goal was 'ill-advised and preposterous'. It debunked Major Bird's rhetorical efforts to sway the British mob. The *Times*, which had initially published more favourable representations of the delegation, echoed this scathing article. The *Times* thus shifted against the mission within ten days, now portraying it as a nuisance to the British rather than a source of pride, profit or even entertainment:

The strangely dressed natives stroll and lounge about the street without apparently the slightest notice being taken of them.... Altogether the natives appear a very good-tempered race, and amuse themselves principally by troubling shopkeepers to explain the quality and use of the articles exposed for sale, but in few instances making purchases at the prices which they are called upon to tender for the transfer of the goods.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to their reluctance to spend money, the *Times* attributed unpleasant odours to them as a 'race' apart. Indeed, the hotel that they rented would allegedly be unfit for respectable people (i.e., Europeans) for some time: 'Mr. White, the proprietor, received £100 for the use of his premises during the 10 days they have been occupied; and we do not doubt that it will be at least as many more days before the establishment will be again rendered fit to be used as the residence of a European.'<sup>14</sup>

By the time of its departure by train from Southampton for London, the delegation retained mainly its curiosity factor. The *Times* stressed the childish disorganization and impracticality of these 'natives' and 'Orientalists'. (Such language meant Indians were 'natives' everywhere, but Britons were not 'natives')

even in their homeland.) Again the press highlighted as comical and ineffectual the efforts of the eunuchs and other servants to follow ‘the customs of their race’ and protect the modesty of their queen, ‘this curious specimen of Eastern royalty’, as she moved from covered carriage to the train.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the eunuchs were defeated by plucky Britons who climbed onto the roof of the railroad carriage to peer over the inadequate screening:

[O]ne or two [British male] persons, availing themselves of the opportunity afforded owing to the attention of the officials being directed to the importance of the proceeding, climbed to the roof of the Royal carriage, and by that means witnessed the Queen’s progress between the two lines of drapery placed to secure privacy. However, the gratification could not have been very great, as Her Majesty was closely veiled.

Nonetheless, after the mission established itself in London, the *Times* later described the physical features of the Awadh dowager queen for the edification of the British public: ‘The Queen-Mother is between 50 and 60, and of a somewhat corpulent figure, of a light copper colour complexion.’<sup>16</sup>

Some in British society admired her devotion, but presupposed her incapable of effective action or even of understanding of British politics:

This journey of the widowed Queen to Europe, to solicit the restoration of her son to the throne of Oude [Awadh], displayed such an unusual energy of maternal affection as could only excite admiration. But, alas! what influence could she expect to exert in England; confined as she had been to her harem in Lucknow, ignorant of the usages of civilized life, with no one to plead her cause, or interested in her son’s welfare?<sup>17</sup>

In London, the embassy rented the Duke of Brunswick’s Harley House on New Road (now Euston Road) for a year at £550. It was not very secluded nor was it large enough for the entire entourage; they also hired nearby houses for the rest. Newspapers pictured their moving in as a great bustle of effeminate activity and expense:

The [British] mob ... gaze and laugh at the barbaric crowd in feminine garb, who, with their semi-virile chiefs, throng the ante-rooms of the New-road harem, or cluster on the tops of the neighbouring cabs.... The wrongs of the Oudean [Awadh] dynasty have produced a less intense effect than the number, the costume, and the dirt of the Oudean domestics.<sup>18</sup>

This delegation thus was portrayed not as a great honour to Britain, but as a comic Oriental farce.

For some Indians in Britain, however, this lavish delegation appeared both as a source of pride and also of employment and social support. Among them

was Mirza Ali Ackbar Khan Bahadur (b. 1817). Until his sudden dismissal in 1848, he had achieved the highest levels of his profession, rising to the post of Chief Munshi, confidential secretary and Persian translator to Sir Charles Napier in newly annexed Sindh. Charging him with accepting bribes, the Bombay Government dismissed him without a pension. He fought this in Bombay and, when unsuccessful there, went to Britain to continue his cause, officially as Persian Secretary in the suite of Mir Jafar of Surat.<sup>19</sup> Once in London, Ali Ackbar supported himself by working as advisor to the Awadh and other missions, as he explained, 'writing pamphlets and taking opinions'.<sup>20</sup>

The Awadh mission's many nobility, scribes, and servants also interacted socially with the growing number of other Indians in London, according to their respective classes, and also with curious or interested Britons.<sup>21</sup> A British missionary (who often visited the Surat mission seeking converts) described interactions among servants of the Awadh and Surat missions and other working-class Indians:

The inmates of Harley House, however, were not long in discovering that a colony of Orientals was already established in London, and their number was soon increased by deserters from ships, and the Asiatic vagrants of the metropolis, and all soon made acquaintance with the suite of the Nawab of Surat. Some of them came into the kitchen of the Nawab... winter was then approaching and the cold autumnal winds blew with terrible effect on the naked legs of the visitors. English boots and stockings were produced by the servants of the Nawab; the boots were examined and approved of, but the stockings excited deep curiosity, and were the subject of much discussion as they were handed about for inspection.<sup>22</sup>

This observer also depicted their evening's socialising:

After dinner, which generally took place about seven o'clock, cards and tea were always placed on the table, visitors from other families would drop in ... the dhol' or native drum would be brought forward, a series of native songs sung ... a long table, capable of seating about fifteen persons ... was occupied by the card-players, the interval being usually filled up by tea and coffee drinkers and smokers.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, shared experiences in London bonded these working-class Indians; the accumulated knowledge of earlier visitors passed to later ones. Further, many of these servants joined other working-class Indians in east London's Oriental Quarter, finding there fellowship and pleasure. For example, during the fast of Ramzan, which the Awadh and Surat delegations officially respected, non-observing attendants went there to eat and drink.<sup>24</sup>

While the members of this embassy met socially with their fellows, the Awadh emissaries officially mobilised their campaigns to persuade the Directors,

Parliament, Queen Victoria and the British public. But, in these mid-nineteenth century years of burgeoning British imperialism, they met with largely unsympathetic official responses. The Awadh Queen-Mother wrote formally announcing her arrival and submitting her son's appeal to reverse the annexation; the Directors and Board of Control rejected these. She hired British lawyers to formally request all the relevant papers in the company's files, unavailable in India. At first, the Directors refused to provide them. The delegation, however, induced Parliament to demand them, which made these accessible for the Awadh mission to refute. Not until early 1857, six months after their arrival, were they received at the company's headquarters, and then only as a courtesy, not as ambassadors.<sup>25</sup> Indian members of the delegation and supportive Indian settlers in Britain also wrote letters to prominent British authorities and newspapers.<sup>26</sup> Their hired lobbyist Bird published a pamphlet outlining the wrongs perpetrated against them, *The Spoliation of Oudh*,<sup>27</sup> which he then expanded under the pseudonym, Samuel Lucas, into *Dacoitee in Excelsis*.<sup>28</sup> Further, Mussehood-Deen published his own book, *Oude: Its Princes and Its Government Vindicated*.<sup>29</sup>

By this time, however, some in the British press regarded the mission as a contest between British purity and Oriental debauchery. The *Times* now proclaimed the delegates 'parasites ... lapped and nurtured in an atmosphere of venality, and hardened in the routine of those vile arts by which Eastern courtiers rise and fall.'<sup>30</sup> Frustrations led to internal dissention. As described by a British observer:

One day, on entering Harley House, all was astir and in a state of commotion; eight of the inmates had been poisoned, and narrowly escaped with their lives.

Such was the state of anarchy, jealousy, and deadly enmity towards each other in which they lived, ever plotting one against another! so that whilst the royal household was conflicting with Parliament, they were at war amongst themselves, till law-suits and counter claims disorganized the whole establishment. But a shock was about to come, that would paralyze their secret counsels and blight their sanguine hopes; the astounding news of the Indian Mutiny blasted all their prospects and rendered their further residence in England useless.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the sporadically arriving news of the outbreak of the 1857 fighting destroyed most remaining public and official sympathy for the Awadh cause.

Nevertheless, the Awadh mission in London persisted. Yet, they, like other Indian delegations in London, now had additionally to protest their loyalty to the British, including through a petition to the House of Lords.<sup>32</sup> In this they expressed their '... sincere regret [at] the tidings which have reached the British kingdom of disaffection prevailing among native troops in India'. They

assured that they themselves were 'a Royal race, ever faithful and true to their friendship with the British nation'. The Lords, however, rejected their petition on a technicality, since it omitted the required term 'Humble' in places where protocol repeatedly demanded it. Even the petition's sponsor, Lord Campbell, excused himself for having submitted it, which he said he did out of duty alone.

In November 1857, the delegation unrealistically offered to reconquer and rule India for Victoria:

We propose that the Prince Mirza Md. Hamid Allie Bahadur Heir Apparent to the King of Oude now resident in England should immediately proceed to India supported by a British Force and in the name of the King of Oude should assume the Government of the Country and call upon the People to rally round the Standard of the Sovereign against the revolted Sepoys.<sup>33</sup>

They cited the precedent of Dost Muhammad, ruler of Afghanistan, whom the British had once imprisoned in Calcutta, but then installed on the throne, who was supporting them in 1857. This proposal met no encouragement from the British. British authorities in Britain and India seized all the copies they could of Mussehood-Deen's recent book, *Oude: Its Princes and Its Government Vindicated*.<sup>34</sup> In India, to distribute or even possess a copy of this work became evidence for treason, although it was circulated in German translation.

Other Indian diplomats in London likewise had to adopt the same position of protesting loyalty to a disbelieving British public even as the British government and directors increasingly pressured them to leave. For example, as news of 1857 in India began to reach London, making the environment more hostile for Indians there, Mir Jafar of Surat settled for what he could get and abruptly returned home in August 1857, ending his campaign of two visits and five years of negotiations in London.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Mehdi Ali Khan Bahadur (d. 1863), who had gone to London in 1856 in order to gain the title and estate of his late father-in-law, the Nawab of Rampoor, initially proved able to obtain the support of Parliament. News of 1857, however, put paid to his chances, and left him in a dilemma. To return to India might appear disloyal to the British, so, whatever his true personal feelings, he wrote the Directors assuring them of his loyalty and begging them not to misinterpret his departure for home which was solely on the basis of his 'health'.<sup>36</sup> The Directors also instructed Ali Morad of Sindh to abandon his lobbying campaign for restored sovereignty and go 'manifest your zeal and fidelity in the service of the British Government' back in India.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Syed Uckbur Ally and Khirat Ali Khan Bangash had been in London since 1851 representing Raja Tuckt Singh of Jodhpur. In September 1857, they submitted petitions to the Company's Directors and to the House of Commons which proclaimed 'the devoted friendship and zeal displayed by the Prince my master upon the breaking out of the deplorable occurrences that now convulse the portions of India contingent to his possessions and the promptitude with

which (as I learn from the Public Press) he came to the assistance of the British Government ... [showing] his unwavering loyalty' by sending 5,000 troops to support the British.<sup>38</sup> These diplomats, however, left London at the end of 1857 for Bombay, where they and their English attorney were arrested on charges of treason. The British ship's captain testified:

the Mahommedan secretary [Khirat Ali Khan Bangash], in my presence and in the presence of the passengers, said that he could murder [Governor-General] Lord Dalhousie without remorse, and throw his body to the vultures, or something to that effect.... He frequently expressed his sympathy with the rebels and mutineers, and expressed his wishes for their success. He frequently stated that the country would be much better governed under native princes and rulers than by the English.... I now produce a book, entitled, 'Oude, its Princes and its Government Vindicated.'... I understand that a case of these books is on board intended for circulation here....<sup>39</sup>

The captain added for good measure that one of their servants, Mirjan, had abandoned his English wife back in London.

Even working-class Indians encountered the sudden opprobrium of appearing as 'hostile'. For example, a Bengali named Joaleeka had come to London with Gholam Mohamed, the youngest son of Tipu Sultan, in 1854. While staying at the Oriental Hotel, Joaleeka fraternised with British women of his class, although he was in his forties. He reported: 'I formed a connection with a white woman. She was a servant in the hotel. I broke my caste and from that moment I knew that it would not do for me to go back to India. The girl fell in the family-way....'<sup>40</sup> Rather than return to India, Joaleeka stayed on in London (although he abandoned his first English lover and their child), living with a series of other English and Irish women, fathering at least four more children with them, and nominally converting to Christianity (although, he said, 'I turned Christian. I do not know what it means, but I am a Christian, and have been for many years'). Despite having thus settled in London for years, earning by interpreting for other Indians, begging from Britons, and doing odd jobs, British attitudes toward him radically changed during the fighting of 1857: 'After the mutiny ... I did very badly. No one would look at a poor Indian then—much less give to him.... All that knew me used to chaff me about it, and call me Johnny Sepoy.' Thus, Indians of all classes faced new difficulties during that period.

To add to the problems of the Awadh delegation in particular, its funds dwindled as Wajid Ali Shah remained in close confinement in Calcutta throughout the 1857 conflict.<sup>41</sup> They wrote: 'The expenses in London [were] so much greater than what Her Majesty and the Princes could possibly have expected'; with much difficulty, the Awadh ex-King sent them £4,783 in October 1857.<sup>42</sup> The Awadh delegation's appeals to the Directors for financial assistance

received a cold shoulder.<sup>43</sup> They gave up Harley House as inauspicious (after two women servants died there) and rented four attached houses on Warwick Road (one leased by Jafar Ali of Surat), plus a country home in Richmond for the Queen-Mother.<sup>44</sup> Finally, they received another £7,156 from Wajid Ali Shah in January 1858.<sup>45</sup>

In the face of the intensified British hostility, financial pressure and internal conflicts within the delegation, it broke apart. In September 1857, Musseehood-Deen wrote to the Directors requesting that they ignore any communications that came directly from the Queen-Mother, since she had come under the influence of Indians opposed to him.<sup>46</sup> Some of the Awadh mission, finding no support in London, decided to go to Paris and from there to Mecca and back to Calcutta.<sup>47</sup> Although the British government rejected their request for passports, the French government issued them.<sup>48</sup> In Paris, the Queen-Mother died (24 January 1858), as supporters in Parliament said, 'of a broken heart'.<sup>49</sup> Next month, her son died in Paddington (25 February 1858). Then the young Awadh heir tried to take leadership of the mission away from Musseehood-Deen, who had control over whatever funds remained. The heir (who was a minor in British law) therefore, acting in the name of his father, used the mission's British lawyers to sue Musseehood-Deen, who counter-sued. Musseehood-Deen had one of the prince's supporters jailed for forgery, although the courts dismissed the charge. Musseehood-Deen was eventually compelled by British courts to turn over the remaining £4,000 of the mission's funds.<sup>50</sup> Several of the servants of the Awadh mission then sued to get their unpaid wages.<sup>51</sup> Several stayed on or went home separately, often in dire financial straits.<sup>52</sup> Several were arrested on their arrival back in India.

Musseehood-Deen blamed the youth of the heir and the 'unworthy and self-interested intriguers [in margin] Mehdi Koolie and Allie Ackbar'.<sup>53</sup> The former was a Persian who claimed to be the great-grandson of Nadir Shah. The latter, Ali Ackbar, (discussed above) had also advised three other delegations in London.<sup>54</sup> In response, the heir asserted that Musseehood-Deen 'was ready to betray us'. This internecine conflict divided many other Indians in London. After a further vain petition to Parliament, the heir then went via Marseilles and Alexandria back to India in 1861, taking the remaining valuables.<sup>55</sup> Although the Awadh ruler dismissed and replaced Musseehood-Deen in 1859, he remained in Britain, marrying an Englishwoman, Miss Bilk.<sup>56</sup> During the 1857 fighting, his two houses in Agra had been looted, and then confiscated by the British government. His request for employment or a pension from the British was rejected.<sup>57</sup> He finally retired to India in November 1863, leaving his young but estranged British wife behind with no means of support.<sup>58</sup> The solidarity among Indians in Britain initially generated by the arrival of the Awadh mission, therefore, shattered in the face of British hostility during 1857.

## Aftermaths of 1857

The events of 1857 thus marked a transition in the experiences of Indians in Britain as British attitudes shifted against them collectively. Yet, 1857 was not an absolutely abrupt transformation. There had been precursors of these changes in both the Indian and the British attitudes. Many Indians there had developed a sense of class solidarity and trans-regional shared experience. Neither were British prejudicial stereotypes shared universally, nor did they apply equally to all classes of Indians. Gender relations between Indians and Britons particularly reflected these complex underlying patterns. Further, many of the changes catalysed by the 1857 conflict continued to affect the lives of Indians in Britain thereafter.

During the early nineteenth century, various Indians in Britain had articulated their growing resentment about British prejudices against them, both in India and in Britain. Most Indians recognised that British racism was worse in India. One scholar-diplomat who had come on Mir Jafar's first mission to London in 1844, Lutfullah (1802–1874), contrasted relatively welcoming British society with the condescending or contemptuous attitudes of Britons in India: 'The fact is, that the more you proceed on towards England, the more you find the English people endowed with politeness and civility...'<sup>59</sup> Yet, Britons in Britain could also be racist, as various Indians experienced there personally.

Indians' common treatment by the British as 'other' made some conscious of their shared condition. Mixing with Indians from many other regions often overcame traditional cultural and political distinctions. Particularly articulate both about such British discrimination and also about the need for a collective response to British aggression was a Maratha diplomat, Rango Bapojee, who spent over a dozen years in London (1839–1853). In 1842, Bapojee complained about slights he had personally received from Britons, and the 'oppression set upon our race and colour'.<sup>60</sup> Bapojee also delivered public speeches in London and published his insightful analysis of British global imperialism based on racial prejudice. He claimed to speak for 'the hundred and fifty millions of my fellow-countrymen'.<sup>61</sup> He also wrote a rallying letter to all the Indian rulers back in India, warning them against the insidious British practice of piecemeal annexation that was evident only from the perspective of Britain, the very annexationist policies that would depose Wajid Ali Shah.<sup>62</sup> Before he left London, Bapojee also passed on his understanding of these injustices to newly arriving diplomats, including Mohammed Ali Khan of Rohilkhand and Azimullah Khan (c. 1830–1858) who represented in London (1853–1855) the exiled Maratha prince Dhundu Pant 'Nana Sahib'.<sup>63</sup> After their alienating experiences in Britain, all three of these men evidently fought the British in 1857.

Mohammed Ali Khan, Azimullah Khan, and Bapojee's son were all summarily executed without trial; despite the £50 reward that the British put on Bapojee's head, he evaded capture.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, to some of the avenging British officers in India, Azimullah's personal relationships with British women during his stay in Britain were particularly offensive. He had become protégé of Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon (1821–1869), an author and traveller who had married the prime minister's cousin, Sir Alexander Duff-Gordon.<sup>65</sup> She educated Azimullah in British culture and politics, falsely believing she had convinced him to relinquish his anti-British sentiments. Although only about ten years older, she signed her letters to him 'your affect. Mother', and he addressed her as 'European Mother' in reply.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, a young British woman in Brighton, 'Miss A.', wrote letters, partly in French, expressing her desire to marry Azimullah. Despite these women's affections for him, not all Britons accepted Azimullah. When Azimullah was introduced to John Lang (1817–1869, a British journalist and lawyer) as 'the Prince', Lang responded, 'Prince indeed! He has changed my plate fifty times in India [i.e., as a table-servant].'<sup>67</sup> This had become a repeating pattern: Britons with experience in India denigrating Indians who were received as royalty in London's salons. Frustrated, Azimullah Khan and Mohammed Ali Khan left Britain in June 1855, travelling via Crimea, where they observed the British army ineffectively fighting the Russians.<sup>68</sup> After rumours of Azimullah's participation in the Kanpur 'massacre' reached her, Lady Duff-Gordon hoped he could not have committed such 'atrocious conduct' and bemoaned, 'Who will pity the poor, helpless mass of people guilty of the offence of a dark skin and a religion of their own? What a vista of disaster & hatred is before us and them!'<sup>69</sup>

Conversely, later Indian and Pakistani nationalist historians have highlighted these men as freedom fighting heroes. For example, one Pakistani nationalist historian called Azimullah,

the Master Brain who created consciousness among the Muslims and lead them to the battle field to restore their last grandure [sic] from the jaws of the great colonial power. This was the master brain of Azimullah Khan, a great personality behind the war of independence of 1857 which has left everlasting imprints on the history—in the Shape of PAKISTAN.<sup>70</sup>

Simultaneously, Indian nationalist commentators have also claimed him.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Basu argues Bapojee 'should be considered the first and pioneer Indian agitator in England, and his failure shows the futility of so-called constitutional agitation on the part of Indians for their rights and privileges'.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, Sir Christopher Bayly of Cambridge identifies their ideas as 'old patriotism' rather than modern nationalism.<sup>73</sup>

Not all who came to Britain turned against the British in 1857. General Jung Bahadur Rana (1817–1877) of Nepal came to Britain in 1850.<sup>74</sup> There he was impressed by British military and industrial power. In 1857, he proved among the staunchest political and military supporters of the British.

Even during the crisis of 1857, some Indians in Britain managed to avoid being targeted by the government or public. Indian royalty, including Dalip Singh (1838–1893, r. 1843–1849) and two descendants of the Nawab of the Carnatic, Hafiz Lodroo Islam Khan and Hyder Jung, remained in Britain and eventually regained British favour, as did others.<sup>75</sup> Gholam Mahomed, a son of Tipu Sultan, had left Britain and spent 1857 in India, but, once the fighting was over, he returned to London with his son and grandson, receiving increased pensions and benefits and savouring London's high society. Overall, the Indian princes who did not egregiously oppose the British emerged thereafter as princely pillars of the Raj and were often welcome in London.

Increasingly appearing more of a social problem to many elite Britons was the growing number of working-class Indians in Britain, especially the community of the Oriental Quarter. *The City Mission Magazine* of August 1857, as first news of the fighting arrived, articulated British fears about promiscuous intercourse between Indian men and British women there:

Men of all colours, and half a score of nations, are accompanied by a host of [White] women. Many are drunk, and all are riotous; the women have sailors' hats on their heads, and sailors' belts round their waists; they are quarrelling and pulling each other about; some have been robbed, and the police are amongst them; the language uttered is such as Satan only could suggest, and the whole scene calls up in the mind of the spectator an idea of the orgies of hell.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, missionary Salter described with dismay the shift of an English public house, the Royal Sovereign (12 Blue Gate Fields), into a haven for lascars and British lower-class women:

The skittles have long vanished, and the rough walls and roof have long ceased to echo with boisterous European voices—for Asiatics have taken possession of it, and twenty beds are spread out for the repose of the Lascars who seek shelter [in the skittle-ground]. The jagree dust, crazy hookas, and dirty lotas give evidence of the free use made of it. But, hark! what is that uproarious shout of discordant Asiatic and European voices mingled?—the sound of excited men and women together ... only a jollification and a spree these Lascars have with the [British] ladies of the neighbourhood ....<sup>77</sup>

This house was still owed by a British man, but a Goan Indian, Francis Kaudery, operated it, much to Salter's dismay.

Also in Britain during the crisis, but often less directly targeted, were middle-class Indians including Syed Abdullah (discussed above) and a Parsi scholar and merchant from Bombay, Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917). Both taught Indian languages at University College London until 1866.<sup>78</sup> The latter also became the second Indian elected to the British Parliament, and the ‘Grand Old Man’ of the Indian National Congress. Indeed, many later Indian nationalists also studied in Britain during subsequent decades, learning there about the larger patterns of British colonialism including B.R. Ambedkar, S.C. Bose, Mohandas Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, M.A. Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru, and V.D. Savarkar. As has been extensively studied, all these men found that their experiences in high colonial Britain helped them formulate their own political and cultural nationalisms. Additionally, Indian male and female social leaders—including Behramji Malabari, Saraswati Ramabhai and Cornelia Sorabji—also engaged critically with British society, opposing British efforts to control their lives and impressions. Nor did all Indians respond the same way. Some, including Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagare, M.P., remained staunch Tories.

Thus the events of 1857 marked a major shift in the lives of Indians in Britain, and in the British attitudes towards them. The experiences of the members of the Awadh embassy and the other Indians who associated with them particularly reflected many of these changes. Subsequent generations of Indians in Britain also lived under its shadow, although their personal experiences there varied by their class and background.

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49. Commons Debate 16 February 1858, *Hansard*, series 3, vol. 147, p. 513.
50. He retained his £948 annual salary, however. *Times* 21 April 1858, 23 April 1858, 27 April 1858, 10 May 1858, 29 May 1858.
51. *Times* 10 May 1858; FSC 29 January 1858, no. 609.
52. For example, Musseehood-Deen fired his long-time personal servant, Kadir Bukhsh, who had also married a British woman. With the help of Syed Abdoolah, Kadir Bukhsh took work in a Turkish Bath in Finsbury, and later sued Musseehood-Deen. *Times* 19 December 1861, 20 December 1861. See also Jaleesood Dowlah to Court 7 January 1859, PDHC, f. 259.
53. Musseehood-Deen letter 1 July 1858, PDHC, f. 123.
54. Court to Foreign Secretary 2 July 1858, PDHC, ff. 124–125.
55. Musseehood-Deen letter 26 August 1858, PDHC, f. 125; Hameed Ali Petitions to Parliament presented to Lords by Lord Mcunteagle 29 June 1858, 29 July 1858. For a critical epitaph on this mission see J.W. Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War*, 3 vols, 9th edn (London: Longmans, Green, 1896), vol. 1, pp. 402–404.
56. Musseehood-Deen, *Oudh*, pp. 170–172; *Times* 17 December 1861, 6 August 1862. The Awadh ex-King later sent eunuchs Ahsanuddaula and Mean Mahboob to England as his representatives. FPC 18 November 1859; *Calcutta Englishman* 2 November 1859 cited in *Times* 20 November 1865.
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