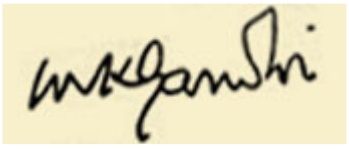
The Making of a Social Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa 1893 – 1914

Surendra Bhana and Goolam H. Vadeh



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Common Abbreviations

BIA	British Indian Association
CBIA	Colonial Born Indian Association
CWMG	*Collected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi*
DIA	Durban Indian Association
DIS	Durban Indian Society
DIWA	Durban Indian Women's Association
HIS	Hamidia Islamic Society
HSS	Hind Sudhar Sabha
HYMA	Hindu Young Men's Association
HYMS	Hindu Young Men's Society
INC	Indian National Congress
IO	*Indian Opinion*
KAM	Kathiawad Arya Samaj
MDS	Mahomedan Debating Society
MYMS	Mahomedan Young Men's Society
NAR	Natal Archives Repository
NIA	Natal Indian Association
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NIPU	Natal Indian Patriotic Union

NLCC	Natal Land and Colonisation Company
SABIC	South African British Indian Committee
SAIA	South African Indian Association
SAIC	South African Indian Committee
SHA	Surat Hindu Association
SN	Serial Number
SNA	Secretary of Native Affairs
TBS	Tamil Benefit Society
UPS	United Patidar Society
YMA	Young Muslim Association
YMS	Young Muslim Society

Preface

A 2.5 meter high bronze of a statue of Mohandas K. Gandhi was unveiled on October 2, 2003, in Johannesburg. Gandhi is depicted as a dashing, young, human rights lawyer. That there should be twenty-four hour security to protect the statue from vandalism, suggests that his legacy in South Africa is not free from controversy. Nhlanhla Hlangwane, writing in THIS DAY, said that Gandhi had barely noticed the African people during his twenty-one years in South Africa. They were mostly invisible and deemed beneath him. "For him, Black people were the 'untouchables' of this land." Hlangwane quoted Gandhi who had said in a speech in Bombay, September 26, 1896

"Ours is a continual struggle against a degradation sought to be inflicted upon us by the Europeans, who desire to degrade us to the level of the raw Kaffir whose occupation is hunting, and whose sole ambition is to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife with and, then, pass his life in indolence and nakedness." Hlangwane's article sparked fierce debate about Gandhi's South African contribution and legacy. Some letters to newspapers insisted that Gandhi displayed no love for Africans; others even argued that he hated Africans. A few said that he was hypocritical in ignoring the suffering of Africans at the hands of the colonial rulers while championing the cause of Indians.

One writer pointed to the picture of distaste painted by Gandhi at having to share a prison cell with Africans, some of whom he had described as "only one degree removed from the animal and often created rows and fought among themselves." On the other hand, Khulekani Ntshangase, a spokesperson for the African National Congress Youth League, defended Gandhi by saying that his critics had missed the larger picture of his contribution to the liberation struggle.

This debate constitutes a small part of the way in which the recent past is contested by South Africans. It also reflects present-day concerns about the attitudes of Indians towards Africans in a democratic South Africa. For example, in 2002, playwright Mbongeni Ngema, well known for his roles in Sarafina, Woza Albert, and Asinamali, produced the following song in a record album entitled AJive Madlokovu. The song "AAma-Ndiya" stirred strong feelings about the seeming inability of Indians to accept Africans as equals. The translation, as provided in Post, May 24-26, 2002, read:

Oh brothers,
Oh, my fellow brothers,
We need strong and brave men to face the Indians.
This situation is very difficult,
Indians do not want to change
Whites were far better than Indians
Even Mandela has failed to convince them to change,
Whites were far better than Indians.

Even you people in power
Don't want to intervene in the situation.
They bribed you with roti [unleavened bread] and paku [beetlenut]
They don't vote when we vote but they are full in Parliament.
What do you say, Chief of Tellers when you see people of the Zulu nation?

They are in shacks.
Where is S'bu Ndebele?
Where is Gideon Zulu?
Dabla Manzi, get up from your grave!
Indians have conquered Durban.

We are poor because all things have been taken by the Indians.
They are oppressing us.
Mkhize wants to open a business in West Street,
Indians say there is no place to open a business.
Our people are busy buying from Indian shops.

What do you say, Thabo Mbeki?
Indians are playing with us!
What do you say fellow brothers?

They are speaking fanagalo now saying,
Athenga lapha duze kamina yena shibile. [Buy from me, I am cheap]
They don't want to support a single black shop.
Indians keep coming from India.
The airport is full of Indians.

They come here to open their business.
Oh brothers,
Oh my fellow brothers.

Ngema's song is really not about Indians being entrenched in national politics. There are six Indians on the ANC National Executive Committee. Two hold ministerial portfolios, Asmal Kader in Education and Moosa Vally Moosa in Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Aziz Pahad is a deputy minister in Foreign Affairs. In Parliament, there are twenty-four Indians out of a total of 442, twenty-one of whom belong to the ANC and three to the Democratic Party. The song is mainly about those aspiring African classes who feel they are being elbowed out by Indian businessmen in retail trade even as they service a predominantly African clientele. It is a historical grievance, and one that has some validity.

This issue came up most forcefully at the hearings after the Durban riots in 1949. Indeed, it goes back to the 1890s, and continues in post-apartheid South Africa as White businesspersons in CBDs increasingly drift to suburban malls, and their place is taken by Indians who have always struggled against unfair White business competition.

In the public debate that followed the song in newspaper articles and radio talk-in shows, some Africans and Indians agreed but many were appalled by the inflammatory tone of the song. They felt that it perpetuated the myth that Indians had bribed their way into positions of trade advantage, and that their influence was so pervasive that even Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were unwilling to speak out against them.

The reference to roti and paku is intended to conjure unfavorable ethnic association. The call on the ancestors to arms was alarming to many who remembered the 1949 riots. The reference to the use of fanagalo, a system of communication from Natal's colonial days, and still widely used, implied that Indians were essentially outsiders who were unwilling to embrace Africans as their equals, but instead continued to exploit them.

How can we place the charges of racism against Gandhi, and the sharp ill-feelings reflected in the unveiling of Gandhi's statue and Ngema's song in their proper historical context? Several studies have argued that there was strong racial antagonism between Africans and Indians in the 1930s and 1940s as the two groups increasingly gravitated towards cities like Durban, a process that started in the 1890s.

They competed for jobs in the manufacturing sector, and for scarce resources in the informal settlements that mushroomed in the outlying parts of the city. Bill Freund, for example, showed in his study that the fear of African competition persisted among Indian workers in spite of their industrial militancy and non-racial rhetoric. Africans resented the perceived favored status of Indians. They disliked Indians monopolizing the retail sector, from which their own aspiring entrepreneurs were kept out. They believed that Indians deliberately maintained a social distance from them, and abused and exploited them.

All of these reasons were articulated after the 1949 race riots in Durban that took the lives of 148 people. Iain Edwards has shown in his study that Africans regarded the conflict as war against Indians. The relationship between Indians and Africans has been problematical since then. Even if the Indian and African congresses proclaimed inter-racial unity between the two groups in the 1950s and beyond, tensions have remained. Apartheid capitalized on these feelings, and in fact used them to demonize the consequences of African majority rule in Indian minds. Such fears continue to find fertile ground among Indians well into the 1990s and beyond.

Our study revisits the early years from the 1880s when the process of ethnic and racial identification began to take shape. Labels mislead, and we argue that South Africans must come to terms with their historical past in order to build a true non-racial country. Those who seek to appropriate Gandhi for political ends in post-apartheid South Africa do not help their cause much by ignoring certain facts about Gandhi; and those who simply call him a racist are equally guilty of distortion.

In the 1890s when Gandhi was in his twenties, he thought of Africans as being different and inferior. He shared much of the prejudices against Africans prevalent at the time. His views matured in the 1900s. While he still thought of them as being on a different plane, this has to be placed in the context of his maturing ideas generally. He became absorbed in assessing the value of modern industrialization with its deleterious consequences on the human spirit. By 1910 his views, as articulated in Hind Swaraj (1909), were that modern civilization was on the wrong track primarily because it privileged materialism over spirituality.

He believed that the simple life of farming was the best way to counteract the evils of rampant materialism. He linked this with his holistic view about the individual's well being. Individuals, who took charge of their physical well being, were best suited to combat industrialism's inherent alienation. Those who achieved self-control deserved to be politically free.

To be sure, much of what he was saying connected South Africa to British rule in India. For Gandhi, the nature of Indian society was forever at the center of his thinking. Although he spent over two decades in South Africa, his gaze was always on India. But as he developed these thoughts, he began to see the value of African society.

He believed that Africans possessed a truer perception of life because they were a rural people engaged in living off the land. On Tolstoy Farm, he and Kallenbach wanted to be just in their treatment of "native John" to whom they had leased a parcel of land. Indian Opinion increasingly wrote about things Africans from 1910. But Gandhi probably missed the fact that there were growing numbers of Africans who were becoming dislodged from their traditional, rural moorings as a consequence of the colonial state's destruction of their economies.

Africans and African life remained mainly hidden to him. He made no effort to get to know Africans. Indeed, his autobiography, Satyagraha in South Africa which was published as a book in 1928, fails to mention a single African leader by name.

In promoting "Indianness" to unite Indians in South Africa with their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, he did not see South Africa as unique and distinct but as part of British India. His vision connected South Africa's Indians with those in India. For all that, however, he believed that the rights of Africans should not be ignored. As he told Joseph J. Doke, his first biographer, Africans deserved a voice in their own affairs. Gandhi feared there would be collision between White ascendancy and African aspirations.

When this happened, he hoped that Africans would resort to passive resistance. "When the moment of collision comes, if, instead of the old ways of massacre, assegai, and fire, the natives adopt a policy of passive resistance, it will be a great change for the colony." The solution was to give Africans a voice directly or indirectly in their affairs.

He wanted Africans to have voting rights when they were "fit to exercise the vote," that is, "when the native people had risen sufficiently high in the scale of civilization to give up savage warfare and use the Christian method of settling a dispute …." If Africans adopted passive resistance, there need be no fear of the "horror of a racial uprising."

Gandhi promoted Indianness as a matter of strategy. It was to him the best way to make a case for Indian rights. White rule, however, found it convenient to treat Indians as if they were an undifferentiated mass, and in time, Indians would think of themselves as one, different from the Africans. The root causes of racism in South Africa in the 1890s and 1900s must be found in the institutions White supremacy created.

As we show in chapter two, political economy played a significant role in creating racial divisions. Gandhi did not create divisions, but he shared in them, and did not warn Indians against participating in the divisive state structures.

Gandhi's focus on Indianness did not allow him to think of Africans as potential political allies. If he included the Chinese, it was because he saw some parallels between them and Indians. Maureen Swan's Gandhi: The South African Experience (1985) seeks to debunk the myth of Gandhi's centrality in the politics of the two decades from 1890.

She has a point, and her work highlights groups other than Gandhi that played a role in these decades. But her lens is too narrow in fully grasping Gandhi's role in the politics of South Africa's Indians. He stressed that Indians must move away from caste thinking, and in his views about how Hindus and Muslims should relate to one another (again as part of his vision of an independent India), he came up with interfaith harmony that is unique.

This book stresses how Gandhi negotiated the narrowness he found among Indians who were absorbed with cultural and religious issues, and in this we see his reforming spirit even if he was not free from racial prejudices against Africans.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

A regular stream of new works explores the seemingly inexhaustible complexities surrounding Gandhi's life and times. Writers inside and outside of academia continue to find new meaning to Gandhism. They are too numerous to discuss in a book that seeks mainly to explore a new context for Gandhi's South African years from 1893 to 1914. The focus of the book is the religious and cultural orientation of his compatriots, which has received little or no attention by scholars; and, given that almost every account on Gandhi considers the South African years as being crucially important to his later development, this new dimension seeks to add to our understanding of the making of a social reformer.

The vast majority of the earlier works tended to see Gandhi's South African years as an extension of traditions in India. One example of this approach is the work of Pyarelal Nayar, his one-time secretary, who became one of his most prolific biographers. He began a multi-volume project that placed Gandhi within the context of other significant political and social reformers in nineteenth-century India from Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda to swadeshi (patriotic self-reliance) protagonists like Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901), Bal Gangadar Tilak (1856-1920), and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) reacting to British imperial rule. D.G. Tendulkar's eight-volume work also falls in that category.

A more recent example is the work of Bhiku Parekh which made Gandhi the heir to the ecumenical concept of yugadharma within the Hindu philosophical and religious traditions in India.

Maureen Swan's Gandhi: The South African Experience virtually ignored Gandhi's Indian background to place him in the South African context and to present him as being ever mindful of opportunities to break into the Indian political scene. Swan denied Gandhi's centrality as she argued that politics in Natal and the Transvaal were "crucially shaped by the social and economic stratification of the Indian population." Stressing their materialist interests, she argued that the Indian merchants, petty traders, and educated white-collar workers dictated to Gandhi a conservative approach in the 1890s and early 1900s. Swan maintains that the early Gandhi had become a mere hired representative of the merchants who needed a full-time organizer.

His legal training, his fluency in Gujarati and English, and his political views rendered him suitable. Gandhi was at best "cautiously and selectively reformist." Later he became a revolutionary "only to the extent that the technique of mass passive resistance implied elements of a revolutionary style." It was only in 1913 that Gandhi became a mass leader. Swan is critical of Gandhi's failure to even consider including in his political movement the African masses whose oppressive conditions were worse than those of Indians.

While Swan's work was influenced by Marxist scholarship and the antiapartheid movement of the 1970s and 1980s, others sought to find meaning in the wake of the apartheid regime's demise in the 1990s. As India reestablished diplomatic ties with post apartheid South Africa, Gandhi was being re-appropriated for cementing the foundation of the relationship between the two countries.

The second high commissioner to South Africa, Gopalkrishna Gandhi who is a direct descendant of Gandhi, paid tribute to "the roles of Mahatma and Madiba" in creating "transcontinental mutuality" when he presented his credentials in August 1996. Mandela in turn praised M.K. Gandhi for laying "the foundations of a modern liberation movement."

E.S. Reddy's Gandhiji's Vision of a Free South Africa pointed to the symbolically important role Gandhi played in India after leaving South Africa. Rajmohan Gandhi had a whole chapter on South Africa's race relations in his book on Gandhi.Most significantly, The South African Gandhi: An Abstract of Speeches and Writings of M. K. Gandhi, 1893-1914 edited by Fatima Meer reproduced documents with commentaries by leaders across the new political, social, and economic spectrum, including Mandela, in an attempt to reassess Gandhi's historical role and its relevance for the new South Africa.

Gandhi in South Africa: Principles and Politics was intended to show the significance of Gandhi's South Africa experience in his later political life in India. A seminal essay by A.J. Parel argues that Gandhi's Hind Swaraj (1909) would not have been possible without the historical and intellectual contexts provided by South Africa. Parel reproduced Hind Swaraj with a detailed introduction and illuminating footnotes.

This is the historiographical context within which this book seeks to expand the understanding of the South African Gandhi. It examines the cultural and religious traditions Indians brought with them to South Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the extent to which Gandhian politics interfaced with them. It is not surprising that religion and culture should be significant among the early Indians. They articulated their world through culture, which broadly is defined as an ensemble of shared values and practices.

There is close connection between culture and religion. Thus, Muslims debated about the best way that they could transmit ilm through their madressas to ensure that their children grew up with proper knowledge of Islam. Members of a caste organization, to take another example, talked among themselves about a code of conduct to ensure cohesion within the narrow confines of their cultural legacies and assimilated as much of the outside world as they needed to survive. Progressive-minded Hindus established Bhagavad Gita study groups so that they could gain a deeper understanding of its spiritual message beyond popular forms of religious rituals.

We searched for activities that signified values transplanted from India. Migration studies are replete with instances where immigrant communities recreated the worlds they left behind in their new environments. This study is ethnographic in nature, but our sources did not allow for thick descriptions of cultural and religious explanations. Rather, it points to the existence of practices that show how important they were in defining Indian identities and determining behavior in the early years. Indeed, many of these practices have persisted among succeeding generations of Indians as segregation and apartheid further racialized citizenship and heightened a sense of ethnic separateness.

Racial attitudes emerged around transformations in Natal colony's political economy. In pursuing many forms of livelihood, Indians came into conflict and competition with Whites and Africans over land, labour, and commerce in the public and private sectors. It is in this three-way relationship that identities of all the groups were shaped. Zuluness was being defined even as the Indians began arriving, and White rule was coming into sharper focus as laws were passed in the 1890s and 1900s to restrict the trade, immigration, and political rights of Indian immigrants.

The process spawned racial animosities. When the Natal Mercury responded editorially to a printed circular by Gandhi in which he defended Indians, it argued self-servingly that there was good reason to dislike the Indian presence in the colony. This dislike, it continued, was shared by the African; the "contempt of the coolie was even greater [among the Africans] than the Europeans."

This study will explore some of the sources of differences and conflict around Indian communal activities. By 1910, Indians numbered 147,000, which, while it was only one-tenth of the total White South African population, had grown from 30,000 in 1890. It was under these circumstances that "Indianness" as a basis of transmigrational politics came into being. Gandhi was its chief promoter responding to the way White rule determined the place and role of subordinate groups. He founded the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in 1894 to unite the Indians. Gandhi pointed out that as "Indians" they should seek protection in the imperial doctrine of legal equality.

Gandhi's strategy connected South Africa to India as both were part of the British Empire. While his Indianness had wider imperial application, it denoted otherness and separateness in the South African context. Fully aware that White rulers intended to exclude from the system the indigenous peoples, Gandhi argued that "Indians" could indeed claim greater affinity because of their illustrious historical past.

By contrast, the indigenous populations, referred to variously as "Natives" and "Kaffirs," displayed no such advanced levels of development. Indianness at the very least implied that it was therefore unfair to lump the Indians with the "Kaffirs." Gandhian politics helped to embed Indianness into the racialized ethos of emergent White supremacy in South Africa.

The fact is that Indianness concealed a multitude of identities extant among the Indian migrants who settled in South Africa, and the important question is how Gandhi negotiated the differences and in turn was influenced by them. There are various strands of that identity as Indians were divided in terms of class, religion, language, and caste.

They were either Hindus or Muslims, spoke Bhojpuri if they came from the Ganges valley, Tamil and Telugu if they came from the southern parts of India, or Gujarati if they came from the western part of India. Hundreds of bodies emerged around caste, culture, religion, and language. Appendix 1 lists close to 140 bodies organized around culture and religion in contrast with about 25 that were secular in nature. Groups that incorporated culture in its broadest sense determined the ethnic dimensions of the Indian experience and shaped Gandhi's world view.

Religion was the strongest base around which Indian migrants organized their lives. Old world institutions and images were recreated. Indians built shrines, temples, and mosques. Among the earliest were the traditional Hindu temples that dotted the Natal coastline. In their Hindu world, gods were everywhere, and Indians constructed visual images to remind them that they are part of everyday life.

They afforded them darshan—that is, the seeing eyes of the gods they worshiped were always upon them for protection. Seeing and being seen by the gods was indeed an act of worship among the Hindus. Rituals such as mantra-chanting, bell-ringing, conch-blowing, and fire-lighting became essential ingredients of religious worship. The outside of the temple articulated for them the plenum of life; and the inside directed them to the source of all life. So, Hindu migrants to Natal created these images and formed temple and cultural organizations to give them direction.

Muslims and Christian Indians, the other two important religious groups, were equally active in organizing themselves around mosques and churches. Most of the Muslims were Sunnis, yet in time, the Shi-ites would also come to play a role. All of them observed eight festivals fundamental to Islam. Muslim devotional music known in the Sufi tradition as qawwali (devotional songs) was sung in praise of God, Prophet Mahomed, and the Fourth Caliph, Ali.

As for the Christian Indian community, Anglican and Catholic organizations were likely active as well, although we did not uncover evidence to show this. They used the networks of relations with Chennai (Madras) to help build communities in South Africa. These bodies often brought out educated Christian Indians from the southern parts of India, where Christianity had made an early introduction, to help in running state and church schools. In the 1890s and 1900s, Christian Indians produced an educated elite that was to play a substantial role in Natal public life.

Indians maintained contact and communication with their ancestral homeland. Friends and family were remembered. The Makanjee brothers in Durban requested donations for road paving for villages like Karadi, Matvad, Samapur, Dandi, Kothamadi, and Pethan in the Jalalpur district. Morar Dalla in Cape Town appealed for funds to help the library in Khadsupa in the same district. The Durban darjees decided in 1909 to write to the panch (council of elders) in Navsari for guidelines about expenses at social functions like weddings.

Sometimes disputes were resolved through institutions with which the Indians were familiar. In Verulam, a dispute between husband and wife over money matters was resolved by a panch organized by Babu Talwantsingh and others. In appreciation of its role, the husband and wife donated over £7 to Verulam "dharmastan." Another such dispute in Malvern was resolved between two quarreling Indians. The panch met on September 4, 1910, with Ambaram Maharaj as chairman.

Concern for those in India showed up most particularly in times of natural disasters. Such was the case in 1900 when famine struck Northern and Western India affecting 5.5 million people. The Indian Famine Relief Fund in Natal collected £4886, contributed in the following way: £3022 by Whites, £1760 by Indians, and £103 by "natives."

South Africa's Indians identified with movements in India. One example of this was the swadeshi movement. P.A. Moodaly headed this movement, which had branches in Durban and other major cities. There are numerous instances when others expressed support for the movement. In his talk to the Sanathan Dharma Society in Pietermaritzburg, Satyendrakumar Bannerjee linked swadeshi to education and unity.

Various other individuals also addressed the issue in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Stanger, Tongaat, and Kimberley. Of particular importance is that such appeals were being made before Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj in which swadeshi values are at the core of the pamphlet. By 1910, there were many instances when Vande Materam, the patriotic song that was composed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya and later adopted as India's national anthem, was sung at the start and end of meetings.

This India-connected orientation is to be found in the remittances that Natal Indians regularly made to their families. The Protector's Office, established in the early 1870s to monitor the activities of indentured Indians, kept careful records of money sent through this official channel. Money was sent also through the Post Office, and from the figures available for the 1900s, the amounts were substantially larger than those remitted through the Protector's Office. In 1877, £97 was remitted through the Protector's Office. Since then it steadily rose to £280 in 1880, £754 in 1883, and £901 in 1884.

There was a decline over the next six years but steady increase thereafter. In 1901, the amount was £2060. The fluctuations were connected with the state of the economy in Natal, and of course, the number of people who availed themselves of the Protector's Office for this service. A total of over £37,000 was remitted from 1863 to 1910. Money sent through the Post Office was quite substantial in the years for which we have information. The total remitted for four years between 1907 and 1910 was £249,340. Much of this was "Arab" (Indian merchant) money. In 1901, for example, the amount of £105,889 was made up substantially of money remitted by wealthy merchants.

Returning Indians also took with them large sums of money and jewels. For example, the Protector recorded that in 1908, £22,016 cash and £8696 in jewels was taken out by Indians. In one case, a man and his wife had so many jewels that an inquest was ordered. Sewsaran Kahar and his wife Suhodree possessed jewels worth £256. In question was a diamond in their possession. Depositions were taken from people who knew them, including the jeweller in Natal who had made many of the pieces.

While nobody could say where the diamond came from, goldsmith Mody Sonar itemized all the pieces of jewellery that he had made. In the end, they were cleared of any wrong-doing. Protector L.H. Mason, who conducted the investigation, summed up, "It is no uncommon thing to see Indian woman parading almost daily dressed in velvets and most expensive silks, adorned (particularly on special occasions) with jewels of very considerable value, and there are at present time Indian women in this town possessing jewels over the value of £500 each."

The connectedness with India is well illustrated in a twenty-one-part story written in Gujarati in 1911 in the Indian Opinion. The story is in the form of a dialogue between accountant Udayshanker who had been in Durban for six years, and his school friend, Manharam, who came from the same village as he, and who had just arrived in Durban as a new immigrant. The dialogue raises contemporary issues in India and South Africa and provides useful incidental information.

One of the more important details to emerge from the story is the extent to which networking was used in immigration and jobs. So, not only did Manharam come on the advice of Udayshanker, but he was carefully guided every step as he made his way to Natal. Once in Natal, Udayshanker helped him to find a job as a bookkeeper with an established trader, namely Hoosen Mahomed Company, an importer of cloth from Madras and elsewhere. The salary that Udayshanker helped to negotiate was £50 per year.

Udayshanker had left behind a wife, daughter, and an aging father. He had resisted bringing them out to Natal, but was overcome by guilt and remorse when he received a letter from his father and his wife who reminded him of his duty, and he decided to return to India. When Udayshanker departed, those who came to see him off included kolis, dhobis, darjees, Brahmins, and Muslims. His friends gave him gifts for their relatives in India.

While Indian migrants were strongly tied to their ancestral land, they also engaged in making a new home for themselves. Indians were adapting as they made Natal and South Africa their home. There are several indicators for this. Indians began investing money in the Natal Government Savings Bank. In 1885, there were 172 depositors with a total savings of £2,819, and this number steadily increased in the next two decades. In 1900, there were 936 depositors with £23,362 to their names, and in 1908 they numbered 2,043 with £41,760 in deposits. Sports is another indicator of adaptation.

The annual general meeting of the Griqualand Football Club in Kimberley reported the club's participation in the interstate Sam China Cup competition which had started in 1904. The Mayville Indian Football Club in Durban was founded in 1904.

There were reports of the activities of other sporting bodies: Overport Cricket Club, Malvern and Seaview Cricket Club, Durban Stella Football Club, Pietermaritzburg Natal Railway Football Club, Rander Anjuman Roshan Achhta Cricket Club, Rising Star Cricket Club, Rander Mehfil Sultania Cricket Club in Ladysmith, Ladysmith Indian Football, Durban Hindu Cricket Club, and Hamidia Cricket Club in Johannesburg. A deputation raised the issue of the lack of sporting facilities for Indians with the mayor of Pietermaritzburg.c Indians followed other sports such as boxing and cycling.c

Education significantly factored in transformations that were shaping the world of immigrant children. They were being schooled through a system that was essentially South African. The syllabi required reading in English from standard texts.

While Indians built their own schools and ran them, they also demanded the creation of government schools. Government schools built to cater for White children generally opposed accepting Indians. The Natal Prime Minister said in 1897, "There was great difficulty in defining colour, but the government would as far as possible keep the separate races in separate schools."

In 1884, children made up less than 25 per cent of the Natal Indian population, while in 1906 the percentage had jumped to 37 per cent of the total. Formal education developed slowly. Indians were scattered far and wide across the colony so that schools were not within easy reach of all who were eligible. In 1877 there were only 8 pupils. In 1880, there were eight schools with 196 pupils. Three years later, the numbers stood at eighteen schools and 1011 pupils. In 1884, there were twenty-four schools and 1371 pupils. In 1885 there were three Board Schools catering for 295 pupils, and twenty-two Aided Schools serving 1275 pupils.

Of the total of twenty-five schools, five were run by groups affiliated to the church. There were thirty-three teachers, most of whom were educated in Chennai. The average salary for teachers was £60 per year, and the salary of teacher assistants with sixteen years of experience was raised from £24 to £50. In 1899, the Natal government spent over twelve shillings for an Indian child as opposed to over seventy-nine shillings for the White child.

Despite the steady growth of schools, the children of indentured Indians were still being neglected. One of the individuals who spoke on their behalf at an official educational commission hearing in 1909 was Swami Shankeranand, an advocate of reform Hinduism then visiting South Africa. He argued for "free and compulsory" education with primary education in the vernacular and English to be used in the fourth standard. Many others argued for the inclusion of vernacular education.

When the government schools did not respond, they decided to organize it through their respective communities. The emphasis on vernacular languages is also apparent from the items kept by various libraries established and run by Indians. The Durban Indian Public Library made available seventy-five newspapers in English for its readers at the beginning of 1907; there were also forty to fifty in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu.c

These, then, are some of the parameters within which Gandhi acted. Much has been said about the impact of his forceful personality on others. He spoke English with great clarity of thought and command of details. When he used Gujarati, he was totally at home in the idiom of his native tongue. He was given to using adages which native speakers knew and understood.

The passion of his convictions often led him to ignore the points raised by his critics, and he was selective in what he chose to write or not write about them. He declined to reproduce the testimony presented by M.C. Anglia at the 1914 Solomon Commission in Indian Opinion after he received an angry letter from the NIC secretary requesting him to do so.

Satyagraha in South Africa records in detail his activities in South Africa, but there are few references by name to the people who disagreed with him. Gandhi was a phenomenal collector of newspaper cuttings—all of them are to be found in the SN series at Sabarmati in Ahmedabad. He was therefore well informed and chose to ignore those persons he believed irrelevant to his own convictions.

There is a remarkable transformation in Gandhi between 1906 and 1909, and this was to play an important role in the strategies he would use in 1913 and 1914. He carried out his tasks with "great skill and finesse" in his 1906 visit to London as one of the two members of the delegation. He met and talked with militants like V.D. Savarkar (1883-1966), read William Mcintyre's Ethical Religion which deeply influenced him, and took great interest in the passive resistance campaign waged by the Nonconformist churches in England and Wales to the Education Act of 1902.

By the time of his second visit in 1909, he had little faith in the imperial government and questioned the value of modern civilization. He admired the ideas expressed by Edward Carpenter in Civilization: Its Cause and Consequence. Gandhi shared a platform in 1909 with Savarkar on the occasion of the Dussera festival celebrating the victory of Rama over demon Ravana. Gandhi spoke of Sita as embodying virtue, patience, and nonviolence as he reaffirmed his belief in passive resistance, while Savarkar stressed Durga's violent slaying of Ravana and physical force.

On his return voyage, he wrote Hind Swaraj, which Anthony J. Parel correctly describes as "an indispensable tool for the study of Gandhi." It is worth quoting Parel in full, "… by 1909, Gandhi had integrated all the essential ingredients of his political philosophy into a coherent whole, ingredients that were derived from East and West.

He had by then acquired a definite philosophical vision which enabled him to assess the relative significance of things that concerned him—the problem of the self, of the Indian praja, the nature of Indian nationalism, the modern industrial civilisation, colonialism, the extreme selfishness of the Indian middle class, racialism, the spectre of rising violence in India and the legitimation of terroristic violence by extreme nationalists. It is from that vision that the basic argument of Hind Swaraj emerges." Swaraj was the rule of the self by the self.

Self-rule could be acquired through self-control: temperance, chastity, truthfulness, freedom from possessiveness and greed, courage or the capacity to overcome fear, including the fear of death. "Such inner experience of self-rule enables the citizens to reinforce their political ethics by their aesthetic feelings, their political action by political symbols."

These are the values he sought to inculcate at the Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm. In Hind Sawaraj he said, "If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarreling." By 1912, he had developed a strong bio-moral dimension to his thinking.

He wrote a series of articles in 1913 covering everything from proper diets to remedies for burns and scorpion bites to the control of sexual lust. He prescribed remedies for many ailments, but addressed one central question, namely, how people in search of freedom should cope with bodily "inadequacies." If one learned to control the senses, one prepared oneself for political independence.

He hoped to teach Indians the value of self-control as a test that they were indeed masters of their own destiny and thus deserving of the respect of alien rulers who lorded over them, and thus also of political freedom. In essence, Gandhi argued that those who were chaste and in control of their bodies had the potential to be their own masters. Joseph S. Alter's Gandhi's Body argues that Gandhi melded "together lessons from the Gita, Bible, Koran, teachings of Christ, Krishna, and Buddha. Cosmology, biology, theology are connected with filth, faith, and food.

Diet reform is connected to his vision of politics that is village democracy." For him, "the ashram [was] a kind of staging ground and local laboratory for experimentation in large-scale sociopolitical reform."

While many scholarly works examine the sources of Gandhi's Satyagraha in South Africa, none has carefully examined the religious and cultural makeup of South Africa's Indians as a factor. Gandhi says little about it in his own writings, and yet he was intimately connected with the community of Indians who shared values that helped to shape his ideas. Gandhi may have articulated the broad outlines of his ideas, but they also sprang from the communities themselves.

If India was ever at the center of Gandhi's thinking, it was also so for his compatriots. The South African Indians were intimately connected to India in a variety of ways. Of particular interest in this study is how he drew from the cultural and religious diversity of the people.

Given the focus of this study, it draws heavily from two newspaper sources, namely Indian Opinion and African Chronicle. In Satyagraha in South Africa, Gandhi said that at its height around 1906 to 1908, the Indian Opinion had 3500 subscribers. But the newspaper was passed around, and his estimate was that as many as 20,000 readers had access to its contents. Indian Opinion reported widely on cultural and religious activities, and this study has drawn freely on them in chapters 3 and 4.

The columns in Indian Opinion reflect the context Gandhi helped to create. Between April 1910 and October 1912, for example, the newspaper used the cultural medium of poems in Gujarati and Urdu. It published twenty poems that were either religious or heroic. Ambaram Maharaj's refined poetry drew heavily upon Hindu religious symbols.

In one of the poems, he sang the praises of those who had been to Mecca, stressing the essential oneness of the message in the scriptures of Hindus and Muslims. He was seeking to build bridges between the two, and in that way served Gandhi, even if, as one suspects, the learned Brahmin did not agree with Gandhi's interpretation of Hinduism. Sheik Mehtab recited popular verses in praise of people in the satyagraha movement even though he never joined the NIC. He wrote a ninety-two-line ghazal paying tribute to over twenty individuals involved in the movement.

The other newspaper, the African Chronicle, consisted of four pages in English and eight pages in Tamil around 1908. A year later, the ratio was eight to eight. It reported on organizations such as Hindu Young Men's Association and Hindu Young Men's Society. It was particularly strong on reporting on cultural events relating to Tamil-speaking immigrants and promoted the study of Tamil as a language. The Tamil Panchangam appeared regularly after the Tamil New Year in April 1910.

In addition, African Chronicle focused on education, indentured conditions, and religious festivals like the Mohurram and Thai Poosum (Kavady). Occasionally, it reproduced guest articles by Swami Shankeranand. Like the Indian Opinion, it also focused on patriotic events and nationalist leaders in India.

But unlike Gandhi's paper, it gave space to the debate of those who held extremist views regarding British rule in India, as was the case in the June 1909 issue. V. Chattopadhyaya's criticism of Leo Tolstoy was published in its April 2 and 4, 1910, issues. It also reported in March 5, 1910, the arrest of Professor Parmanand who had visited South Africa in 1905 for his alleged connections with a militant Shyam Krishnavarma (1857-1930) who was critical of Gandhi's passive resistance. In chapter 2, we examine the imperial setting specifically with reference to Africans.

While Gandhi's earlier attitudes toward Africans are filled with prejudices, it is his strong identification with the British and the action he took in South Africa to show his support that was open to misperception. Gandhi did not create racial divisions. Natal's political economy played a significant role in shaping racial attitudes and identities. In chapters 3 and 4, we turn to a detailed examination of the cultural and religious dimensions of the Indian experience. They reflect strongly a point of connectedness with things Indian, thus defining a unique form of South African Indianness.

Under those conditions, how should one see Gandhi's South African experience? How much did those conditions shape Gandhi's politics in South Africa? These are some of the issues in which we see Gandhi emerge as a social reformer in chapter 5. In chapter 6, we explore the last phase of passive resistance in which he had to deal with dissension even as he used his creative energies to mobilize masses of Indian supporters.

The important point of this study, as we say in the concluding chapter, is that Gandhi's ideas matured within the culturally and religiously diverse makeup of his compatriots. In India, Gandhi would simply expand on what he learned and experienced on his road to mahatmaship.

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The NIC had as one of its goals the promotion of education for Indians, but its role in direct assistance was minimal, and critics were not slow to point this out. John L. Roberts who wrote to Gandhi in March 1901 charged that education had become a "dead principle" for the Congress, and challenged it to offer scholarship funds instead of making "empty promises" and "unfulfilled pledges." The Indian Opinion criticized the NIC for its do-nothing attitude on education. SN 3488, 3485, Newspaper Cuttings, September 10, and September 10, 1900; SN 2494, 10 August 1897, and SN 3786, 12 March, 1901, SN 3077, 7 March, 1899, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad; IO 6/10/1905, 10/28/1905.

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Chapter 2 Gandhi, Africans and Indians in Colonial Natal

Africans and Indians worked in the agricultural sector, moved to the urban centers for employment, and competed for land in colonial Natal. They were bound to come into contact with one another as employers and workers, landlords and tenants, and buyers and sellers. Language was surely a barrier, but some probably relied on the emerging new patois known as fanagalo to communicate.

There was some casual sex, and a few instances of marriage. But there was little by way assimilation of Indians into African social structures and vice versa. Relations between Africans and Indians mainly centered around their interactions in employment, land ownership, petty trade, and service.

As White rule was coming into place, racial tensions emerged, and officials and employers alike often exploited them for their own ends. Take for example the occasion in 1877 when eighty-six of the "Delta coolies all armed with large sticks and bludgeons" marched towards the Albion Estate in Isipingo, "shrieking vengeance against four kaffirs" who had been hired to prevent the Indians from passing through the estate's mill. Or in another instance in 1896, when White shopkeepers organized knobkerrie-carrying Zulus to march up and down the Durban harbor to frighten the Indians on board the Courtland and Naderi.

Racialized perceptions affected social relations as well. F.E.T. Krause's African servants protested at having to serve an Indian who was his guest. The servants relented only after they had been assured that his guest, Gandhi, was an important person like "a native chief."

All of this suggests that in examining the emergence of White supremacy in South Africa, it is simply not enough to focus only on Blacks in their relationships with Whites, but to see how the two Black communities related to each other. In the very nature of the process of colonial consolidation over Zulus after they were subjugated, the presence of Indians would inevitably create dynamics in which the two subordinate groups would find themselves in conflict and competition.

It is with this in mind that this chapter examines the role of the political economy in shaping African and Indian attitudes toward each other and the circumstances around which Gandhi conceptualized Indiannness and rejected the idea of seeking out allies from among the Africans. There were over 42,000 Indians in the colony in the 1890s and about as many Whites. The Zulu population, 375,000 in 1881, increased dramatically to 455,983 by 1891.

Political Economy

The literature has usually focused on the rivalry between Indian and White workers in colonial Natal, and how, when the latter came to have influence over the government after responsible government was introduced in 1893, laws were passed to curtail the threat Indians posed in artisan labor employment. There has been little attention given to relationships between Zulus and Indians. A recent study examined the issue of identities in the context of Natal's political economy, but it paid little attention to relations between Africans and Indians.

Most Africans in Natal did not think of themselves in collective terms until fairly late in the nineteenth century. The Zulus were referred to as "abenguni" or "bakoni" by their neighbors. Early British traders in Port Natal and Cape used the term "Zulos." In time, however, the presence of White settlers in Natal created an "alternative source" of identification. White rule saw the gradual erosion of the power base of the Zulu kingdom.

Zulu land and resources shrank as five-sixths of Natal's land passed into the hands of the colonial government or private landowners. Chiefly authority was undermined as a new class of Africans emerged in the amakholwa (believers) and as young men who made up the amabutho (military regiments) became laborers on white farms or in the mines, or served the towns as togt (casual) workers.

Indian employment, indentured and non-indentured, extended beyond the coastal region from Verulam in the north to Umzinto in the south to the interior in the area between Camperdown and Pietermaritzburg. From the 1880s, workers were involved in building railroads and mining coal in northern Natal. They worked on wattle estates, on tea and coffee plantations, and were used as shepherds and cattlemen in the midlands. Indeed, they were so widely employed that the Protector exaggeratedly ruled out in 1901 African labour in agriculture:

"Native labour for farming purposes, or, in fact, for any other industry in the Colony, must, I think, be looked upon as a thing of the past, consequently the employers of coloured labour generally throughout the Colony have now realised the fact that without Indians they absolutely do nothing, and it is pleasing to note that, notwithstanding the hue and cry made against the introduction of Indians a few years ago by certain sections of the community, the majority of the people are now actually employing Indians themselves, either as household servants, general labourers, hospital attendants, etc." The growth of mealies, tobacco, beans, and garden produce was "entirely in their hands."

Natal experienced a resurgence of economic activity after the South African War even if the postwar prosperity was enjoyed disproportionately as the per capita income in 1904 shows: £124 for Whites, £20 for Indians, and £4 for Africans. Competition and conflict accompanied the share of the resources among Indians and Zulus.

Indians worked alongside Africans, and it was inevitable they should experience some friction in the work environment. In agriculture, Africans and Indians are known to have worked on the same plantations, but we are less certain about the circumstances under which they labored individually and jointly. In 1875, there were 5292 Indians on the plantations as opposed to 7457 Africans, that is, 58 per cent of the total. The percentage of African workers employed in the cane fields dropped to 28 per cent in 1887 and 1888, and 18 per cent in 1907 and 1908. After the end of indentured importation, the percentage of African workers rose sharply to 44 per cent in 1914 and 15. It is likely that the increasing use of Africans as casual laborers was not reflected in these statistics.

Africans were sometimes hired as sirdars (overseers) over Indians. In 1862, an African was used by the employer to lash an Indian tied to a tree, according to a report in the Natal Mercury. This may be an isolated instance, especially as the sugar industry was worked predominantly by Indians, but it is quite likely that in agriculture, industry, and public service there were many instances of employers and officials using similar strategies to keep Indians and Africans divided by differential treatment or by placing one group in a position of authority over the other.

For example, Dorasamy working for the Redcliffe Estate testified to the Protector in November 1882 that two months earlier, a "Kaffir" took a large stick of sugar and struck him. He continued, "I fell down and the Kaffir was on top of me beating me with his fist. I took the first thing that was near me, a cane knife. The Kaffir told my master who was in the field. My master told six or seven Kaffirs to take hold of me, put me in the ground where they held me when the master thrashed me with a sjambok. When he finished beating me my master told me to go to work ...."

There are other examples. Katharayan complained in 1888 that his employer encouraged "Kaffirs to beat" them to keep Indians in their place. C. Kannippa complained in 1902 about being assaulted by his employer D. Douglas, who threatened that in future he "would tell the Kaffir to beat" him. In 1891, G. Martin who managed the Quarantine Station in Durban wrote to the Protector to "send him some Kaffir Policemen to prevent the immigrants from straying beyond their limits…," who obliged him with two African constables.

Somewhat related is the case of F.R. Bloy who informed the Protector in April 1883 that he had employed "Kaffir Mazwi" to arrest Indian absconders. Mazwi had been active since December and had already arrested ten absconders, nine men and one woman. An African named "Coffee" was paid for arresting two Indian deserters at Lion's River in April 1885.

Good land was scarce in the colony, especially after the growth of commercial agriculture when great tracts of land passed into White hands. Many Africans, most of whom were amakholwa, acquired land when Crown lands were thrown open to the public. But the increasing number of Indians in the colony seriously affected the extent of land available to Africans. The Natal Land and Colonisation Company (NLCC), one of the biggest land speculators, preferred Indians over Africans because they used a crop rotation method that helped to conserve soil.

Indian farmers who thus acquired land did not evict African labor tenants, but began replacing the rent tenants with other tenants (their compatriots presumably) who could pay higher rents. Indians acquired small holdings in northern Natal ranging from 3 to 25 acres in the 1880s and 1890s. By the end of the century, NLCC sold plots varying from 40 to 80 acres. By 1902, 2000 acres had been sold to the Indians in northern Natal.

There were 600 Indian farmers in the Umhlali district; and in Verulam and Tongaat, Indians owned about 1400 acres. Land purchased by Indians was intended for White settlers but there were not enough buyers. African homesteaders could not own land outside of reserve areas although some chiefs were able to acquire land. In the early years ex-indentured Indians could seek land in lieu of return passages, and some of them took advantage of the law. In Umzinto, only fifty-two persons received land in the 1880s. In 1880, one A.F. MacKintosh applied for land on behalf of eighty-nine Indians. All eighty-nine had served under MacKintosh Indian Corps under his command.

The presence of Indians as competitors was resented by Africans. In 1881, potential Zulu buyers complained that land was too expensive to buy or lease because the country was "full of coolies." Reference here appears to be to the pressures created by the presence of the large imperial garrison in the colony in the years 1879 and 1881, when the British went to war against the Zulus and Boers respectively.

It created opportunities for landowners in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and the surrounding countryside. Whites and Indians who grew produce on their land began subdividing their plots to accommodate new tenants. As rentals increased, many African families who lived in huts owned by landlords were forced to go elsewhere. The impact of being displaced from the land was felt particularly in the drought years from 1888 to 1893.

Africans were forced to buy rice from Indian suppliers in the coastal areas, and the African homesteaders who supplied vegetables and grains to buyers in Durban and Pietermaritzburg were displaced by Indian and White market gardeners.

The resentment to Indians was deep in some areas. Heather Hughes argues that the Qadi chiefdom feared being elbowed out of the country by White and Indian farmers. Private landownership eroded their chiefly powers. There were an estimated 14,000 Indians in the Inanda area by the 1880s, and large portions of the Riet River and Groenberg farms close to the Qadi heartland were leased by Indians. White landowners preferred Indian tenants to Africans because they had the cash to pay the rent per acre leased.

Indian tenants had easier access to credit and were entirely engaged in agriculture since they did not have herds of cattle. Africans "perceived Indians to be the cause of the land distress" since they pushed up the price of land. Indians who sold treacle used for brewing isitshimiyana (beer) and ran eating houses were also blamed for drunkenness and crime among Africans. Dube was aware of the feelings of Africans when he said in 1912 that "people like coolies have come to our land and lord it over us, as though we, who belong to the country, were mere nonentities."

By the 1890s, Indians were being prohibited from owning colonial land in areas that the Whites considered exclusively theirs. Open competition was feared. Numerous letters appeared in the press by people who believed that the Indians were likely to swamp Natal. Indians succeeded, said one White colonist in 1894, because they worked hard on small lots sold to them by White farmers with borrowed money. They lived frugally, took their wealth back to India, and encouraged their compatriots to come to Natal.

He concluded, "What does this mean? Simply that the coolies are coming here and enriching themselves at the expense of the Colony, and spending their money in India. The evil is growing daily…." He blamed the landowners for this development.

There are many instances when sale of land was prohibited to Indians, although some were able to get around the hurdles. When Messrs R. Acutt and Sons organized the auction of land in Musgrave Road in Durban, the condition of the sale was that the lots could not be sold or resold to Indians. Yet one unseen bid did go to an Indian. In Pietermaritzburg, five lots of land in the Lower Illovo were keenly contested by Indians.

But they all went to W. Pearce. In another instance, two lots were sold in Umgeni Road at Trimble's land sale to Whites. When it was learned that the principals were Indians, Andrew Trimble cancelled the sale. Part of the condition of sale was that vendors should not accept Indian purchasers.

Indians also acquired land in parts of Zululand in the early years. The agitation to prevent them from acquiring more land became strong after 1895. J.A.F. Ortlepp had sold land to Indians in 1876 in the Melmoth township. When he ran for public office in Melmoth in 1898, the opposing candidate used this against him, although Ortlepp had changed his stance and himself had become anti-Indian. It became difficult for Indians to acquire land in Zululand in such climate of anti-Indian feelings.

A report was filed by the sub-inspector of Verulam regarding the displacement of Africans by Indians from private lands. "The free Indian," it stated, "is now gradually ousting the native from private lands, and forcing him into the locations, already crowded, except for those large sacrificed areas known as 'Mission Reserves'."

Free Indians were also employing Africans. The result of this situation was that the African acquired the habits of the "Coolies." "Experience shows that the native learns nothing but evil from his association with the coolies" who are thieves and "superlative liars," said the writer.

In another instance, the respondent to an interview in the Natal Witness said that if Zululand was opened to Indians, it would suffer the same fate as Natal, that is, it will be swamped. "We in Natal," said the unnamed person, "know that but a few years ago, European storekeepers were to be found dotted throughout the colony. Today they are supplanted by the trading Hindoo.

". Yet another instance was that of an individual complaining about "coolies" getting a foothold in Mapumulo where they were operating on agents' licences because the Colonisation Company had refused to allow land to be sold to Indians for farming and maintaining stores.

When the Natal Government officially barred Indians from owning land in Nondweni township in Zululand, Indians drafted a memorial protesting their exclusion because the action drew "invidious distinctions" between "European and Indian British subjects." The memorial was signed by Abdul Karim H. Adam and others in Durban on February 25, 1896.

In Umvoti there were twenty families cultivating 125 acres of land. A Mr. Essery did not think that the "coolies" would do harm. Still, he wanted to prevent the African reserve from turning into an Indian location, and a resolution to that effect was passed by Essery and seconded by W.F. Clayton.

The presence of Indians in or near Zululand was a matter of concern in official circles from the 1880s. There was a directive from the Secretary of Native Affairs (SNA) in 1883 to establish the number of Indians in locations and/or kraals. In an area in which Dinnabezwa was chief, there was one Indian who was given permission by the chief to be there. In Alexandra County, an Indian had married an albino "Kaffir" and lived outside the Mabia location. There were also two Indians in G. Fynn's location who had built their own homes.

One "coolie" was said to be "loafing around." In the Canada Mission Station, an Indian lived in the house of Daniel Zoba and had two wives. Five other Indians were trading with Africans for hides and fowls but were not living among the "Kaffirs." In Umsinga, there were ten Indian traders who exchanged goods for goats and money. At Umzimkulu, an Indian lived in the kraal for many years.

There was at least one instance of an African employer hiring Indian labourers. Umlauw in Stanger hired fourteen free Indians in his business venture by October 1884. Others were reported practicing as “doctors” among the Africans in locations in Insuza.

The SNA files refer to several cases of Indian traders who were given permission to trade in stores and hides in or near mission reserves, but who were under threat to move through the offices of the SNA or the Colony’s Licensing Officer. In one case, the complaint was that the Indians buying the hides used their own false scales to cheat the sellers.

Often pressure was put on the chief who leased the land. Sidumuka of the Nyavini clan wanted to give one V. Supramuna Pothee the right to use Lot 5 of Block A of the Ifumi Mission Reserve. Harry Escombe advised not to allow the establishment of Indian stores on mission land. He suggested an amendment of Act 25 of 1895, specifically subsection (d) of Section 2 to prevent this from happening. In another case, the lease of an Indian trader was renewed for five years in January 1903 on the American Mission Reserve.

The occupant at the time was Konjibari. However, the lease was given to A. G. Kadwa. The Umzinto Magistrate ruled to eject Konjibari in October 1904. The SNA directed, “It is desired by the Trust that Indians shall not obtain a foothold in the Locations, and it is intended to get rid of all Indian tenants as opportunity arises.” However, the original lessee challenged the decision, and the Supreme Court set aside the decision in favor of Kadwa in February 1906. Under the circumstances, the Board decided it would not renew the lease after it expired on December 31, 1907.

At Ifumi Mission Reserve, an African trader by the name of Charlie Mali was accused in 1908 of being a front for a store run by Ismail Amod for Ismail Dadabhoy. The charge was brought by Louis Mgadi who said in his letter of complaint to the SNA, “If Government objects to Indians having stores on Mission Reserve, they should go further and forbid the employment of Indians by natives who own stores on Mission Reserve.” Mali denied the charge.

He maintained, “I got this Indian as a man who understands this line of business, to show me how to run my own business….” The licensing officer knew how to get Mali’s cooperation. “I should require him,” he said, “to give me a written undertaking not to draft an Asiatic into his business before considering a renewal of his license, and any attempt to do so would mean cancellation of his license.”

In 1913, the residents of Umvoti Mission Station at Groutville petitioned to remove Essop Hoosen Patel who was running a store on the premises rented to him by Chief Martin Lutuli. The stores should be run by Africans, and Patel in their opinion was not a “fit and proper” person.

The petitioners were backed by Walter Foss, a member of the American Zulu Mission who, in forwarding the petition, was told by the Commissioner of Native Chiefs that he should communicate his objection directly to the licensing officer. In any event, Chief Lutuli was pressed into giving Patel notice to quit, and not allowing any other Indian-run stores in the future. The American Mission Board in Inanda strongly resented the presence of Indians.

White traders, like their counterparts in the urban areas often felt threatened by the presence of Indian traders. They were not slow to use colonial officials to eliminate the competition. H.E. Swales of Ndedwe complained that he suspected Indians of selling treacle to the African without proper trade licenses. According to Swales, they stood 800 yards from his store to sell the treacle. Although Indians could not go into the locations, they could not be prevented from selling on the public road.

One of the officials commented that the African would buy where it was cheaper and more convenient. In any event, the SNA was not happy about the sale of treacle because it was being used to make isitshimiyana. Storekeeper J.W. Whittaker was similarly interested in shutting out Kajee from the Mapumulo Mission Reserve. The authorities replied that "the simplest way of disposing of him [Kajee] will be for the N.N. Trust who now are their landlords, to refuse to renew his lease when it expires."

Increasingly the colonial authorities wished to keep out Indians from mission lands. A request by the Tugela Irrigation Works to hire an Indian servant was rejected by SNA on the grounds that the "presence of Indians on Trust land is undesirable …." The Durban General Agency acted in 1911 on behalf of an Indian or Indians who wanted to buy 300 acres of reserve land. The Department of Native Affairs replied that "no portion of the Umlazi Mission Reserve was available for Indian tenants."

At the same time, replacing Indians with Africans in public institutions was frowned upon. The colonial engineer wanted to replace in 1908 indentured Indians with Africans at a Lunatic Asylum, brickyard, and so on. "The obligatory labour obtained from the Native population is limited on the public road," he said, and he did not want "to deviate from [that] principle."

In industrial labor, there was competition for similar jobs. For example, Indians who terminated their contracts in search of better employment in the Natal Government Railways (NGR), ended up as competitors with African workers who also sought out NGR jobs. By 1890, 3137 Africans and 2606 Indians were employed by the NGR. A few of the reported incidents suggest that relations were not good between them.

A skirmish broke out in 1890 between Indians and Zulus in the railway barracks outside of Pietermaritzburg. Some tension was caused by employers who seemed to use ethnically/racially separated accommodation and tasks on plantations.

Employers were motivated as much by the need to keep the labor force divided as by a desire to prevent racial tensions. In any event, the efforts to keep Indians and Africans separated created sufficient room for prejudices to fester and stereotypes to develop. In coal mining the law allowed Indians but not Africans to refuse underground work.

The law protected Indian indentured miners in other ways, and when they were unhappy about conditions, as was the case with the Ramsey Colliery, they struck in 1906. Even this form of modest protection was not available to African workers.

If there was a perception that Indians seemed to be favored by White employers, nowhere was this more obvious than in the case of "special servants," a select group of hand-picked migrants who came on contracts for particular employers. They worked in residential clubs and hotels as waiters, cooks, dhobis (washermen), or coachmen; in hospitals as orderlies and compounders; as interpreters and clerks in law courts; or in municipal services as policemen and postmen. Special servants were part of a work environment that included Africans as policemen, government messengers, post carriers, and domestic servants.

Togt (casual) labor was popular with Africans. In 1889, the estimated number of such laborers was 7000. Peripheral Durban and Durban itself saw Africans and Indians entering the labor market at roughly the same time. The amakholwa were becoming carpenters, bricklayers, shoemakers, and so on. Africans in Durban were heavily male before World War II, and were limited to some sectors like domestic service, rickshaw pulling, and dockside work.

Dhobis competed with and eventually displaced Africans doing similar work in the laundry business. Specifically with reference to the "old fashioned wash Kaffirs," the introduction of improved water supply in two of the leading townships in 1887 had far reaching consequences. Zulu amawasha (washermen) did their washing on the river front, which meant that the washing had to be taken several miles away from the householder.

Piped water made it possible for washing in white colonial homes to be done on the premises. With time, this displaced the town-based Zulu washermen. Within a decade, the Zulu washerman's "challenger and effective rival," according to Atkins, was the dhobi "whose hand laundries in the towns operated at cheap and therefore highly competitive rates."

Many of them were forced to migrate to the gold-mining towns of the Rand where they once again engaged in the laundry business. In time, dhobis were themselves forced out of business by White-controlled commercial laundries.

There was also resentment, as we saw earlier, in having Africans in position of authority over Indians. Doorasamy Pillay's petition to the Viceroy on July 14, 1884 on behalf of "traders and storekeepers from Mauritius and other colonies" objected to Indians being arrested by "Kaffir constables, who treat them with great cruelty, using unnecessary and undue violence."

The petitioners requested that if warranted, the Indians should be apprehended by "European or Indian constables, who do not use harsh measures, but treat all alike …." Such racial stereotyping was common.

In terms of commercial services, Indian traders formed an important link in providing stores to the Africans as they were being drawn into a cash economy. There were forty traders in Umgeni and forty-six in the Lower Tugela in 1879, many of whom were Indians. In the beginning traders were White, but the appearance of Indians in the 1870s and 1880s gave White wholesalers an opportunity to use them as distributors in remote corners of Natal.

This trade was significant. The annual combined turnover in 1904 of Indian traders and hawkers all over South Africa has been estimated at £25 million, and the Natal share of this total must have been substantial as the majority were based here. Small White traders in Natal complained that their Indian counterparts had cornered the "kaffir" trade.

In rural Natal, one assumes that Indian traders did not face any competition from potential Zulus traders—there were amakholwa general storekeepers, however—and it would be useful to know about the interpersonal relations between Indian traders and Zulus, the extension of credit facilities to them, and generally the way the services were rated by Africans. Answers to these questions will also yield some idea of the nature of the relationship.

By 1900, racial antipathy was evident in the attitudes between Africans and Indians particularly in the way the in which words like "kaffir" and "coolies" were used. Just as "kaffir" became a term of contempt for Africans, "coolies" or "amakulas" was used to refer to Indians. In sounding off on what Africans would think of the proposed formation of an arms-bearing Indian Volunteer Corp, John Bazley said in 1877, "The Kaffirs are down on the Coolies, and would ask, are these spider-legged bags to have guns, and Kaffir men not to have them?" Stereotyping suggests a growing awareness of the "other" in relation to oneself.

Take the case of Rev. H. Mtimkulu who complained quite legitimately about the appalling conditions that Africans had to endure in trains. They were overcrowded, and the ticket office that catered for them opened only at the last minute as the train pulled in. Rev Mtimkulu was badly treated at Alcock's Spruit. The language he used in his November 11, 1909, letter reflects racial stereotyping, "May the authorities ask what wrong I had done. I am not the only one. All the 'kolwas' here, he [the station master] irritates with offensive language, yet coolies sit on that very seat for which I was beaten."

Indians used similar stereotypes. An Indian named Subroti was killed in a freak accident when he and a "Kaffir" were greasing the axle-boxes of an empty wagon. The nameless "Kaffir" removed the stones; the wagon began rolling, and as Subroti tried to put on the breaks, he slipped and fell.

The wagon wheel went over his neck, killing him almost instantly. In 1895, Ramasami working for E. Essery in the Riet Valley complained about being assaulted by an Indian sirdar aided by a "Kaffir sirdar named Damma" who held him by the legs. Ponnammal laid charges of complaint against her husband in January 1910 for having three other wives, one Indian and "two kaffir."

There are many other references to "kaffirs" by Indians. While the term was widely used to refer to Africans, it does suggest an attitude, a frame of reference that betrays an undercurrent of racial tension between Africans and Indians. A crime committed by an African against an Indian would certainly have enhanced racial prejudices.

Panic followed in 1889 when a rumour circulated that "Natives" were going to attack Indians in Durban and were going to gather at the race course. Africans certainly came in large numbers, as many as 500 by one account, on May 15 or 16, 1889, but it turned out that the target of their wrath was not the Indians but the borough police.

The "Native" police force was said to be overbearing and high-handed in its operations when arresting other Africans and charging them. Among those who gathered were 300 to 400 togt labourers. The Natal Mounted Police together with the Borough Police were able to scatter the group of angry protesters.

That the Indians should have believed that they were the target suggests that feelings against them were less than friendly. In 1895 an Indian was murdered in the Springfield Flats in a particularly brutal fashion. It was the work of "kaffirs,'' said the police report. Another was said to have been beaten in the vicinity by "Kaffirs."

L. Marria Pillay wrote a five-page letter in his own hand on September 22, 1905. He had been hired as a cook, but his employer, E.M. Green, forced him "to do those works which a Kaffir and two shillings Cooly" did. Where Africans exercised authority over Indians, there were complaints of one kind or another. On the issue of ill-treatment of Indians by Africans, Indian Opinion weighed in with the assessment that Africans were responsible for the use of excessive force.

The April 15, 1905, issue said, “It is common knowledge that a native, an excellent servant, once promoted to some authority becomes a tyrant over those under him.” In a competitive situation, there was mutual distrust and animosity between the two subordinate groups.

It would be a mistake to think that normal and harmonious relations did not develop between Indians and Africans, though they were rare. When an ailing Moti came to the Mantyonga chief Swamana in the Inanda Native Location, the chief helped him with medication.

When Moti died, the chief buried him after getting permission from the authorities. In another instance, Tika, who had deserted his employer in 1882, spent four months going from “kraal to kraal” working for Africans named Stoffel and Vagana. Tika earned a cow, two goats, and a pig from Stoffel, and only a cow from Vagana who considered the Indian a “malkop” (mad).

Competition and conflict were at their most intense in the 1890s and 1900s as these two decades generated problems and issues around which identities became more sharply defined. Responsible government in 1893 gave greater say to White settlers in Natal’s affairs. Agitation against the Indians increased and gave rise to the NIC. The rinderpest epidemic devastated the Zulu cattle stock, and this natural disaster dramatically altered the social and economic systems that were central to Zulu society.

Africans lost a total of 379,576 cattle (76 per cent) in 1897, and never quite recovered from it. The war between the Boers and Britons (1899-1902) did not leave Africans in the colony unaffected. After the war, Natal’s White authorities were determined to work for settler interests, abandoning, as Lambert says, the earlier “spirit of trusteeship” and “any sense of obligation for African welfare,” and “actively intervened to consolidate settler domination in Natal to prevent African competition.”

Africans became indebted and impoverished, and their proletarianization hastened. They increasingly sought jobs in the urban environment. The economic depression between 1904 and 1909 caused a massive influx of African migrants into Durban where their number stood at 20,000 around 1910. No urban location for African settlement was laid out until 1910. The per capita income of Whites in Natal was twenty-four times that of Africans and Indians. Crime and resistance to the settler presence increased.

There were 2416 instances of stock thefts and the like over two years from 1888 to 1889, and 6495 over a thirty-month period from January 1890 to June 1892. At least one other consequence of the migration to Durban was the formation of gangs among African youth, as Paul la Hausse points out, although he does not say whether their behavior was racially motivated. This form of socially deviant behavior had a bearing on the way identities came to be shaped.

Gandhi's Indianness and Africans

Indianness began to develop almost from the time that the migrants began arriving from the subcontinent. But it was from the 1890s that it became more clearly defined as part of the political vocabulary of colonial Natal's political economy. Indians and Africans used otherness to define themselves. Gandhi's endeavors to create Indianness happened within this context. He gave it form and direction by placing it within an imperial context but its source was larger.

For Gandhi, diaspora Indians were an extension of the diverse strands of those in India, and in Natal he and other Indians saw as advantage in considering themselves as the sum of the whole rather than isolated groups broken up into castes, classes, religions, and languages. Yet, even as Gandhi promoted unity, he did not seek to diminish the diversity that prevailed among Indians. He respected the rootedness of Indians in their ancient cultures even as he advised reforming outmoded practices. So, when he encountered the scores of community organizations among them, he worked with them and encouraged them to think of the larger issues as a basis of common interests.

Gandhi's notion of Indianness in South Africa was intrinsically connected to the ancestral land of the immigrants. What did Gandhi mean by "Indianness"? It implied a geographic unity when he first used it around 1894. In his elaboration of the term thirteen years later he stressed the cultural and religious diversity of India. In Hind Swaraj (1909), he advanced the argument that the people of the subcontinent had always constituted a "praja," that is a nation.

India's capacity to assimilate meant that it was a unified whole in spite of its many different parts. "India cannot cease to be a nation," he said "because people belonging to different religions live in it." He seemed to define India civilizationally and territorially. If British imperial rulers invoked unity to make possible the appropriation of "Indians" to refer to Queen Victoria's subjects on the subcontinent, this could apply equally to parts like Natal, a British colony, to which people from India had migrated. If people in the subcontinent could be called "Indians," so too could those who had migrated.

When Gandhi helped to establish the NIC in 1894, he did not intend to displace the hundreds of religious, cultural, and caste organizations that fundamentally served as identity markers for the transplanted communities.

The NIC was simply one additional body with whose secular objective the migrants could readily identify. Joining it, or in some other way identifying with it, did not require them to give up affiliations with organizations for which they had primary loyalty. It acted like a coalition of these various other groups. Those leaders who were co-opted to serve on the executive committee came from many organizations.

In South Africa, the use of "Indians" had clear ideological implication different from the one intended by Gandhi. Natal's White population felt threatened by the immigrants from India and proceeded to deal with them legislatively as a collective whole. Gandhi's Indianness straddled both Natal and the Raj because it was part of his strategy to use the imperial framework to defend the rights of Indians as British subjects.

However, in the unique circumstances in which the notion of Indianness became crystallized in South Africa, it came to be racialized. The system of White domination required that "Indians" be treated as a separate entity so as to discourage the idea of their uniting with other Blacks politically.

In the context in which Gandhi used the term, it served him well. His intention was to unite the Indians in South Africa. In the very first speech that Gandhi made in South Africa to a small group of Indians in Pretoria at the house of Haji Muhammad Haji in 1893, he stressed "the necessity of forgetting all distinctions such as Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, Christians, Gujaratis, Madrasis, Punjabis, Sindhis, Kachchhis, Surtis and so on."

Indeed, he suggested the formation of an association to make representations of the "Indian settlers," and offered his services. Some months later when he returned to Durban, he took up the issue of resisting the Natal legislature's attempt to deprive Indians of their right to vote in the colony. He got the support of the important merchants to take the lead in fighting for the Indians under circumstances that are well known. As in Pretoria, he stressed the need to unite all Indians.

"In face of the calamity that had overtaken the community," he said, "all distinctions such as high and low, small and great, master and servant, Musalman, Parsis, Christians, Gujaratis, Madrasis, Sindhis, etc., were forgotten." And a year later, by which time the NIC was established, he thought it was important that the body reflect a connection to India. "The name 'Congress,' I knew, was in bad odour with the Conservatives in England," he said, "and yet Congress was the very life of India. I wanted to popularize it in Natal. It savoured of cowardice to hesitate to adopt the name. Therefore … I recommended that the organization should be called the Natal Indian Congress …."

Right from the beginning, there never was any doubt in his mind about seeking alliance with the Africans. Gandhi was asked about this later in his life, and, while the point of reference was different on each occasion, there is consistency in his responses. He did not deny that Africans had legitimate aspirations that could best be achieved through passive resistance. He doubted, however, whether they were ready for the kind of satyagraha campaign that the Indians were running.

In this he was saying, if not directly then by implication, that the Indians had become acquainted with the use of peaceful methods, and Africans had not. Gandhi made a further distinction relating to the respective statuses of Africans and Indians: they differed both in their circumstances and in the goals they sought to achieve.

The Africans were children of the soil with legitimate aspirations; the Indians were a minority building a case on the basis of the imperial doctrine of equality. Indians were not interested in seeking political power in South Africa for themselves. From Gandhi's perspective there were no common goals that justified a united front.

He clarified his position on two separate occasions in 1936 and 1939. In 1936 when Gandhi was asked by Howard Thurman, Dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University, "Did the South African Negroes take part in your movement," he responded, "No, I purposely did not invite them. It would have endangered their cause. They did not understand the technique of our struggle nor could they have seen the purpose or utility of nonviolence."

He replied three years later to a similar question raised by Rev S.S. Thema of the D.R. Mission in Johannesburg. Gandhi said that it would have been a mistake for Indians to join the Africans politically because they would be "pooling together not strength but weakness." Indians were not considered a "menace" by Whites. The Africans were bound to resist because they had been robbed of their inheritance. He continued, "Yours is a bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indians." There is no ambiguity or insincerity in his position.

What is, however, more pertinent is that in the context in which he operated between 1893 and 1914, his actions were always open to ambiguous interpretation given his expressed beliefs in the cultural inferiority of Africans.

He told Doke, his earliest biographer, that he foresaw a collision between the White man's desire to maintain ascendancy and African aspirations. "When the moment of collision comes, if, instead of the old ways of massacre, assegai, and fire, the natives adopt a policy of passive resistance, it will be a great change for the colony." The solution was to give Africans a voice directly or indirectly in their affairs. The right to vote would be a "great solution" provided that it was linked to passive resistance.

He qualified this further by saying that it should be done only when they are "fit to exercise the vote," that is, "when the native people have risen sufficiently high in the scale of civilization to give up savage warfare and use the Christian method of settling a dispute …." If the Africans adopted passive resistance, there need be no fear of the "horror of a racial uprising."

Gandhi feared that if Indians united with the Zulus they would probably be subjected to the same kind of brutal treatment that Africans had experienced during the 1906 Bambatha Rebellion. Besides, he was not sure whether as allies Africans would adopt nonviolence. The Indians stood to lose rather than gain by such an alliance. The only ethnic group he sought out as allies were the Chinese because they, like the Indians, were a minority not interested in challenging the White power structure but rather in protecting rights.

Gandhi was actively loyal to the British Empire early in his life. “Hardly ever have I known anybody to cherish such loyalty as I did to the British constitution,” he said in his autobiography. He was aware of the defects in British rule, “but I thought that it was on the whole acceptable.”

So, in Natal he joined the singing of the British national anthem, and in 1896 when he returned to India briefly, he served on Rajkot’s committee that had been appointed to celebrate Queen’s Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. His actions were open to ambiguous interpretation, however. He admired the Boers, and yet when they fought the British in the South African War (1899-1902), Gandhi felt he had to show his loyalty to the British by creating the Indian Ambulance Corps.

When General Butler relieved Ladysmith which had been under siege by the Boers, Gandhi congratulated the general on behalf of the Indian Ambulance Corps. His behavior was consistent with his moral and political position, but it appeared partisan to others.

He made no attempt to cultivate the friendship of African leaders. In Satyagraha in South Africa, written in the 1920s, he remembered many people, and yet he did not mention by name a single African contemporary leader although periodically the Indian Opinion wrote on African leaders. He knew of Reverend John Langalibalele Dube who was to become the first President-General of the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress).

Dube, born in 1871, studied in the United States from 1887 to 1891, and upon his return to Natal in 1892, modeled an industrial school, the Ohlange Institute, upon the Tuskegee Institute of Booker T. Washington. Dube’s Ilanga lase Natal, an African weekly in English, used the same press as the Indian Opinion until the institute came up with its own.

The two met at least once. They were both present in August 1905 at the residence of Marshall Campbell who was hosting a reception for the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Dube made a speech at the reception in which he criticized the colonial authority for depriving the Africans of their land and for imposing unfair taxes on them. The British delegation was sufficiently impressed with Dube’s work and donated £60 to the Ohlange Institute.

Gandhi referred to the meeting in the Indian Opinion on September 2, 1905, and spoke highly of Dube as a man “one should know.” Dube knew Gandhi, and is reported as having said to Rev W.W. Pearson, an English clergyman, that he had “studied in depth the struggle fought by the Indians” under his leadership, and had nothing but respect for “all the Indians.” Could the Africans emulate the Indians? No, he did not think they could.

For one thing, the Africans did not possess the "divine power" the Indians had. For another, the Africans would retaliate for "their safety" to provocation because "nobody [could] control their violent nature."

Prabhudas recalls that Gandhi had talks with Africans, and he implies in a 1992 interview that Dube may have been among them, although this is not clear. No African family lived at the Phoenix Settlement as part of the experiment in communal living, but there was one at Tolstoy Farm.

There were Zulus all around Gandhi. They were included in the prayer sessions at the Phoenix Settlement and worked as laborers at the ashram. There is no evidence to suggest that Gandhi visited the Ohlange Institute as close as it was to the Phoenix Settlement. Gopal K. Gokhale visited it on November 11, 1912, and spent some time with Dube talking about the "Native question." The students sang a couple of Zulu songs in his honor, and the band played music.

Ilanga Lase Natal refers to the visit, but there is no reference to Gandhi having accompanied him. Others at the Phoenix Settlement developed some form of regular contact and communication with African schools in the area. An African worked in the press. On April 23, 1909, the Phoenix Settlement school visited the Inanda Seminary for African girls run by White ladies, and Dube's industrial school. Gandhi was in jail at the time, but Indian Opinion (May 1, 1907) noted that the "carpenter shops, smithy, and turning benches were much admired."

At Tolstoy Farm in the Transvaal, which was used in the satyagraha struggle between 1910 and 1914, there is reference in the Kallenbach diaries to Africans who worked for payment and who associated with the residents in some fashion. The Collected Works refers to an agreement between Gandhi and Kallenbach in June 1910, "It is understood," said Gandhi to Kallenbach, "that the ideal is not to employ native labour …."

Gandhi allowed an African named John, described as "a splendid boy," food beyond thirty shillings a month. He was allowed to peg out a small area of about thirty acres beyond the fruit trees for one year. "I feel that it is much better to let the natives feel that here they may depend upon the fairest treatment. And I have no doubt that if it proceeds from the heart and is uniform, continuous and not from affectation, it will bless both the parties," said Gandhi in a letter on November 6, 1911.

All of this suggests that there was some contact between Gandhi and the Africans through the ashrams, but they are incidental and are not part of a deliberate strategy to involve Africans in the political movement. It is clear that he did not systematically seek out African leadership to canvass their opinion on issues of the day.

So the message he was giving to Africans was mixed. He led a small stretcher-bearer corps during the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906. In his Autobiography he believed that "the British Empire existed for the welfare of the world," and even if the Zulu uprising was not a "rebellion" he was obliged as a resident of Natal, to do his "bit" in the war. Gandhi was certainly sympathetic to the Zulus. As he said in 1928, "I doubted then and doubt even now if the outbreak could be described as a rebellion…;"

and again, "… my heart was with the Zulus." So they nursed the wounded Zulus who would otherwise have gone unattended because Whites refused to do the work. The corp's work lasted for a month, and Gandhi was certain that its work was appreciated by the Zulu warriors even if there was a language barrier.

As he said, "… from their gestures and the expression of their eyes they seemed to feel as if God had sent us to their succor." While the Zulu warriors may have appreciated the help rendered by Gandhi's band, the politics surrounding the conflict made it open to different interpretation.

The Zulu press was critical of Gandhi's action, and the ambivalence shows. There are more than a handful references to Indians in the Izwi Labantu between 1906 and 1909. There was no sympathy for the Indian cause. "The countrymen of Gandhi," said the newspaper, "are like the Mohammedans and Malays, extremely self-centered, selfish and alien in feeling and outlook."

Specifically with reference to Gandhi's action during the Bambatha Rebellion, Izwi, according to Odendaal, reproduced without comment an extract from an American newspaper which stated "that the Africans in South Africa had not forgotten that Indians had volunteered to serve with the 'English savages of Natal' who massacred thousands of Zulus in order to steal their land."

There was some understanding for their common disabilities around the time the Union of South Africa was formed. Naledi ea Lesotho expressed admiration for the passive resistance campaign, and Indian Opinion expressed sympathies for Africans who were "our oppressed fellow subjects who are made to suffer for the same cause that we suffer, viz., our slight pigment of skin."

At another time, Indian Opinion stated that by discriminating against the various Black groups, the Whites were "trying almost to compel them" into creating a united front. Izwi Labantu and Ilanga lase Natal welcomed the editorial. African Chronicle and Indian Opinion stated that the proposed Act of Union amounted to a declaration of war against all Blacks. But the expression of such sentiments was rare and incidental, and did not translate into any collectively meaningful political action by the Black groups.

Gandhi and Haji Habib set sail on the Kenilworth Castle on June 23, 1909, in the company of John X. Merriman, a liberal who was opposed to exclusive White rule, and Abdurrahman, leader of the Cape-based APO. They may well have discussed the situation, but no action resulted from it.

The young Gandhi was influenced by segregationist notions prevalent in the 1890s. In a memorial he drafted in 1896, he said that denying Indians the franchise amounted to treating them "lower than the lowest native." In another petition that he addressed to the British colonial secretary, he complained about the Indians having to be "huddled together in the same compartment with Natives."

Like other Indian leaders, Gandhi also endorsed a pass system for Africans. Public buildings should have three entrances so that Indians would not have to use one used by Africans. In an address in Mumbai, Gandhi said that the Whites sought to degrade Indians to the level of the "raw Kaffir whose occupation is hunting, and whose sole ambition is to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife with and, then, pass his life in indolence and nakedness."

Even as late as 1909, he wrote, "We may entertain no aversion to Kaffirs, but we cannot ignore the fact that there is no common ground between them and us in the daily affairs of life."
Indians loathed to be treated like "Kaffirs" in an environment in which they wished to point out to the colonial authorities that they were civilized by the standards imposed by Whites. Many Indians complained about being treated like "kaffirs" having to carry passes, sharing public transport, or, as during the Satyagraha campaign, having to share jail facilities with them.

Yet while Gandhi was aware of the differences, his experiences in jail seemed to make him more sensitive to their plight. He said, "It was, however, as well that we were classed with the Natives. It was a welcome opportunity to see the treatment meted out to Natives, their conditions [of life in jail], and their habits."

The later Gandhi mellowed; he seemed much less categorical in his expression of prejudice against Africans, and much more open to seeing points of common cause. His negative views in the Johannesburg jail were reserved for hardened African prisoners rather than Africans generally.

Given the circumstances around which Indiannness came into being, and the ambiguities inherent in its creation, the possibility of Gandhi's molding a united front with other Black groups was never a realistic one. That this did not happen is partly to be attributed to the racial prejudices prevalent at the time. But Gandhi's action was driven mainly by political considerations.

Scholars like Maureen Swan who have been critical of Gandhi's failure to unite with others, are inspired by the perspectives of a later era in South African history, and fail to fully appreciate the cultural and religious dimension around Indianness.

The next two chapters show how strong that dimension was. Gandhi's approach was based on Indianness, and he was able create a semblance of unity among Indians by cultivating the leadership of the various organizations across language, religion, and caste divisions. Interlocking membership of the various organizations helped. He was particularly good at creating alliances at key moments, moving from one to the other to keep up the momentum in the campaign he launched in 1907.

Knowing and understanding the Indianness he created, he managed to overcome the ebb and flow of the campaign for the next seven years. When a group opposed him, he always succeeded in finding new allies. Under those circumstances, it is unlikely that he could have been able to do the same if Africans, about whom he knew little, had been part of his political campaign.

Indians organized themselves around culture and religion significantly as a way to identify themselves, and, notwithstanding the fact Indianness saw them as one single group, they saw themselves as many groups, separate and distinct. Gandhi's role was important, but it should always be measured in relation to the diverse cultural and/or religious bodies among the Indians.

Worship in the mosques and temples, and participation in Mohurram and Kavady festivals created images of differentness.

The cultural and religious activities of Indians, necessary though they were for the survival of the communities, set them apart from Africans and Whites alike.

Africans responded to the colonial structures by developing identities in relation to Whiteness and Indianness. There was competition and conflict in the political, economic, and social spheres as the three groups came into contact with each other. The White power structure was in a position to manipulate the subordination of Indians and Africans.

As a subordinate group, Indians embraced many of the racist notions of the "kaffir" either as a way of identifying themselves more sharply, at least to stress the difference between them and Africans. There were many places of contact—in agriculture, in industries, on farms, in commerce, in service in the towns as co-workers, as landlords and tenants, buyers and sellers, employers and workers. They related with each other not as equals but as two despised groups ("kaffirs" and "coolies") in a situation of competition and conflict. Where there was no mutual respect, stereotypes were bound to emerge. Indianness and Africanness, then, became sharper as both groups dealt with Whiteness.

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Chapter 3 Hindus: Traditional Temples, Religious, and Cultural Practices

The decentralized nature of the Hindu faith allowed for much diversity in religious worship and practice. Devotional beliefs, attitudes, and practices diverged widely even though Hindus generally accepted the fundamental unity of their faith.

There were village deities and shrines. Puja (worship) was at the heart of Hinduism, and the rituals associated with it included mantra, music, singing, conch-blowing, incense-burning, displaying of lamps, receiving darshana (blessing), performing arathi (waving of the lamps), circumambulating, the taking of panchamrita (liquid confection), and prasada (food representing the material symbol of the deity's power and grace).

Early Hindu immigrants working in the agricultural sector used such resources as were available to continue their religious practices. They were thrown together with other migrants who belonged to different castes, languages, and ancestral regions, and adapted to this new condition as best they could. Hindus built shrines in their homes where they lit a lamp daily.

Outdoor shrines were popular as they provided communal forms of ritualized religious worship. In time they built simple temples. Those who completed their indentures moved to other places, and became part of communities already established and participated in existing forms of religious worship.

A priest was a necessary part of religious worship. In the Hindu tradition, even a person who was not of Brahmin birth could claim sufficient knowledge in spiritual matters and religious practices to become one; and if one was not available, the community requested the authorities to allow a priest to be brought from India.

This chapter focuses on early temples, festivals, and organizations among Hindu immigrants who made up 80 per cent of the Indian population. They represented expressions of the Hindu faith in its many forms. Reformist Hindus sought to introduce what they considered to be pristine Vedic values, and in the process they did not always agree with Gandhi's broadly ecumenical approach to matters of faith.

Early Temples

Hindu temples reflected a desire among adherents to create a spiritual and religious iconolatry with which the migrants were familiar. They needed temples adorned with deities to participate in visuality and ritualism. As Meer says, a Hindu temple "is not so much a place of congregation as it is a symbol of Divine veneration" in which mantra (verbal) and the yantra (visual) are integral parts.

It was intended to evoke religious ecstasy through, for example, the depiction of Shiva, the cosmic dancer who produced the vibrations of life through a small damaru (drum) in one of his hands.

The early temples were built over a thirty-five-year period from about 1875 to 1910. There was no discouragement either from the imperial and colonial authorities or employers. Indeed, there was active encouragement from some employers who made donations in the form of land or money, and allowed time off for religious observances.

The earliest temples were wood-and-iron structures around which individual and communal rituals took place which sometimes involved blood sacrifices. Such practices were frowned upon by the Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand in India, whose aim was to reform Hinduism on Vedic principles. One of the Samaj's proponents was Professor Bhai Permanand, who, upon his arrival in Natal in 1905, sought to cleanse Hinduism of practices he considered excrescent.

He encouraged the establishment of the Hindu Young Men's Associations to promote a more reflective kind of Hinduism. The Hindu Thirukootam Association in Ladysmith, for example, wanted to hold meetings twice a week to do "preaching." Bhai Permanand was followed by Swami Shankeranand who continued with the mission of revitalizing Vedic-based Hinduism. The swami endeavored to end the participation of Hindus in Mohurram and tried to institutionalize among indentured Indians the celebration of Diwali, the Festival of Lights, observed annually by all Hindus.

He sought to enlist the help of the Protector of Indian Immigrants in October 1910, "You will help them [indentured Hindus] immensely if you stop the Pagoda day holiday and will substitute the same with one on Diwali." More will be said about Swami Shankeranand later in the chapter.

Such reform Hindu activities were viewed with suspicion by at least one colonial official. The official saw erroneously a conspiracy at work among reform Hindus who, in his opinion, merely sought to promote the expansion of colonial-born Hindu traders at the expense of the established Muslim traders. The group likely sought to promote Hindu traders if this meant that they would also help to spread reform Hinduism.

In spite of the efforts by the reformist Hindus, popular forms of ritual worship continued to flourish within the temples. One such case is the Kavady festival. The roots of this festival go far back to ancient India. In Natal, it was celebrated twice during January and February and again during April and May. The Mariamman Temple in Isipingo Rail near Durban was built in 1870 as a private shrine of Kandasamy Moodley, who purchased five acres of land from a sugar estate owner.

He brought a murthi (iconic representation of deity) from India to place in the temple shrine. This temple has been a popular site for the Kavady festival, which honors Muruga, also known as Subrahmanya, the son of Shiva. This is a thirteen-day festival, the first twelve of which are reserved for cleansing and purification, and the last for carrying Muruga's murthi on kavady (decorated bamboo frames) for installation in the temple. The decorated bamboo frames represent the penitential burden that the devotee is prepared to carry.

The annual Kavady festival was to reaffirm faith in Muruga, and to remind devotees of the need for penitence to remain in his good favor. Hinduism in Natal lists at least 12 temples in Natal that observe Kavady today.

Individuals associated with the construction of temples had knowledge of the main elements of the Hindu temple, and indeed may have had access to the manuals on temples known as Mansara or Shilpa Shastra. All of the builders came from among the migrants themselves. Such temples served the needs of the poorer class of Hindus. Traditional Hindu Temples lists six of the more prominent builders who built several temples. There are, of course, a few more that have been identified.

Except for one, all were born in India and therefore had sound knowledge of the temple structure. There was some mixing of the two main styles (North and South Indian), and the local conditions required some adaptations and variations. A temple was sited generally where space was available. Preference was given, however, to sites with a western slope allowing for an eastern approach, or with a river nearby since water was important in the Hindu system of belief.

Such aspects enhanced the significance of the temple. In terms of siting temples on land that was sacred, Natal was a new home and did not have the religious history of the ancestral villages of India. But occasionally that kind of significance accompanied the selection of a site. For example, the Mariamman Temple site was reportedly inhabited by nag (the cobra) closely associated with Shiva.

This temple is built on three acres of land with many trees easily affording the kind of open space around which communal activities could take place. The Mount Edgecombe Mariamman temple is said to have been built over an existing anthill. Natal was blessed with terrains that had lush vegetation and trees, and the temple builders were mindful of their beauty and of their religious significance in Hinduism. Peepul and banyan trees were added later to the complex because they have special meaning in Hinduism.

Many of the original wood-and-iron structures were torn down, and replaced by stone buildings. The opportunity to rebuild or upgrade was used by the builders to add iconic visuality as an added dimension to the temple. The incredible variety of local beliefs and practices in Hinduism was given free expression in the visual form of the deities, vahanas (vehicles), astral signs, alters, antechambers, and the anterala that sheltered the main deity below.

Hindus in South Africa recreated forms of worship they had left behind in India. Regional variations extant in India are reflected in South Africa's traditional temples as well. So, Bhojpuri-speaking Indians from the Ganges valley named their temples after Vishnu, incarnate of Rama and Krishna; in South India, Vishnu is referred to as Narayan, Perumal, or Emperumal. Shiva is worshiped as Nataraja by South Indians, whose consort is variously known as Parvati, Uma, Durga, and Kali.

The traditional temples have certain common features. The deity and sculptures represent divine manifestation. The rounded domes (sikhara) are North Indian in style and carry Islamic influence; the conical or pointed or rectangular domes are South Indian. The cella or mandapa is where the main sanctuary is located, and the dome is immediately above the sanctuary.

A veranda allows devotees to walk around the shrine. Peepul, banyan, and palm trees grow in the compound. The kodi maram is a flag pole on a pedestal representing a sacrificial altar. Each deity has a vahana (vehicle). Nandi the bull is for Shiva; the peacock is for Subrahmanya, or Muruga; the rat stands for Ganesha; the tiger is for Parvati; the lion is for Draupadi; the lotus is for Saraswathi; and garuda is for Vishnu. Astrological markers decorate the structure. Navagraha (the planets) are represented by black stones. Surya (the sun), Chandra (moon), Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn are represented. Rahu is the ascending mode, and Ketu is descending mode of the dragon's tail.

Visual imagery, then, is significant for Hindus. Darshana, that is visually feasting one's eyes, is an important part of their religious worship. Deities had to be prominently visible even as Hindus went about their daily business. Hence temples needed to be centrally located and have bright colors and elaborate designs.

The deities with their respective birds and animals and forms of human beings mingling with gods provided the worshipers with a cosmic representation that was familiar and reassuring. Hindus also felt the need to actively participate in religious rituals. The traditional temple operated on a ritual-based popular, rather than philosophical, level. In colonial Natal, the traditional temples were open to all Hindus.

Hindu Festivals

Kumar in his Hindus in South Africa points to eight major Hindu festivals in South Africa, namely, Thai Pongal, Thai Pusam (Kavady), Maha Sivaratri, Ramnavami, Krishna Jayanti (Krisnajanmastami), Diwali (Dipavali), Parattasi, and Karttikaidipam. Sixty-seven festivals were observed annually among the Tamil and Telugu speakers alone. Less well known festivals like Holi, Balev or Rakshabandan were also celebrated. Ramnavami and Krishnasthmi (or Krishna Jayanti) observed the births of Rama and Krishna.

Hindus read about them in the two great Hindu scriptures, the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita. Such readings were accompanied by fasting, prayers, and meditation. Hindus drew from the vast range of kirtans or bhajans (hymns) to sing the glories of Ishvara (God). The proceedings usually ended with the taking of prasada.

Diwali was a widely celebrated festival. It was followed a day or two later by the North Indian Hindu New Year. South Indians observed the Tamil New Year in April each year. Those Hindus who had businesses were encouraged to close their shops, if not for the whole day then at least for part of the day. Among the Gujaratis, the Hindu New Year began with the exchange of good wishes, and sometimes with gifts as well. In Durban, one of the merchants usually offered his business premise or his home which was nearby as a place of meeting.

On one occasion, the Depot Road temple and the Thakurdwara School combined to mark Diwali. The “Indra Sabha Natak” put on a play. On another occasion, the Surat Hindu Association (SHA) combined with the Kathiwad Arya Mandal (KAM) for Diwali celebrations.

As more Hindu organizations came into place, such celebrations became bigger and better organized. This was the case with Diwali and New Year celebrations, especially in Durban and Johannesburg. But even Hindus in Stellenbosch, small as their numbers must have been, marked the occasion. Indeed, they reached out to their Muslim neighbors to celebrate Diwali.

Communities banded together or, as in the case of greater Durban, the celebrations were observed independently by various bodies. C. P. Lucheram was an influential member of the United Hindu Association in Cape Town. In 1913, Johannesburg’s Hindus used the Diwali celebrations to reach out to all, Whites and Muslims, to appeal for support of the satyagraha campaign.

Indian Opinion often reported on religious functions. Katha (religious discourse) or homa (fire sacrifice) held at the Verulam Gopalal Mandir was accompanied by religious lectures delivered by Ambaram Maharaj or Shivcharan Maharaj. Community leaders like Babu Talwantsingh, among others, were in attendance.

If donations were received for one project or another, the names of donors and the amount they gave were reported. The extent to which religious observances were followed in individual Hindu homes will never be known. But they were no doubt substantial. Many had access to the Panchang (Panchangum in Tamil), a manual based on the lunar calendar to guide Hindus in their daily lives about the innumerable events with religious significance from birth to death.

The place of religious worship among the Hindus was significant. One such place was the Shri Thakurdwara Temple, better known as Depot Road Temple. It was opened to public worship in September 1901 with a great deal of fanfare. A huge marquee was erected to accommodate devotees. The temple was modeled on the one in Varnasi, and took six months to build at a cost of £1069. All of the money came from donors. There was a wide verandah, inner court, and sanctuary with a white dome over it.

The side of the dome facing Depot Road had bas-relief representations of Bansi Dhar (another name for Krishna) and of Prahlad and Arjuna who feature prominently in the Hindu epics. Outside of the temple, a sign in English read, “None but the Hindus shall be allowed to enter the temple.” The most important part of the ceremony was the dedication of the temple to the various deities that were to be housed in its inner sanctums.

Priests chanted Vedic mantras as they carried the deities: Ganesha, the elephant-headed remover of obstacles, Lakshmi-Narayan, representing both Vishnu, the ninth incarnation of God, and his consort Lakshmi; and finally Hanuman, the monkey god whose devotion to Rama is described in the Ramayana.

The reporter did not give any attendance figure, but noted its colorfulness, “To right and left from every point of vantage, and right across the flats in the direction of the railway, a kaleidoscope wave of colour was afforded by the ever-shifting crowd of Indians, attired in their brightest costumes. Red, white and gold were the favourite hues, although here and there, presenting a strangely occidental appearance, might be seen worshippers, clad in European style.”

The Depot Road Temple in Durban was a popular center of activities. Hindus gathered there also to celebrate Ramnavami, the birth of Lord Rama, an event that usually took place in March each year. It was marked by discourses on its significance, singing of kirtans, and the performance of pujas by hundreds of devotees who attended it.

Krisnajanmastami or Krishna Jayanti marked the birth of Krishna, and was celebrated in August. The 1904 celebrations attracted as many as 1500 devotees that included "Culcuttias, Madrassis, and Gujaratis," according to Indian Opinion.

Devotees continued to arrive at the Depot Road temple from the early morning hours to perform pujas and to participate in organized activities that continued through the evening and into the night. Ravishanker Bhatt donated books on religion, including an English translation of the Bhagavad Gita. The temple activities were financed by donations and plate collections.

Suchit Maharaj's annual report happily disclosed that the cost of temple land had been fully paid up, and that a board of trustees was going to take over its management. The monthly income and expenditure for August 1904 was £175 and £203 respectively, with over £76 outstanding. Secretary Bhagwatideen helped with temple work in his spare time.

On occasions, the Depot Road Temple was used for other community events. Such was the case when the Hindi Dilprasang Natak Company performed there. Sanathan Dharma Sabha meetings sometimes took place in the Depot Road Temple. Major religious and/or social events drew hundreds of people to the temple.

There was a crowd of 2000 when Swami Shankeranand spoke in November 1908. A decision was made to run English classes through the traditional patshala (vernacular school). A piece of land next to the temple was acquired for this purpose, and a call went out for donations. At this school, known as the Thakurdwara, plays were performed by the Indra Sabha Natak during Diwali celebrations. The temple's pujari, Bhatt Keshavram Ghela, informed the public about prayers at noon, and bhajans at night to mark the birth of Lord Rama.

Balev or Rakshabandan, a North Indian festival that reaffirms the bond between a brother and his sister, was observed in August 1910, and sixty to seventy were present. On this occasion, the guest was Swami Shankeranand.

During the festival known as Chaitra Purnima, there was a rath (chariot) procession on Saturday evening at the Umgeni Road Temple. The procession of 3000 to 4000 people went through downtown Durban and ended up at the temple at 10:30 p.m. The next day (Sunday), the rath returned to the temple after puja at the Umgeni River. On this day all 8000 present were fed. The procession went from the temple to central Durban along Cathedral Road, and West, Queen, Grey, and Albert Streets before returning to the temple.

Other temples that featured prominently in the observance of Hindu festivals were the Lakshmi-Narayan Temple, and Verulam Gopalal Mandir. The Verulam temple was opened by Gandhi in May 1913, when he was given a golden key and a copy of the Bhagavad Gita.

Hindu Bodies

There were various organizations that promoted Hindu beliefs and practices. Sanatan Dharma Sabhas placed emphasis on traditions and rituals; the Ved Dharma Sabhas were reform-oriented and drew their inspiration from Hinduism's philosophical orientation. They became very active in the first decade of the twentieth century, and some tensions would develop between these movements. Our sources yielded little information on popular Hindu traditions among the indentured Indians working on plantations and farms.

The sabhas were established in Natal, Transvaal, and the Cape. The activities of the sabhas in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Verulam, Stanger, Tongaat (f. October 1906), Estcourt, Ladysmith, Johannesburg, Kimberley, Port Elizabeth and other places were reported regularly in Indian Opinion. African Chronicle reported on the activities of Hindu Young Men's Association (HYMA) in Pietrmaritzburg and the Hindu Young Men's Society (HYMS) in Durban.

The Ladysmith body, established in May 1908, was called Sanathan Dhurm Soodhur Sabha. This sabha and other similar bodies aimed to cleanse Hinduism of beliefs and practices more in line with its lofty Vedic ideals. If the various sabhas were not organizationally linked, they seemed at least to be informally connected through common membership.

In Durban, the sabha's meetings took place in the Depot Road Temple or at the public library in Grey Street. Times for meetings were announced, and changes in venue were reported. Its generally well-attended gatherings began with readings from the Bhagavad Gita, and were followed by presentations on selected topics by members or invited guests.

Topics listed in Indian Opinion from July 1904 to July 1906 included: sixteen Samskara (sacrament), Satsang (Hymns), the Ramayan, India's Lofty Path, Manushya Kartvya (Human Duty), Paropakar (Helping Others), Arya Kartvya (Noble Duty), Satya Yuga (Age of Truth), Peace, Swadeshabimaan (National Pride or Patriotism), and Brahmacharya (Celibacy). The Tongaat body, known as the Hindu Dharma Sabha, organized a talk on karma, the Hindu belief system of action and reaction. Satyendrakumar Bannerjee spoke on swadeshi (patriotic self-reliance or promoting indigenous values), education, and unity at the Pietermaritzburg sabha. At a Stanger sabha meeting, Purshottam Desai spoke on swadeshi.

In Durban, the weekly meetings were held at 138 Queen Street or at 171 Grey Street. Ambaram Mangalji Thaker, better known as Ambaram Maharaj, was the president. He had a flair for writing poetry and won a poetry competition organized by Indian Opinion. Ambaram Maharaj's name appeared frequently in connection with Hindu religious activities.

He sang kirtans that he himself had composed, and gave discourses on the Hindu religion. The sabha usually read from the Bhagavad Gita. It consulted with Gandhi about establishing a dharmasala (caravansary) for Hindus. It sometimes invited G. Williams and H. J. S. Bell of the Theosophical Society to speak on Theosophy.

The sabhas usually took a leading role when the annual Hindu festivals were celebrated. The Ladysmith sabha, for example, celebrated Krishna Jayanti at its temple in 1907, when about 500 Hindus were present. In Benoni, the sabha there also celebrated Krishna's birthday. At this gathering, Gandhi, Polak, MacIntyre, and Pandit Ram Sundar were present.

There was music with the use of such instruments as the harmonium, sitar, sarangi, and tabla, followed by Vedic puja rituals. The climax was reached forty-five minutes before midnight when Krishna was born. The gathering also sang Vande Materam. On such occasions, it was not unusual for financial contributions by caste-based bodies. For example, among the donors were darjees and khatris in Johannesburg.

Often, the sabhas combined their religious function with that of providing educational facilities, especially after the Natal government restricted state education for Indian children under fourteen. In Tongaat, the leading official of the sabha was P.B. Desai, who arranged to build a temple, a hall, and a school on land donated by one of their numbers, Narayan Sami.

At another of its meeting, the Tongaat sabha gave vartan (recognition for good behavior?) to 150, and 16 Calcutta brahmans took upvatti (initiation). It was not unusual for such gatherings to call for donations on special projects. Often, officials from one sabha asked for help from another Hindu body, as was the case with Tongaat's R. M. Sodha, who sought financial assistance from HYMA in Pietermaritzburg for building a temple and school. The Tongaat sabha had success in its drive to build a school and library. In 1908, it handed out certificates to honor students. In addition, it raised the issue of building a crematorium for the local Hindu community.

The Durban sabha challenged young individuals to become involved in fundraising for a balmandir (nursery school). The Arya Mandal Yuvak raised chapti (instant) funds over two weekends. The students collected almost £7, and 200 pounds of dal and four pounds of rice over four months. The Pietermaritzburg sabha followed this example by collecting over £31 to run a school in Hindi and English with the help of chapti funds. Port Elizabeth's sabha announced prizes for students who had learned religious songs.

The New Guelderland sabha established a school. In Stanger, the sabha ran classes in Tamil and English with two teachers. Thirty-five 35 pupils, and ten adult indentured Indians attended classes after work. The sabha asked for donations to bring out two matriculated teachers from India. Taken together, the sabhas did remarkably well in promoting religious, cultural, and educational needs of the community.

The Hind Sudhar Sabha (HSS), founded in 1905 after Professor Permanand's visit, celebrated its first anniversary in September 1906. Somebody wrote to the Natal Mercury to say that HYMA and Hind Sudhar Sabha should unite, and perhaps they did.

In any event, HSS cosponsored in July 1909 with NIC, NIPU, Anjuman Islam, Catholic Young Men's Society, and Shri Vishnu Temple at Umgeni a petition to the imperial government against the indentured system, trade and franchise restrictions, segregated schools, and municipal vagrancy laws.

At its annual meeting on June 5, 1910 in Durban, a special guest handed out awards to pupils in the school run by the sabha. About 300 guests heard the children take part in the prayers and sing songs.

Hindu Young Men's Association (HYMA) was founded in 1905 in Pietermaritzburg. Hindu Young Men's Society (HYMS) with similar aims was to be found in Durban with several branches. HYMA's leadership was made up entirely of Tamil-speaking Hindus. In 1907 V.R.R. Moodaly was the president.

Its third annual meeting in Pietermaritzburg attracted 400 to 500 members, thanks to the presence of their guest speaker, Swami Shankeranand. The association also organized a meeting of Indian Women's Association in Pietermaritzburg. While the organization promoted Hinduism among its members through lectures or religious festivals, it was primarily concerned with promoting Tamil.

When founding member and past president Moodaly returned from a tour of India that included a visit to Madras, he addressed the association about the value of promoting Tamil and of educating girls. He had sent his own daughter for education to India. Moodaly was inspired by his visit to the Swami Vivekananda Hindu Balika Patsala Chulai. Durban Indian Women's Association president Mrs. K. R. Nayanah spoke in English on unity, while Mrs. V. R. R. Moodaly spoke in Tamil on the same subject.

This tandem performance was repeated a week later when Mrs. Nayanah talked about peace in English while Mrs. Moodaly translated it into Tamil. HYMA's Tamil school, opened in 1905, and had 125 pupils three years later. It also opened a school in South Coast Junction toward the end of 1910.

HYMA was not opposed to taking a stand on political issues. For example, it supported a petition in 1910 for advancing the trading rights of colonial-born Indians, and it played a role in the creation of the Natal-born Indian Trade Protection committee. HYMA passed resolutions against age limits in Higher Grade Indian Schools.

It also started a tradition of public lectures in the city at the corner of Church and Alexander Streets in Pietermaritzburg on Sunday afternoons. Some of the speakers were P.V. Naicker, N. Pather, and K. Chettiyar.

In addition to these two major bodies, were Durban-based Umgeni Hindu Progressive Society, Malvern Hindu Sabha, Sanatan Brahman Sabha, and Bhavik Vishnuites. Others in Natal were the Trikootam Association in Ladysmith and the Gnanvardak Sabha in Stanger. The United Hindu Association was based in Cape Town, while the Hindu Dharma Society was located in East London.

The United Hindu Association conceived its role broadly. It represented Hindu interests in activities that were not religious. Thus, for example, it joined the British India League, the Islamic Society, and the Habibia Muslim Society to welcome the first Governor General to South Africa.

When its president, C. P. Lucheram, moved to Johannesburg, he created a body with a similar name. Many priests from all over Natal came to attend a meeting of the Sanathan Brahman Sabha in October 1910. They passed resolutions to abolish the £3 tax for women, and to repeal the 1907 law that was at the center of the satyagraha campaign in the Transvaal. Not much is known about a third group, namely the Bhavik Vishnuites. Ambaram Maharaj sang kirtans at its gathering in October 1910.

There were many sectional bodies that served regional and/or religious interests, such as the Aryan Literary Association in Pietermaritzburg and the Gujarati Indian Association in Kimberley. The first sought to promote moral, intellectual, and social education, although it is not clear whether "Aryan" referred to membership or literary pieces;54 the second represented the political interests of those in Kimberley, Hindus and Muslims who were Gujarati-speakers. A Gujarati Hindu Society was founded in Johannesburg on October 6, 1906, to organize celebrations around Hindu festivals and added to its goals the unity between Hindus and Muslims.

Other bodies called for mother-tongue instruction in Gujarati. Shri Hindi Jigyasa Sabha which had branches Mayville and Sydenham, sought to promote Hindi as a language, the Devanagri script, and love for the motherland.

The Kathiawad Arya Sabha (KAM) and Surat Hindu Association (SHA) were founded in 1907 and reflected the regional interests of Gujarati-speaking Hindus. They had much in common as both pursued cultural and educational goals, but chose to have two sectional organizations. Committee meetings usually were held at the home of the president as was the case with KAM's Damjee Karsandas.

KAM ran vernacular classes about which details are not available. It met on occasions to hear M. M. Diwan who spoke about modern ways in India, or Virjee Damodar who spoke on "dharma" (devotion and duty), and Ambaram Maharaj who spoke about satyagraha and sang a song. The meeting ended with prayers, singing of Vande Materam, and paan-sopari (refreshments). KAM supported Gandhi's satyagraha campaign in 1910 by hosting many meetings to honor those who had been jailed and/or deported.

Odhav Kanjee in Durban invited Hindus from Surat on August 1, 1907, to form an association. They met at the Victoria Theater. One of those who supported the idea was Jinabhai Desai who said, "Every kom [cultural community] establishes mandals (clubs or associations) to promote its welfare, and they carry out their work well. That is what we must also do."

Office bearers were elected, a membership fee established, and soon the organization they created, namely SHA, was searching for a building that they could use for their meetings as well as to run vernacular classes and hold cultural events. At its meeting on December 1, 1910, the SHA announced the purchase of a building from Sir B.W. Greenacre for £1125. A deposit of £100 was paid. It publicized a dharmasala fund of £175, of which £50 had already been collected. The SHA's building in Victoria Street had four separate rooms reserved for the temporary use of people going to or returning from India.

In April 1911, sixty-two people used the facility. At the same time, it reported a debt of £200. Occasionally, the SHA hosted persons like Vasant Gosai Desai, who had just returned from India and talked about Paropakar (helping others). The SHA also showed support for the satyagraha campaign.

The religious leaders or members associated with temple committees often did not shy away from taking a stand on political issues. Babu Talwantsingh told those gathered in the Verulam Gopalal Temple not to re-indenture. The United Patidar Association was a body that served the interests of the patidar caste. But it did not shrink from playing a political role. So it honored leading satyagrahis like V. A. Chettiar and Sorabjee.

Nyati or caste thinking was very prevalent in this period. Observe, for example, the caste categories used in April 1910 by the Durban Samshaan Committee of its 59 cremations: 1 koli, 4 dhobis, 3 darjees, 2 mochis, 15 sonis, 2 anavils, 3 kunbis, 1 mooltani, 13 culcuttias, 1 soothar, 1 ganchi, 1 kayasth, 8 madrassis, 2 vanias, 2 vanands. Donors who gave to the Satyagraha campaign identified themselves by caste and took delight in the honor it brought to the group.

Thus a man wrote to say how proud he was that matya kunbis were showing an interest in the political struggle; others took pride in the donations made by lewa kunbis and vashnaiva kunbis. Similarly there are references to dhobis, darjees, mochis, kolis, and hajams.

There are frequent references to caste activities in Indian Opinion. The Natal Anavil Sabha was founded in 1906. An organization called the Vannik Kstriya Association in Pietermaritzburg declared its intention to build a temple and to help the poor. In Vrededorp, Johannesburg, fifty-seven members of the Anavil Samaj met on July 14, 1910, to promote nyati goals.

Membership fees were established, and at a later meeting, the group formed itself into a Transvaal-wide body. Patidars in South Africa followed with keen interest a meeting of patidars in Surat where they sponsored a boarding house. Some thirty people gathered at Ramjee Patel's home to honor achievements by fellow nyati members. The Natal Luwana Nitidharshak Sabha, based in Durban, was connected to similar organizations in Delagoa Bay and India.

It may have had a branch in Pietermaritzburg. Its main function was to promote the interests of the luwanas, but it did contribute financially to the satygraha fund. The organization delegated Dharmsi Tulsidas Jodiawala to a luwana conference in Mumbai to participate in discussions about nyati promoting education, helping the poor, and curtailing needless expenses for social functions. They also supported a cow protection program and gave money during times of famine.

The darjees in Johannesburg were told that a dharmasala had been built for nyati members who wished to go on Unaimata pilgrimage close to Navsari in India. The Anavil Mandal in Johannesburg collected money, among other things, for the purpose of maintaining a boarding house in Surat.

Hindus generally cremated their dead, and so their endeavors to build crematoriums must be seen as part of their religious faith. Udayshanker, in "Conversation between Two Friends", a twenty-one-part novel reproduced in Indian Opinion in 1911, made pointed references to the lack of cremation facilities except in the major centers. On this issue, Hindus without distinctions of caste, language, or region worked together.

They created Hindu samshaan (crematorium) fund committees and approached city and colonial authorities for permission to build crematoriums on public land. The committees organized collection drives to gather funds from Hindu members of the community. Once the facility was built, appeals for funds were made for its upkeep and maintenance. In Durban, a caretaker was needed to prevent vandals from desecrating the facility.

The Indian Opinion reported on such endeavors in Durban, Verulam, Tongaat, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, East London, and even in Delagoa Bay. The Durban Hindu Fund regularly published an account. In April 1910, it reported a balance of just over £5 deposited with the National Bank and the cremations of sixty-three persons, thirty-eight male adults, twenty-three female adults, and two children.

The Durban Samshaan Fund appealed for funds for special needs, such as laying pipes for its water requirement, and for a library which was started by Ambaram Maharaj. M. M. Diwan was in charge of the fund for many years, and when he went to India for a visit at the end of 1912, J. B. Mehta took over. In Johannesburg, Hindus met on August 25, 1910, and decided to submit a request to the colonial secretary for a plot of land next to a cemetery in use to build a crematorium with the help of Gandhi's services if he was available. Two years later, the city allocated a piece of land so long as the facility was shared by non-Hindus.

Swami Shankeranand and Gandhi

Swami Shankeranand was important in many of these developments. He followed in the footsteps of Professor Permanand who was associated with the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) College in India and who had visited South Africa earlier. Professor Permanand promoted the ideas of Arya Samaj and the Dayanand Society in his appearances all over South Africa from August 1905 to March 1906.

In 1914 his book entitled Tarikh-in-Hind was banned by the government of India as he argued in it that the 1857 Revolt was justified. He was prosecuted in 1915 under the Defence of India Act, even though the evidence against him was slender, and transported to a penal colony for life.

A fund was established in March 1908 to bring Swami Shankeranand to South Africa by Lala Mokhamchand and others like Heera, Parshotam Gopal, and Vallabh Laljee. By June 1908, over £50 was collected. Swami Shankeranand was born in Jullundar, Punjab in 1868. He was the son of Pundit Tulsidas Shastri who was a professor at the Oriental College in Lahore.

The swami was educated at a mission school, and the DAV College. He was married for a short time before becoming a celibate. His guru was Swami Atmanandji of New Delhi. In 1891, Shankeranand founded the Society of Celibates, preached against child marriages in 1894, founded the SAS High School, and in 1896 became a sanyasi (renunciate). Shankeranand spoke Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Gujarati, Sanskrit, and understood Bengali, Marathi, and English.

Shankeranand insisted that he was not formally a member of the Arya Samaj. Though he differed in various ways from Professor Permanand, he stressed the Vedic base of Hinduism. He was very popular among South African Hindus. In the three months after his arrival, he was invited to many places to present discourses on Hinduism and to perform religious ceremonies. He spent a night at Phoenix in October 1908 and was also honored at a reception in Congress Hall, Durban. Among the 1000 guests present were some Theosophists like Williams and Bell.

Shankeranand was garlanded by Williams and by Lala Mohkhamchand who was the chief organizer. R.R. Moodley was the chairman of the Reception Committee. Tamil girls recited a hymn. Shankeranand read from the Koran and stressed that Christians, Hindus, and Muslims were equal. At a Sanathan Dharma Sabha meeting on October 18, 1908, Shankeranand gave a commentary on Chapter 18 of the Bhagavad Gita. In Overport at which a crowd of 500, including some Muslims, were present, he spoke on “Man’s Duty.” At another meeting in the Congress Hall organized by the Durban Theosophical Society, he spoke on the “Practical Religious Life.” Later he spoke at the same venue on the “Hindu Conception of Morality.”

Shankeranand addressed 2000 worshipers at the Depot Road Temple. When HYMA celebrated its third anniversary in Congress Hall in 1908, the swami gave a sermon to six hundred persons. Yagna (sacrifice) was performed, and speeches were made in Tamil. The swami urged women to train young minds by opening schools and libraries and by providing children with physical education.

He advised Hindus to lead sober lives, which among other things, meant abstaining from alcohol. The swami was particularly worried about Hindus who were turning to Christianity. Focus on self-improvement, he charged them, and there would be no need to convert to another religion. This theme would be repeatedly stressed in many of his addresses during his stay in South Africa.

Swami Shankeranand continued his travels in Natal to talk about religion. At many of the places he visited he combined discourses on religion with the performances of yagna. At the Verulam temple at which 2000 people were present, Shankeranand spoke about dharma (devotion and duty). Hindus should not reject other religions but should steadfastly observe their own.

If Whites scorned Indians, it was because Indians had failed to follow the true path of their own faiths. He visited again the Phoenix Settlement. On January 3, 1909, the swami spoke to over 1200 Hindus at Umgeni temple where he reminded them to honor God, perform yagna, honor their parents, give to charity, and respect all living creatures.

In Durban, he was a guest of Hillary White where he spoke on atma (soul); at the Congress Hall he lectured on dharma, and he was present at an Indian Chamber of Commerce meeting also attended by Gandhi. He performed a vasant panchmi puja associated with the first day of Spring, and pointed out that ignorance, pride, and selfishness were the main cause of grief.

When he returned to Verulam he said that suffering was the fruit of karma. Hindus should engage in sadhna (worship). Chant the Gayatri mantra, do agnihotra (fire sacrifice), and listen to the recitation of the shastras (scriptures). Later in the month, Shankeranand spoke to about thirty people at a HYMA meeting in Pietermaritzburg. His busy schedule in 1909 continued: February 26 at Babu Ganpatti Singh's home, February 27 at the Vishnu Mandir, February 28 at another Hindu temple, March 5 at the Natal Creamery Hall, and March 6 at the Krishna temple.

On March 10 he was at Howick Falls where he talked about Ved dharma at the farm of Thakor Dasarath Singh; two days later, he was at Dr. Marsh's house where he spoke on moksha (spiritual liberation); and on March 14, he did havan-kriya (sacrificial ritual) at the home of Narsibhai in New Scotland and talked about para (knowledge of the earth) and apara (knowledge of Brahman).

In April, Shankeranand was called upon to mediate in the quarrel within HYMA. As a result, seven HYMA members who had been expelled were taken back after offering an apology. The swami appealed for unity among Hindus and Muslims in Pietermaritzburg. We do not know the circumstances of the appeal, but a unity pact was signed by Muslim traders Amod Bhayat and M.J. Mahomed, and ex-indentured Hindu landowner C. Nulliah. Shankeranand was also present in Pietermaritzburg on Emperor's Day to express loyalty to the monarch on behalf of Vedic religion followers at the Ved Dharma Sabha Hall in Church Street.

He spoke about the benefits of British rule to India, especially under Queen Victoria. At Washbank he helped to establish a Ved Dharma Sabha. At Ramsevek Singh's place he performed havan-kriya. In Tongaat, the swami spoke at P. B. Desai's place on nitya karma (daily living). Ambaram Maharaj spoke on swadharma (own faith or duty). The next meeting took place at A. A. Gandhi's place in Tongaat, followed by one at the Ved Dharma Sabha building.

The swami also took up the cause of the education of Indian children, especially the indentured, since he believed that they were not getting any. He appeared before a commission in 1909 to speak on education. He testified that only five per cent of the Indian children were getting formal education and was scathing about the "racial prejudice" inherent in Indian children being cut off at age fourteen from educational benefits.

He championed the cause of indentured Indians whose children should receive "free and compulsory" education from the state. This was not the responsibility of employers, who forced the children to work instead of sending them to school. He pleaded similarly for the children of free Indian parents. Rich merchants could pay for their education, he felt. Shankeranand was strongly opposed to missionary schools because they insisted on Bible studies and were opposed if not hostile to Hinduism. Primary education should be offered in the vernacular with English being introduced from standard four. 77

In the beginning there were no signs of disagreement between Gandhi and Shankeranand but this changed within a year of the swami's arrival. Why did the two disagree? Gandhi's broad interpretation of Hinduism irked the swami. It was not so much that he disagreed with Gandhi's call for unity between Hindus and Muslims, but diverged with Gandhi's interpretation of Hinduism. Swami Shankeranand was ambivalent toward the Muslims.

He was behind the creation of the Indian Farmers' Association in 1909 which encouraged Hindu farmers to boycott the Grey Street Mosque Indian market because he felt it was monopolized by Muslim traders. As Goolam Vahed points out, the swami certainly had leadership ambitions and hoped to use economic rivalries among Hindus and Muslims to realize them. He wrote a letter to Gandhi in 1909 pointing out the fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam.

Gandhi responded in 1910 by saying that swami's "sarcastic remarks about Islam" were against "the spirit of Hinduism," and labeled his behavior "expedient and immoral." Gandhi said, "If it is necessary to keep so much distance between the Hindus and Mussalmans, then, Hindustan deserves to remain slave." Gandhi had faith in Hinduism's broadly inclusive spirit.

He reiterated this during the Diwali festival by challenging Hindus to reach out to non-Hindus as a sign of the respect they had for the religious beliefs and customs of others. He said, "We are of course a single nation of brothers as among ourselves. We should regain that consciousness …. This will betoken our fraternal relations and prove that we have become one nation."

At a KAM meeting at which Gandhi was present, Swami Shankeranand called for unity and equality. In Pietermaritzburg, the swami was on hand to perform a religious ceremony for the newly opened Natal Indian Traders. At another KAM meeting, Swami Shankeranand was in the chair to honor passive resisters who spoke of their experiences.

He was, however, critical about some aspect of the passive resistance campaign. The mandal mildly rebuked him in a letter to the Natal Mercury, "We are sorry that Swamiji made such comments and offered advice to the people concerning the laws. But we do not think it likely that a satyagrahi will abandon what he considers to be the truth or give up his pledge because of such criticism."
Whatever else may have transpired between them, it seems that the swami's position had hardened by the time he left South Africa in 1910. He seemed to have fallen out of favor with the local authorities. In a move probably intended to embarrass the swami, the police approached him in June 1910 for payment of the poll tax. He was summoned to appear in the Durban magistrate's court when he failed to pay.

Swami Shankeranand explained that it was against his principle to do so "unless and until I was taken under arrest" for committing "some heinous crime." It was "the greatest injustice" to ask him to pay the tax when he had no profession. Besides, he was in Natal only temporarily. Better sense prevailed at the colonial secretary's office which agreed with the swami.

Swami Shankerand left South Africa and returned in 1912. By this time, the breach with Gandhi was complete. He considered Gandhi more of a "Tolstoyan" rather than "an absolute Hindu," and did not believe that he was really working in the interests of poor Hindus. In May 1912, the swami was invited as a guest of the South African Hindu Conference. The aim of the organizers was to promote dialogue among the various Hindu groups and foster unity. But the affair produced much bickering and division.

The swami took public issue with Gandhi's approach to Hinduism. As a result, the Tamil Benefit Society passed a vote of no confidence in the swami, while Kimberley Hindus regretted his attack on Gandhi. When the swami came again in May 1913 with the purpose of promoting Hinduism, Gandhi wrote to Bhawani Dayal, "If the Swami is invited to the Hindu Conference or if it seeks his support in any way, no sensible Hindu can participate in it."

If some Hindus still continued to place their trust in the swami, they may well have disagreed with Gandhi's untraditional approach to Hinduism. Udayshanker in "Conversation between Two Friends," the twenty-two-part novel reproduced in Indian Opinion in 1911, complained that Gandhi had not done as much as he could to promote Hinduism in the traditional sense. His religious pluralism did not go down well for some, although it made it possible for Gandhi to rise about rival claims between Hindu groups and between Hindus and Muslims.

In this, he was inspired by the Jain belief that all visions of truth were necessarily fragmentary. It served him well as a reformer who tried to place his own stamp. As Margaret Chatterjee points out, Gandhi sought to secure "practical exigencies of living together peacefully."

She continues, "His own experience of living in a multi-religious society ... provides a constant reminder that the discussion of religious truth is not a mere theoretical matter but has a direct bearing on how men behave towards each other, bearing with each other's credal and 'observational' differences, and that the whole question is in fact intimately related to whether men of different persuasions can live together in harmony or not." It is in South Africa that he began these experimentations even if it meant displeasing some of his constituents.

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Their Traditions and Beliefs, Durban, 2000, argues that the beliefs held in common by all Hindus are: reincarnation, one divine reality, importance of dharma, belief in moksha, acceptance of scriptures like the Vedas, Ramayana, and Bhagavad Gita, and the observance of religious festivals like Krishna Asthmee, Diwali, Ram Naumee, and Maha Shivrathri.

J. B. Brain, "Religion, Missionaries and Indentured Indians," in Essays on Indentured Indians in Natal, edited by Surendra Bhana, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1991, pp. 209-25. In a case reported in 1895, Gandhi defended the right of 75 Indians employed by the NGR who wanted to take a day off for religious festivals. CSO 3467/1895, NAR, Pietermaritzburg. See also I 814/1896; CSO 2903/1896; I 814/1899; CSO 656/1908, NAR, Pietermaritzburg.

I 115/1904; IRD 779/1903, NAR, Pietermaritzburg.

Buildings have a bearing on the way communities organize space and the way they perceive the world. This is a point well illustrated in a book by Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 1977. Visuality is combined with culture and ethnicity.

The Hindu term for temple is vimaha or rath (a chariot), and so a temple is a means by which one transports oneself to the divine. The temple is also the abode of the deity, hence the sikhara that rises up to the sky. The mandapam (main hall) represents the heart (hrdaya) of the divine. See also Fatima Meer, Portraits of Indian South Africans, Durban, 1969, pp. 161, 160-78.

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The other office bearers were: S. K. Pather, Anand Rai, P. S. Aiyar, C. V. Pillay, B. Meghraj, S. Doorasamy Pillay, C. K. D. Pillay, Siroomal, Shelat, R. W. Moodley, R. Moodly, and P. S. Singh. Ibid., 9/22/1906.

Others who held office were: S. P. Pillay, R. C. Naidoo, R. M. Naidoo, M. Killavalla, S. D. Pillay, B. Purmaser, T. Vallo, V. M. Pillay, V. S. C. Pather, P. G. Padiachy, P. G. Naicker, T. M. Naicker, and K. R. Naidoo. Ibid., 5/4/1907, 5/11/1907, 5/25/1907; African Chronicle, 1/22/1910.
The women were V. R. Moodaley, Vinden, C. Nulliah, N. K.Naidoo, T. Naicker, John Thomas, R. Pillay, M. Reddy, and Nadasa Pather. Ibid., 8/ 1/1908.

Shiv Kumar Gupta, Arya Samaj and the Raj, 1875-1920, New Delhi: Gitanjali Publishing House, 1991, pp. 119-20; Ibid., 8/12/1905, 10/7/1905, 10/28/1905, 11/4/1905, 11/11/1905, 11/18/1905, 12/2/1905, 12/30/1905, 3/10/1906

The names of the seven who were expelled were: V. K. Sabbah, V. R. Pillay, R. S. Pillay, K. Pillay, A. S. Padayachee, M. K. Pillay, and Mooruga Chetty. Ibid., 1/16/1909, 1/30/1909, 2/13/1909, 2/27/1909, 3/13/1909, 3/22/1909, 4/3/1909, 4/10/1909, 6/5/1909.

Ibid., 8/7/1909. Shankeranand continued to speak on the need for formal education for Indian children. African Chronicle, 2/19/1910.

Goolam Vahed, “Swami Shankeranand and the Consolidation of Hinduism in Natal, 1908-1914,”Journal for the Study of Religion, 10:2(August 2002):3-35.

Ibid., 6/18/1910, 6/25/1910, 7/2/1910. See also Raojibhai M Patel, The Making of the Mahatma, Ahmedabad, 1990.

NAR CSO 2602 C 40/1910. Shankeranand to Plowman, n.d.; C. Bird to Acting Secretary of Interior, 20/6/1910.

Emphasis is in the original. See Margaret Chatterjee, Gandhi’s Religious Thought, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983, p. 8.

Chapter 4 Muslims, Mosques and Madressas

“Where there are ten Muslims, there will be a mosque or a madressa.”

Udayshanker in “Conversation between Two Friends”, a twenty-one-part novel reproduced in Indian Opinion, 1911

All Muslims observe the five basic principles central to Islam. They recite Kalma to profess faith in Allah, Prophet Mahomed, His angels, and the Koran; they perform namaz (prayers) five times a day; they observe roza (fast) during the holy month of Ramadan; they give zakaat (alms); and undertake Haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca in the twelfth month of the Hijri (Muslim) calendar.

These five principles guided the lives of Muslims in India, who were predominantly Sunni. Majda Asad identified five major Muslim festivals: Ramadan, the month of fasting; Eid-ul-fitr which comes at the end of the fasting; Eid-ul-Zuha or Bakri-id on the tenth day of the twelfth month in the Muslim calendar to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his own son to God; Milad-ul-Nabi honoring Prophet Mahomed’s birthday; and Mohhuram commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Mahomed, in 680 ACE.

As M. Mujeeb points out, there was great diversity of beliefs among Indian Muslims. In many parts of India, Muslims retained some Hindu practices since the "vast majority" were converts. The descendants of small groups of them such as the Khojas, Bohras, and Memons came to South Africa. The Gujarat region was “a melting-pot of races and beliefs.” Sufism developed by the twelfth century, and “took root immediately in the life of the people, and was more Indian in its character and expression than orthodoxy could ever become.” It brought Hindus and Muslims closer more than anything else.

Muslim immigrants brought many of these traditions to South Africa. The sufi order known as Qadiri accepted the idea of Pir (Guide) who acts as the preceptor between Allah and His followers, and one of its earliest proponents was Shaikh Ahmed who came to Natal on the Truro in 1860, the first ship conveying indentured Indians. He became known as Badsha Pir (King of Guides) and was popular among indentured Indians.

He was followed by Mahomed Ebrahim Soofie, also known as Soofie Saheb, who arrived in 1895 as a missionary and propagated the ideas associated with sufism until his death in 1910. Soofie Saheb built a shrine in memory of Badsha Pir. Annually, Badsha Pir's sainthood was commemorated with a recital of qawwali (devotional songs), communal dinner, and a procession through the city accompanied by raathie players doing bodily penitence with spears and swords.

In addition to propagating the faith, Soofie Saheb built mosques, madressas, schools where children are taught to read the Koran in Arabic, orphanages, and guest houses all over southern Africa.

Yet another tradition emerged around the Mohurram festival. All sections of the Muslim community participated in this most popular event that lasted ten days. It was broadly tolerant and allowed Hindu participation, and Hindus themselves were drawn to it for its mystical quality.

Indeed, in India, sufi saints incorporated some of the culture and imagery of Hindus. Mohurram ended on the tenth day with a colorful procession that involved pulling several tajjias, decorated miniature mausoleums made of wood, through the streets to end up on the banks of the Umgeni river where the final ceremonies took place. Those who participated engaged through music, dancing, and singing.

In some families, women recounted over nine days the tragedy of Hussain's death. Annually, the Mohurram festivals required permits from city and town authorities for their processions. Invariably White residents complained bitterly about the noise, especially the repeated beating of drums, and sought to restrict them.

At the Mohurram festival described in Indian Opinion in October 1904, there were as many as 3000 people some coming from as far as Johannesburg, Charlestown, and Dundee. They were all greeted by Soofie Saheb. The procession of people carried tajjias with the accompaniment of music and dancing.

In 1905, the Raboobee tajjia went along Victoria and Grey Streets before it joined others already assembled in Umgeni Street. In 1907, 3000 individuals at the lower Umgeni River took part in the annual event to honor the patron saint, Khajwa Saheb, on Saturday and Sunday. Such events also took place in Tongaat, Dannhauser, and Hattingspruit. The Mohurram festival in the region attracted many people from places like Ladysmith and Igogo.

Muslims regularly honored Prophet Mahomed’s birthday in Durban. During the Bakri-id festival in 1907, Indian Opinion alerted Mulsims about local laws relating to kurbani, that is the slaughter of goats that accompany this event. Muslim shops were closed in the Grey Street area and elsewhere on that day. Indeed, there was pressure on Muslim shop owners in many parts of South Africa to observe Eid-ul-fitr by closing their businesses.

In 1908, Bakri-id celebration included a performance by the Star Dramatic company in Durban's Victoria Street Theater. Durban's Point Mahomedan Society gave out prizes to its outstanding madressa students on Eid-ul-fitr in 1911. When Estcourt and Dannhauser celebrated Prophet Mahomed’s birthday, Muslims came to the function from nearby towns like Newcastle, Dundee, and Hatingspruit.

In Port Elizabeth, 250 Muslims, among them Malays, were present when Akoob Saheb Barber Aliporwala celebrated molud sharif (holy celebration) in honor of Prophet Mahomed, and ended with a traditional fateha (prayers). At Amerspoort, Dawjee Suliman Bomat's daughter, Hawabibi, completed Koran sharif (holy Koran). She read one chapter from the Koran.

Other children who read from the Holy Book were given silk handkerchiefs as gifts. Another Islamic festival was celebrated in Greytown, Volksrust, Standerton, and Durban.

Mosques and Madressas

For Muslims a mosque, referred to as masjid in Gujarati, is the center of religious activity. In the absence of one—as was the case of early Muslims who came mainly from Malabar and Hyderabad as indentured immigrants—shrines served the purpose. The first mosque was built in Grey Street in Durban in 1881. Another was constructed in 1885 in nearby West Street.

The mosques incorporated architectural features common to all such structures. Additional features were introduced in the Durban mosques that represented the traditions of Muslims who came from the western parts of India with regional variations. The Grey Street mosque served the needs mainly of Gujarati-speaking Sunni Vohras from Surat, while the other in West Street was for Memons from Kathiawad and Kutch, each showing ethnic distinctions of the Muslim traders who built them.

Soofie Saheb, referred to earlier, built nine mosques all over South Africa from 1895 to the time of his death in 1911, thanks to the generous help, among others, of Parsee Rustomjee, a rich merchant in Durban.

Muslims considered it their sacred duty to build mosques wherever they resided. A mosque was built in Allendale near Pietermaritzburg in 1908 even though there were only three Muslim shop owners in the area. Dannhauser Muslims built a mosque in 1905, and a madressa was started in September 1906.

They had previously shared facilities in Ladysmith, Dundee, and Newcastle. Cape Town's Hajee Suliman Shahmahomed gave one-half of his land to a trust for the purpose of building a mosque and madressa.

Weddings were happy occasions at which donations were showered on favored mosques, usually ones that had personal or ancestral connection. Such was the case when a double wedding took place in Pietermaritzburg. Hajee Hoosen Mahomed Badat's two daughters were married to the son of Ebrahim Shah of Ladysmith and the nephew of Ismail Dowjee Mia of Kearsney. Donations were given to masjids in Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle (Kathor Mehfil and Kathor Mehfil Zintol), and Ladysmith.

Another such social event was marked by generous donations for mosques. On the occasion of the marriage of Hajee Ahmed Mehter to Kathor's Hajee Cassimjee Mahomed in the Umgeni's Habibia Jooma, Amjee Sulliman Kadwa (Cassim Mahomed's brother) donated £1 each to Kathor Mehfil Ronkul Islam, Kathor Zintol Islam, Umgeni Madressa Habibia, and a Verulam masjid; and £2 to Durban's Madressa Anjuman Islam.

Fund raising for building or improving mosques and madressas was frequent. Most of the appeals came through individuals. Moot Vali was entrusted, for example, with the task of collecting funds for the Greytown mosque which had run out of money. From Port Elizabeth, Shah Panday and Ismail Ahmed Dhabelia set out for Kimberley, Mafeking, Vryberg, and Winterton to collect funds for a masjid. Others also went out on similar collection drives.

Muslim South Africans helped to finance mosques and madressas in their ancestral villages in India. Thus, various organizations regularly sponsored the building of mosques and madressas in villages and towns like Kathor, Kholvad, Ranavav, Rander, to name a few. Occasionally, the appeals were made through paid announcements signed by the official British administrator in the district.

When the Panoli Shoktul Islam madressa had its meeting at West Street in Durban in 1912, seventy-five persons who represented villages like Diwa, Daddar, Panoli, Kharach, Karod, Pirmani, Hathuman, and Kosamdi attended. Other funds, including the Ranavav Madressa Fund were created;26 and activities of Rander Anjuman Islam in India were reported.

The Kholvad Mehfil Saiful Islam supported religious activities in Kholvad. It published a long report detailing contributions and expenses that suggest that those who had migrated to South Africa still desired to contribute to the religious welfare of the village from which they came.

Similarly, Anjuman Islam from Bodania in India gave a financial account of how South African donors' money was spent on the mosque and madressa classes in quarterly, annual, bi-annual, and even tri-annual reports. Kathor Anjuman Islam ran a boarding house for twenty students, a library, and a masjid. Rs. 7889 were received and Rs. 6494 were expended.

Ranavav Anjuman Islam gave a two-year account. Kadod's Jamat (Muslim congregation) wrote a letter signed by Osman Goolam Rasool and fifty-four others appealing for funds to undertake repairs to a mosque that was fifteen years old.

The total amount requested was Rs. 7000.32 Johannesburg's Ebrahim Suliman Mankada, himself a resident of Dhabel, inquired into the financial affairs of the Dhabel madressa. A report informed that Farsi, Arabic, Urdu, Gujarati, and English were being taught at the madressa, and that there were hostel facilities.33 The Kathor Madressa Anjuman Islam, established in 1889, announced its school enrollment at 204 pupils in 1911 up to standard six. Subject matter included Gujarati, English, Arabic and Farsi.

There are countless references to Muslims in South Africa who were engaged in promoting the building and maintenance of mosques and madressa or of bridges and walls in villages in India. A former resident of Alipor writing from Johannesburg argued that Muslims who lavished on weddings should cut back so as to make donations for masjids and madressas. He was not the only one to suggest this.

One who described himself as “Kathor Sunni Vohra” wrote in a similar vein. A meeting was held on January 14, 1912, in Durban regarding a masjid in Diwa, Kosamdi, and Datal in India. Alipor, Bodana, Gandev, Panoli, Kantolia and many other Indian villages similarly appear as places where Muslims wished to build or maintain mosques and madressas for which funds were collected.

Many protest cables were sent in response to A.D. Vahed's request to voice opposition to the Gaekwad state's announced intention of taking over the management of the karbastan (cemetery) in Kathor. A committee was established in October 1912, and in the end the Gaekwad administrators backed down.

Differences among mosque committees arose from time to time over a variety of issues and showed how vibrant the communities were. There was disagreement among members in the Kranskop masjid. In Kimberley, Imam Mahomed and others were forcibly ejected from the mosque by Abraham Hoosen. The Court ruled that the ejection was legally improper. Similar disagreements were in evidence among Muslims in Port Elizabeth. Here the presence of a Malay mosque added to the complications.

Heidelberg's Cassim Suliman Kajee complained that the masjid built seventy-eight years ago was badly in need of repair;42 and Essop Moosajee, a Durban resident from Kathor wanted to know what had happened to the money raised ten years ago to build a masjid there. In Cape Town, the managing committee of the Loop Street Indian masjid had not met in three years, hence a meeting was called to return power to the trustees. Muslims met on July 3, 1910, about paying off a debt on the masjid. Since it was built in 1892, more Muslims, especially Kanemias and Pathans, had moved to Cape Town.

The members hoped to establish efficient management of mosque affairs. To help resolve a conflict in the Richmond masjid, people came from Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Whatever the source of the disagreement, the mediators determined differentiated membership dues for shopkeepers and others. A man calling himself "Democrat" wrote several letters complaining about the high-handed behavior of the Kathor Mehfil Ronkul Islam officials.

There are numerous instances of people disagreeing about what should be taught, how the classes should be run, and at what age children should start receiving madressa education. Standerton's Muslims argued that children should start receiving ilm (Islamic knowledge) as early as seven or eight years of age in Kholvad.

They moved to recommend this change to the Kholvad Jamat in India, and also suggested a fine of Rs 50 for any student who stopped classes before the age of fifteen. S.I. Patel writing from Vereeninging talked about incorporating untouchables in the educational program. From Barkeley West, Ebrahim Asmal Bhamla argued for instruction in mother tongue languages like Gujarati and Urdu.

Muslim Organizations

Hundreds of organizations catered for Muslim religious needs. Each city or town usually had more than one body with strong organizational and religious ties to the ancestral homes of its members. Committees or trusts were put in place to manage their activities on a day to day basis. On the whole, they succeeded in their primary function of preserving and maintaining Islamic values.

Many of them were run by merchants who knew how to turn profits from investments in buildings with rent-paying tenants. Such was the case of Kathor Mehfil Ronkul Islam which bought its third building in July 1911 for £350 in Durban's Umbilo Road with a monthly rental income of £4.50 They often combined religious, educational, recreational, and sporting functions.

Among the bodies that called themselves Anjuman (Association) Islam, a few were very active. In Durban, Abdul Kadir managed the needs of Anjuman Islam and its members, while at the same time supporting a madressa in Porbandar in India The Durban Anjuman Islam ran a madressa school for 126 pupils in May 1909, and taught subjects like English, Gujarati, Arabic, and Urdu.

The school thought about hiring a Gujarati teacher in May 1909. Its school in Saville Street was established after Indian children over age fourteen were barred from government schools. At its first anniversary in 1910, some 400 adults were present to see awards made to those among the 150 students who did well in English, Gujarati, and Arabic.

Among those present were Dawad Mahomed (NIC president), Ismail Gora (vice president of the Durban Anjuman Islam and chairman of the school committee), Ismail Moosa (Gujarati teacher), and non-Muslim teachers like Michael Lazarus (English), H.L. Paul, Vincent Lawrence, and R. Bughwan.

The school was planning to collect money from Muslims living on the north and south coasts. It also addressed the issue of upkeep and maintenance of its school building. At one of its meeting, the discussion was about namaz, and the topic slated for the next session was competition and rivalry.

The school had a sports day festival for its 200 pupils. Occasionally it met to honor community leaders. Such was the case in January 1910, when M.C. Anglia who had just returned from England where he was part of a delegation was recognized for his role as a delegation member. Anglia's message for the 300 who had gathered was that Indians should rise above their parochialism.

Pretoria's Anjuman Islam looked into anti-Muslim practices while Muslims satyagrahis were in jail. But it was largely devoted to routine community work. Its meeting on July 26, 1908, dealt with such issues as appointing a new managing board, treasurer's report, and honoring members going to India. It publicized examination results of eighteen students.

This body spoke about collecting funds for its English classes on January 5, 1910. Suliman Ismail Suj, chairman of Pretoria masjid, reported that the imam's salary had been increased by ten shillings, and the muezzin's by one shilling. Johannesburg's Anjuman Fejeh, established in 1895, had fifteen members in April 1910. It honored twelve persons who did majlis molud sharif (gathering for holy celebration). Meals served on this occasion were prepared by volunteer cooks.

The Anjuman Esha-Etul Islam in Depot Road, Durban, represented Muslims from Calcutta and its aim was to help the children of the poor. In Pietermaritzburg, the Anjuman Himayatul Islam met on May 1 with 150 in attendance to discuss changes in teaching at its madressa school. Anjuman Islam in Somerset Strand in the Cape was established in January 1910. In December 1910, it gave out prizes to students for Koran sharif and ilm.

The South African Janjira Anjuman reached out to befriend Louis Botha when this Boer leader visited Durban in July 1910. Botha was not available, and so S. Ismail Seepye of Pietermaritzburg sent an address to him in Pretoria.

There were Muslim organizations that had "mehfil" or "mehafil" (organization) in their names. The Kathor Mehfil Zintol (or) Shintul Islam had a balance of £200 in May 1909. In June 1910, it issued a two-year report of its activities. It had collected Rs 5828 and spent Rs 5237. Among the donors were Moossajee Ahmed Co., Hassen Mamoojee, Cassim Essop Moolla, and Ebrahim Mahomed Timol.

The Kholvad Mehfil Saiful Islam published a long report detailing financial contributions for the religious welfare of the village from which their South African members came. In 1913, it suggested raising matching funds to help the Gaekwad government provide compulsory education.

Motavarachia Mehfil Islam honored Ahmed Bhayat of Pietermaritzburg and E.M. Haffejee of Estcourt who were going to Mecca for haj. Three hundred were present at the meeting, among them Maulvi Fateh Mahomed and M.C. Anglia. Sheik Mehtab recited poetry, and Bhyat and Haffejee donated £15 and £5-10-0 respectively to the organization. Other organizations included the Kathor Mehfil Islam, Kathor Mehfil Ronkul Islam, and the Surtee Mahomedan Mehfil Islam.

Hamidia Islamic Society (HIS) was an important Johannesburg-based Muslim organization that played a leading role in the first four years of the satyagraha campaign. Its founding member was H.O. Ally, who together with his fellow HIS members supported BIA initiatives. The famous mass meeting of September 11, 1906, in the Empire Theater at which the satyagraha resolution was taken, took place under its aegis.

It played a dual role, however, that of serving the needs of Muslims and of linking it with issues that were politically important to them. For example, when Imam Abdul Kadar Bawazeer was arrested in October 1908, HIS organized a protest meeting. At the HIS hall, madressa school awards were made to students by M. P. Fancy, one of the officials In a first of its kind, HIS organized celebration for Imam Hoosain in Johannesburg on January 30, 1910.

The Hall was decorated, and many, including Malays, took part in the festivities. HIS cabled £60 to the Muslim Educational Conference in Deobund, Punjab which lasted for three days in April, and attracted as many as 30,000 Muslims. Many South African maulvis had studied at Deobund. Hamidia Madressa's managing committee met to discuss the secretary's report.

It resolved to call a meeting on June 16 for those who wanted to take imtihaan (examination). In 1910, HIS discussed the request for financial help by Al Islam, a newspaper based in Cape Town. On another occasion, the maulvi presented students with gifts.

The Mahomedan Debating Society (MDS) combined religious and secular issues. Its chairman, Mahomed Ahmed Meer, who had links with the Hamidia Islamic Society in Johannesburg and the Pan Islamic Society in the United Kingdom, played a leading role. It was active in supporting Indians in trade license appeals.

M.A. Goga was congratulated on his successful trade licence appeal and encouraged the NIC to take steps. The MDM ran a library and accepted donations of newspapers, books, furniture, and the like. At one of its meetings in 1907, Hindus were invited to discuss the Transvaal satyagraha struggle. At its meeting on May 31, 1910, the group read passages from the Koran’s third kitab, and from a historical novel (not named). The MDS met on July 30 under chairman Ismail Allarakha to deal with routine matters such as the acknowledgment of its letter of sympathy written on the occasion of the emperor's death, new books in the library, and “Unity” as the focus of discussion for its next meeting.

Sayed Adbul Kadir read passages from Lord Chesterfield's Advice to His Son at another meeting. The group congratulated Sir Carimbhai Ebrahim on his attaining the Baronet's title in England. Members sent letters to Sir Carim from among those submitted by members. They also made a decision about feeding a destitute Muslim boy during Ramzan. Five shillings were donated by Cassim Meer, and Osman Allarakha donated a bag of rice. Eid-ul-fitr prizes were distributed, and farewell was said to Fakir Ismail Loonat who was going to India.

In Durban, the Point Road Mahomedan Society was established on May 15, 1910. Sheik Imam was the chairman who worked with committee members like Sayed Chhaboo Mia, Sheik Mahomed Ebrahim, Sheik Ismail, and Abdul Hakim. The aim was to promote unity and peace among Muslims.

It had at least one sitar and qawwali recital. Its madressa had an enrollment of sixteen pupils all of whom received ilm. At another of its regular meetings, members resolved to meet twice a month and thereafter read from Koran, and they retired after cha-pani (refreshments) at 7:30 p.m. At its monthly meeting, students received prizes. At its October 30 meeting, Deobund and Mehfil maddressas were cited as good examples to follow.

Other Muslim organizations thrived. The Haripura Gujamwadi Masjid Fund was established in Ladysmith. The Ladysmith Islamic Society, founded in 1907, honored maulanas (Islamic religious scholars) from India and elsewhere. The Mahomedan Club in Marburg, the British Indian Mahomedan Association in Mafeking, the Natal Memon Community, the Alipur Islamic Committee in Johannesburg, the Surtee Masjid School in Durban, the Rander Jalse Habibia in Ladysmith, Cape Town's Habibia Muslim Society, Mahomedan Charity Club in Simonstown were regionally and locally active bodies that promoted Islam broadly.

Bloemhof established the Islamic Society in 1911. Some like the Union Mahomedan Society, which had prominent leaders like Moulana Maulvi Ahmed Mukhtiar and Abdul Gani, were thinking nationally about Muslim interests. In Stanger, the Mehfil Islam was established in 1912 with 31 members. Moosa Tootla was named the president. Durban Anjuman Islam's president, Ismail Gora was happy to donate twenty-one shillings to the new body.

Some organizations focused on youth. The Young Muslim Society (YMS) promoted Islam through membership drives and by publishing articles. In Durban, the YMS opened a library in Pine Street that was open from four p.m. until nine in the evening. The Mahomedan Young Men's Society was active in Pretoria, and in Pietermaritzburg, a body with the same name met, and was attended by some fifty individuals on December 10, 1910 to give speeches, garland honored persons, and sing ghazals (lyric poems).

Young South African Muslims were often sent abroad for education. Some went to England, others to Aligarh College in India. Greytown's Moosa Mamoojee Omarjee sent his son to Aligarh to learn ilm. Omarjee was from Kathor, and the writer (A.D. Vahed) said that in spite of his impoverished status, Omarjee was the first and had thus made all Kathor residents feel proud. Muslims were never slow to support good causes.

Thus, several bodies donated to the Muslim University and the London Masjid Fund. Many attended a conference on December 24, 1911, in Cape Town to talk about the religious and general education for young Muslim boys and girls. Dr Abdurahman was the guest speaker.

A Muslim Education Committee was created. Pietermaritzburg's Ahmed Bhayat pointed to the need for a boarding school at which ilm should be taught. Four donors had already come forward with £1500. Zeerust's Ebrahim Haji Mahomed talked about the need for classes in industrial skills at the Kholvad madressa.

Even in general educational matters, Muslims took great interest. Thus N.M. Kader of the Durban Anjuman Islam donated £101 to the Natal Educational Institute. Zakat (charity) was an important Islamic tenet, and many Muslims took it seriously. Durban's Anjuman Islam set up a committee to collect funds for needy shop assistants and hawkers on an annual basis.

At a function organized by the Durban Esha-Etul Islam, M.C. Anglia provided two dozen readers for students, and Maulvi Bashir donated 1000 labels, and alphabetical charts in Arabic and Urdu. E.H.M. Moolla from Zeerust referred to a Penny Fund that had been created in 1910 for madressa work.

There were strong Pan-Islamic sentiments among the Muslims. They rallied to the support of the Turks during the Balkans wars, 1911-13. They boycotted goods from Greece and Italy and made substantial cash donations to Turkey. Members of the South African Moslem League, South African Moslem Association, and Habibia Moslem Society were among those gathered at a meeting of 3000 in Cape Town to show support for Turkey.

The Red Crescent fund was established. Durban's Mahomedan Mastik Society was among the bodies that collected money. An earthquake in Turkey led Gardee in Johannesburg to create the Hamadard (Sympathy) Islam Fund. Over £60 was collected. Washbank in Natal also established a fund October 1912. The Mahomedan Theatrical Group performed in 1912 on the night of Eid-ul-fitr in Durban to raise money. Merchants contributed substantially, but workers also joined in the endeavor.

Newcastle cabled nearly £271 to Constantinople. Ladysmith sent £425, and of this a sum of £30 came from the Muslim Labour Association. Dundee District gave £500. Durban donated £1000 bringing the total in January 1913 to £4000. Vryburg's Muslims donated £34.

Johannesburg's Red Crescent Fund, together with the Hamdard Islam Fund, collected £2756. Hamdard Islam announced in April 1913 that the total donation was £23,000 for all South Africa. Of this £11,000 was for the Tripoli War, and £12,000 for the Balkan War.

The South African Muslims, like those in India, were connected to the Middle East through regular pilgrimages to Mecca. Some broadened their interests as they traveled. Such was the case of NIC's Dawad Mahomed's son, Hoosen, who wrote about his travels to India, Mecca, and other places in the Middle East. He talked about Khalifana (Caliphate), which, a few years later from 1919-1923 was to become known in India as the Khilafat, to which Gandhi would lend his support.

Gandhi's relations with the Muslim Community

Muslims played an important role in the experience of the South African Gandhi. From the time he came to help sort out a legal dispute between two wealthy merchants in 1893, he plunged himself into South African affairs substantially with their help and encouragement. He was to learn much about the Muslims, and came to trust them. His own moral and political development was based on interfaith tolerance, which became the hallmark of his stay in South Africa.

Gandhi said in 1908, "I have only one duty: to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together to serve them as a single community." Indian Opinion was an important tool in shaping Hindu-Muslim amity. When the Hindu Shravan (a holy Hindu month dedicated to Lord Shiva) and Muslim Ramzan months coincided in 1913, the newspaper was quick to point to the unique opportunity for Hindus and Muslims in some form mutually to cleanse themselves through their respective festivals.

Gandhi was careful to work with Muslim organizations like HIS. His religious and political world view allowed him to treat Muslims with respect. Muslims themselves felt pride in being able to come forward to support satyagraha. In some instances, this pride took on narrow ethnic proportions. Thus the Memons in Umsinga were proud that one of their numbers had gone to jail. Yet Konkans and Kanemias often came to blows in 1908 about their differences in spite of repeated calls for unity by Muslim leaders.

While Gandhi worked tirelessly to create good relationship with the Muslims in South Africa, his comments about aspects of the history of Muslims in a series of speeches he gave in 1905 to the Theosophical Society in Johannesburg created some uneasiness. Specifically the comments that upset many Muslims related to Gandhi's assertion that the Islamic tenet of equality had made a such favorable impact on "lower classes" of Hindus that hundred of thousands accepted Islam.

There was nothing transparently offensive about Gandhi's statement. Indeed, he portrayed all religions, including Islam, in a favorable light. He seemed to stress the common ancestry of Hindus and Muslims, if only to unite them in their political struggle.

Muslims took offense, however, at his implication that those Hindus who converted to Islam came primarily from the lower classes and castes. The Indian Opinion received many letters. All of them were likely not reproduced. Those that were published presented their arguments in well-constructed letters. A.E. Vawda pointed out that there were many converts who came from high classes and castes.

Gandhi did not deny that this was so. In very conciliatory language, he reassured his Muslim readers that he did not in any way seek to degrade Islam. Indeed, he repeated the positive aspects of Islam and argued that it was his intention to bring out the "special excellences" of all the religions so as to make a favorable impression on his White audience.

But he remained firm in his conclusion that the majority of the converts came from the lower classes. It was a historical fact, and he did not therefore think less of those who converted. On the contrary, it showed “excellence." After all, he did not make a "distinction between a Brahmin and a bhangi (scavenger)."

"Muslim" and Mahomed Seedat continued to be critical about Gandhi's position, however. They did not have much faith in the Encyclopedia Britannica and Hunter's Indian Empire from which Gandhi had drawn his information. Gandhi did not wish to prolong discussion on the subject although the question continued to dog him.

All of this must have been awkward for Gandhi. He was mindful of the communal ill-feelings that were being aroused by the British imperial government’s decision to partition Bengal.

Gandhi wished to make amends especially as he needed Muslim support for the Indian Opinion, which was then experiencing financial difficulties. The journal seemed to make an extra effort to report on events relating to Muslims in Durban. Thus there were regular reports of the Mahomedan Young Men's Society (MYMS) recently established, and the Mahomedan Association. Gandhi was particularly encouraging to the Muslim youth organization.

Despite his conciliatory efforts, the issue came up at a MYMS meeting towards the end of April 1906. Goolam Ahmed Loharia referred to Gandhi’s controversial statement. "We must not forget it," he advised. He seemed to imply that Muslims were not getting fair coverage in the journal, suggesting perhaps that all the correspondence on the subject had not been published by Indian Opinion.

There was a veiled suggestion that a separate newspaper run by Muslims was necessary. Gandhi asked for forgiveness without admitting to any wrong-doing, and appealed for amity between Hindus and Muslims in the interests of the Indian community as a whole.

As for the newspaper's financial crisis, Gandhi met with a group of individuals at a meeting chaired and hosted by Omar Hajee Amod Zaveri. Almost all of the people named were Muslims. He reassured those present that it was "necessary for every Indian to look upon the journal as belonging to him, not as something mine." He apparently got the support of those present.

Over a year later, Indian Opinion translated in Gujarati parts from Washington Irvine's Life of the Prophet.

Muslim readers were offended by the part that dealt with idol worship and superstition in Arabia before the Prophet's time. Some readers were also pained to read accounts of Mahomed's marriage in chapter 5. They suggested that the newspaper should stop serializing from the book. Indian Opinion heeded the advice.

The general feeling among Hindus and Muslims was for cooperation. When, for example, Bhana Jagjivana died in Dundee, Hindus and Muslims worked together to deal with the local town officials to process quickly a death certificate and crematorium arrangements.

There were, no doubt, many other similar instances when Hindus and Muslims worked together. But there were also underlying tensions. The colonial-born Hindus in Pietermaritzburg applied for licenses in part because they resented Muslim traders in the city. Indian Opinion deplored their action.

As we pointed out in chapter 3, the Indian Farmers' Association in 1909 boycotted the Grey Street Mosque Indian market because it was dominated by Muslim traders.

Gandhi's second London trip played an important role in crystalizing his views on Hindu-Muslim unity, and found expression in Hind Swaraj. Gandhi embraced Syed Ali Imam's idea expressed at the Bihar branch of the All-India Muslim, namely that where there were Muslim majorities in India, they should work to protect the rights of the Hindu minority, and vice versa. Gandhi said, "... it was in South Africa that the Indian nation was being formed."

In a letter to the Indian Review he said that the Hindu-Muslim problem was solved in South Africa. He gave some indication of what "Indian nation" meant for him when he spoke in London at the Dassera festival that celebrated the victory of Rama over Ravana. He said that Rama should be honored by all, Muslims and Hindus alike, because they all belonged to a country that produced such a hero. He expected Hindus and Muslims to accept each other to the point of embracing each other's religious icons.

The highest point of Hindu-Muslim amity was reached around the time Gopak K. Gokhale visited South Africa. Soon after the Indian nationalist leader's visit to South Africa was announced in January 1912, Gandhi wanted Hindus and Muslims to unite to honor him.

No one should raise differences between the two groups. Yet there was a tendency for groups to break up along religious and sectional lines. For example, Hindus gathered on August 14, 1912, at Victoria Theater to discuss how they should honor Gokhale.

When Gandhi spoke at the Kimberley banquet he wished people would work together as well as the machinery he had seen do. "What a happy family" they would be then.

At the end of October, committees came into place to welcome Gokhale. The Johannesburg committee had thirty-six members. Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer was the chairperson. Except for Sonja Schlesin, Gandhi's trusted assistant, all the others were Muslims and Hindus who were about even in numbers. Such committees came into being for Pietermaritzburg, Durban, and Cape Town.

The Durban Reception Committee consisted of ninety-six members. Gokhale arrived in Cape Town on October 26 and left via Johannesburg to Delagoa Bay on November 17. A special train took him all over South Africa. He visited Cape Town, Kimberley, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban.

Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer was perhaps the only Muslim leader to join Gandhi in his experimentation of communal harmony. He, his wife, and their two children came to stay in Phoenix. As president of HIS, Imam Bawazeer took a leading part in the political campaign. In addition, he led prayers at the Jumma Masjid in Johannesburg.

At Phoenix, he read from the Koran, and sang Gandhi's favorite composition, "Vaishnava Jana," except in place of "Vaishnava" he substituted "Muslim". The imam followed Gandhi to India and stayed at the Sabarmati ashram (commune). As Gandhi reported him saying, "I have put my faith in God. You do not know Haji Sahiba [his wife].

She will, of course, be ready to live where I live. She will also be ready to share whatever is my life. I have, therefore, decided to go to Phoenix. Nobody can say when the satyagraha struggle will end. But I can no longer return to my old business or any other. Like you, I have realized that a satyagrahi should give up love of money and wealth ..."

Some of the latent differences between Hindus and Muslims, apparent since 1908, would resurface in the last ten months of Gandhi's South African stay when he effected a settlement with Smuts. A group of his vocal critics insisted that he had no the right to speak on behalf of Muslims.

It is not clear how many local Hindus and Muslims shared the views expressed in Hind Swaraj that Hindus and Muslims could make up one praja (nation). He was drawing from his understanding of ancient India which had the capacity to accommodate all people of different languages and religions.

As Parel points out, Gandhi recognized the differences between Hindus and Muslims, but his "normative approach to them disposed him to consider them to be not serious enough to prevent the growth of a composite nationalism." Muslims did not oppose his ecumenical approach. Hence, he was confident that Muslims in India would make a "creative adaptation of Islam to the ethos of Indian civilization." He expected no less from Hindus.

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In 1921, there were 69 million Muslims in India, who made up one-fifth of the population. In Uttar Pradesh, Muslims are numerous in Lucknow, Amroha, Jaunpur, Bilgram, Rampur, and Fyzabad. Western India was the home of Bohras, majority of whom were of Hindu origin, Khojas, and Memons, all trading communities. Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-1928, Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1979.

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Chapter 5 Gandhi and Community Resources, 1906 to 1912

"And if my countrymen believe in God and the existence of the soul, then, while they may admit that their bodies belong to the State to be imprisoned and deported, their minds, their wills and their souls must remain free like the birds of the air, and are beyond the reach of the swiftest arrow." Gandhi, 1908

"In South Africa, I have only one duty: to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together to serve them as a single community." Gandhi, 1908

"A man's duty is to worship God. Telling one's beads is no symbol of that worship; neither is going to mosque or temple, nor is saying namaz or the gayatri. These things are all right as far as they go.... He alone truly adores God who finds his happiness is the happiness of others, speaks evil of none, does not waste his time in the pursuit of riches, does nothing immoral, who acquits himself with others as with a friend, does not fear the plague or any human being." Gandhi, 1911

In seeking to get Hindus and Muslims to work together closely, Gandhi drew upon the cultural and religious traditions of the two communities. He recognized how deeply both groups were invested in them, and urged them to grasp the "real significance" of their religion in sacrifice, duty, and fearlessness. Behavior that was not governed by these principles was cowardice.

Gandhi's repertoire was full of heroic imagery during the satyagraha campaign, and he used it especially during the periods when the campaign reached low points in 1908 and 1909 when he hoped to tap into the religious traditions of his supporters. By the end of 1910, there were only about 100 stalwarts who were prepared to make the kind of sacrifices Gandhi required.

He spent a great deal of time at the Tolstoy Farm reaffirming his beliefs, and possibly rethinking his strategy. By the middle of 1913, he was ready to move boldly to harness the raging dissent among the indentured Indians relating to their work conditions, and an unfair, unjust tax that sought to keep them locked into the system.

In this chapter, we pay particular attention to Gandhi's reliance on the cultural and religious orientations of Indians in South Africa. Community organizations rallied to his call for support, but he framed the discourse on his own terms. He gave lead and direction to it through the Indian Opinion, but always responded to opposition by revising his strategy.

Religion for Gandhi formed the basis of ethical behavior. When Gandhi translated parts of William MacIntyre's Ethical Religion (1889, 1905) into Gujarati for his readers, he used a quote that summed up his view, "So long as the seed of morality is not watered by religion, it cannot sprout."

“And if my countrymen believe in God and the existence of the soul, then, while they may admit that their bodies belong to the State to be imprisoned and deported, their minds, their wills and their souls must remain free like the birds of the air, and are beyond the reach of the swiftest arrow." He likened the struggle to Rama's battle with Ravana.

The cause of the Indians "was God's own cause." He was everywhere with them, and therefore there was no need to fear defeat. But "suffering" was essential for "purification" and humility, a process he explained by citing a Gujarati idiom, "The more the mango tree flourishes, the more it droops." Gandhi drew upon the bravery of Prophet Mahomed to illustrate the need for faith in God: when Mahomed and two others took refuge in a cave from hostile forces, the Prophet reminded one of them that there were not only three of them but four in the cave as God was also there with them.

Adherence to the truth was in itself a victory. Truth as God was for him the essence of all religions. Those who serve God never lose; that was divine law. Gandhi quoted from the Bhagavad Gita, "Without even mind for happiness and unhappiness, gain and loss, victory and defeat, and so join battles..."

After he was assaulted in January 1908, he wrote, "We fear death needlessly; " "... there is suffering only as long as the soul is in intimate union with the body." Some know only "physical strength as a way of expressing disapproval;" it is the “duty of the wise man to bear in suffering and patience." Socrates was a "great satyagrahi." In urging Indians to "cleanse" themselves "within and without,” they could, like Socrates, prove that truth was worth dying for.

"We shall discover that, if we do not fear our enemy and do not show temper with him, he becomes our friend, for he then serves us like one."

Satyagraha’s political and social implications were clear to him. Politically, it inspired Gandhi to think that imperial rule had to be based on equality without the taint of racial discrimination. The British constitution had taught him that every subject was to be treated equally regardless of race, culture, or religion. This was the only thing that bound the empire.

It was flawed in its implementation, and he did not hesitate to point out the weaknesses. He viewed the anti-Asian policies in South Africa, Australia, and Canada as a violation of that principle. Natal's anti-Indian bills in 1908 drew this response from Gandhi, "Many imperialists in England include India as part of the Imperial federation, and I do not know that it is possible to have at all a British empire, leaving India out, seeing that according to Lord Curzon, India is the dome of the Imperial edifice and that it is India which makes the Empire possible."

For Gandhi, South Africa and India were connected by empire. Hence, he never took his eyes off India while he was in South Africa. In December 1907, he warned the imperial government that it could not hold the affection of the people of India "at the point of a bayonet." And in 1908 he said, "Our vigilance will serve India well." There was bound to be indigenous response. England might have to choose between India and the self-governing White colonies. It is in this context that the discourse on swadeshi (patriotic self-reliance or promoting indigenous values) took place in South Africa.

Socially, Satyagraha implied working for the common good or sarvodaya. This encompassed duty and service. Gandhi was influenced by the work of Christian missionaries among the poor in India, Ruskin, and several others. Gandhi came to the conclusion that the "exclusive quest for physical and material happiness ... ha[d] no sanction in divine law."

He rejected the Western ideal of pursuing individual self-interest. It was a great "delusion" to make laws that disregarded their social impact. It was the duty of each -- soldier, physician, pastor, lawyer, and merchant -- "on due occasion to die [in service] for the people." Merchants should not only think about profit; they should do with less and work for the welfare of the people, bearing in mind that God lived in the home of the poor only. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few was undesirable.

Whites in South Africa were selfish, Gandhi said. They confused Western civilization with Christian progress, and in their selfishness they overlooked that the colored people were hard-working and that the Africans were here when they came. Indeed, Blacks were an asset for the empire. If Indians and Africans were to leave, he believed there would be a civil war among the Whites.

"If Jesus Christ came to Johannesburg and Pretoria and examined the hearts of General Botha and General Smuts and the others, he would notice something strange, something quite strange in the Christian spirit." Gandhi said, "Treat him [the Indian] as a real, live human being, and you will have no such thing as the Indian question in this country."

"... I refuse to believe in the infallibility of legislators," Gandhi said. "I do believe that they are not always guided by generous or even just sentiments in their dealings with unrepresented classes." He continued, "I venture to say that if passive resistance is generally accepted, it will once and for ever avoid the contingency of a terrible death struggle and bloodshed in the event (not impossible) of the natives [in South Africa] being exasperated by a stupid mistake of our legislators."

For Gandhi, duty and sacrifice were the greatest of virtues in an individual. So he lauded people like Thambi Naidoo whose bravery made up for those like Ramsunder, the first satyagrahi prisoner who failed to live up to his expectations. As Gandhi saw it, the “body of the community [was] healthy enough to expel impurities from the system."

Gujarati-speaking Indians would have understood well the idioms he used to describe people like Ramsunder: no one can divine what lies in the heart of a man or in the hollow of a drum; the weak man will not turn manly through pressure; and glass will not turn into diamond.

These basic ideas propelled much of his actions. An examination of events up to 1912 shows how strongly he relied for support on the Indian communities in their culturally diverse forms. There was ebb and flow to the support he received from the various community organizations. Often there were disagreements, and he used culturally and religiously significant symbols to appeal for unity.

There was strong support from the various Indian communities in 1907 and 1908. Gandhi's arrest early in 1908 sparked off wide protest activities among the Indians. The NIC held a mass meeting in Durban at which 1500 were present at the Grey Street Market Mosque. Numerous other organizations adopted resolutions of support; Indian-owned shops closed in show of support, and funds were collected for the Transvaal passive resisters. There were mass meetings in other places like Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, London, and cities in India.

The Surat Hindu Association in Durban adopted a resolution condemning his arrest. Other organizations that did the same were: East Rand Indians, Ladysmith Farmers Association, Durban Fruiterers Association,

Wakkerstroom's residents, Indians in Stellenbosch, and N. N. Patel on behalf of Klerksdorp's Indians; the Natal Memon Community fund contributed financially to the struggle; the Durban Fruiterers Association sponsored a play "Dage Hajrat" in Hindi at Victoria Theater, performed by the Easy Indian Theatrical Company, while the Ladysmith Islamic Society met on January 11 to collect funds for Transvaal passive resisters.

Gandhi was also to discover how quickly support could dissipate. He reached a compromise with Smuts in January 1908 without adequately preparing those who might disagree with him strategically. One individual assaulted him, while others questioned his leadership and considered inviting Mahomed Ali Jinnah, a Gujarati-speaking Muslim advocate from Mumbai who was then in London, to come to South Africa.

Indians needed to show courage like the Spartans who held the pass at Thermopylae. In idiomatic Gujarati, he explained that it was sheer ignorance to be impatient like the dog under a moving cart which thinks it is drawing the cart. Indian Opinion argued at length that voluntary registration gave Indians "honour and responsibility."

Gandhi saw the compromise as victory for truth. He used a Gujarati idiom to ask for unity: water cannot be cloven asunder by hitting it with a stick; similarly we cannot be separated from one another.

An imaginary dialogue in the Gujarati section explained the advantage of voluntary (marjyat) over compulsory (farjyat) registration. The stigma of registration by law had gone. The community was always in favor of voluntary registration; and besides, it would be harmful if on occasion the leaders were not allowed freedom of action. "Confidence in the leaders is a sign of unity, of generosity, and an unflagging spirit among the people."

In an open letter dated February 15, 1908, Gandhi pleaded for mittaas (sweetness) not khataas (bitterness) between Hindus and Muslims. He advised all Indians to give ten fingerprints. "I ask 'Khuda' to bless the community; to take it onto the path of Truth; and let my blood bind Hindu and Muslim." "What we have gained by satyagraha can be retained only through satyagraha."

But Gandhi continued to receive abusive letters. He regretted that Haji O. Ally could not trust him because he was a Hindu. Muslims, for their part, argued that the compromise had ruined them -- they were all traders while Hindus were mostly hawkers. They cabled complaints to SABIC in London, and some openly supported inviting Jinnah to South Africa.

One Muslim suggested that HIS and the Pretoria Anjuman should sponsor the Muslim advocate's visit. Gandhi countered by warning his "Muslim brethren against those who are out to set people at variance with each other by saying these things." "In South Africa, I have only one duty: to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together to serve them as a single community."

Leading Muslim leaders denied the split. They insisted that except for a few, "Mahomedans as a body have accepted it." That was the assertion by Muslim leaders like Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer, M.P. Fancy, Essop Ismail Mia, Syed Mustafa, Allibhai Akoojee, and M. E. Nagdee, all of whom were members of HIS and BIA.

Gandhi continued to defend the compromise, even invoking the authority of the Koran in the voluntary giving of finger impressions so long as it was not compulsory. "Bhago athwa jago" (run or awaken) wrote one Muslim in support of the compromise. However, the attack late in May on BIA's Essop Mia by two Pathans suggested that the fallout from the compromise was continuing.

In Natal, the Hindu-Muslim question surfaced in a different way. The split in the NIC came about because colonial-born Indians felt excluded from a Muslim-dominated NIC. Rumors of the split first surfaced in January 1907, and became a reality when a new body, the Natal Indian Political Union (NIPU), emerged a year later.

It had branches in Durban, Isipingo, Sea Cow Lake, Springfield, and Clare Estate. It sought to promote, as its leader P.S. Aiyar wrote, the welfare of the poorer classes of Indians in such matters as greater police protection against crime, ownership of firearms, abolition of the £3 tax, licenses, disfranchisement, and exclusion from civil service jobs.

Even as Indian Opinion proclaimed the success of voluntary registration,27 there were signs that the compromise would not hold. By the end of May 1908, the breach became a reality. The Indian leaders publicly called for the return of their certificates. Gandhi said in an open letter that he felt no shame in asking them to resume the struggle because he did not betray the cause.

Those who blamed him, if they were sincere, should join satyagraha; those who supported him must redouble their efforts. He said, "... the more the other side attempts foul play, the better to advantage will our truth be set off." Mass meetings took place. One was under HIS's auspices in Johannesburg. Resolutions were adopted. Rustenberg's United Assembly called for resumption of the struggle.

In Cape Town, E. Noordien, president of the SAIA (South African Indian Association) who had been actively seeking to bring local Indians together on immigration and trade issues, organized a meeting of several bodies on June 24 to call for support in the Transvaal fight.

Smuts and Botha set out to foment division by suggesting that Muslims were opposed to passive resistance. The BIA was quick to respond by holding a mass meeting. No, said the leaders, Hindus and Muslims were not divided. BIA President Cachalia countered the charge that passive resistance was agitating the "native minds." On the contrary, he said, Satyagraha was about self-control and patient suffering. If Blacks were unhappy, it was the result of intolerable injustice as in the case of the 1906 Zulu rebellion.

The measure of support for satyagraha for the six-month period after the campaign was resumed can be found in the telegrams that were received from places like Ventersdorp, Warmbaths, Volksrust, Vereeniniging, Pietersburg, Lydenberg, Roodepoort, Standerton, Lichtenberg, Nylstroom, Middleburg, Pretoria, Christiana, Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Zeerust, Fortune, Boksburg, Heidelberg, Durban, Verulam, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Kimberly, and even Rhodesian towns.

Indian shops closed to show support. The NIC donated £100, some of it coming from proceeds of a play performed (“Dage Hajrat no khel”) by the Grand Theatrical company.

Other bodies that showed support were the Durban Fruiterers Indian Association at a meeting attended by 500 people, the Cape Town British India League, and Ladysmith’s Indians.

After the certificates were burned at the famous mass meeting at Hamidia mosque, Indian organizations began preparing for the resumption of the campaign. The South African Indian Association in Cape Town, NIC, HIS, and the Cape Indian League organized mass meetings to show support. The Tamil community showed great tenacity. In Durban, Gandhi addressed an NIC gathering of 900 to 1000 people on September 26.

On his return to Johannesburg, Gandhi was arrested along with fifteen others. Prisoner Gandhi called himself the "happiest man in the Transvaal" as he dug roads in Johannesburg's Market Square. He was released in December after seventy days in prison at Volksrust. En route to Johannesburg, he was greeted by Indians in Standerton, Heidelberg, and Germiston.

Several hundred people enthusiastically received him at the Johannesburg station. From there he was carried shoulder high to the horse-driven cab that took him to the Hamidia mosque, where a much larger crowd of supporters was waiting for him. Some of them sang "Vande Materam."

Important political developments within South Africa overshadowed the campaign. Britain was encouraging the unification of the four colonies. Indians had been following the deliberations for closer union since 1908. They rightly saw it as a consolidation of White interests, and as such the issues that concerned them were sidelined. This protection of White interests was seen as part of the same anti-Asian phenomenon then prevailing in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Indian Opinion commented on the impending Union of South Africa Draft Act. It was "a frank declaration of the White South African policy ... to keep the native, the coloured, and the Asiatic races in bondage if they cannot be exterminated or expelled." It noted one nonracial response to these events. A meeting took place in Kimberley among Africans, Indians, Coloreds, and Malays to unite. It decided to send delegates to the African conference planned in Bloemfontein.

Under the circumstances, Gandhi’s endeavors to highlight the campaign’s importance fell on deaf ears in official circles.Rumors of the tensions between some Muslim traders and the mostly Hindu hawkers kept surfacing. The Star reported that Pathans, unhappy with BIA leadership, had broken away.

They did not like the picket system. A person writing to the Star called the picket volunteers "bullies," given to making "derogatory remarks about our religion and pass[ing] insulting remarks against our Prophet."

The campaign was losing steam early in 1909, and newspapers like the Star, Rand Daily Mail, and the Sunday Times were quick to point this out. Increasingly, Gandhi called for the need to make sacrifices. He said, "No religion believes it possible to worship God and Mammon at the same time."

Devotion to God required giving up wealth, he continued. He hoped that the battle could be widened to include Natal. The January 23 issue of Indian Opinion suggested that in Natal a passive resistance body should be formed to oppose the payment of the £3 tax.

In March and April of 1909, the BIA and individuals connected to the movement hoped to rally the Indians. They held a series of mass meetings and honored the prisoners when they were released. God's name was invoked; there was no honor, as Dildar Khan suggested, to walk around with certificates "like Kaffirs."

The support of leading Jewish individuals was strong. The Indian Opinion published poems in Gujarati and Urdu glorifying those who were making sacrifices. A Muslim writer urged Indians to have faith in God in the way Ebrahim had faith when he jumped into fire on the advice of the angel Gabriel. Mahomed Khan wrote to say that he went to jail rather than follow the advice of his parents who had ordered him to flee to India; and fourteen-year old Mohanlal Manjee Ghelani from Johannesburg informed the readers about his father's arrest.

When Botha claimed that the Indians were content with the state of affairs, BIA organized a response on April 11. Some 1500 delegates from all parts of the Transvaal met to refute the statement. While the meeting was intended to show Indian support, it also revealed the weakness of the movement. For example, Ali Mahomed Khamissa admitted that as a trustee of a company, his first duty was to look after his business interests, and he had therefore registered. Indians in positions of leadership secretly applied for duplicates; traders especially were guilty of this.

A group of seventy individuals in Standerton wrote to say that they had taken out duplicate certificates although they fully sympathized with the campaign. It was not because of weakness but because of personal and business reasons, and they hoped to rejoin when circumstances were different. And a supporter like Advocate James Godfrey had applied for a permit to be sent to him at the height of the campaign.

Freed on May 24, 1909, Gandhi returned to Johannesburg to a hero's welcome. Beyond the warm reception he got, he was troubled by the absence of strong commitment, especially on the part of the merchants who were more concerned about their material interests.

In "Who Can be a Satyagrahi," he spelled out that commitment implied giving up even family attachment if this became necessary. He used the Gujarati idiom he that a supporter could not have one foot in curd and the other in milk; words should match action; individuals could not have the name of Rama on their lips and carry a dagger under their arm.

In another article, "Who Can Go to Jail," he listed six conditions that were essential to be a satyagrahi: non-addiction to alcohol or tobacco, disciplined body, disregard for comfort, simple diet, humility, and patience. He drew upon heroic religious figures like Prahlad, Sudhanva, Nala-Damayanti, and Harischandra to illustrate the idea of selfless sacrifice. Gandhi stressed "soul force" as the key ingredient of the campaign.

Gandhi, however, realized that leaders in the BIA and HIS were not prepared to make these kinds of sacrifices. A British Indian Conciliation Committee was set up to reach some kind of settlement. At the meeting in June 6, 1909, at which Gandhi was present, Habib Motan criticized Gandhi for not having the compromise with Smuts in writing. He also resented the label "blacklegs" for people who refused to go to jail.

Motan accused Indian Opinion of often publishing "tendentious articles and reports." Somebody like Khanderia, he said, did not go to jail, but he encouraged others to do so. Hajee O. Ally was also critical of Gandhi.

Since the passive resistance campaign had failed to yield the desired results, BIA leadership adopted a more conciliatory approach, and fell back on organizing deputations. Three of them came from among its own ranks; the fourth was from Natal. That the Natal deputation should happen at the same time suggests that there were individuals who also had doubts about passive resistance.

The first of the deputations was the British Indian Conciliation Committee. George Godfrey, Gussub Ebrahim Gardee, Habib Motan, Ali Mohamed, Khamissa, S. V. Thomas, H.O. Ally, Abdul Ganie, and Adam Desai met Smuts at the end of June 1909, but had no success getting the law repealed. Two other deputations were named at a BIA meeting to proceed to England and India. The first consisted of Habib and Gandhi; two others who had been named, Cachalia and Chettiar, were jailed by the Transvaal government. The second was made up of Polak after three others, Nadir Ardeshir Cama, Ebrahim Saleji Coovadia, and Gopal Naidoo, were arrested and thus prevented from going.

The Natal deputation to England consisted of M. C. Anglia, Amod Bhayat, Hoosen Mahomed Badat, and Abdul Kadir who was already in England.

Unfortunately for them, the deputations to London came about the time Sir Curzon Wylie was murdered by an Indian militant. Many in the British government were suspicious of the Indian delegates even though Gandhi and local Indian groups such as BIA, Ved Dharma Sabha in Pietermaritzburg, and Durban Hindu Temple condemned the assassination. Gandhi was personally not very hopeful of achieving any success. He was "disgusted" by the behavior of the so-called “big men.”

“All such efforts are no better than pounding chaff,” because those in power showed "little inclination to do justice." He had even less hope for the Natal deputation since it had come too late to raise a “very old” issue, namely trade. Gandhi wrote after September 3, 1909, "The more I observe things, the more I realize that deputations, petitions, etc., are all in vain if there are no real sanctions behind them." He quoted Meerabhen's song to steel himself about the obstacles ahead. At the same time his disillusionment with the West had deepened, "... unless its whole machinery is thrown overboard, people will destroy themselves like so many moths."

Such changes in his thinking are reflected in Hind Swaraj which Gandhi wrote in Gujarati on board the Kildonan Castle between November 13 and 22, 1909, on his return trip from England to South Africa. At the core of the pamphlet, as discussed earlier, was the idea that true self-rule or self-control required that modern civilization’s values had to be discarded.

The Polak deputation to India was successful. Thanks to the support of Gopal K. Gokhale,56 the leading Indian nationalist within the INC who was also a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council from 1902, Polak was able to excite great interest and support in India for the struggle in South Africa. Chhaganlal Gandhi who comanaged the press at Phoenix joined at some stage to help. Local and national politicians in such places as Mumbai, Surat, Chennai (Madras), Ahmedabad, Poona, Navsari, Kholvad, and Kathor organized meetings. In Kathor, the Mehfil Ronkul Islam helped to organize the meeting. Polak also addressed gatherings in Lucknow, Kanpur, and Agra.

In Lahore he addressed the INC. C. R. Naidu from Durban speaking as a special delegate representing colonial-born Indians in South Africa described the lives of Indians "hell upon earth." In his presentation, Latchman Panday, who had served with Gandhi in the Ambulance Corps during the South African War (1899-1902), focused on the Natal Government's "deliberate attempt to crush Indian education out of existence."

Polak's visit also coincided with the widespread opposition to the indentured labor system led by Gokhale. And Mir Alam Khan, who had reconciled with Gandhi after assaulting him, and who had been deported as a satyagrahi, worked actively to speak against South Africa's racial policies when he was in India. He wrote articles in newspapers and appeared at the Anjuman Islam in Lahore to relate first hand his own experiences. Polak was widely honored when he returned to South Africa after his fifteen-month stay in India.

With about 100 passive resisters in jail at Diepkloof by January 1910 and 36 more awaiting deportation, Gandhi's strategy was to keep the movement alive symbolically. He hand-picked new resisters to court arrest by crossing into the Transvaal from Natal. Bodies such as BIA, TBS, NIC, KAM, DIS, Indian Farmers Association, Ved Dharma Sabha in Johannesburg and Durban routinely organized mass meetings to pass resolutions about a variety of emotive issues.

One such issue was the death of Naryansamy, a thirty-year old returning deportee who was not allowed to land in Durban, Port Elizabeth, or Cape Town. He never got off the boat, and died as it headed back to India via Delagoa Bay. Another revolved around the statement by Johannesburg's Police Superintendent Vernon who said that it was a White man's duty to hunt Indians out of the country. A third issue was the refusal by prison authorities to allow Muslim prisoners special arrangement during the fasting month of Ramadan.

A fourth issue related to Rambhabai Sodha who was arrested when she crossed the Natal border to join her passive resister husband who had been in jail for eighteen months. She had no means of supporting herself and planned to live on Tolstoy Farm where others like her were being maintained from the Passive Resistance Fund.

The case involving the residency rights of A. E. Chotabhai's sixteen-year old son, Mahomed, who was a legal resident of the Transvaal, got a great deal of coverage because of its ominous implication, namely that even individuals with valid registration certificates could be deemed illegal under the 1908 law. Indian Opinion kept up a steady stream of heroic poems and songs by people like Ambaram Maharaj and Sheik Mehtab, while also highlighting the jail experiences of passive resisters.

While most Indians were ambivalent about the newly created Union of South Africa, various groups were probing the new system to see what rights and privileges they could negotiate for the Indians. Such was the case of a Pietermaritzburg deputation consisting of local leaders who went to see the provincial administrator on such issues as care for the aged, £3 tax on women, education, technical training, interprovincial restrictions, uniform immigration requirements, indentured working conditions, railway travel conditions (about "herding" them with "raw natives"), trade licenses, firearm restrictions, liquor laws, removal of farm land ownership restrictions, adequately trained court interpreters, and the exclusion Indian children from the Union Day celebration.

A second deputation consisting of some of the same people saw the mayor to raise issues such as municipal franchise, need for public lighting, street repair, the provision of playground and sports facilities, the city's nonhiring of Indians, and so on.

The lack of enthusiasm for pushing on with the campaign was evident. In April 1911, Smuts as Minister of the Interior introduced a new immigration bill. A literacy test was proposed without reference to race, but the bill was ambiguous on domicile rights. While it was to replace Act 2 of 1907, the proposed new law did not spell out the rights of Indian minors which the old law had done.

Since the bill had no chance of passage in the early 1911 session, it was to be re-introduced in the parliamentary session in 1912. Gandhi saw in the bill some effort to accommodate campaign demands, and believed that a dialogue could resolve some of the issues by the time the bill was reintroduced. He wrote to Smuts on April 19, 1912, asking for a truce. Gandhi met Smuts in Cape Town and returned to Johannesburg on April 26 where he persuaded Indian political bodies to agree to suspension of the campaign.

The second compromise was scrutinized by BIA leaders in a meeting marked by “heated discussion.” Although there were five dissenters, most of those present accepted the compromise.

With the compromise in place, Gandhi hoped to tap into the community’s connection with India. Most Indian leaders were disillusioned by the British government's support of White rule, but they retained faith in imperial politics. Gandhi’s own faith in the empire was sustained by those who held the liberal view that imperial interests bound Indians and Whites as equals. Joseph Doke (1861-1913) is illustrative of the liberal White South African view.

As Gandhi’s first biographer, Doke’s persective appealed to those in the colonies whose parochial views threatened the larger imperial interests. He stressed Gandhi’s refined character, his education, culture, and unfailing courtesy as a fine example of the liberal impact of empire. The subtitle of Doke’s book, An Indian Patriot, did not specify a country.

Gandhi hoped to invite Gokhale to South Africa as part of his strategy to get India more directly involved in deliberations in South Africa. As we saw earlier, Gokhale was a strong supporter of the rights of South Africa Indians. He represented India symbolically as the champion of Indian rights.

The visit announced in January 1912 and scheduled for the second half of 1912, was not official, but it had the blessing of the Government of India. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, born in 1866, rose quickly to serve in important administrative positions. In 1895, he became the secretary of the Mumbai Provincial Council. Two years later, he was one of the secretaries of the INC, and in 1905 its president. In 1900-1, he was elected to the Mumbai Legislative Council.

He became an influential member of the Imperial Legislative Council from 1902. The Viceroy bestowed the CIE on him. As a reformer, he hoped to break down caste distinctions among Indians, and promote pure and selfless forms of livelihoods through the Servants of India Society that he had founded in 1905.

The committees to welcome Gokhale came into place by October 1912. He arrived in Cape Town on October 26 and left from Johannesburg for Delagoa Bay on November 17. A special state railway saloon took him all over South Africa. He visited Cape Town, Kimberley, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban. He was honored with official addresses at each of the places he visited.

It was not unusual for one address to have multiple sponsors across the language, religious, and cultural diversity of South Africa’s Indians. While in Natal, Gokhale was greeted on November 9 from his moving car by over 2500 people who had assembled at Albert Park, among them many school children.

The next morning, which happened to be a Sunday, he was met at the Lord's sports ground by about 2000 ex-indentured Indians. He heard complaints from 50 to 60 individuals about the £3 tax and other issues. Gokhale visited St Aidan's College, made a trip to Isipingo where he met with and heard the problems of indentured Indians, drove to Mt. Edgecombe with Gandhi and Kallenbach where 10,000 indentured Indians were assembled, went to Phoenix and visited the Ohlange Institute where he talked at length with John Dube.

Throughout the tour, Gokhale argued for equality in the empire. He said that White fears about being swamped by Indian immigrants were not justified since no Indian leader wanted this to happen. Indeed, he expected Whites to be dominant in South Africa. But if Whites insisted on reducing Indians and other Blacks to “only hewers of wood and drawers of waters,” then England would find it hard to hold India. South Africa’s Indians could not go back to India.

"Any policy which preferred the interest of one section at the expense of another, however convenient it might be temporarily to do otherwise, if it became a permanent policy, would lead to disaster," he warned.

The Gokhale tour established Gandhi's name in India. Henry Polak’s endeavors in India from mid-November 1911 to August 1912 as a BIA representative helped to make Gandhi known. Doke's biography on him had appeared in 1909 and was likely circulated among influential individuals. P. J. Mehta had also produced biography on Gandhi. Indian nationalists were becoming alive to action against South Africa, and shortly after Gokhale returned to India, some newspapers suggested that the country should use its consumer power to get England’s attention.

Gandhi's strategy of using public opinion in India had succeeded, and it would stand him in good stead in 1913 and 1914. In South Africa, his reliance on the cultural and religious resources of Indians had not been enough to make up for the divisions in the movement. He would continue to use such resources in 1913 but embarked upon a course that would see the kind of mass participation that had escaped him until then.

References

Indian Opinion (IO), 1/5/1907, 2/2/1907; Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG), vol. 6, p. 313. He discounted four other terms, namely pratyupaya, kashtadhin vartam, dridha pratipaksha, and satyanadar, IO 3/7/1908.

IO 3/7/1908. The longest chapter in Satyagraha in South Africa, published in 1928, was on the opposition to the compromise.

NIPU's other leading members were: Bernard Gabriel, S. E. Dahnookdharie, V. Lawrence, L. Gabriel, A. D. Pillay, H. J. Joshi, R. Lungunberthy, Surendrai B. Medh, J. M. Francis, T. C. Moodley, M. Bethasee Maharaj, Roopnarain Singh, Lutchman Panday, K. R. Nayanah, U. M. Shelat, R. Bughwan, Bryan Gabriel, A. Christopher, D. Stephens,

Kaisavaloo, M. K. Patel, Makanji Bros, John L. Roberts, G. M. Desai, Seunaik Pundith, S. N. Richards, S. Gareeb Panday, Ibid., 3/21/1908, 4/4/1908, 4/11/1908, 4/25/1908

In London those who spoke in support at a Caxton Hall meeting were: Mancherjee Bhownagree, Lala Rajpat Rai, J. M. Parikh, Bipin Chandra Pal, G. S. Savakar, and G. S. Khaparde. Ibid.,5/9/1908, 6/20/1908, 6/27/1908, 8/15/1908, 8/22/1908, 9/19/1908

Among those present were: H. I. Joshi, M. N. Goshalia, S. B. Medh. S. J. Randeria, M. P. Killvala, U. M. Shelat, Omar Osman, Ebrahim Hoosen, Moosa Ahmed, Suliman Ebrahim, Valli Amojee (hawker), Kajee Kalamia Dadamia (a fruit agent), Diar Mawjee, Vallabh Bhula, Ismail Essop (salesman), Makan Vallabh, and Moolji Ooka. Ooka was a fruiterer who had been in Pietersburg, Johannesburg, and had a Dutch registration certificate. These individuals took an active part in the resumption of the struggle. Ibid., 8/22/1908, 8/29/1908.

Some of the others arrested were Kothari, Sodha, Mehta, Talwantsing, Dulabh, Naidoo, Nath, Lala, Rantanji, Makan, Mulji, Vartachalan, and Jogi. Ibid., 9/12/1908, 10/3/1908, 10/10/1908, 10/17/1908.
Gandhi and his Jewish friends enriched themselves through selective sharing. He and they shared an immigrant status, and found common bonds in their search for identity according to Margaret Chatterjee, Gandhi and His Jewish Friends, London: Macmillan, 1992. Some other White supporters were William Hosken, Chas Phillips, J. W. Matthews, A. Cartwright, Edward Dallow, G. Isaac, William Morris Vogel, Rev John Howard, M. Harris, David Pollock, C. E. Nelson, Adv Leslie Blackwell, H. Kallenbach, Rev Joseph Doke, Rev Phillips, Rev Canoner Berry, Podlashuk and Kaplan, E. C. Griffin, Walter Evans, Lettmann and Brown, Thomas Perry, Frank Stokes, Digby M. Berry, David Hunter, Arthur D. Home, C. H. Leon, T. R Haddon, A. W. Baker, C. B. Hamilton, Robert Sutherland, W. Kimberley, A. Beetles, M. Alexander. See IO 2/6/1909, 3/6/1909, 3/27/1909, 6/12/1909, 6/19/1909, 4/3/1909.

It is not clear whether Hindu-Muslim tensions had any part in Habib Motan's criticism of Gandhi. In a letter Gandhi wrote to him, Motan had asked Gandhi's position on a Muslim being appointed to the Viceroy's Council as a representative of the Muslim League. Gandhi response was typical, he made no distinction between Muslims and Hindus and he would gladly support such a move in the interest of unity. IO 6/26/1909, Sushila Nayar, Mahatama Gandhi: Satyagraha at Work, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1989, pp. 415-16. See also IO 6/12/1909.

Cama was born in 1870 in Mumbai, Coovadia was born in 1878 in Surat District, and Naidoo was born in 1873 in Tanjore District. Ibid.,6/19/1909, 6/26/1909, 7/3/1909, 7/10/1909, 7/24/1909. On board the ship that took him to London, Gandhi read Kasssul Ambia in which Azazil found that even after 600,000 years of worship, he would fail if even once he did not bow before God. So it is with the satyagrahis, he argued. IO 9/18/1909. CWMG, vol. 9, pp. 364-65; IO 8/7/1909, CWMG, vol. 9, pp. 276-79.

Gokhale alone collected over £6666 for the Passive Resistance Fund. A Mumbai Funds Committee included the Aga Khan, R. J. Tata, and Jehangir Bomanjee Petit. Ratan J. Tata sent another Rs 25,000 in 1910. Of the contribution received from India, two-fifths came from Tata. The Madras Presidency contributed Rs 8334 towards the fund. The Maharaja of Mysore donated Rs 2000. IO 2/12/1910, 6/4/1910, 9/3/1910, 5/7/1910, 8/27/1910,.

Of the six educated Indians who entered the Transvaal from Natal on December 7, 1909, three were Christians, namely Joseph Royeppen a barrister-at-law who had also completed a B.A. degree at Cambridge; Samuel Joseph who was the headmaster of an Indian school at Seaview near Durban; and David Andrew who was a clerk and an interpreter. The other three were Abdul Gafur Fajander, acting chairman of BIA, Ramlal Singh, a clerk, and Gandhi's 17 year old son Manilal. Twelve new border crossing passive resisters left the Durban station on March 11, 1910. The Tamil Benefit Society honored Joseph Royeppen, David Andrew, and Samuel Joseph at a special meeting. Those present were V. Chettiar (president), Gandhi, K. K. Samy, the Dokes and their daughter, Kallenbach, Sonja Schlesin, Issac, Williams, Cachalia, Moosa Bhigjee, Maimee, Ebrahim Coovadia, Suj, Shelat, Mulji Patel, and others. The passive resisters were Kaji Dadamian, Subramaney Achary from Durban, Ramhory, (26, ex-teacher who was a former Transavaal resident), Pragji Khandubhai (25, bookkeeper), Tulsi Jutha Soni (30, former Transvaal resident), Essop Moosa Kolia (35), Kara Nanji Soni (35), Mahabeer Ramden (22), Barjor Sing (20), Mahomed Ebrahim (47), Govindsamy Tommy (22), and Manikum Pillay (17). Bhana Parshotam, an influential community leader, invited people to his home in Tollgate Road to honor about 50 satygrahis. Among his guests were Swami Shankeranand and NIC's Dawad Mahomed. Ibid.,1/1/1910, 1/15/1910, 1/29/1910, 3/5/1910.

Chotabhai's son had come to South Africa as a minor on his father's certificate. When the son turned sixteen, he applied for registration, but he was refused under the 1908 law and was deemed an illegal person. The family appealed all the way to the Transvaal division of the Supreme Court of South Africa. A split vote went against Chotabhai. Chotabhai prevailed at the Appellate Court level, however. Ibid., 11/19/1910, 1/28/1911.

Of the fifty-six Indians, only four were women. Forty-five were South Indians. Three were Muslims, and eight were Christians. There were a few traders or shopkeepers, but most were hawkers, laundrymen, store assistants, drivers, cooks or waiters, cigar-makers, bottle sellers, or barbers. One was a student. The oldest was Latchgadu, a gardener over fifty, and the youngest was fourteen. The majority fell between the ages of seventeen and forty. In the group of twenty-four additional names were released, eight were Christian Indians and eleven had South Indian names. Only one was a Muslim. Two were Gujaratis, and two were Bhojpuri-speakers. The oldest was sixty and the youngest was sixteen. One, Francis Nyanah, was a cartage contractor, and another, Aaron John, was a teacher. Ibid.,4/16/1910, 7/10/1909, 7/17/1909, 8/6/1910, 4/2/1910, 7/2/1910, 8/6/1910, 8/13/1910, 9/3/1910, 9/17/1910, 11/5/1910, 12/3/1910, 12/10/1910.

The first deputation consisted of John L. Roberts, C. A. F. Peters, T. M. Naicker, R. G. M. Naidoo, and M. Thomas. In addition to these five, the second group had three more

delegates, namely Charlie Nulliah, R. N. Moodley, and Baboo Mahomed. Ibid.,2/26/1910, 6/4/1910, 6/11/1910, 8/13/1910, 7/9/1910.

At a KAM meeting Swami Shankeranand suggested a compromise solution which displeased Gandhi. Ibid.,11/19/1910, 12/17/1910, 10/22/1910, 12/10/1910, 3/19/1910, 7/2/1910, 4/24/1911, 3/18/1911, 4/8/1911, 4/1/1911; CWMG, vol. 10, pp. 339-40, 82-84, and vol. 11, pp. 31-34.

In terms of the settlement, Act 2 of 1907 was to be repealed, and the proposed new law was to restore legal equality to allow six educated Indians to enter the Transvaal, seven educated Indians to settle in the province, and recognize residence for those passive resisters who had lost it (180 Indians and 30 Chinese). The settlement agreed to discharge passive resisters still in jail, and release Mrs. Sodha. The six educated Indians were Sodha, Royeppen, Sorabjee, Medh, Desai, and Shelat. IO 4/29/1911, 6/3/1911; CWMG, vol. 11, pp. 99-104.

IO 7/5/1913, 9/6/1913, 11/12/1913, 12/17/1913, 12/31/1913. Here I am borrowing liberally from James D. Hunt's book, Gandhi and the Nonconformists: Encounters in South Africa, New Delhi: Promilla & Co., 1986, pp. 116-17; Joseph J. Doke, M. K. Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa, 1909.

Gokhale was born in Kohlapur, obtained a BA degree at Elphinstone College in Mumbai, and went on to Deccan College, Pune, in 1884. He was admitted to the Deccan Education Society after his degree. Thereafter, he taught English literature, mathematics at Ferguson College, and served as chair of History and Political Economy. In 1887, Gokhale became the editor of Quarterly Journal and Sudharak. In 1897, he went to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission. CIE stands for Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire. IO 1/6/1912, 8/13/1912, 8/14/1912, 11/9/1912, 8/24/1912; CWMG, vol. 11, pp. 338-40.

The committees were carefully balanced between Hindus and Muslims. The Johannesburg committee of thirty-six members was chaired by Imam A. K. Bawazeer. The Durban Reception Committee consisted of ninety-six members. Such committees also came into being in Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town, and many other towns and cities in South Africa. IO 9/14/1912, 8/31/1912, 9/21/1912, 9/28/1912, 9/21/1912.

The addresses contained the signatures of the people who presented them. Cape Town's addresses were by British Indian Committee, Kokney Moslem League, United Hindu Association, Habibia Moslem Society, Mizan of Afghan, Kanamia Anjuman Islam, Mahtab-i-Ikhias, and Madrass Association. In Johannesburg, there were six addresses by BIA, HIS, Johannesburg Hindus, Tamil Benefit Sociaty, Patidar Association, and Indians in Pietersburg. In Pretoria, the address was given by Arya Dharma Sabha. In Durban, the groups were Indian Reception Committee, Durban Indian Women, Colonial-born Indians, Mahomedan Committee, Brahman Mandal, Mahomedan Mastik Society, Ottoman Cricket Club, South Coast Indians, New Guelderland Indians, Hindi Sabha, Maharastrians, and Zorastrian Anjuman. Others addresses were from Klerksdorp,

Bloemhof, Potchefstroom, Krugersdorp, and Pietersburg. In Natal the messages sent to Gokhale were from Natal Gokhale Reception Committee, Pietermaritzburg Reception Committee, Durban Ajuman Islam, CBIA, Natal Zoroastrian Anjuman, Roman Catholic Indians, NIC, Mafile Osmania Cricket Club, Surat Hindu Association, Kathiawad Arya Mandal, Mahomedan Mastik Society, Durban Indian Society, Isipingo, Tongaat, Verulam Indian Communities, and Mahomedan Debating Society in Dundee.

The crowds came from St Aidans College, Cato Manor, Clare Estate, Isipingo, Sea View, Stella Hill, Springfiled, St. Anthony's, South Coast Junction, Newlands, Verulam, and Tongaat.

P.J. Mehta, M. K. Gandhi and the South African Indian Problem, Madras: G. A. Natesan & Co., 1911, 96 pages. A biography written by R. N. Iyer was not available.

Chapter 6 The Satyagraha Campaign, 1913 to 1914

"Singly, he will be dangerous, but in conjunction with others, he will do immense good. We therefore want another leader to work with Mr. Gandhi." Leo R. Gopaul, 1913

Much happened between the second compromise in April 1911 and the resumption of the campaign exactly two years later. There was growing anti-Indianism in the form of Hertzogism, so called after Minister of Justice J.B.M. Hertzog (1910-12) declared his intention to class Indians with Africans. The Union government tightened immigration of Indians into South Africa.

What was earlier confined to each of the state governments became a nationally coordinated policy after 1910. Gandhi needed issues that could galvanize the majority of Indians behind his faltering campaign. His use of cultural and religious symbols to get the support of the Indians had some success, and he would continue to use them. But he needed to go beyond such a strategy if he was going to make any headway with the campaign.

In Natal, he could not get past NIC conservatives who became increasingly critical about passive resistance while the emergent non-merchant class of professionals did not trust his motives. If he was to succeed, he needed to get around them. When the campaign was resumed in April 1913, Gandhi was not sure of how things would develop. This chapter explores some of the dramatic developments that moved thousands of Indians to support Gandhi by November 1913.

He could not have predicted these developments, but his creative use of opportunities as they arose reflected his boldness and maturity as a leader of the masses.

The first of the two issues that helped to revive the satyagraha campaign came in March 1913 when the Supreme Court handed down a judgment on the legal status of Indian marriages. The court’s decision came in the wake of the immigration authorities' refusal to allow Hassen Essop's wife to land in 1912 because she did not satisfy the requirements of a legal spouse.

In agreeing with the decision, Justice Searle ignored the practice in India that did not require Hassen Essop to register his marriage before an officer of the law. Even as these events were unfolding, the Natal Supreme Court ruled that Hindu and Muslim marriages were not "monogamous." Smuts inflamed Indian feelings further by stating that divorce was easily achieved by Muslim men who simply had to say "voetsek" (“get lost”) to their wives.

Gandhi saw an opportunity to connect the Searle decision with the campaign when it was renewed. He argued that the legal validity of marriages conducted according to Muslim and Hindu rites was an existing right.

If the imperial authorities in India accepted such marriages as valid, South Africa was unreasonable in denying their legitimacy. Gandhi used cultural and religious symbols as he requested "every Anjuman, every Association, and every Dharm Sabha" to call upon the government to make the necessary adjustment to the Immigration bill to accommodate Hindu and Muslim marriages.

The Indian response was strong. Cachalia said at a BIA mass meeting that the court's decision devalued Hindu and Muslim religious institutions and struck at the heart of the Indian family. The Koran required all Muslims to protect their women, said a maulvi. The Tamil Benefit Society argued that the decision was contrary to the sanctity of marriages as enshrined in the Vedas and must be resisted to preserve Hindu honor. To show its solidarity with Muslims, the Natal Brahaman Mandal argued that polygamy was also allowed in the Hindu religion.

Pragji Khandu Desai saw the decision as an attack on Hinduism, intended indirectly to promote Christianity. In spite of the emotional outpouring, this issue on its own was not sufficient to arouse the majority of Indians.

The second issue did. The £3 tax was a long-standing issue that Gandhi could have embraced as a matter of principle earlier but did not. A law passed in 1895 by the Natal legislature required all indenture-expired Indians over the age of sixteen to pay the tax with the purpose of keeping the contract laborers locked into the system. This created great hardship on freed Indian families after the law went into effect in 1901.

At the same time, it drew attention to the conditions under which indentured Indians labored. Why was Gandhi slow in embracing the one issue that was of serious concern to these Indians, and then only after circumstances thrust it on him?

He favored the abolition of the tax. But he was not prepared in November 1911 to advise its non-payment. He wanted instead, as he wrote to A. H. West on November 27, 1911, the NIC to send a petition to Natal’s prime minister signed by at least 15,000 Indians. There should be a mass meeting. If parliament rejected the petition, Gandhi continued, an appeal should be made to the Imperial Government. The support of other organizations in South Africa should be procured. If all of this did not work, then only should people refuse to pay the tax.

“This thing cannot be taken up haphazard,” he warned. Gandhi wrote again from Johannesburg on December 4, asking West to take the lead in initiating and organizing the £3 tax issue with people because he was then not in a “position to feel the pulse of the community there [Natal].” Gandhi warned West not to take steps that in any way “clash[ed] with what Aiyar [was] doing.”

Gandhi wrote again on December 8 asking West to collect statistics “in what cases the tax had been remitted.” “It seems to me,” Gandhi concluded “that it is possible perhaps to get Europeans in Natal to sign a petition for its repeal, and, if we can get an influentially signed document, we can certainly bring about repeal during the forthcoming session without passive resistance.” Gandhi wrote on December 22 urging him to press the leaders to take up agitation regarding the tax. He continued, “Aiyar may be left to himself and he may have all the credit and all the glory. We simply do the work if the leaders are ready to do their share of it.”

Meanwhile, he devoted additional space in Indian Opinion to the plight of the indentured Indians from about the end of 1911. The many instances of abuses against individual indentured Indians were reported, as well as the hardship caused by the tax. For example, when fifty-two Indians went on strike at the Balcomb Estate in Stanger, Indian Opinion applauded their decision to choose jail rather than pay fines.

The editorial comment pointed to the "tremendous power that lies with all workers to obtain just treatment from their employers by means of passive resistance or soul force." In February 1912, the newspaper slammed as "absurd" the Supreme Court decision to uphold the law. It called upon the NIC "to defend these poor people." The NIC was prepared to intercede in individual cases as that of V. Naik who had received forty to fifty summonses relating the tax in 1911.

Newly created bodies such as NIPU (f. 1908) and CBIA (f. March, 1911) made the tax an important issue. In the forefront was P.S. Aiyar who used his African Chronicle to highlight abuses against the indentured laborers. He had convened a meeting in October 1911 at Parsi Rustomjee's Field Street residence to discuss the tax. The group created a £3 League with Vincent Lawrence as secretary.

While NIC stalwarts like Abdulla Hajee Adam and M.C. Anglia were present, most of the others in attendance were colonial-born. Aiyar established the South Africa Indian Committee (SAIC) in October 1911 whose sole purpose was to secure the abolition of the £3 tax. Gandhi showed little interest in Aiyar’s endeavors. If not much came out of such attempts, it was, as S. Chetty was to reveal in 1913, the committee had suspended possible action on the advice of “friends” in India.

If this was so, Gandhi may well have been privy to this “friendly” advice which perhaps suggested to him that the tax would be abolished in due course before the slate of other issues in the campaign were resolved. In December 1911, Gandhi wanted Albert West to lead the campaign against the tax. He had decided possibly by the end of 1911 that Gokhale should play a leading role in the abolition of the tax. After all, his mentor had been instrumental in ending the indentured system. Indeed, if the South African government had abolished the tax after Gokhale’s visit in 1912, the issue would never have arisen.

Gandhi's hesitation may have reflected his doubts about his ability to control the masses that could be easily misled. Indeed, he thought the £3 tax cause was "the cause of the helpless and the dumb," as he wrote to Millie Graham Polak. He thought of Aiyar as an opportunist capable of misleading people.

Gandhi knew him from the 1890s. In 1898, Aiyar introduced himself as editor of Indian World and distanced himself and the newspaper from Gandhi's controversial Green Pamphlet. Some seven months later, however, he was prepared to consult with Gandhi as NIC secretary for possible financial aid to run a school he had started in Verulam. Aiyar started the African Chronicle around 1908, and used its columns regularly to air his views.

He was an ambitions person who saw himself as a champion of indentured and free Indian interests. Thus he communicated with Gokhale in the hope of influencing the Indian nationalist. On March 19, 1911, Aiyar wrote to Gokhale about inter-provincial travel restrictions since Gandhi would not. He hoped Gokhale would raise the issue with the South African government since public opinion in Natal demanded it.

Aiyar wrote again to Gokhale on February 8, 1912, this time on behalf of the SAIC requesting him to address the £3 tax issue. Although the committee had not authorized him to talk about other issues, he nevertheless enclosed the text of Immigration Restriction Bill and hoped Gokhale would examine it before he came to South Africa.

Gandhi thought of Aiyar as a "man of the moment" who could not be trusted and who was given to misrepresenting issues in African Chronicle. In a letter he wrote to Chhaganlal Gandhi in September 1911, he said that Aiyar was "innocent of what he had written..." During Gokhale's visit, he accused him of writing "violent articles."

Gandhi believed that the colonial-born were easily misled, and therefore, one presumes, open to manipulation by Aiyar. While we do not have a clear idea of where Aiyar stood on the larger issues, one incident suggests that he was likely open to the militant ideas of expatriate Indians regarding British rule in India. When Gandhi refused to reproduce V. Chattopadhyaya's response to Tolstoy's "Letter to a Hindoo," Aiyar published it in African Chronicle in an action clearly aimed at the former.

There is some ambivalence in the way Gandhi reacted generally to the political endeavors of colonial-born Indians. When the Colonial-Born Indian Association submitted a petition in April 1912 for trade licenses as a matter of "first claim," Gandhi criticized the body for seeking preferential treatment for colonial-born Indian because they were educated in English and observed "European" standards.

Why seek a privilege denied the parents of the colonial-born? Gandhi said nothing about the "Arab" traders who had elbowed them out of competition, and about the NIC which mainly represented these "self-selected settlers." Some of the differences between him and the colonial-born would resurface toward the end of 1913.

While Gandhi found people like Aiyar too independent for his movement, he worked with many colonial-born Indians who supported the campaign under his guidance. One such individual was Cambridge-educated Joseph Royeppen who was also engaged in promoting the interests of the colonial-born. An attorney by profession, he led a deputation to the Durban Town Council over trade licenses for colonial-born Indians, racially motivated tramcar incidents, beach segregation, and other matters.

The Town Council's attention was drawn to the fact the "localities inhabited by Indians [were] much neglected in respect of roads, paths, streets, lighting, and general clearance..." In 1911, Royeppen was also a voluntary chairman of the group of about forty Indians, most of them colonial-born, who sought to combat T.B. in Durban. He questioned the need for the city to appoint a special NIC committee when he and his group were already running the Indian Volunteer Health Committee.

Another individual who had Gandhi's confidence was Albert Christopher, who would take a leading part in the campaign as it unfolded in 1913. Yet Christopher, like Royeppen, was critical of the NIC, and accused it early in 1912 of high-handedness in the way it conducted its meetings. Indeed, Gandhi thought Royeppen was on the "wrong track" about the £3 tax issue, and hoped that Polak, who was in India at the time, would "restrain" him if he should come to India.

As we examine the course of the campaign after it was resumed, it is clear that Gandhi made creative use of opportunities as they arose. He did not necessarily have a blueprint from which he proceeded. The campaign was re-launched on April 28, 1913, at a BIA mass meeting. Various individuals and organizations made known their opposition to the bill. The Immigrant Regulation Act went into effect on August 1, 1913, and was opposed on four grounds: those with indentured background after 1895 appeared to lose the right to settle in South Africa; the right of entry into the Cape of South African born Indians was being curtailed;

Indian marriages celebrated according Hindu and Muslims rites were not being recognized, and the narrow definition of "monogamous" would disallow a wife in India from joining her husband who was legally resident in South Africa; and lastly, Indians traveling through the Orange Free State (OFS) were required to sign a declaration that they would not settle in the province.

The law also provided for the creation of judicial review through Appeal Boards, and Indians pointed out that the participation of immigration officials on the panels compromised the judicial integrity of the process.

The law imposing a tax of £3 became an issue only after the South African Parliament, influenced by interest groups such as the Natal Agricultural Union, failed to repeal it.

Gandhi had been thinking about its importance to the campaign from early 1913, which is why, as he explains in Satyagraha in South Africa, he moved from Tolstoy to Phoenix in Natal where the law affected the indentured and ex-indentured Indians. Besides, the fact that the government had promised Gokhale to abolish the tax gave him further opportunity to play up the imperial angle.

The Government of India and Whitehall would surely be drawn into the issue. It was also a matter of honor to support his mentor, who, after all, had staked his personal reputation in the matter. Gokhale came to symbolize a leader of mythical proportions to Indians he had addressed on his recent visit.

Many of them may well have felt the need to respond to the perceived “insult” to Gokhale. Gandhi wasted no time in arguing that the government’s failure to abolish the tax was a breach of promise that had been made to Gokhale. Organizations such as CBIA, Shri Hindi Jigyasa Sabha, Zoroastrian Anjuman, Kathiawad Arya Mandal, Anjuman Islam, and Gujarati Hindus all agreed with him. The NIC was not among the organizations.

The passive resistance campaign was launched in September 1913, under these circumstances. The letter by BIA's Cachalia dated September 12, 1913, became an official declaration of the campaign. It told the Minister of Interior that the Immigrant Regulation Act had placed new obstacles on Indian immigration and domicile, and that the government had failed to repeal the £3 tax as promised to Gokhale. An "unrepresented and voiceless community ... which is labouring under a curious but strong race prejudice ... can defend its honour and status by a process of sacrifice and self-suffering."

Gandhi had already been preparing the Indians for the battle. There would be no shame this time, he said, for those who did not step forward to participate actively. "He alone can be a satyagrahi whose soul is possessed of satyagraha." In an article under the heading "Death Alone Can Raise Us," he argued that with satyagraha even the most "hard-hearted man [would] melt as he sees the enemy suffering in innocence." Theirs was a just cause. Remembering how vulnerable traders had been to government reprisals earlier, he said that only hawkers should engage because they had few goods that could be auctioned.

Anticipating resistance by some, Gandhi stressed that those who could not join, need not do so. If they did not want to go to jail, they could support in other ways by looking after the business of those in prison, helping with the maintenance of the families of the passive resisters, giving cash donations or sending food grains, organizing meetings in every town to approve the resolutions contained in the Cachalia letter, sending telegrams to the government through public bodies, and contributing to the London Committee. This time, he did not want to ask for money from India.

The first party of sixteen resisters left Durban for the Transvaal border in September 1913. When they failed to get arrested, they recrossed. They were arrested, sentenced to three months jail hard labor, first in Pietermaritzburg and later in Durban. Fatima Sheik Mehtab, wife of Sheik Mehtab who was Gandhi's childhood friend, her seven-years-old son, and her mother Hanifa, protested the marriage issue by crossing into the Transvaal illegally. They too were jailed. Groups of individuals courted arrested by hawking in Johannesburg.

Bodies such as HIS, TBS, UPS, Transvaal Hindus, CBIA, Anjuman Islam, Zoroastrian Anjuman, KAM, the Brahman Mandal, Newcastle Indian Organization, Awakened Indian Society in the Cape, and various organizations or groups of individuals in Pietermaritzburg, Tongaat, Verulam, East London, and Germiston endorsed the Cachalia letter, passed resolutions which were forwarded to the government, and collected funds.

But even as all these individuals and organizations came forward to support passive resistance, there were reports of dissension. An article in the Transvaal Leader reported merchants who refused to support the campaign. A Parsi merchant said, "We can't do anything. I might as well run my head against the brick wall. Trade is not good, and we suffer much in the past."

A Muslim trader asked, "What have we got as the fruits of this sort of thing? Nothing at all. The government has been fair to us. They have treated us with justice. I have faith in our Empire. Full justice will come, must come, without these methods. I am all against this agitation..." The government had spent £800 giving them a Gujarati school, hired teachers, and a physical culture instructor, he added. Other merchants said that they were "tired" of Gandhi.

It was in Natal that a serious rift occurred. Gandhi had been avoiding the NIC because of Anglia. Trouble had been brewing from 1911, at least. Polak, writing to Ritch on April 11, 1911, said that the "situation here [Natal] is very bad. Anglia is doing his best to prevent his resignation and I don't know what is going to happen. So long as he is the secretary, no good work can be done." In his reply, Ritch echoed the sentiments. "I quite understand," he said to Polak, "how ugly the situation in Natal is, or rather, that it must be very ugly. Any satisfactory solution of Indian difficulties is impossible so long as these personal ambitions and disputes bulk so prominently among those who ought to be guides and servants of the community."

He said that the situation in Cape Town was the same except there it had "become somewhat better than it was." In Kimberly, the Konkani community was "holding aloof." Three days later Polak wrote to say that in Natal things seemed to be going "from bad to worse." Then in a pointed reference to the person behind it, he said, "The only dangerous man is Anglia, and he is a snake. For the sake of his damnable self-esteem I foresee a feud that may split the community for years."

Gandhi's relationship with M. C. Anglia dated back to the 1890s. In 1897, Anglia announced his presence by berating somebody who had made fun of his name by calling him "Angliere." Three years later he wrote to Gandhi, who was then secretary of the NIC, seeking clarity on a series of questions before he decided to join the organization. The questions were not clearly defined so that it was hard to separate them, but they can be reduced to an issue of central concern to Anglia, namely, would the authorities not have allowed a qualified form of franchise in 1894 if the NIC had limited its request to include only the Indian upper classes.

After all, Anglia went on to point out, distinction had already been made between the merchants and the indentured on passes. Anglia's questions were not neutral. If anything, they were plainly provocative and intended to be critical. For example, he asked if the votes had been given to the Indians "wholesale," how many MPs would they have been able to send to parliament.

Or again, if Indians were not interested in political power, why was all the agitation necessary. Was the NIC not engaged in testing principles thus to have aroused such opposition among Whites? Finally, was the NIC having a "bad effect" on Whites?32

We have no record of Gandhi's response. In any event, Anglia went on to become the secretary of the NIC in the mid-1900s. If the 1900 letter was any indication of his later thinking, he had hoped to steer the NIC onto a more conservative path. While in London, he wrote in the Times on August 27, 1909, that while Indians did not seek political franchise then, he did not discount it as a grievance in future.

Anglia did become actively involved in the Transvaal campaign by going to jail in 1908, but he seemed to oppose an extension of this form of action to Natal. For example, he did not like Gandhi's advice to use passive resistance against the Permit Office.

While there were no serious differences until 1912 or 1913, it does appear as if Anglia was at variance with Gandhi on broadening the campaign to include issues that affected lower classes of Indians. The split was brewing from April 1913 at least. In an article entitled "Gandhites thoroughly beaten," African Chronicle reported an NIC mass meeting in Durban on April 26, 1913 with 500 in attendance when the two secretaries, Anglia and Dada Osman, submitted their resignations over the way money was being handled. Supporting Anglia and Osman were people like J.L. Roberts, Mahomed Jeewa, and S.R. Pather while others like H.I. Joshi and V. Lawrence opposed them. The decision to accept the resignations was deferred.

The breach between Anglia and Gandhi was aired again at a public meeting in Durban on Sunday, October 12, 1913, under the auspices of Anjuman Islam with NIC's Dawad Mahomed presiding. Gandhi wanted the NIC to support the struggle. It was a stormy meeting that went from two o' clock in the afternoon until ten at night. Anglia and Dada Osman showed their displeasure with Gandhi by tendering their resignation.

They charged Gandhi of having misled Indians. His role was characterized as being “not only worthless but highly injurious,” and he was accused of enticing Indians “into slavery.” A sticking point with some including Anglia was Gandhi’s heavy reliance on Polak, Ritch, Kallenbach, Albert West, and other Whites. Gandhi’s response was that the resignations should be accepted, but it was shouted down.

Albert Christopher who rose to speak in support of Gandhi failed to get heard in the midst of all the commotion. Under these circumstances, it was decided to call an NIC meeting the following Sunday, October 19, to decide whether to accept the resignation of the two secretaries.

At the meeting, Aiyar suggested a South Africa-wide conference to gauge the strength of the action to be taken. Gandhi, according to Aiyar, was evasive as he indicated he would abide by a decision by the people if it was not in conflict with his conscience. The African Chronicle said in response, “We are not aware of any responsible politician in any part of the globe making such a stupid reply as the one that Mr. Gandhi made the other day.” “Mr. Gandhi’s superior conscience is pervading everything,” said the newspaper sarcastically.

Gandhi was accused of showing “passive” not “active” love for his opponents. What hurt Aiyar most was when Gandhi, in reply to Dada Osman’s question as to why he had not supported Aiyar’s £3 campaign, argued that Aiyar and three other Indians he named did not compare with Polak in “purity, talents, ability, and ideals.” Gandhi thought of Polak as the “purest ray serene”. Well, said Aiyar snidely in his columns, Gandhi, Polak, Kallenbach, and Ritch had failed to “unearth the secrecy of the immigration law.” He referred to Gandhi's supporters as the local Indian "aristocracy" and his “trusted prime ministers,” Kallenbach and Polak.

The differences could not be patched over at the NIC meeting on October 19, 1913. Anglia presented a four-page closely typed document in support of his argument. The NIC decided not to accept the resignations of the two secretaries. Its endorsement of their views meant a vote of no confidence in Gandhi and forced him and his supporters to withdraw from the organization.

They marched in a procession to Parsi Rustomjee’s residence where they formed a new body called the Natal Indian Association (NIA), with Dawad Mahomed as president and Omar Haji Amod Jhaveri the secretary. The NIA passed a resolution to support the movement.

Gandhi wrote to Kallenbach on two occasions in October 1913 to speak about the differences in the NIC. In a letter possibly dated October 20, 1913, Gandhi referred to "two nice but stormy meetings yesterday." He was more specific on October 27, 1913, when he wrote that Anglia and Osman were "making much mischief." He said that he had requested Cachalia and other Muslims like Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer “to counteract the mischief." In a subsequent letter he referred to an "interview" with Osman. It was "a study...but otherwise it was not of any use," he concluded.

The Strike

Even as these events were unfolding, Gandhi had decided to organize a strike among the indentured Indians. With the NIA in place, he did not have to worry about opposition from NIC members. His trusted supporters were able to persuade the coal-mining indentured Indians in the Newcastle area to come out on strike. On October 14, 1913, those in the Railway barracks also went on strike; a day later, 36 of the coal miners at Farleigh Colliery joined them. By the end of October, about 4000 indentured Indians working in nine coal mines in and around Newcastle had joined the strike.

Gandhi, together with Kallenbach and Polak, visited the areas to speak to the passive resisters. He also met representatives of coal, sugar, and agriculture in Durban and assured them that the passive resisters would return to work if the government promised to repeal the £3 tax. “It is not the intention to ask them to join the general struggle at all,” he said. There were other issues, so that even if the tax were repealed, the campaign would continue. He said that they did not intend African workers to join them. "We do not believe in such methods." He denied that any intimidation was used against non-strikers.

By the middle of November over 5000 Indians were on strike, about one-fifth of whom were women and children. Organizations such as the NIA called upon the government to honor the promise it had made in 1912 to Gokhale to repeal the £3 tax. Smuts denied that he had given any such pledge. The Union government had indeed increased Natal’s subsidy in 1913 by £10,000 to compensate for the possible repeal of the tax, but there was substantial opposition to its blanket repeal among groups that used indentured labor.

The NIA distributed food with some difficulty in the face of hostile employers and the corps of special police called essentially to force the strikers back to work. As the strike spread to other parts of Natal, incidents between strikers and the police increased. NIA members and sympathizers in Durban like Bhana Parshotam, Odhav Kanjee, Sorabjee Rustomjee, T.J. Sandhvi, Odhav Ragha, Parshotam Patel, M.M. Diwan, and J.M. Lazarus collected money and provisions and often went to the estates to speak to the strikers.

Indians in Pietermaritzburg raised money. Support also came from Johannesburg's Hindus, Pretoria's dhobis, and from others in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Cradock, and Volkstroom.

Beside Anglia and Osman there were, however, other Indians who were opposed to the strike. Many of them believed that Gandhi's strategy was bound to create ill feelings among the Whites. All of them supported the repeal of the £3 tax, but stressed different reasons for their opposition to the strike. Aiyar called it disrespectful and disloyal to the king.

African Chronicle reported violent action by strikers such as the burning of cane. After the appointment of a commission was announced, Aiyar wrote, “While we are one with him [Gandhi] in our demands for respecting Indian sentiments…we have reason to believe that the Indian community could have achieved this object long ago, if he had adopted an attitude milder than that which he has now adopted.” Gandhi, Aiyar felt, surely saw his mistake after the death of some strikers. Aiyar hoped that Gandhi would give their families money from the funds he received from India.

Others like Bernard Gabriel and K.R. Nayanah were not only peeved that Gandhi should have upstaged them on the tax issue, but seemed to imply that Gandhi had an ulterior motive. How was it, asked Gabriel, that the tax was taking up so much of his time when he had paid no attention to the £3 Tax Committee when it was first created?

"The fact is," said Nayanah, "that during the last twenty years of Mr. Gandhi's political career in this country, I am not aware of any systematic and organized effort made by him to give due prominence to the question of this £3 tax." When the African Chronicle started this movement, Gandhi did not raise "a single finger to help," he stated. John L. Roberts simply thought of passive resistance to be a "Hydra-headed blunder" that would have serious consequences.

Leo R. Gopaul argued that the strike was neither justified nor spontaneous. But he expressed qualified support for Gandhi. Gopaul's assessment was that Gandhi was "an acute observer, but a poor reasoner." He continued, "Singly, he will be dangerous, but in conjunction with others, he will do immense good. We therefore want another leader to work with Mr. Gandhi." Did any of them encourage the strikers to return to work? Gabriel, Nayanah, Aiyar, and S.R. Pather did go to Verulam to speak to the strikers, but it is not clear from the reports what their intentions were.

Whites who lived in constant dread of an African uprising, disapproved of the campaign because it had set a “bad example.” The labor shortage caused by the strike prompted the Natal Sugar Association to request the help of the Chief Native Commissioner in securing African replacements.

The association believed that the “moral effect upon the Indians would be enormous and would do much towards breaking the present strike.” It also hoped that African laborers would be available to the planters on a permanent basis.

A leading planter like Marshall Campbell opposed the £3 tax but disapproved of Gandhi’s action. He said that agents had provoked violence even if Gandhi did not approve of it and that Gandhi had lost control of the movement.

As he wrote to Gandhi, "... many of those you lead are realizing the weakness of your policy more and more everyday..." He described indentured Indians as "contented but ignorant." Gandhi's "high words and false hope [were] incapable of realization."

By the end of November 1913, the strike had spread to the north and south coasts of Natal. Durban Corporation and Railway workers downed tools while hundreds of Indians at the South African Refineries, Hulett's Refinery, Chemical Works, Wright's Cement and Pottery Works, and African Boating joined. Laundrymen, hospital, and bakery workers stopped working. Even Indian bars closed.

Extra police were brought in from Johannesburg and Pretoria essentially to break the strike. Confrontations occurred between the authorities and strikers. Indeed, there were several serious instances when sporadic violence caused death and injury. At Mt. Edgecombe, four Indians were killed and two were seriously wounded; at Umzinto, two Indians were shot dead, and among those injured nine required hospitalization; at Reunion, Indians were severely beaten. Arrests and detentions did not seem to deter the strikers.

Over 16,000 indentured Indians working for sixty-six employers had gone on strike. Newspaper reports rarely probed working conditions that underpinned the action of such a large numbers of laborers. Rather they opted for anecdotal stories that focused on how a "rajah" had instructed the strikers to do so, and that the tax was not really the main cause of their action. Some believed that Gokhale would send a regiment to defend the strikers; others addressed Gandhi as Rajah, Kasturbai as Rani, and their sons as Princes.

Those strikers who came to Phoenix Settlement called it Gandhi Baba=s home. There was a cultural and religious dimension to their reactions. Those who marched with Gandhi from Newcastle to Charlestown used religious slogans such as, "Dwarakanath ki jai," "Ramchandra ki jai," and "Vande Materam." Many sang bhajans as they marched.

The condition of work under which indentured Indians labored became generalized into grievances. If they responded to Gandhi's call to strike, it was because they saw the £3 tax as part of the same set of grievances they felt against employers who were seen to be working closely with the government. There are numerous instances of complaints by indentured Indians against their employers.

The Indian immigration files in the Natal Archives Repository contain case after case from the 1880s to the 1900s about abuse by overbearing Indian sirdars or owners, overwork, inadequate rations, Sunday work, withheld wages, and late payment, to mention a few.

Indentured workers found it difficult to lodge complaints. They could not easily come forward with complaints in the presence of the employer when the Protector or his deputy made their regular visits of the estates. The Indians required passes to leave the estates to make complaints to the Protector, and in many cases they simply left without permission. But in doing so, they violated the law and were prosecuted. Requests for transfer to other employers were generally refused except in special cases where the punishment was cruel and unusual. This must account for the large number of desertions. On the other hand, there are many letters by owners who requested transfers and even deportations of Indians who were "troublesome."

Conditions for indentured workers in the coal mines were particularly hard. Over 2500 worked in six of the main coal mines in 1908 and 1909. Those infected with pthisis—and 95 per cent came from the coal mines—were repatriated. Indians complained about the tedious nature of the work, besides having to do excessive amounts of it even over the weekend. They disliked "golvan" (underground) work. Subbaraya Mudaly, aged 18, committed suicide in August 1909 when forced to do underground work.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Indians acted individually and collectively to improve their lot. Whatever the nature of their political awareness, they defended their self-interests.

There are many documents that show that despite all the obstacles, they were able to make their voices heard. They banded together to create communities for social and religious interactions. We know of numerous pools that were formed, known as the "chitti," to share among them its benefits even if their earnings were modest. Sometimes Indians who wanted to return to India sought the advice of the Protector.

In cases involving marriages, they took the initiative in finding out circumstances under which the union of two individuals could take place, or as was also the case, when marriages should be annulled in an abusive relationship. Indentured Indians showed leadership and judgment in many such informal occasions.

There are also many formal instances when Indians exercised leadership to confront owners about their rights. They knew enough about the systems to do so. Such was the case when five individuals emerged as ringleaders on the Reunion Estate in October 1910. Their employer Reuben A. Swales wanted them transferred. In another case, forty-two men and three women marched to Durban to complain against H. Lavoipierre of Bellamonte estate. The five "ringleaders" were Nagadu, Byagadu, Nayayen, Runga Pillay, and Lutchman.

Gandhi had not anticipated the overwhelming response to his call for strike, and his close associates could not keep control of such large numbers of strikers. The NIA responded as best it could with rations and the like, but it really had no access to the strikers or those who were their immediate leaders. Eight of them—I.A.H. Moosa, Addool Haq Kazi, S. Emamally, J.M. Lazarus, M.B. Lazarus, Sorabjee Rustomjee, Arjoon Singh, A. Christopher, R. Bhugwan, C.V. Pillay, and Thumbi Naidoo—were charged for inciting violence.

In their letter of November 25, 1913, to the attorney general in Pietermaritzburg, they pointed to the police's refusal to allow them perusal of the affidavits. By December 1913, the attorney general had decided to drop charges against them since by then Gandhi, Polak, and Kallenbach had already been released. Charges against the NIA's C.R. Naidu were also dropped.

The commission that investigated the strike focused on "ringleaders" who were generally seen as the culprits by employers and police alike. Beyond the NIA members who were politically motivated and thus likely had some information about the conditions of work, there were others who came primarily from among indentured Indians.

The attorney general in Natal wrote to public prosecutors in Durban, Verulam, Stanger, Umzinto, Port Shepstone, Greytown, Camperdown, New Hanover, Mtunzini, and Empangeni in November 1913 requesting them to take steps “to ascertain who the ringleaders [were] and have them arrested.” One such individual arrested was Peter Jackson at the Elands Laagte Collieries near Ladysmith. When the resident magistrate learned that he had been supported by about 1300 strikers, he thought it prudent to drop the charges since his prosecution could lead to "bloodshed.”

The Pietermaritzburg corporation workers were organized by headman Gunpat Singh.

Events at the Ballengeich Colliery compound near Estcourt offer insights into how free and indentured Indians collaborated. Some 195 Indians were involved, most of whom were apparently free. From the various depositions filed, it seems that Indians were determined to take part in the strike over the £3 tax. They proceeded to the Transvaal but were brought back to be confined in a make-shift jail.

When the Indians were told they would serve for six months in the mine as part of their jail sentence, they rebelled. They disliked having to spend time behind the barbed wire they saw before them. Instead, they chose to leave for the Newcastle jail. As Sayed Batsha said in his deposition, they were being fenced in just like the “Bambatta Natives.” An altercation broke out. White managers, African constables, Wartskis butchers, and others attacked the Indians with knobkerries, sjamboks, rifle butts, and even fired with their guns in the air in effort to drive them back into the compound.

Eight of the Indians were bundled into a separate room where one or more attackers assaulted them and taunted them for having followed Gandhi. The next day all the dissidents were tried in the Estcourt courts and found guilty, and sentenced to six months jail or £5 fine. In a separate incident, one Nagadu died on November 17 after being assaulted.

In another strike-related incident, Madhar Sahib, an indentured Indian, was severely assaulted by Robert Johnson at the South African Colliery on November 11. It was not merely his absence from work that triggered the abuse; he was thought to be involved in the strike since he was accused of intimidating the workers. But the attorney general filed no charges against him.
At Reunion Estate, eleven Indians were charged with “unlawfully gathering to disturb the public peace and security of or to interfere with the rights” to cause a riot by using sticks and other blunt instruments. They were all freed because they had no weapons on them before they assembled, and there was some hesitancy to re-indict them.

A batch of Noodsberg Indians came to Tongaat and insisted on being allowed to proceed to Durban to see Gandhi or the Protector in December 1913. When they were ordered to return, the women put their babies in front of the horses, and they themselves lay down on the ground. The police tried to disarm them, but they defended themselves by using sticks and by lining up back-to-back. Nobody was seriously hurt.

Two "recalcitrant" Indians were turned over to the Protector for deportation. At Hawksworth Estate near Esperanza, a solicitor's clerk was accused of having incited Indians, and another described as an "absolute fanatic" had worked 400 persons into a "howling mob." At Blackburn Estate on the North Coast 12 Indian "ringleaders" were arrested, some of them with wounds. In Avoca, "ringleaders" destroyed or seized milk and vegetables that non-striking Indians were selling.

The March

Gandhi's decision to open another front was intended to take some control over the movement. He had access to hundreds of indentured Indians who had walked away from their jobs. If, therefore, he could use them under his supervision, he might have some leverage in dealing with the government. He had already organized a party of sixteen in September 1913 to cross illegally into the Transvaal.

In November he decided to implement this idea on a grand scale for it was sure, he thought, to capture the government's attention. Besides, he was afraid that the strike might collapse, as he wrote to Kallenbach on October 23, 1913. He decided to take about 2000 of the strikers across the Natal border into the Transvaal. It was a daring idea, brilliant in its conception, and creative in its implementation. As Parel says, this padayatra, "slow motion by foot," was an effective way to raise consciousness and build unity. In India, it would be used in nation-building.

The plan was to take the marchers into the Transvaal through Charleston and thus invite arrest. The march was divided into eighteen stages from November 6 to 13. In the event that they were not arrested, they planned to walk to Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg at the rate of twenty to twenty-five miles a day. The government had no desire to ease the organizational problems that Gandhi faced, nor did it wish to make martyrs of the marching passive resisters. It was rather hoping that the movement would falter before arrests became necessary.

The organizers had a difficult time controlling, feeding, and otherwise managing large numbers of men, women, and children on the move. Gandhi had the support of people like Kallenbach, Thambi Naidoo, P.K. Naidoo, Polak, and others. The cost was £250 a day. The daily ration of bread and sugar needed to be provided; and even though many Indians en route helped, local funds were not adequate to cover the expenses. Much as Gandhi had hoped otherwise, the funds had to come from India. Close to £1500 was received by December 1913, the largest donation of £660 coming from the Aga Khan.

The details of the dramatic march are given by Gandhi in his Satyagraha in South Africa and by Kallenbach in his diary. It was not until November 10 that the government decided to arrest the marchers by which time they had reached Balfour, some fifty miles from Johannesburg, or about seventy miles from their final destination, Tolstoy Farm in Lawley.

They were placed on three special trains and deported to Natal. Meanwhile, Gandhi was sentenced in Dundee on November 11 to nine months' jail with hard labor. From Dundee, he was taken to Volksrust on November 13 to face the charge of aiding and abetting prohibited persons from entering the Transvaal. In the next few days, Gandhi, Kallenbach, and Polak were all found guilty and sentenced to three months' jail in the Volksrust prison.

As the authorities in Natal dealt with leading NIA members and other supporters of the strike, there were signs by the end of November that the strike was coming to an end. Some were charged with inciting violence and others with desertion. Since employers did not continue to provide rations for the strikers, this too must have been a factor in spite of the action taken by the NIA to step into the breach. Newspaper accounts reported indentured Indians in almost all sectors returning to work.

Solomon Commission

As Gandhi had expected, the increased tempo of the passive resistance campaign was bound to attract the attention of India. Viceroy Harding expressed strong support for the movement in a speech he made in Chennai on November 26, 1913. Gokhale who had just returned from England got busy organizing another round of meetings and collecting money for the passive resisters.

He was responsible for sending Charles Andrews and W.W. Pearson who traveled to major South African towns and cities to appear at many public meetings and churches and to talk to many influential Whites. The INC, meeting at Karachi on December 26, strongly objected to the treatment of Indians in South Africa. London newspapers talked about government blunders that had put the empire at risk.

The government responded to these pressures by announcing the appointment of a commission. Even though Gandhi, who was in jail at the time, found two of the three commissioners unacceptable because of their known anti-Indian bias, he believed that the government had shown sufficient good faith. He deemed the government’s regular communication with him as being “consultation.”

But Gandhi did not back down from his demand for the removal of two commissioners after he and the other passive resisters were released unconditionally. Indians repeated their demands at an NIA meeting in Durban attended by 6000 to 7000, and endorsed Gandhi’s decision to boycott the commission.

In an interview Gandhi gave to Pretoria News on January 9, 1914, he said that he did not want to take advantage of the trouble that the government was then facing with a general railway strike. In his letter to the secretary of the Interior Minister, he virtually outlined what was to become the settlement five months later.

He agreed that the passive resisters would forgo filing lawsuits; that all passive resisters would be released in due course; that the £3 tax would be repealed; that the marriage question would be fixed legislatively; that the Cape entry issue would be settled by administrative relief; that there would be verbal assurances with regard to the OFS restrictions; and, finally, that there would be a just administration of laws toward Indians. Gandhi explained his conditional agreement at an NIA mass meeting in Durban on January 25, 1914, at which 3000 were present.

Meanwhile, Sir Benjamin Robertson, Chief Commissioner for the Central Provinces in India, was specially sent by the Viceroy to speak to the commission. The importance of the testimony was not what he said—it was ambivalent and paternalistic—but that he spoke with the authority of the Government of India. While the NIA boycotted the commission, the NIC resolved at its meeting on January 28, 1914, to appear before it. This meeting was not without procedural difficulties. Sixty-nine individuals later claimed that the majority was against testifying.

Others also denounced the NIC decision.

In any event, Anglia and Osman, who appeared before the commission for the NIC argued for polygamous marriages in addition to raising immigration and license issues. Indian Opinion said that their testimonies had “done harm” to the community by setting limits to Indian demands. They should have consulted a “reliable lawyer” before presenting their material. It was thankful that the two had refrained from “washing the dirty linen of the community” in public, but on whose behalf had Anglia spoken?

Anglia reacted angrily to the comment about his testimony, and challenged Indian Opinion to reproduce in Gujarati his entire testimony. The editor promised to do this, but it was not published. S.B. Sooker also spoke, but he was “carried away by his pride” according to Indian Opinion.

He had named individuals who would give evidence about ill treatment by employers; and as for P.S. Aiyar, Indian Opinion commented: “What can we say? He has given evidence without thinking,” and he only spoke for himself. Aiyar himself had a different take and reproduced his entire testimony in African Chronicle. The commission contacted at least one person, namely D. Lazarus, requesting his help to identify witnesses named by Sooker, but he declined to assist.

The commission produced a thirty-eight-page report in March 1914, which highlighted disturbances at Mount Edgecombe and Esperanza estates. Four Indians were killed at the first, and two at the second. In both instances, the commission cleared the police of any wrong-doing, even though Indians claimed that they had acted under severe provocation.

At La Mercy estate near Verulam, three Indians were injured after African constables attacked them with knobkerries.

The commission recommended the repeal of the £3 tax, and changes in the law to allow for the legitimacy of marriages celebrated according to Muslim or Hindu rites. Gandhi was pleased generally. He had been preparing Indians not to overreach since they could "eat" only according to their capacity, that is, that they should not ask for anything for which they would not be able to mount a campaign. Be patient, he had said a month before the report was published, because the opportunity of the future would "far exceed the present one."

Most of the English newspapers were positive about the recommendations by the commission, and were glad to see that it offered an opportunity to end the campaign. The Natal Agricultural Union, on the other hand, was opposed to the repeal of the £3 tax. Meanwhile, Indian strikers were charged with unlawfully striking, and official inquiries were instituted in instances where death had occurred. These trials highlighted how brutally the indentured system operated.

The commission's report culminated in the Indian Relief Act. On the marriage question, it restored the status before the Searle judgment; it repealed the £3 tax; and validated domicile certificates in Natal. In addition, the Act provided for free passage to any Indian who was willing to renounce all claim to domicile in South Africa. The Natal government had used the tax to ensure indirectly the return of Indians who terminated their indentures. The free passage provision was similarly aimed at securing the repatriation of those Indians who selected it.

As far as Gandhi was concerned, the goals he had set out for himself had been reached. He refused to allow the Gold Law, location trading restrictions, trade license difficulties, inter-provincial travel restrictions, and restrictions on ownership of land as part of the campaign. These outstanding matters, he said, would require "further and sympathetic consideration by the Government" some day in the future.

The settlement was agreed to, and for Gandhi eight years of struggle had "finally closed." In his farewell, Gandhi advised Indians not to succumb to provincialism. "All ideas of high and low which divide men into Brahmans, Kshtriyas, Vaishhyas, and Sudras should be abandoned." Get rid of dirty ways, cease gold smuggling, drop addiction to alcohol, and stop calling indentured Indians "colcha."

But there were critics. Indian Views, established by Anglia and others in 1914, called the settlement "farcical" and questioned Gandhi's claim to be speaking for all Indians. They pointed to the large numbers who opposed passive resistance, and they reproduced the names of people who sent telegrams opposing the settlement.

Its July 24, 1914, issue stated that the one lesson that Indians could learn from Gandhi's twenty-one years was to resolve issues "in a calm and constitutional manner and not to resort to passive resistance, strikes and other cut-your-nose-off-to-spite-your-face method." It referred to the NIA as a "relic of Gandhism."

In March, after the settlement was announced, Aiyar commented, "…Gandhi can boast as much as he pleases about his achievements, and the blunt truth of the matter is that others made a case for him while his crew condemned, vilified, and victimised these very same people, simply because they won't pay homage to his saintly honour, and blow trumpet for Mr. Gandhi's glorification."

After the Indian Relief Act was passed, Aiyar derided Gandhi's role in an imaginary dialogue. He accused Gandhi of being arrogant and a false patriot who did not interest himself in the welfare of the people. Gandhi was quick to attribute failure to the government, according to Aiyar, a "slippery customer" who "unblushingly" called the settlement a Magna Charta when it was simply a "farce". Gandhi said that only a "minority" opposed the settlement. Aiyar commented bitterly that the "minority" did not get money from India, or organize crowds for shouting down opponents, or have the support of the "Junta" at Field Street.

H.O. Ally who had accompanied Gandhi to London in 1906 was the severest of his critics. The Rand Daily Mail reported a meeting of Muslims who were concerned about a variety of issues: on whose authority had Gandhi acted in signing the settlement? What had Indians gained in the previous eight years? Why had he taken money set aside for a hospital during the plague scare in Johannesburg?

Gandhi replied to each of the points raised by his critics. He had acted on behalf of all Indians; he believed that Indians had made definite gains, most particularly in the respect that they had won; and he had taken money in 1904 that was due to him for his legal services. He had hoped to use the money to train himself as a doctor in England.

Early in 1914, HIS had indeed written to Sir Benjamin Robertson saying that the Indians wanted, among other things, the removal of travel restrictions, a privilege then enjoyed by the "Cape Coloureds, the Kaffirs, and the Hottentots," property rights, and township trading. HIS had taken a resolution at a meeting in March 1914 at which it declared that "Messrs Gandhi, Polak and their associates [had] no right or authority to act for the Muslim community or any matter concerning them."

V.M. Khamissa's tone was communal: since Gandhi was a Hindu, he had no business interfering in Muslim matters.

At a meeting called by HIS in Johannesburg, Gandhi responded to some of the charges leveled against him. He said he had given full accounting to the BIA of the Anti-Indian Law Fund, the Passive Resistance Fund, and funds from Mumbai. Ally persisted in his criticism. How could Gandhi call it a final settlement when there were "certain disabilities and grievances that were killing the people," he wanted to know.

Gokhale had not forbidden anyone to submit evidence to the commission, he continued; instead Gandhi spent £200 sending a long cable to Gokhale in Mumbai about the need to honor the oath to proceed with passive resistance until all contested issues were settled. Had Gandhi bound Muslims to only one wife? If so, this was a violation of law of God. Gandhi should have called a public meeting before talking about "an honorable settlement."

Had not Gandhi said in 1909 that he would continue until all the children were free? How could he claim to be speaking for all when HIS and the Hamdard Society had passed a resolution on March 31, 1914, insisting that he and his friends had no authority to act for them. Habib Motan raised a question about £1200 Gandhi had taken for Indian Opinion. These questions showed how serious the disagreement was between Gandhi and some of the Indians.

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Newspaper Clipping SN 2796, August 20, 1898, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad.

SN 3077, August 20, 1898, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad; Gandhi to Millie Graham Polak, November 12, 1913, in CWMG, vol. 96, Supplementary vol. 6, p.155.

Aiyar to Gokhale, March 19, 1911, Papers of Gopal K. Gokhale, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Aiyar to Gokhale, February 8, 1912, Papers of Gopal K. Gokhale, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

CWMG, vol. 11, p. 162; Gandhi to Gokhale, 14 February 1913, CWMG, vol. 11, pp. 460-61; IO 5/20/1911, 4/1/1911, 4/15/1911, CWMG, vol. 10, pp. 459, 465-66.

V. Chattopadhyaya accused Tolstoy of selective and erroneous reading of history, and questioned whether the great religions were centrally non-violent in their teaching. How did love translate itself into "regulatory social principle"? It did not automatically lead to non-violence. How should violent men be reformed?

If their malignant activity could not be checked through morality, "death should be dealt out as a gift of love so that our brother may die with at least some attributes of a man. A violent plunderer is not a man but a brute and cannot be treated like a social being." African Chronicle, April 9 and 16, 1910.

The president was K.R. Nayanah. Others were R. N. Moodley, L. Gabriel, S. Emamally. S. Lutchman Panday, and Albert Christopher. IO 4/20/1912, 5/11/1912.

Those who opposed the bill were colonial-born Indians in Johannesburg, Indian Women's Association, European Committee, and such Durban bodies as the Anjuman Islam, Zoroastrian Anjuman, Mastic Society, Shri Hindi Jigayasa Sabha, Kathiawad Arya Mandal, Natal Brahmin Mandal, Thakurdwara Hindu Temple Committee, and Anjuman Hedayatul Islam; and in the Cape, the British Indian Union. The NIC remained aloof. Indian Opinion, 4/19/1913, 5/3/1913, 5/10/1913, 5/17/1913, 5/24/1913.

Their names were not released immediately. They were Kasturba Gandhi, Kashibehn Gandhi, Santokbehn Gandhi, Jayakunvar P. Mehta, Parsi Rustomjee, Chhaganlal Gandhi, Maganlal Gandhi, Rawjibhai M. Patel, Maganbhai H. Patel, Solomon Royeppan, Shivpujan Badri, V. Govindrajulu, Coopoosamy Moonlight Mudaliar, Gokuldas Hansraj, Revashanker R. Sodha, and Ramdas Gandhi. IO 9/24/1913, special issue.

They were P. K. Naidoo, Jivan Premji (chairman, UPS), Mawji Premji (vice chairman, UOS), Kunverji, Dulabhbhai, Dayal Parbhu, Jivanji Devji, Morar Kanji, Parbhoo Chhana, Coopoosamy Naidoo, Narayansamy, Krishnaswamy. Others were: S. B. Medh, P. K. Desai, Manilal Gandhi, Veerasay Francis, Soopie Pillay, Anamaly, Khusal Morar, Bhaga Manchha, Dhaya Parbhoo, Rajoo Nursoo, and Willy Morgan. Ibid.,10/8/1913.

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Anglia to Gandhi, 15, August 1900, SN 3906, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad.

African Chronicle, 5/3/1913.

IO 10/15/1913, Natal Advertiser, 10/20/1913.

African Chronicle 10/18/1913. See Gandhi’s letter to Kallenbach, March 21, 1914, CWMG, vol. 96, Supplementary vol. 6, p. 177.

African Chronicle, 10/25/1913.

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Gandhi-Kallenbach Papers, 1909-1946, National Archives of India, New Delhi; see also CWMG, vol. 96, Supplementary vol. 6, p. 151.

Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa, Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1928; Gandhi's trusted lieutenants were T. Naidoo, Bhawani Dayal and Ramnaran, Mrs Moorgan, Mrs. P. K. Naidoo, and Mrs. T. Naidoo. They were joined by local individuals like I. Seedat, Abdial M. Ephraim, Amod Vawda, D. Lazarus, M. R. Chetty, M. M. Pillay, M. R. Currian, M. R. Tomy, Ebrahim Khaki, Suliman Seedat, and Amod Dawjee, IO 10/22/1913, 10/29/1913.

CWMG, vol. 12, pp. 253-54, Gandhi's interview with Natal Mercury on October 27, 1913.

Others were the Durban Indian Association, Colonial Born Hindu Benefit Society in Port Elizabeth, Surat Hindu Association, and the Awakened Indian Society in Cape Town. IO 10/29/1913, 11/5/1913, 11/12/1913.

NAR CNC 148, 2035/1913, David Fowler, acting president of NSA to Chief Native Commissioner, 5/12/1913.

The Protector of Indian Immigrants Polkinghorne revealed this at the commission's hearings in January 1914.

Sushila Nayar, Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha at Work, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1989, pp. 678-79, 684; see also Raojibhai M. Patel, The Making of the Mahatma, (Based on Gandhiji-ni Sadhna), Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1990, pp. 213-17.

NAR I 1104/1891 1/60. One such case was that of William Sykes of Trenance Estate in Inanda who was found guilty of branding Appasamy. His thirteen employees were transferred to the Natal Sugar Company.

While it is hard to determine the collective consciousness of the indentured Indians, we seek to give them more agency for their actions than the works by Swan, Beall, and North-Coombes. See M. J. Swan's Gandhi: The South African Experience, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985; and J. D. Beall and D. North-Coombes, "The 1913 Disturbances in Natal: The Social and Economic Background to 'Passive Resistance' ", Journal of Natal and Zulu History 6(1983): 48-81.

Some of the others arrested were B. K. Patel, R. H. Lazaraus, C. R. Naidoo, P. K. Naidoo, N. B. Naik, and Dookie.

The ringleaders, all free Indians, were Babhoo, Batsha, Abdool, Saibo, Manikum, Annamalay, Lutchman Singh, and Mahomed. NAR AGO 1/8/146 764/1913.

The accused were Vallai Gounden, Lachmon, Ramai, Jogyram, Parabhu, Ramdu, Coopoosamy, Muthu Govinden, Abbu, Chinnabbu, and Chinnappa. NAR AGO 1/8/146 826/1913.

Depositions were made by Ramsamy, Kanny, Munsamy, Venkatigadu, Govenden, B. Yelligadu, Anganay, and Sukroo. NAR AGO 1/8/146 783/1913.

Gandhi to Kallenbach, October 23, 1913, in CWMG, vol. 96, Supplementary vol. 6, p. 150. See also Anthony J. Parel, "Gandhi's Idea of Nation in Hind Swaraj," Gandhi Marg

Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa, Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1928; Isa Sarid and Christian Bartolf, Hermann Kallenbach: Mahatma Gandhi's Friend in South Africa, A Concise Biography, Selbstverlag, Germany: Gandhi-Information-Zentrum, 1997. Kallenbach kept a diary of events as they unfolded. They are found on pages 38 to 61.

Meetings of support also took place in Chennai and Calcutta; and the INC's meeting in Karachi in December put the South African Indian question on its agenda. IO

Polak claims it was he who insisted to Gandhi that they should refuse to appear before the commission unless at least one independent person was appointed. He said, "At first he [Gandhi] was inclined to tender evidence before the commission, but I felt strongly that the commission as appointed was one-sided, with two of the three members well-known anti-Indians, and there being no one to represent the Indian community." See Polak's article, pp. 230-47, in Incidents in Gandhiji's Life, edited by Chandrashanker Shukla, Vora & Co., 1949.

In place of Ewald Esselen and J. S. Wylie, the Indians suggested Sir James Rose-Innes, and W. P. Schreiner. Gandhi did not carry out his threatened march to Pretoria on December 21, 1913, over the issue, and decided to wait. IO 12/17/1913, 12/24/1913.

Ibid., 1/28/1914; CWMG, vol. 12, pp. 327-29, 333-36. See also interview with Rand Daily Mail on 24 January 1914, IO 2/4/1914, 1/25/1914.

Sir Robertson disappointed Gandhi. He wrote to Gokhale, "He has done hardly any good and he may do a great deal of harm. He is weak and by no means sincere. Even now, he has hardly grasped the details. And he undoubtedly, consciously or unconsciously, fosters divisions among us". CWMG, vol. 12, p. 360; and in a letter to Kallenbach on January 19, 1914, he called Sir Benjamin "dangerous, weak, and shifty man." CWMG, vol. 96, Supplementary vol. 6, pp. 159, 165. See also IO 2/4/1914, 2/11/1914, 2/18/1914.

They wrote to the Natal Mercury, "We, the undersigned, who were present at the meeting and recorded our votes, deny the accuracy of the report. The meeting, by a majority of 69 to 48, were against giving any evidence." M. C. Coovadia who had chaired the meeting, "absolutely" refuted this. He disclosed that those for the motion were Hassim Jooma, M. C. Anglia, Dr. Hira Maneck, Dada Osman, K. R. Nayanah, Jeewa and himself. Those

who opposed it were J. M. Francis, B. Sigamoney, Karwa, and Vaidya. There was no counter-motion, he said. IO 2/11/1914.

Indians in Stanger, Tongaat, Newcastle agreed to boycott the commission. Other bodies that joined the chorus of opposition were Mahomedan Mastic Society, Kathiwad Arya Samaj, Maharastrian Sabha, Surat Hindu Association, Hindu Hawkers Association, Zorastrian Anjuman, Tamil Mahajan Sabha, and the Durban Hindu Women's Association. IO 2/11/1914, 4/18/1914.

African Chronicle, 1/31/1914

Report of the Indian Enquiry Commission, UG 16, 1914. See also communications in the Attorney General's office in Pietermaritzburg, NAR AGO 1/8/146, 756/13. Resident magistrates sent information about the progress in various parts of Natal.

"Colcha" referred to "coal" or was a corrupt form of "coolies". Gandhi was given reception by all, including the Dheds in Durban. Durban communities, Verulam's residents, Johannesburg's citizens, among whom he found his most precious friends, and Pretoria's Indians. Tributes were paid to him by, among others, the following groups: Griqualand Indians, Durban Reception Committee, Anjuman Islam, Durban Indian Committee, Colonial-born Indians, Natal Zoroastrian Anjuman, Hindu Women's Association, Mastic Society, District Association, Mayavant Association, Shri Hindu Jigyasa Sabha, Gujarati Hindus, Verulam Indian Community, Verulam Tamil Community, Pretoria Indian Community, Mahomedan Community, Vereeniging, Madras Indian Association, Port Elizabeth Indians, Parsi Community in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg's Indians, TBIA, Tamil Mahajan Sabha, Danhauser Indians, Ventersdorp Indians, Transvaal Mahomedans, Germsiton's Indians, Chinese Community TBS, IWA, and Gujarati Hindus. CWMG, vol. 12, pp. 481-86.

Indian Views, 7/24/1914, 9/25/1914.

The supporters of the resolution were H. O. Ally, Hajee Habib, Mal, Motan, Moulvi Abdool Gafoor, M. M. Patel, Cassim Adam, V. M. Khamissa, K. I. Patel, H. I Moola, M. Gathoo, M. M. Dadoo, Hassim Kara, M. Saloojee, and M. C. Anglia. It is interesting to see Anglia's name in this list because he was based in Durban. SN 5949, Newspaper Cuttings, March 20, 1914 and SN 5951, Newspaper Clippings, no date, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

South Africa's Indians embodied varied regional, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Worship in temples, mosques, and churches and the celebration of religious festivals were essential parts of their identity. As immigrants, Hindus and Muslims sought to recreate the worlds they had left behind. Hindus, for example, observed eight major religious festivals, and countless smaller ones either in their homes or in temples. A few responded to traveling missionaries seeking to reform traditional

Hindus ways; the greater majority held on to narrow nyati concepts to identify themselves. Muslims were equally strong in preserving their religious traditions around five major festivals. Mosques and madressas were central to the way these traditions were honored in South Africa and in the ancestral towns and villages from which Muslims hailed.

Our research uncovered little about Christian Indian cultural and religious traditions, but they were likely as vibrant as those of Hindus and Muslims who created a myriad of organizations. This is the point we endeavored to convey in our detailed discussion of religious and cultural activities in chapters 3 and 4.

Appendix 1 lists close to 140 bodies organized around culture and religion. Religion was the strongest base around which the Indian migrants organized their lives. Only 25 of the bodies were secular in their orientation. Here are some characteristics of migrants during these formative decades:

Links with India:

Gujarati-speaking Hindus and Muslims made frequent return trips to India. They were given farewell receptions on their departure, and some gave their impression about developments and conditions in India on their return. They created many organizations in an attempt to maintain links with the villages, towns, or cities from which they came. Our evidence was particularly strong for Muslims who sent money to maintain mosques and madressas in India.

Committees were set up to coordinate such activities for Alipor, Bodana, Dhabel, Diwa, Kathor, Karod, Kholvad, Kosambi, Panoli, and Ranvav, to name a few. Such organizations published their accounts regularly. Recently, we discovered a trust deed of Mehafil Eslam Mota-Varachha, a body created in 1905 by eight traders in Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle, and Umzimkulu who were also natives of the village in the Surat district. (See Appendix 3).

All Indians, including those who were indentured, regularly remitted money through the Protector's office.

Promotion of Traditional Values:

Many groups emerged to promote languages such as Gujarati, Tamil, and Hindi through vernacular schools. V.R.R. Moodaly, as we pointed out in chapter 3, became inspired about promoting Tamil and educating girls after visiting India, and indeed sent his own daughter to be educated in India. Others sought to encourage religious values and held weekly meetings on discourses with the help of readings from scriptural texts. Groups met weekly to read from the Bhagavad Gita, and individuals gave discourses on morality and religion.

Caste organizations endeavored to inculcate cohesion. We referred to the luwana community's participation in a Mumbai conference in 1910 about promoting education, helping the poor, and cutting back on unnecessary social functions. Among Muslims there was often spirited discussion in mosque and madressa committees about how best to provide ilm to their children. For example, a Muslim in Standerton believed religious education should start when their children were seven or eight years of age, and recommended this to the Kholvad Jamat in India.

Identification with Movements on the Indian Subcontinent:

Indians closely followed political and cultural events in India. Indian Opinion and African Chronicle kept up a steady stream of patriotic fare for their readers. Since Indians shared broadly Gandhi's faith in the imperial approach because it connected them to India, Gandhi tapped into their patriotism. Many Indians in South Africa spoke of the duty to the motherland. Swadeshi movement (1905-8) in India emerged in response to the British decision to partition Bengal, with nationalists like Surendranath Banerji (1848-1925) leading the opposition.

The call for resistance extended to British rule itself. The methods used included passive resistance, boycott of British goods, and even violence. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's hymn to A Mother (Vande Mataram, I bow to you, Mother), composed in 1875, was resurrected as part of the nationalist reawakening. Many groups in South Africa identified with this movement. We pointed to the numerous occasions on which organizations ended meetings with this patriotic song. Gandhi strongly condemned violent methods that were being used by some in India and publicized the virtues of passive resistance in the columns of Indian Opinion.

Passive resisters were lionized for their "patriotism" in South Africa, thus blurring lines of loyalty between ancestral and adopted homes. Hindus in South Africa identified with reform bodies such as the Arya Samaj founded by Dayanand Sarasvati (1824-1883) in India with the purpose of reforming Hinduism. A body calling itself Arya Pratinidhi Sabha took its name from one founded by Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901) in India. In chapter 3, we referred to the activities of Professor Permanand and Swami Shankeranand who successfully won over reform-minded Hindus to their cause.

It is less clear how strongly South Africa's Muslims identified with nationalist movements in India. A few had some contact with two movements in India, namely Aligarh, founded in 1886, and Deoband in the 1860s. The first sought to re-position Muslims favorably in relation to the Raj after the Revolt of 1857, and the second aimed at cleansing Islam of practices that were considered alien.

Some Muslims sent their sons to study at Aligarh Muslim University and were likely aware of the Muslim League (founded 1906) which was to play a significant role in the creation of Pakistan four decades later. Muslims in South Africa embraced the Islamic ummah in its wider transnational context. Hence, when the Ottoman Empire was threatened, they rallied in the same way that Muslims in India did. They called the drive for funds "Hamdard" during the Tripolitan and Balkan wars, 1911-12, a name they took directly from the Urdu newspaper edited by Mahomed Ali (1878-1931) and Shaukat Ali (1873-1938) in India.

The Ali brothers were prime movers in the Khilafat Movement (1919-22) that sought to preserve the caliph in the dismembered empire as the spiritual head of all Muslims. Muslims in South Africa and India accepted the caliph as their symbolic spiritual head, Mecca as the central place of pilgrimage, and the Koran as the source of the Islamic faith.

We have little information about the religious and cultural lives of the small numbers of Christian Indians who were among the earliest to come to Natal as products of evangelical missions already active in India. There were Roman Catholics, Wesleyan-Methodists, and Anglicans who came to constitute well-established communities by the 1890s and 1900s. Well known family names included Gabriel, Godfrey, Joseph, Paul, Peters, Lawrence, Lazarus, Nundoo, and Sigamoney.

They recognized the value of Indianness even if their point of reference was Western rather than Indian. Like Hindus and Muslims, their primary source of identification was likely with the church denomination around which so much of their personal and social life revolved. Organizations such as the Catholic Young Men's Society were active in progressive causes under the leadership of people like Vincent Lawrence and M.B. Lazarus, to whom Gandhi was closely connected.

Christian Indians became prominent in government civil service positions, promoted public education, and engaged in politics. Indeed, Christian Indians made up a substantial part of political bodies with a colonial-born orientation. As second generation residents who felt strong ties to the country of their birth, they often spoke out for their rights as South Africans. We referred to several such individuals in our study, namely, Albert Christopher, Bernard Gabriel, George Godfrey, James Godfrey, Leo R. Gopaul, J.M. Lazarus, Joseph Royeppen, and others.

Even though there were only isolated archival references to the religious and cultural activities of indentured Indians, we know from other sources that their participation was substantial in such popular forms of worship as Kavady and Mohurram.

The early traditional Hindu temples were meant for the Hindus among them. Since indentured Indians did not feature prominently in our two main newspaper sources except as victims of the system, we are less clear about their cultural and religious activities. There is sufficient evidence in official sources to suggest that they were not simply victims of the system, but acted in protecting their interests when the need arose, as we saw in chapter . We referred, for example, to the "chitti" system through which they pooled their wages to share in their meagrely monthly incomes.

They did not hesitate to take concerted action in the workplace when their interests were threatened. If such action did not reflect a highly developed sense of class-consciousness, it nevertheless suggested collective concern for the welfare of the group. For example, in 1895 indentured Indians attacked railway police who tried to stop them from collecting firewood. They resisted arrest, and all seventy-one were eventually arrested after reinforcements were called. At their trial, Magistrate Dillon was sympathetic to the Indians and did not punish them. He said that they had no means to light fire to cook their food for seventeen days, and likened their plight to that of the ancient Jews who were forced to make bricks without straw.

There was another instance when 250 indentured Indians went on strike against poor rations, and marched to the Protector=s office to complain even though they were aware that they were violating the law by taking leave without permission. They also approached Gandhi to appear for them. Indentured Indians on some occasion preferred jail rather than work for an employer whom they did not like. As we underscored in chapter 6, individuals labeled as “ringleaders” during the 1913 strike showed imagination in their leadership roles. A closer and more detailed examination of their roles would yield greater insights into the communities of the contract laborers.

When did Gandhi realize the potential of using indentured issues to further the larger Indian struggle? The transformation in Gandhi’s thinking is apparent from about 1911. The time he spent at Tolstoy Farm provided him with the opportunity to reflect on and renew his faith in satyagraha as a way of life. If he had doubt about being able to control the indentured masses, he dispelled them by 1913.

His disillusionment with the authorities’ inability to protect the poor propelled him “to do something” for them. He demonstrated his ability to achieve that objective and to transform them through his own brand of politicization, padayatra (marches). The year 1913 prepared him for the role he was to play among the peasants of India. Gandhi turned his back on the West’s political and economic systems and placed his faith in indigenous solutions. His change in dress and his insistence on using Indian languages were part of his endeavor to re-appropriate Indian values.

Even as South Africa's Indians were adapting to their new environment, they sought to maintain values rooted in their ancestral traditions. Gandhi was aware of the discourses taking place among the many different Indian groups in whose midst he operated.

He worked within the cultural and religious parameters set by these groups, but he sought to redefine them. Inevitably, he ran into people who disagreed with him as he worked tirelessly against caste and sectionalist distinctions. As a social reformer, Gandhi was creative in blending his message drawn from various religious traditions and strongly worked for interfaith tolerance.

His unique brand of religious tolerance was the hallmark of his stay in South Africa, a great contribution in lesson to future generations of Indians. When he was assaulted by Meer Alam Khan in 1908, he pleaded with his countrymen to drop khataas (bitterness) for mittass (sweetness).

In 1912, Gandhi declared that a true Muslim could not harm a Hindu, and a true Hindu could not harm a Muslim. He insisted that a true follower of God thought of religion ethically and ecumenically. His insistence that one could remain rooted in one's own religious beliefs and still participate within a broader framework was aimed at the falsity that underpinned the claim by colonial rulers that Indians were divided by religion, caste, and ethnicity and could never develop into one nation. In India, Gandhi would devote his entire life to propagating this idea.

Indians were silent for the most part about the oppressive conditions of the Africans. They learned to live with African exclusion, and incorporated in their worldviews White supremacists' racist notions about Africans. In this respect, Mahmood Mamdani is correct in saying that "the colonial state tried to naturalize political differences, not only between the colonizer and the colonized, but also ... between the two kinds of colonized: those indigenous and those not."

Natal's political economy played a substantial role in shaping African and Indian attitudes toward each other, as chapter 2 showed. But we cannot exclude xenophobic tendencies among Indians which, as Vijay Prashad argues, were carried into the diaspora, and may have translated into South African Indians' thinking of Africans as different and lower in scale.

Gandhi occasionally spoke out against racism and discrimination and even commented on the abject plight of the African people, but he did not argue for equality for them. If he did not feel the need to spell out how Indians should relate to Africans, it was because he remained firmly focused on an imperial approach that put India at the center of his thinking. Yet he was keenly aware that oppression against Africans might blow up in the faces of White rulers if they did not face up to the legitimate aspirations of Africans.

How then should we view Gandhi's role as leader? From the beginning he understood that he had to take into account the cultural and religious orientation of the communities he was working with and for. Some like C.M. Pillay, one-time secretary of the Pretoria based Indian Congress, did not get far with the kind of name-calling he engaged in 1898 about Apolygamous Muslims," "ignorant coolies," and "Kathiwar Bunnia" who were agitating for the franchise and equal trading rights."

There were many non-secular organizations which could and did make input in determining community matters even on political issues. An example is a petition submitted to the imperial government in 1909 to protest the indentured system, trade and franchise restrictions, segregated schools, and municipal vagrancy laws by NIC, NIPU, Anjuman Islam, Hindh Sudhar Sabha, Catholic Young men's Society, and Shri Vishnu Temple at Umgeni. Fourteen officials and 1124 others signed the document.

Cultural and political lines often became blurred, as this study has shown. For Gandhi, there were no clear lines of demarcation between politics and religion since action had to have a moral foundation. Gandhi's insistence on truth and transparency was based on religious morality. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was able to work with individuals whose primary interest could best be defined in religious and cultural terms.

If he disagreed with individuals, it was not because of their specific affiliation to a cultural or religious body, but rather because of their interpretation on broad issues. Among Hindus, people like Bhavani Dayal, Pragji K. Desai, Odhav Kanjee and Bhana Parshotam, C.P Luchiram, V.R.R. Moodaly, C. Nulliah, Latchman Panday, Babu Talwantsingh, Ambaram Maharaj, and many others were prominent in religious and/or cultural organizations. Among Muslims, people like Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer, Dawad Mahomed, and Sheik Mehtab acted similarly.

Parsee Rustomjee was one of Gandhi's strongest supporters. We focus on a select few to show their strong cultural and religious affiliations even as they supported Gandhi.

Bavani Dayal was an active member of the Germiston Hindu Yuvak Mandal. He established the Indian Prachini Sabha with the purpose of conducting adult education classes. He became a strong supporter of passive resistance and played an important role in encouraging indentured Indians to strike in October 1913. Pragji K. Desai supported Gandhi strongly. He started out as an influential member of the Tongaat Hindu Dharma Sabha actively promoting the building of a temple and school to preserve Hindu values and traditions.

In 1908, he expressed support for swadeshi; and in endorsing satyagraha in 1910, he outdid Gandhi in his call for sacrifice. His passion for patriotic values was reflected in an imaginary dialogue he wrote in December 1910 between Britain Devi and Hind Devi. He was one of the six educated individuals selected by Gandhi in 1911 to test Transvaal's immigration law, and he courted arrest in 1913 by engaging in illegal hawking. When the Searle judgment was announced in 1913, Desai asked Indians to protect their religion with their lives if necessary. He was a frequent contributor to Indian Opinion.

Odhav Kanjee, one of the founders of SHA, had a hand in the creation of the Durban Indian Fruiterers Association, which supported the NIC in 1908 and the strikers in 1913. Kanjee actively raised money and foodstuff for the strikers. Bhana Parshotam who was also a member of SHA and was affiliated to, among others, organizations such as Indian Chamber of Commerce, Hindu Samshaan Fund, and Sanathan Dharma Sabha in Durban.

In 1912, he launched a fund to raise money for the Nadiad Hindu Anathashram in India. Like Kanjee, he raised money and foodstuff to support strikers in 1913. Parshotam was also a member of the Tavdikar Bhajan Mandal, which honored in 1914 Rev Charles F. Andrews (1871-1940) who had been sent by Gokhale to support Gandhi.

C.P. Luchiram established the United Hindu Association in Cape Town and created a body with a similar name when he moved to Johannesburg. He used this organization to support the passive resistance campaign during Hindu religious festivals like Diwali.

V.R.R. Moodaly was a founding member of HYMA in Pietermaritzburg who devoted his energies to promoting the Tamil language. While we are not sure how he related to Gandhi's political movement, his wife was an active member of the Durban Indian Women's Association which identified with it. Charlie Nulliah, who came as an indentured Indian, was a member of HYMA and the Sanatan Ved Dharma in Pietermaritzburg.

As a rich landowner, Nulliah supported NIPU and was active in promoting civic rights and privileges for Indians living in the city. Lutchman Panday, who served with Gandhi in the Indian Ambulance Corp in 1899 during the South African War (1899-1902), was a member of the Vishnu Temple in Durban. Later, he joined NIPU and CBIA. He and C.R. Naidu were the first South Africans to present the Indian case before the INC meeting in Lahore in 1909.

In 1911, Panday became a member of the Durban Institute for Higher Education. Babu Talwantsingh was closely associated with the Gopala Mandir in Verulam and participated in a panch in 1910 to resolve a dispute between a husband and wife. He supported satyagraha in 1910 and encouraged indentured Indians not to re-enlist for work under contact.

Ambaram Mangalji Thaker, more popularly known as Ambaram Maharaj, presents a unique study of a religious leader responding to Gandhi's political movement in his own way. He held weekly meetings of the Durban Sanathan Dharma Sabha, of which he was president, at which he engaged in religious discourses based upon the Bhagavad Gita. Occasionally he invited guests that included the Theosophists.

The sabha considered establishing a dharmasala for Hindus and consulted Gandhi about it. He was also the vice president of the Natal Brahman Mandal. Ambaram Maharaj had a flair for writing poetry, and won a competition organized by Indian Opinion. The learned priest sang kirtans, which he had composed at public meetings and started a library at the Durban Hindu crematorium.

Ambaram Maharaj spoke in support of satyagraha. He sang a song composed by himself at a meeting organized by KAM to honour those who had been jailed or deported. In 1910, he said that it was the right, honor, and duty of Indians to fight oppression.

Ambaram Maharaj wrote a twenty-four-line poem on unity; the returning deportees were greeted with stirring poetry, "Chalo lewa Point..." (Let's Go to the Point to receive them); and, he recited poetry praising Polak at a KAM meeting.

He also composed a poem on satyagraha and lionized Mrs. Sodha who had been arrested when she tried to join her husband in the Transvaal. Many of the poems and songs he wrote were reproduced in Indian Opinion. They reflected heavily his deep grasp of Hindu philosophy and teaching. Arre Musafir Chetje (Beware Traveler) is an eighty-five line poem, sung in Rag Dhirana, about following a spiritual path.

Imam Abdul Kader Bawazeer enjoyed an honored position as a leading member of HIS and identified himself strongly with the passive resistance movement right from the beginning. As imam, he led the prayers at the Jumma masjid in Johannesburg. In July 1908, he courted arrest for hawking without a license. Over the next fifteen months, he was arrested and jailed three more times.

Bawazeer was not entirely happy with the Compromise of 1908 and was among the first to question the decision in Indian Opinion. His letter in Indian Opinion pointedly raised the question: Did Indians fight for sixteen months only to say to the government, "Please open the offices, we want to register"? Still, he put aside his reservations and worked to prevent greater division among Indians on sectional lines, becoming in the process one of Gandhi's strongest supporters.

Bawazeer chaired the Johannesburg committee of thirty-six that welcomed Gokhale in 1912, and on January 25, 1914, he chaired the NIA mass meeting in Durban at which 3000 supporters endorsed Gandhi's leadership. As we pointed out earlier, he shared Gandhi's broad approach on spiritual matters and moved with his family to the Phoenix settlement where he used to read from the Koran as well as participate in singing bhajans. The imam joined Gandhi at the Sabarmati ashram in India.

Dawad Mahomed was NIC president from 1906 to 1913. Throughout these years, he strongly supported Gandhi and the passive resistance movement. Together with three other individuals, he crossed into the Transvaal in 1908 to test his domicile rights and suffered yearlong imprisonment. While elements within the NIC opposed Gandhi's broadening of the campaign to include the £3 tax, he remained firm in his support. When, therefore, a split occurred in October 1913, he broke away with Gandhi and others to form the NIA of which he became president.

As a Muslim, he was active in Durban's Anjuman Islam and went to Mecca for haj. Gandhi's farewell remarks reflected his assessment of Mahomed as a broadly tolerant and charitable person. Mahomed was present at the home of Bhana Parshotam who had a reception for Swami Shankeranand in 1910 at his Tollgate home. He allowed his son, Hoosen, to study with Gandhi at the Phoenix Settlement and to proceed to London for his law studies.

While Dawad Mahomed played a crucial supporting role, given his position and stature in the Muslim community, a Muslim like Sheik Mehtab used his talents in a different but nevertheless important way. Gandhi and Mehtab were friends from childhood, which suggests that there was nothing unusual for Hindus and Muslims in India to relate closely to each other.

In South Africa, they renewed their friendship, but it was an uneasy one. Still, Mehtab gave a ringing endorsement of the movement and its leaders through his poetry and ghazals. At a KAM meeting in July, Sheik Mehtab read "Satyragrahioni Tarif while his many poems appeared regularly in Indian Opinion.

He wrote a ninety-two-line ghazal paying tribute to over twenty individuals who were directly or indirectly involved in satyagraha ending with gratitude to Amohandas. Mehtab was a natural entertainer who sought to please his audience. Two-thirds into the ghazal, he introduced three lines, which, while they must have caused amusement, also showed familiarity with Fanagalo:

> Ookala chelile zonke mulungu
> Ayifuna
> Manje chela funa Indian-ku

Parsis made up a small handful of South Africa's Indians but thought of themselves as part of India's bailiwick as much as Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi's Diwali message in 1910 touched upon that theme. Instead of taking to Western ways, he said, Indians should honour Muslim, Parsi, and Hindu new years. "**We are of course a single nation of brothers as among ourselves.** "

We should regain that consciousness... This will betoken our fraternal relations and prove that we have become one nation." Parsis came to have great influence on Gandhi. This was largely through the activities of one man, Parsee Rustomjee, with whom Gandhi developed a deep and personal relationship from the first year that he arrived in South Africa. As a businessman of some means, Rustomjee supported many charitable causes without regard to religious affiliation.

There were numerous occasions when his home became a center of one event or another. In the early years, he strongly supported Gandhi through the NIC, of which he was a founding member, and later the NIA when it was created at his residence in October 1913. Parsee Rustomjee was among the sixteen individuals who launched the last phase of passive resistance by crossing into the Transvaal in 1913, and he served in jail for this.

While Gandhi knew and understood the cultural and religious world of his compatriots, he was not well acquainted with the Jewish religious background of two of his closest confidantes, Kallenbach and Polak. His relationship was one of mutual trust and admiration, and this is reflected in his correspondence with them.

Gandhi was so close to Polak that Mrs. Gandhi used to say that he was like her husband's first-born. Gandhi called Polak "Chhota Bhai." Gandhi considered Albert H. West as the "hope of Phoenix", a "silent doer." As we argued in chapter 6, some Indians saw them merely as "Whites" in whom Gandhi's faith was misplaced. This issue created tension and seriously undermined Gandhi's leadership in 1913 and was one of the causes for the split. Gandhi stood by them illustrating his insistence that personal qualities were superior to religious, ethnic, and racial considerations when judging individuals.

In South Africa, Gandhi's experimentation in communal living at the Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm became the basis of ashram life in India. At the ashrams Gandhi insisted on truth, nonviolence, chastity, palate control, non-stealing, non-possession, physical labor, swadeshi, and the removal of untouchability.

His concern for the masses in 1913 would develop into programs for India's villagers in which he attempted to combine ethical universalism with particular nationalism. It was in South Africa that Gandhi developed these views. The ethnic, caste, religious, and cultural make-up of the Indian communities in South Africa offered Gandhi a laboratory in which to experiment, work out, and develop his ideas. Indeed, as Sushila Nayar has said in her assessment of Gandhi, there was "not a single new idea that he was inspired with after leaving South Africa. He developed his ideas and his techniques further in India but he had formulated them all in South Africa

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We are grateful to Professor Herby S. Govinden for providing valuable insights on Christian Indians. See Prinisha Badassy, A Turban and Top Hats: Indian Interpreters in the Colony of Natal, 1880-1910, Honors Thesis, University of Natal, 2002; J. B. Brain's "Religion, Missionaries and Indentured Indians," in Essays on Indentured Indians in Natal, edited by Surendra Bhana, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1991,219-23 and her book, Christian Indians in Natal, 1860-1911: An Historical and Statistical Study, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1983; Herby S. Govinden, "

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A relevant quote is, "Gandhi's peripatetic youth, and the impact it had on creating, sustaining, and popularizing a national consciousness, would seem to suggest that being a displaced subject of imperial rule was consequential to political action—that there was something about being in temporary or permanent exile that nurtured resistance by changing the terms, the very grounds, upon which the violence of colonialism was enacted" in Antoinett Burton, At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Rule Encounter in Late Victorian Britain, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 73.

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Joseph J. Doke, Gandhi: A Patriot in South Africa, New Delhi: Government of India edition, 1992.

SN 2797, Newspaper Clippings, August 20, 1898, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad; see also Burnett Britton, Gandhi Arrives in South Africa, Canton, Maine: Greenleaf Books, 1999, pp. 80, 75, 77, 121, 124, 127, 296-300.

Their names are for NIC, Abdoola Hajee Adam, and Dada Osman; for NIPU P. S. Aiyar, Anthony Pillay, V. Lawrence, L. Gabriel, and J. M. Francis; for Anjuman Islam Ismail Gora and N. M. Kadir; for Hindh Sudhar Sabha S. Goorrosamy Chetty, and S. K. Pather; for Catholic Young Men's Society V. Lawrence, and M. B. Lazarus; and for Shri Vishnu Temple, Lutchman Panday. Indian Opinion 24/7/1909.

Pragji K. Desai wrote in fluent Gujarati a series of articles an imaginary conversation between a lawyer and a farmer on the patriotic responsibilities of people who felt a strong love for "Bharat" Indian Opinion, 4/15/1914, 4/22/1914, 4/29/1914, 5/6/1914, 5/13/1914. 5/20/1914, 6/3/1914.

The poem shows Ambaram Maharaj's depth of knowledge about the language and about Hinduism. He wrote at least seven poems between April 1910 and September 1912 in Indian Opinion. There were almost weekly reports on his activities in Indian Opinion from 1907 to 1913. Some of the more relevant references are: Indian Opinion 10/19/1907, 5/29/1909, 9/3/1910, 10/15/1910, 5/11/1912, 8/31/1912, 12/10/1912, 5/3/1913, 5/17/1913.

For "Vaishnava Jana" Bawazeer used to say "Muslim Jana" for the sake of communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. Raojibhai M. Patel, The Making of the Mahatma, Ahmedabad, 1990, pp. 147-49; Sushila Nayar, Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha At Work, Vol. 4, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1989, p. 682.

Here we are thinking of what Gandhi said at an Ottoman Cricket Club function on June 29, 1912 to honor Mahomed and three others who were going to Mecca "As a Hindu I am glad of their decision to go on pilgrimage. A true Muslim cannot do Hindus harm. A true Hindu cannot do harm to Muslims. Those who are capable of harming their own Indian brethren are neither true Muslims nor true Hindus. I consider any selfless work done in the service of the community as a religious and not a worldly act.... Ostensibly religious act is not godly if not done with a pure heart." Indian Opinion, 7/13/1912, CWMG,

Mehtab followed Gandhi to South Africa, and stayed with him at the Beach Grove home in Durban. Gandhi threw him out, however, after he was found dallying with a prostitute, and for stealing money from the cash box. They made up, but Gandhi was never quite sure about him. When Mehtab published a book of poems in Urdu in 1905, Gandhi refused to give it notice in Indian Opinion. Burnett Britton, Gandhi Arrives in South Africa, Canton, Maine: Greenleaf Books, 1999, p. 393.

The language he used seemed predominantly Urdu, but there were words and phrases that Urdu speakers could not understand.

Chatterjee says that Gandhi missed the message of the prophets, literature outside of the Hebrew Bible, the significance of Seder meal, and forgiveness and reconciliation in Yom Kippur services. Still, Gandhi's Jewish friends were able to work closely with the Indians because they felt displaced. Herman Kallenbach felt so close to Gandhi he said would like to die near him. Henry S. Polak identified with Gandhi's inner struggles even though did not always agree with him on some issues. See Chatterjee Margaret, Gandhi and His Jewish Friends, London: Macmillan, 1992, pp. 168-69. See also CWMG, vol. 96, Supplemantary vol. 6, pp.32, 34-35, 67; Isa Sarid and Christian Bartolf, Hermann Kallenbach: Mahatma Gandhi's Friend in South Africa, A Concise Biography, Selbstverlag, Germany: Gandhi-Information-Zentrum, 1997; H.S.L. Polak's article on pp. 230-47 in Incidents in Gandhiji's Life by Fifty-four Contributors edited by Chandrashanker Shukla, Bombay: Vora & Co., 1949; H.S.L. Polak and Millie Graham Polak, "Gandhi, the Man," Indian Review, October 1929; H.S.L. Polak, "South African Reminiscence," Indian Review Feb., March, May, 1925, Oct. 1926; Gandhi Letters: From Upper House to Lower House, 1906-1914, edited by Gillian Berning, Durban: Local History Museum Education, Number 14, 1994.

Chatterjee Margaret, Gandhi and His Jewish Friends, London: Macmillan, 1992, p. 165.

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Appendix 1, 2, 3

APPENDIX 1

ORGANIZATIONS

A. HINDU

Anavil Mandal, Johannesburg (Nyati and Hindu)

Aryan Literary Association, Pietermaritzburg (Hindus only?)

Bhavik Vishnuites

Colonial Born Hindu Benefit Society, Port Elizabeth

Darjee Dharmsala, Johannesburg (Nyati and Hindu)

Delagoa Bay Luwanas

Delagoa Bay Hindu Mahajan Mandal

Depot Road Shri Thakurdwara & Dharmsala

Gnanvardak Sabha, Stanger

Gujarati Hindu Society, Johannesburg

Hindu Dharma Sabha, East London

Hindu Sabha, Malvern, Durban

Hindu Tamil Institution, Durban, f. 1914

Hindu Progressive Society, Umgeni, Durban

Hindu Satyasang (Satsang) Dharma Sabha, Port Elizabeth

Hindu Samshaan Fund, Durban

Hindu Sudhar Sabha, f. 1905

Hindu Tamil Institute

Hindu Thirukatam Association, Ladysmith, f. 1910

Hindu Young Men's Society, Sydenham

Hindu Young Men's Association, Pietermaritzburg

Hindu Yuvak Samaj, Germiston

Hindu United Association, Cape Town

Hindu United Association, Johannesburg

Kathiawad Arya Samaj, Durban

Madras Indian Association (Hindu?)

Maharastrian Sabha, Pietermaritzburg

Malvern Hindu Sabha

Mauritian and Colonial-born Hindu Benefit Society, Port Elizabeth

Mayavant Association (Hindu?)

Nadiad Hindu Anathashram

Natal Brahman Mandal

Sanathan Dharma Sabha

Sanatahn Dharm Soodhur Sabha, Ladysmith, f. 1908

Sanathan Brahman Sabha, Durban

Sathyajana Sabha Tamil School, f. 1897, Durban

Shri Hindi Jigyasa Sabha, Durban (branches in Mayville and Sydenham)

Shri Sithivinayaga Saiva Samaya Bhakti Bhajane, f. 1905, Pietermaritzburg

Shri Vishnu Hindu Temple

Sva Gnana Pregasa Sabha, f. 1912, Port Elizabeth

Surat Hindu Association, Durban

Tamil Benefit Society, Johannesburg

Tamil Hindu Samsara Bodha Association, f. 1912

Tamil Mahajan Sabha

Tavdikar Bhajan Mandal, Durban

Thakurdwara Hindu Temple Committee

Trikootam Association, Ladysmith

Transvaal Anavil Samaj

Umgeni Hindu Progressive Society

United Hindu Association, Cape Town

United Hindu Association, Johannesburg

United Patidar Association, Johannesburg

Vannik Kstriya Association, Pietermaritzburg (Nyati and Hindu)

Ved Dharma Sabha, Johannesburg

Ved Dharma Sabha, Pietermaritzburg

Ved Dharma Sabha, Port Elizabeth

Ved Dharma Sabha, New Guelderland

Ved Dharma Sabha, Verulam

Verulam Gopalal Mandir

Young Men's Vedic Society, Durban, f. 1912

B. NYATI/SECTIONAL

Anavil Mandal, Johannesburg (Nyati and Hindu)

Aryan Literary Association

Aryan Youth Progressive Association, f. 1910, Pietermaritzburg

Darjee Dharmsala, Johannesburg (Nyati and Hindu)

Delagoa Bay Luwanas

Durban's Darjees

Gujarati Hindu Society, Johannesburg

Gujarati Indian Association

Kathiawad Arya Samaj, Durban

Madras Indian Association (Hindu?)

Matya and Lewa Kunbis

Natal Luwana Niti Dharshak Sabha

Natal Anavil Sabha, f. 1906

Newcastle Tamil Association, f. 1910

Surat Hindu Association, Durban

Tamil Agam, f. 1917

Tamil Protection Association, Pietermaritzburg, f. 1916

Transvaal Anavil Samaj

United Patidar Association, Johannesburg

Vaniakular Kstariya Soceity, f. 1910, Pietermaritzburg

Vannik Kstriya Association, Pietermaritzburg (Nyati and Hindu)

C. MUSLIM

Alipor Masjid

Anjuman Esha-Etul, Depot Road, Durban

Anjuman Fejeh, f. 1895, Johannesburg

Anjuman Islam, Durban

Anjuman Islam, f. 1910, Somerset Strand,

Anjuman Kuvtul Islam, Durban

Anjuman Kuvtul Islam Dadar, Durban

Anjuman Hedayatul Islam

Bodana Masjid

British Indian Mahomedan Association, Mafeking

Dayadara Anjuman Madressa

Diamond Fields Janjira Anjuman Society

Dhabel Anjuman Islam

Dhabel Madressa

Diwa, Kosamdi, and Datal Islamia, Durban

Diwa and Kosamdi Madressa, Durban

Grey Street Madressa, Durban

Habibia Muslim Society

Hamdard Society

Hamidia Islamic Society, Johannesburg

Kanamia Anjuman Islam

Kathor Anjuman Madressa

Kathor Madressa Anjuam Islam

Kathor Mehfil Ronkul Islam

Kathor Mehfil Zintol Islam

Kholvad Jamat

Kholvad Mehfil Saiful Islam

Kokney Muslim League

Ladysmith Islamic Society

Madressa Sokatul Islam Panoli, Durban

Mafile Osmania Cricket Club

Mahomedan Club, Marburg

Mahomedan Debating Society, Dundee

Mahomedan Mastik Society, Durban

Mahomedan Theatrical Group

Mehafil Eslam Mota-Varachha, Pietermaritzburg, f. 1905

Mehfil Islam, Estcourt

Mehfil Islam, f. 1912, Stanger

Mehfil Kuvtul Islam (for Dhalvasi residents in India)

Muslim Labour Association

Mota-Varaccha Society, f. 1905, Pietermaritzburg

Natal Memon Community

Newtown Hamidia Surtee Masjid

Ottoman Cricket Club, Durban (Muslim?)

Panoli Anjuman Islam

Panoli Anjuman Payra (Pairao)

Panoli Shoktul (Savkutuaal) Islam, Durban

Pinetown Mahomedan Society

Point Indian Young Men's Society, Durban

Point Mahomedan Society, Durban

Ranvav Anjuman Islam

Ranvav Ichtul Islam

Ranvav Ikwa-Tul Islam

Shoktul Islam, Durban

South African Janjira Anjuman

South African Moslem League

South African Moslem Association

Stanger Mehfil Islam

Tidul Islam Kosamdi Madressa

Young Muslim Society, Durban

Young Muslim Association, Pretoria

D. SECULAR

Aryan Literary Association, Pietermaritzburg (Hindus only?)

Awakened Indian Society, Cape Town

British India League, Cape Town

British Indian Association, Johannesburg

British Indian Union, Cape Town

Cape British Indian Association

Colonial Born Indian Association, Natal

Colonial Born Hindu Benefit Society, Port Elizabeth

Durban Indian Society

Durban Indian Association

Durban Indian Library

Durban Indian Women's Association

Durban Fruiterers Association

Indian Young Men's National Union, Kimberley

Indian Political Association, Kimberley

Indian Chamber of Commerce, Durban

Ladysmith Farmers Association

Madras Indian Association (secular?)

Natal Indian Congress

Natal Indian Association

Newcastle Indian Organization

Ottoman Cricket Club, Durban (secular?)

Rustenberg United Assembly

South African Indian Association, Cape Town

St. Aidan's Literary and Debating Society, Durban

(Sources: Mainly from Indian Opinion and African Chronicle)

APPENDIX 2

Mehfil Saiful Islam Annual Report

The Mehfil's secretary reported on 15 February 1910.

On 13 February, Kholvad's Mehfil Saiful Islam's annual meeting took place in the library hall. Mr Hoosein Ismail Khota was the chairman. Mr Hajee Moosa Hajee Ahmed Dindar was elected chairman in place of Mr. Hajee Ebrhim Hajee Ahmed Dindar who was in the Transvaal. In place of Mr Hajee Moosa Dindar, Mr. Mahomed Ahmed Badat was elected as member of the subcommittee. Mr. Goolam Ahmed Bihari read the Mehfil's annual report whose main points are as follows.

The names of the trustees, managing board, and subcommittee members are listed at the beginning of the report. The Mehfil's nine objectives and eighty rules are set out. By the year's end, the total of 52 members is made up of one life member, 16 first-class members, 21 second-class members, and 14 third-class members.

Financial Details: When the last report was published, the Mehfil's balance was Rs 2305-15-9. In previous years, the income was made up of Rs 124 in subscriptions, Rs 388-8-0 in gift funds, Rs 796-12-0 in village repairs, and Rs 559-12-0 , and Rs 559-12-0 in Gurba funds. In addition, the sale of unused library books came to Rs 5-6-0, which together with refunded newspaper subscription of Rs 1-10-0 came to a total of Rs 7. [sic] Mehfil's rental from its let-out building was Rs 20. Scrap metal was sold, and this brought a credit balance of Rs 56-12-6 to the building account. For construction work to Mehfil's building, Rs 639-13-1 was borrowed from Mr. Hajee Ebrahim Dindar, and Rs 165 from Mr Ahmed Suleiman Saloojee Patel. In this way, the income for the last 2.5 years was Rs 5063-9-10.

From this amount, the building cost was Rs 3187-0-4, debit of Rs 90 for double credit, Rs 18-12-0 held by Mahomed Essop Teli, and Rs 168-8-6 for the purchase of newspapers, pamphlets, and books for the library, for furniture and its rental of Rs 33-4-0, Rs 11-9-4 for stationery and stamps, Rs 68-10-7 for workers' wages, and miscellaneous expenditure for gatherings and the cost of printing the last report; add up to expenses of Rs 108-4-9, village repairs of Rs 515-5-9, and Gurba fund donations of Rs 304-9-6 over 2.5 years for 685 poor people. The total expenses come to Rs 4536-2-2. These items of income and expenditure leave the Mehfil with a credit balance of Rs 20-14-5 in cash, Rs 281-6-3 in repair fund, Rs 225-3-0 in Gurba fund, totalling Rs 506-9-3 in Mr. Hajee Ahmed Dindar's possession. The total balance as at the end of the year is Rs 527-7-8.

As of now, Mehfil has assets of Rs 3187-8-4 in building, Rs 169-12-0 in furniture, and Rs 202-3-3 in books, adding up to Rs 3598-15-7 in stock and Rs 141-6-0 worth of assorted items donated by 15 members.

This long report will be printed in a booklet. The Mehfil adjourned.

(Source: Indian Opinion, March 26, 1910)

APPENDIX 3

Trust Deed of Mehafil Eslam Mota-Varachha

Memorandum of Agreement made and entered into Pietermaritzburg, colony of Natal, this first day of October 1905, by and between Amod Bayat, Dawood Mahomed Bayat, Ismail Ebrahim Bayat, and Moosa Ebrahim Rawat all of Pietermaritzburg, storekeepers, Mahomed Sulleman Vaid, Mahomed Ebrhaim Seedat of Newcastle, Amod Mahomed Badat Haffijee of Estcourt and Dawood Amod of Umzimkulu, storekeepers, all natives of Mota-Varaccha District, Surat, India.

Witnesseth:

That the above parties have agreed to form a Benevolent Society to be known as The Mehafil Eslam of Mota-Varaccha upon the following conditions, viz.:

That all the parties hereto are the Trustees and Committee of Management of the affairs of the Society:

1. That said Amod Bayat shall be the president and the said Mahomed Ebrahim Seedat the secretary and treasurer of the said Society, but the majority in number of the Committee of Management shall have the right any time and at all times to elect and appoint other members of the Committee to fill the positions of president and secretary and treasurer.

2. It is further agreed that the funds already collected, or hereafter from time to time collected shall be used for the building of schools, assisting persons who are destitute, and for any other purpose which may be decided upon the majority in number of the aforesaid Committee of Management.

3. In the event of the resignation of any one or more of the said Trustees, the retiring Trustee or Trustees shall appoint some other person or persons who are natives of Varaccha to be Trustee or Trustees in his or their place.

4. In the event of the death of any of the Trustee or Trustees then the majority of the remaining Trustees shall appoint as a successor in office either a brother or son of such deceased Trustee or Trustees.

5. All funds belonging to the Society shall be placed in a Bank by the secretary and treasurer to the credit of The Mehafil Eslam of Mota-Varaccha.

6. All cheques shall be signed by the president and secretary and treasurer.

7. The secretary and treasurer shall on the 30th day of June and 31st day of December in each and every year, prepare and transmit to each and every member of the Committee of Management, a full statement of accounts and report showing the true position of affairs of the Society.

8. All the members of the Committee of Management and their successors in office shall render service free of charge to the Society.

9. The secretary and treasurer shall keep a record in a minute book of all proceedings of the said Society.

Thus done and executed at Pietermaritzburg on the day, month, and year first above written, in the presence of the undersigned witnesses.

As witnesses:

Amod Bayat

Parsee E. Cowasjee

Y. S. Vaid

Mahomed Ebrahim Seedat Ismail Ebrahim Bayat D. M. Bayat Moosa Rawat A.M.B. Haffijee Amod Mamoojee Motala M. S. Vaid (*Source: Hassim Seedat Collection*)

Glossary of Terms

agnihotra	rituals of sacrifice with the use of fire
alim (plural **ulama**)	learned men in Islamic religious sciences
anjuman	a Muslim association
arthi	waving of lamps before the alter
bhajan	religious hymn
cha-pani	refreshments
darshana	visual feasting of the gods
Dassera	Hindu festival commemorating Rama's victory over Ravana
Diwali (**Dipavali**)	the Hindu festival of lights
Eid-ul-fitr	festival marking the end of fast observed during month Ramadan
Eid-ul-Zuha	festival to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim

(Bakri-id)	
ghazal	genre of lyric poems originating in Arabia in the late seventh century
haj	pilgrimage to Mecca
homa	rituals of sacrifice
ilm	Islamic knowledge
imam	Muslim priest who leads the prayers in mosque
jamat	Muslim congregation
kavady	religious festival honoring Muruga, son of Lord Shiva
khalifa	a successor of the Prophet Mahomed as head of the Muslim community
kirtan	religious hymn
kom	community
Krishna Jayanti (Krishnajanmastmi)	celebration of Krishna's birthday
madressa	school teaching the Koran in Arabic
majlis	an assembly commemorating the sufferings of the House of Hussain
mandal	association/club
mantra	sacred chants
masjid	mosque

maulana	an Islamic religious scholar
maulvi	a religious leader
mehfil (**mehafil**)	a committee or an organization
Milad-ul-Nabi	festival to honor Prophet Mahomed's birthday
Mohurram (**Muhharum**)	festival commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Mahomed in 680 ACE
mosque (**masjid**)	a place of worship for Muslims
murthi	icons representing gods and deities
namaz	prescribed prayer in Islam
nyati	caste/community
ooros (**urs**)	festival commemorating death of a saint; also term for wedding or fare
panchamrita	liquid confection
pir	spiritual guide in the Sufi tradition
puja	prayers
praja	nation.
prasada	food representing the deity's power and grace
Ramadan (Ramzan)	fast observed during the holy month of the Muslim calendar
Ramnavami	celebration of Lord Rama's birthday
sabha	association

sharia	Islamic law
sandhya	rituals of prayer
Shia	follower of Ali, the first cousin of Prophet Mahomed
Shravan	a Holy month for Hindus dedicated to Lord Shiva
Sunni	Muslim who acknowledges first four Khalifas as successors of Prophet Mahomed
swadeshi	self-reliance through support of indigenous institutions; patriotism
tajjia	decorated miniature mausoleums carried during *mohharum*
qawwali	devotional songs in the Sufi tradition
yagna	sacrifice