

Memorials in Miniature: the exonomia of the Indian National Movement

Shailendra Bhandare

Ashmolean Museum / St Cross College

University of Oxford

The accompanying object (**FIG 1**) is a base-metal jewellery pendant, mimicking a coin. Just like a coin, it is circular, it has a portrait / bust on one side and an inscription on the other. The prototype for this pendant is evidently the silver coinage of India, issued during the reign of George V (**FIG 2**) but the bust of the King Emperor is replaced here with another bust and the reverse design has only the echoes of the elaborate floral scroll on the coins. The inscriptional panel in the centre is replaced with a visually similar panel but it has a very different inscription.

As other essays in this volume demonstrate, ‘coin-like’ objects, such as tokens, charms and badges, draw upon unique aspects of monetary art, design and function and are used in a variety of ways ranging from value substitution to memorialization to messaging and propaganda. Collectors categorize these objects as ‘exonomia’ or ‘para-numismatica’. Apart from visual similarities with coins (and also banknotes), they also share other features such as method of manufacture, shape, form and composition with them. Some of these are culture-specific – for example, ‘temple tokens’, circulated as part of socio-religious networks of pilgrimage and temple visitation, are confined to the wider Indian subcontinent, whereas ‘magic coins’ ingenuously blending spirit representations with Chinese coin designs are very much a feature of the Indonesian archipelago. However, as a general rule, exonomia respond to social, cultural and political contexts through their visuality and that is precisely what makes them anthropological objects of great interest.

The Indian National Movement was perhaps the greatest movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in terms of popular mobilization towards a common political goal. Its inception is usually dated from 1885, when the ‘Indian National Congress’ was founded with a view to seek constitutional redressal to several issues and problems related to government of India as a crown colony and the representation given to Indians in matters to resolve them. However, the Great Revolt of 1857-59 also sets an important watershed in the evolution of Indian national consciousness and activism. The Movement culminated in India’s independence

from colonial rule on 15 August 1947, through salient 'landmark' moments – of both constitutional and revolutionary nature – such as the two Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, the 'civil disobedience', 'non-cooperation' and 'Quit India' movements and acts of revolutionary terrorism, like assassinations, undertaken by both Left- and Right-wing nationalists. The partition of British India into a Hindu-majority (but secular) India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan was also a culmination point for the National Movement.

The mass mobilization that became a characteristic feature of the national movement in the 20th century, drew inspiration from events and actions of the colonial government. Early nationalist leaders, like B. G. Tilak, contributed enormously to stirring up mass national sentiment against colonialism, taking advantage of issues such as the management of the bubonic plague epidemics in the late 1890s, or the decision to divide the province of Bengal in 1906 on communal grounds for supposed ease of administration. The emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the national political scene in the decade of 1910-1920 gave a massive fillip to public mobilization. Gandhi had a huge public appeal as a leader, social reformer and politician. He perfected innovative political techniques and events like 'Satyagraha' around rhetoric of 'passive resistance', 'civil disobedience' and 'non-cooperation'. Alongside Gandhi, there were a number of other leaders of the National Movement with a mass appeal not only for their politics but also for their oratory skills, polemical and journalistic writing and dedication to social reforms. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose stand out amongst these but Left-wing revolutionaries, like Bhagat Singh, also had a cult-like following particularly as they faced the most severe brunt of the colonial legal machine and were executed for their 'terrorist' actions.

The mass appeal that the principles, events and leaders behind the National Movement received was reflected in the public sphere in many ways. The genres of literature, films and art were replete with echoes of the movement. A lot has been written about these; however, precious little exists in the realm of objects of conspicuous public consumption. More recently, visual anthropologists like Chris Pinney have published interesting research on posters and calendars as popular imprints of the National Movement¹. Pinney draws interesting comparisons between bazaar oleographs and aquatint prints of gods and goddesses and how some of the traditional iconographic elements of these well-known depictions were subsumed or superimposed on nationalist leaders and heroes, elevating them to a 'godly' status. However, alongside posters and calendars, there exists a vast corpus of mass consumable objects with comparable art and design genealogies, which awaits scholarly

attention. These objects range from memorabilia, such as commemorative and prize medals, coin-like objects (tokens, medallions and charms), badges, pins and buttons, to cutlery, awards, statuettes, plaques, and sometimes even decks of playing cards, wrist- and pocket watches, pens and matchboxes. Visual memorialization and ‘marking’ of nationalist leaders, their political and social activities and related events, is also seen on post-card vignettes, postal labels and small gifts for occasions like weddings and birthdays as well as ‘exchange objects’ that are usually passed to each other on festive occasions.

All these objects are essentially ‘visual’ – they carry images which are consumed, much as the objects themselves are for whatever their practical purpose. As Pinney observes, ‘seeing’ or ‘sighting’ has a particular significance in Hindu / Indic culture² which gives a certain valency to images that can circulate. Money, in its most common forms such as coins and banknotes, is familiar, functional and fungible. Familiarity makes coins and notes instantly recognizable. Coins and banknotes are therefore ideal visual templates to communicate messages – most generally through the intrinsic aspects of their design, such as motifs and inscriptions that they carry. Trust inspired by these very aspects is crucial in making money acceptable and circulate. To use the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai’s definition and model, coins and banknotes can also be ‘things’³ that have a life and a meaning beyond their intended nature as circulatory exchange media, with the visibility of money playing a crucial role in their transformation and consumption as such.

The subject of exnumia related to the Indian National Movement has received very little attention, if any. In this paper I will describe and contextualize some such objects and argue for alternative histories they can uncover. To slightly modify Pinney’s problematization - “The relevant question is not (only) how these images ‘look’, but (also) what they ‘do’”⁴.

The ‘Industrial and Agricultural Exhibitions’ of the Indian National Congress:

By far the earliest numismatic objects connected to the Indian National Movement are commemorative and other sorts (like prize or excellence) of medals. The spearheading body of the Movement, the Indian National Congress, met annually across India at various cities and towns in ‘sessions’ which deliberated issues and passed resolutions. Ancillary events, focussing on of social and cultural matters, not of direct political consequence, were often organized alongside the main session.

A major supplementary event that accompanied the Congress sessions, particularly in the 1901-1906 period, were the ‘Industrial and Agricultural Exhibitions’. The inspiration for

these was drawn, as Maharaja Sayaji Rao III Gaekwar, the inaugural speaker of the 1902 exhibition in Ahmadabad mentioned⁵, from European exhibitions which showcased material and cultural progress as viewed through ‘advances made in science and technology’. People in India aspired for industrial progress because it brought not only prosperity but also a sense of national pride and achievement. The Congress tapped on these sentiments. The espousing of avenues which exhibited indigenous arts, crafts and industries was therefore to the advantage of nationalist political rhetoric that the Congress was pushing, particularly that of ‘Swadeshi’ or national self-reliance. The exhibitions also played an important role in promoting debates about India’s industrial development and envisaging an ‘industrial future’.

The earliest of these exhibitions was held at the Calcutta session in 1901. Subsequently, similar exhibitions were held in other cities hosting the Congress annual sessions – Ahmadabad in 1902, Bombay in 1904 and Benares in 1905. They promoted the ideals of Swadeshi by encouraging local artisans and businesses to participate in competitions hosted by the organisation. Medals were awarded for various categories, very much in the tradition of the European exhibitions that provided the model. For example, the 1905 Benares Congress exhibition committee advertised the competitions in the *Indian Textile Journal*: “One gold medal for the best flour made by roller machine. One silver medal for the best needle work turned out by an Indian lady.”⁶ Earliest known medals are of the 1902 Ahmadabad exhibition.

Two examples of these exhibition medals are illustrated here, both from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, collection. The first is a bronze medal, given at the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held alongside the Bombay session in 1904 (**FIG 3**)⁷. It is not known who the artist-engraver was, as the medal is unsigned. However, its visuality offers interesting insights into the prevalent artistic conventions that were popular, the artist’s choice of deploying the motifs in a stylistic sense and how these relate to the political stance of the Congress.

On the obverse, we see a ‘mother and child’ image – the mother wears a coronet with the words ‘CONGRESS’ inscribed on it. The child is held in her embrace with drapes which have the words ‘INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION’ on the folds. The mother’s head is lifted, eyes are closed and the two figures press cheeks together, suggesting an intimate bond. The mother sports cascading long hair, wears a sari and wears traditional jewellery. In its essence the motif invokes a European ‘Madonna and the Child’ comparison; however, the realism and

the treatment is very much Indian. It undoubtedly is inspired by the style of Raja Ravi Varma, the famous Indian painter whose art had become extremely popular and accessible through mass-produced lithographs.

The second medal is struck in silver for the exhibition organized alongside the 1905 Benares session⁸ (**FIG 4**). Its obverse also follows an evocative trajectory. It depicts the famous skyline of Benares (or Varanasi, as it is now known) with temple spires and steps to the bathing 'ghauts'. The imprint of such imagery was already in circulation through other mass-produced objects like book and journal engravings and illustrations.

What the reverses of both medals depict bring forth an interesting aspect of how the Congress viewed these exhibitions, and in general, its emphasis on industries as a pathway for India's nationhood. As the historian Peter Hoffenberg has suggested⁹, there were two main visions for the role of industries in India from a nationalist viewpoint: "one embraced large-scale industrial projects to overcome a sense of colonial weakness... The competing image offered accessible, small-scale, and traditionalist forms of technology and production". This dichotomy between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' is readily addressed on the reverse of the 1904 Bombay exhibition medal – the design is neatly divided into eight overlapping annulets, each showing an industrial pursuit, surrounding a central annulet with the map of India showing the location of 'Bombay'. Six of the scenes refer to 'traditional' industries or craftsmanship – carpentry, ironmongery, copper-smithy, and metal-refinery (ostensibly a preamble for making jewellery), ploughing with bullocks and fabric dying. The remaining two represent 'modern' heavy industries – a textile mill with chimneys spewing smoke and a harbour scene, with a steamship docked in a harbour with heavy lifting equipment. The reverse of the 1905 Benares medal is more straightforward – it shows agriculture and weaving, two traditional pursuits but perhaps this choice reflected the fact that Benares was at the heart of an essentially agrarian landscape and weaving silk and brocade fabrics had been a trademark artisanal pursuit in the city for a few centuries.

These medals demonstrate that the choice of what they depict was very much rooted in contemporary ways in which mass-produced imagery circulated. However, that was not the only guiding principle – the design programme of the objects was also indexical to the politics they were a part and product of. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of the artist behind the design of these medals – apart from a tantalizing signature 'AGK' found on the Benares medal.

The Swadeshi Movement and its popular testimonies:

‘Swadeshi’ derives from the Sanskrit compound *Swa + Desh*, ‘one’s own country / nation’ and as a political rhetoric, came to stand for economic self-reliance. As the historian Sumit Sarkar has commented, “In its specifically economic aspect, Swadeshi may be defined as the sentiment - closely associated with many phases of Indian nationalism - that indigenous goods should be preferred by consumers even if they were more expensive than, and/or inferior in quality to, their imported substitutes, and that it was the patriotic duty of men with capital to pioneer such industries even though profits initially might be minimal or non-existent”¹⁰.

As a concept in political economics, Swadeshi was heavily informed by models such as the ‘drain theory’ proposed by Dadabhai Naoroji, that commented on colonial exploitation. Some political thinkers and social reformists, like G. H. Deshmukh alias *Lokahitawādi*, advocated self-reliance in economic matters as early as mid-19th century. Towards the end of the 19th century, colonial compiling of economic data gave a firm statistical basis to economic observations, like the contraction of indigenous industries, and helped to make ‘Swadeshi’ a passionate and radical political movement. Colonial inequities, such as tariff imbalances, also contributed to the sentiment that ‘Swadeshi’ was a way to encourage progress through increasing indigenous production and consumption. In early 20th century, Swadeshi became the principle galvanizing tool against colonial governance decisions like the partition of Bengal. This first wave of political Swadeshi lasted between 1903 and 1907.

Sarkar argues that ‘Swadeshi’, as a political tool, took three forms of actions¹¹: 1. a push for self-development avoiding an immediate political clash; 2. political extremism using direct actions like boycott of foreign goods, or passive resistance; and 3. revolutionary terrorism. He uses the term ‘constructive Swadeshi’ for the first of these courses, espoused by the ‘Moderates’ faction in the Congress. The ‘Extremist’ faction, on the other hand, believed in direct action and actively mobilised public opinion towards political theatrics like burning of imported fabric and clothes.

A remarkable para-numismatic testament to ‘constructive Swadeshi’, are a series of gold tokens struck in the Madras Presidency at the height of the Swadeshi movement. Jewellery made with gold coins or coin-like objects, known as the *Kāsumālai* in Tamil or *Kasula Peru* in Telugu (a necklace made with stringing the objects along a chain) had been a long tradition in Peninsular and South India. In many instances, the precursors of these tokens were exotic

foreign coins, like the Venetian ducats or zecchinos (sequins). An interesting group, purporting to be ‘Swadeshi’ gold tokens, are known from a few extant specimens. Presumably, they were intended to be used in jewellery. They were first brought to light by N Rajendran¹², on the basis of judicial and intelligence reports, contained in government papers, but he did not illustrate any. They were further commented upon by Sanjay Garg¹³, who adduced more information from investigative files in the National Archives of India. Garg also remedied the lacuna in Rajendran’s paper by illustrating some, courtesy private and institutional collections.

Garg’s contribution reveals that the design prototype for these tokens were in fact French 5-franc coins, bearing the portrait of Napoleon III, which had already been imitated into jewellery tokens. The ‘Swadeshi’ designs make no reference to the foreign authority – instead it only copies the floral wreaths from the 5-franc-inspired tokens. The inscriptions these tokens carry identify them as *Swadesi Nishka* or *Swadesi Booshana* (sic.), literally meaning ‘ornament’ or ‘jewel’ and presumably pointing to their use in jewellery. Interestingly they also bear other inscriptions that overlap in sentiments of religiosity and nationalism, like *Sri Tat Sat* or *Aum Tat Sat* (‘That is the Illustrious Truth’), *Sri-Rastu* (‘Prosperity to you’) followed by the word ‘India’. They are also dated, just like coins would be, and the year is in the Kaliyuga Era, current in South India. The era runs 3102 years ahead of the Common Era, counting from the mythical death of Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, as its inception. The extant specimens, illustrated by Garg, do not have any figurative motifs; however, archival sources indicate that tokens with religious figures such as ‘Krishna riding on a cow’ were also produced. Rajendran also mentions a token with the goddess Lakshmi standing on lotus. Some of the tokens mentioned by Garg and Rajendran have the date 5006 in the Kaliyuga era, which would correspond to 1904 CE.

One such ‘Swadeshi’ token is illustrated here from the Ashmolean Museum’s collection (**FIG 5**). It was acquired in 2015 from a numismatic auction and was also included in Garg’s illustrations. Here we see that the obverse inscriptions are *Swadesi Booshana* in exergue and *Aum Tat Sat India* inside a wreath. On reverse, the inscriptions are ‘REGISTERED’, with *Sri Kali 5009* inside a wreath. 5009 in the Kaliyuga Era would correspond to 1907 CE. This date locates the issue of the tokens right in the middle of the Swadeshi movement. One of the main architects of the movement, Bipin Chandra Pal, toured Madras Presidency in this very year and his speeches roused a nationalist fervour in the region.

The chief quandary the colonial government faced about these tokens was whether they were being used as an alternative form of currency and as such could they be regarded as breaking the law. But the weight and design of the Swadeshi tokens was not similar to any circulatory coin and assays done by investigative agencies proved that they had variable gold contents (between 9 and 15 carat). However, they did discover that the tokens were being used to pawn for small credit. Since evidence as to the tokens being used as money was lacking the Government did not take any action under the Indian Penal Code against manufacturing or possessing of these tokens¹⁴.

Swadeshi continued to inspire other smaller objects such as medallets and badges. A base-metal (zinc?) badge shown here (**FIG 6**) depicts the map of India on the obverse. A staff with an inscribed banner is superimposed on the map. The condition of the medal is very poor so the tripartite inscription on the banner is not clearly readable, but most likely the first part is *Shikshak Sangh* ('Teacher's Union') and the last part is *Pune Shahar* ('Pune city'). The slogan *Swadeshi che Wrat Pālā* in Marathi ('Observe the vow of Swadeshi') is emblazoned on the reverse. Although the object is undated, it is most likely manufactured in the early 20th century. Another octagonal and somewhat impressive silver medal (**FIG 7**) shows the image of 'Gaja Lakshmi' (Lakshmi seated on lotus, anointed by elephants on either side) on obverse with the inscription *Shri Lakshmi Poojan* ('worship of the Illustrious Lakshmi') below. On the reverse, there is a Devanagari inscription *Swadeshi Wastu Khareed Karnā É Apnā Param Dharm Ré* (sic.) ('To buy Swadeshi goods is our most righteous duty').

It is interesting to note that in case of both these objects, the choice of visual and/or textual vocabulary in their design suggests a quasi-religious attitude towards Swadeshi. 'Wrat' in Marathi denotes keeping to a permanent or transient vow, that is usually religious, that would come with its religious and social paraphernalia, like prescriptions, rituals and gatherings. The worship of Lakshmi is an important ritual, particularly for the mercantile classes, during Diwali. Socio-religious occasions like this were conspicuously chosen to promote the Swadeshi rhetoric among the masses. Mass-produced and mass-consumed 'money'-like objects played an important role in relaying messages.

Gandhi memorabilia:

Mahatma Gandhi, India's 'Father of the Nation', was by far the most popular leader of the Indian National Movement. His immense public appeal was not restricted to India but was and is a global phenomenon – he is reportedly the most frequently appearing person on

postage stamps of the World, second only to the late Queen Elizabeth II. Unsurprisingly therefore, there exists a vast corpus of exnumia objects that feature him. It will certainly not be possible to enlist many here; however, I will focus on some for their unique visual and consumptive characteristics and historical context. Some of these overlap with the discussion so far, particularly regarding Swadeshi, because Gandhi made economic self-reliance a cornerstone of his political doctrine and actions. His public appeal also gave rise to several eponymous objects of mass consumption – pen nibs, buttons, caps, cloth, soaps and detergents, dairy products, comestibles – and almost all had a Swadeshi appeal.

Gandhi usually is instantly recognizable by images taken in his older life – his bald, bespectacled, grandfatherly look with a child-like smile is well captured in these likenesses. He is also depicted symbolically – the *Charkha* or the spinning wheel that became indexical with his popularity and politics often accompanied his bodily image or even substituted him in many instances.

While the later image of Gandhi is the one that has come to stay with us, his early images are not equally famous or familiar. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, where he had been living for more than two decades and had already made a name as an anti-colonial political leader in 1915. His novel ways of articulating political protests had created a certain buzz even among the colonial establishment. They preferred his mild, persistent and humane methods, often steeped in deep-rooted socio-cultural practices and philosophies, over the more radical ways other leaders like Tilak had been advocating. Gandhi received a rapturous welcome in Bombay with a grand reception thrown for him by J. N. Petit, a prominent Bombay *Sethia*. It is the image of Gandhi taken at this time that perhaps is his earliest portrait that went into public consumption. Here we see Gandhi dressed in a Kathiawadi (Western Gujarat) turban and a full-length Western Indian attire, complete with a dhoti, a kurta and a shoulder-covering stole.

Gandhi's mentor, the 'Moderate' Congress leader G. K. Gokhale, famously asked him to take a 'gap year' in India, during which Gandhi abstained from politics and travelled across the subcontinent. While he visited Rabindra Nath Tagore in Shantiniketan, near Calcutta, news arrived of the sudden demise of Gokhale and the 'gap year' was cut short. It is widely assumed that it was Tagore who first addressed Gandhi as a 'Mahatma' during his stay, although a few earlier references are known, including one by the physician, surgeon and lawyer Pranjivan Mehta in 1909¹⁵.

The first is the jewellery pendant we started with, from the Ashmolean Museum's collection – it brings these two aspects, the early image of Gandhi and the epithet 'Mahatma', together (**FIG 1**). It comes from the bequest of Hugh de S. Shortt, an eminent numismatist specializing in South Asian coins. On obverse, we see Gandhi's portrait wearing the Gujarati / Kathiyawadi turban and stole. The reverse is evidently copied from a coin-design – the floral border draws inspiration from Indian silver coins of George V, first issued in 1911. In the centre, we have a crudely written Devanagari inscription, *Shri Mahatma Gandhi*. Very likely the pendant was manufactured soon after Gandhi's return to active politics in India.

Since the pendant is cast in a base-metal yellowish alloy it is most certainly intended for cheap jewellery. The fabric and the appearance of the object is also indicative of a mediocre craftsmanship. However, it is precisely these two aspects which give it its importance – as a cheap, mass-produced object based on money design, it at once taps the poorer end of the market and the popular penchant for coin jewellery. The fact that Gandhi's image circulates on it replacing the King Emperor is in itself a worthwhile intervention, suggesting the reach of Gandhi's popular appeal in mobilizing the masses.

Another small silver / white metal piece bearing the bust of Gandhi wearing the turban is worthy of a note, because it is evidently copied from a Burmese coin (**FIG 8**). On the obverse, we see the frontal portrait of a turbaned Gandhi, with 'MAHATMA GANDHI' on either side. On the reverse is a representation of a fan-tailed peacock, with letter O, N and S interspersed with Burmese characters. What they stand for is not clear, but the Burmese inspiration for the token is – the fan-tailed peacock appeared on first Burmese coins to be produced in a mechanized mint, established in Mandalay, by king Mindon Min in 1865, as his royal symbol. It was reclaimed by the government of British Burma after Burma was separated from the Indian Empire in 1935, as a symbol of resistance by the anticolonial activists, as a symbol of the Japanese occupation government during 1941-1945 and finally, as the symbol of the Burmese nation after independence from Britain in 1948.

Gandhi travelled to Burma (Rangoon) three times in his life – in 1902, 1915 and in 1929. Of these, the last visit was the only visit that was purely political in nature and Gandhi toured the country as a national leader. The 1915 visit was undertaken as part of the 'gap year', bracketed by Gandhi's stay with Tagore at Shantiniketan. Rangoon was home to Dr Pranjivan Mehta, an old friend of Gandhi and later, his political sympathizer and in the 1915 and 1929 visits to Rangoon, Gandhi stayed with him. Gandhi's activism, particularly pertaining to the

Swadeshi cause, was a great influence on Burmese nationalists. As early as 1918, the Burmese monk U Ottama, while studying in India, was attracted to Gandhian ‘practical politics’ like the Satyagraha in Champaran. In 1920, a students’ strike, opposing administrative and curricular changes accompanying the change in status of the Rangoon College to a full university by the University Act, led to the eventual amendment of the act. The ‘Thakin Movement’ led by Burmese nationalist U Chit Hlaing, that followed the strike, drew direct inspiration from Gandhian modes of political resistance. The small token with the early portrait of Gandhi bears a testament to these turbulent times in Burmese nationalist politics¹⁶.

A third instance of Gandhi’s early bust wearing a turban is found on a hitherto unpublished bronze medal (**FIG 9**). This medal is important in many ways – one, unlike the previous two objects it bears a date; two, it marks the Gandhi’s 50th birthday in 1919 and three, it is issued to mark the Swadeshi exhibition organized in Amreli, which was located not in British India, but in the princely state of Baroda. This adds an interesting anti-colonial dimension to the medal – the princely states were widely regarded as stooges of the paramount power, however there were exceptions. Sayaji Rao III (1875-1939), the Maharaja of Baroda had great sympathies for the nationalist cause. The fact that an exhibition of ‘Swadeshi Crafts and Industries’ to mark the 50th birthday of Gandhi could be organized in his state adds to his reputation as a progressive anti-colonial royal. As the inscription on the reverse of the medal suggests, the exhibition was organized by the ‘Amreli Sevak Mandal’ (Servants’ Society of Amreli), of which not much is known, except for the fact that it was reorganized in 1937 from by K. J. Chitalia, a local Gandhian leader¹⁷.

Badges – interesting exonomia testaments

Badges form part of the exonomia repertoire because they are produced using the same techniques as coins – by pressing a piece of metal between dies, or by impressing it with a single die, or by casting in a mould. Unlike coins, however, they come in different shapes and sizes. Badges primarily serve as identification markers, and in the context of the Indian National Movement, they are associated with events, groups or societies or particular roles. Being small and often made of inferior metal, badges are usually far more rare than larger exonomia objects like medals or tokens. A few examples of badges, noteworthy not only for their visual details but also for the context, as described and discussed below.

1. The ‘Hindi Swarajya Sangha’ badge (**FIG 10**) –

this dainty heart shaped badge has a figural representation of personified India, often called *Bharat Mata* or *Hind Mata* ('Mother India') on one side, while the other bears the Devanagari inscription *Hindi Swarājya Sangha*, placed above a lotus and bracketed by two tall-stemmed lotus buds. The figure of personified India has the English words 'HOME RULE' on either side.

'Hindi Swarajya Sangha' was the Marathi name for the 'Indian Home Rule League', a political organization co-founded in 1916 by B. G. Tilak and his associate G. S. Khaparde, along with Ms. Annie Besant. They launched the 'Indian Home Rule' movement, along the lines of the Irish Home Rule movement, advocating for a self-governing status within the British Empire for India. Politically, it posed as an alternative for mobilizing public opinion in the anti-colonial cause, when the Indian National Congress had irreparably split between the 'Moderate' and the 'Extremist' factions. The 'Home Rule' movement also provided a platform for political relaunch for Tilak who returned to India after serving a six-year sentence for sedition in Mandalay, Burma. Tilak's attempts of bringing these factions together had largely been unsuccessful owing primarily to Tilak's own firebrand background as a former leader of the 'Extremist' faction.

The 'Home Rule' movement attracted many members of both factions of the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, who had been allied since the Lucknow Pact of 1916. This was indeed a remarkable achievement of Annie Besant. Ms. Besant was arrested in 1917 and it led to nationwide protests. Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India, announced a declaration on 20 August 1917 which stated that "progressive realization of responsible government in India" was the policy of the British government. This declaration paved the way for the 'Montague-Chelmsford Reforms' of 1919. Ms. Besant was largely satisfied with the British response, Tilak died in 1920 and Gandhi came forth as the pre-eminent leader of Indian national resistance after 1918. All these factors led to the gradual demise of the 'Home Rule' movement.

The representation of the *Bharat Mata* on the badge represents a distilled visual impression of the Home Rule movement. The *Mata* has all the typical features of an Indian goddess, including four arms with attributes in three of them. In one of her hands the goddess carries a trident, while in the other two, she carried a paper and a pen. The fourth hand rests by her hip without an attribute. These attributes epitomise the unity between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists' – the trident as a weapon alludes to the 'Extremists' while the pen and paper

refer to the constitutional and mild methods favoured by the ‘Moderates’. The tradition of depicting the ‘Mother India’ with varied attributes can be traced back to her famous representation, painted by Abanindra Nath Tagore in 1905, where she is depicted holding a cloth, a rosary, a paddy sheaf and a manuscript in her hands¹⁸.

2. A ‘Satyagrahi’ badge (FIG 11)–

Satyagraha, literally ‘insistence / hold on Truth’, was a uniquely Gandhian blend of non-violent actions directed towards a political or civil goal. In Gandhi’s own words,

“Truth (*satya*) implies love, and firmness (*āgraha*) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement *Satyagraha*, that is to say, the ‘Force which is born of Truth’ and Love or non-violence”¹⁹.

Gandhi insisted on the sanctity and purity of means to achieve aims, sometimes even emphasizing the means more than the aims, unlike Tilak who openly advocated any means to achieve his aims. The techniques of *Satyagraha* were perfected by Gandhi while he took on the racist colonial regime in South Africa. After returning to India, he famously led *Satyagrahas* in Champaran (1917) and at Kheda in Gujarat (1918) to organize protest against unfair and brutal colonial agrarian taxation.

As a popular form of public resistance and protest, *Satyagrahas* became the norm over the course of Gandhi’s rise as a national leader. A series of *Satyagrahas* followed Champaran and Kheda – the most famous being the ‘Salt *Satyagraha*’ of 1930 when Gandhi mobilized public opinion against the salt tax. The ambit of protest through *Satyagrahas* was not confined to anti-colonial politics alone. *Satyagrahas* such as the Vaikom *Satyagraha* of 1924-25 were directed against caste discrimination and inequality practised by temples in Kerala. People who took part in *Satyagrahas* were called ‘*Satyagrahis*’ and their conduct during the protest was often regulated by a systematic and rigid code, which emphasized truth, non-violence, tolerance, total abstinence and sometimes celibacy.

The ‘*Satyagrahi*’ badge evidently identifies a participant in a *Satyagraha*. It bears the words ‘*Satyagrahi*’ in Devanagari and Urdu around a crescent in the centre and a lotus in bloom below. Unfortunately, it is undated so we cannot ascertain for certain to which of the many *Satyagrahas* it can be attributed to – however just like the ‘Home Rule League’ badge, what it depicts has subtle hints at the politics encoded in its visual details. The juxtaposition of Devanagari and Urdu, as well as the crescent and the lotus, suggests Hindu-Muslim unity that

was the backbone of the Congress' secular politics. The Indian Muslim League claimed to be the sole interlocutor of Muslim interests in India and sought redress of political injustices on communal grounds. This was antithetical to the Congress' position, however gradually the two parties drifted apart to be ideological opposites of each other as Indian politics became segregated more and more on communal lines. Ultimately, this resulted in the partition of India at the time of independence in 1947.

3. The 'Wānar Sena' badge (FIG 12) –

The earliest contribution of Indira Nehru, the daughter of Jawahar Lal Nehru (who later became the Prime Minister of India as Indira Gandhi), to the Indian National Movement was the formation of a young children / youth group allied to the Congress. Drawing inspiration from the epic Ramayana, the group was somewhat mischievously called the 'Wānar Sena', or the 'Monkey Army', referring to the army of monkeys that facilitated Rama's victory over Ravana the demon king of Lanka. Apparently, the name was suggested by Kamala Nehru, Indira's mother²⁰.

The 'Wānar Sena' was formed in April 1930 and had more than a thousand members, all said to be close to Indira's own age, pre- or early teens. They performed ancillary duties in Congress events, like providing food and water for protesters, sewing and hanging flags and bunting and writing letters and petitions for prisoners who could not write. But there is also evidence that they eavesdropped on the police, circulated banned or proscribed literature and acted as informants and messengers between activists.

The badge is shield-shaped and shows a monkey carrying a flag, with the words 'Wānar Sena' inscribed in Devanagari to the left. Although the detail on the flag is not visible, it is clearly tripartite and therefore unmistakably the flag of the Congress. These badges may well have served to identify 'Wānar Sena' members at events like Congress sessions, protest marches or *Satyagrahas*. It is an astonishingly well-preserved testament to a unique effort in the Indian National Movement and also to the fact that the appeal of the Congress had penetrated even to young children, drawing them into the nationalist cause.

Exonumia of the 'other side': the Muslim League and Pakistan movement

Far rarer than the exonumia related to the Indian National Congress and its leaders or offshoots, are the objects connected with bodies that were the Congress' political rivals. The most noteworthy of these is the All India Muslim League. Established in 1906 to represent

the political interests of Muslims of India, it claimed to be the sole interlocutor for them by the 1920s. The most vocal and important leader of the League was Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1878-1948) who resigned from the Congress, as a reaction to Gandhi's rise to political prominence, and made the League his main political platform.

The League organized its own sessions much like the Congress. In the late 1930s, the League embraced the 'Two Nations Theory' that regarded Hindu and Muslim populations in India as two different and distinct 'nations' within the subcontinent and advocated a separate homeland for the Muslims. In the 1940 Lahore session, the Muslim League formally committed itself to creating an independent Muslim state which would include Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, the North West Frontier Province, and Bengal, and which would be 'wholly autonomous and sovereign'. This state was to be named 'Pakistan'.

The League managed to mobilize Muslims of these regions into a political movement for Pakistan, although many Muslims also remained tied to the Congress and its inclusive and secular brand of nationalism. The Indian anticolonial politics in the 1940s took turns that ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan on the eve of independence on 15th August 1947. As the founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah became the first Governor-General of the new nation.

Two exnumia objects with contexts to the Muslim League, the Pakistan movement and Muhammad Ali Jinnah are presented here. The first is a badge for the League from the Ashmolean's collection (**FIG 13**). It was acquired, very interestingly, from a itinerant coin dealer who set up his stall in a local antiques and bric-a-brac market in Oxford in 2015 so it had obviously travelled to the UK. In its visual aspects it could not be more different than the Congress 'Satyagrahi' badge discussed above – it has the slogan *Allahu Akbar* ('God is Great') and the inscription *Muslim Leeg* in Urdu engraved on it, and a flag with the Islamic symbol of 'crescent and star'. It is possible that this badge served as an identifier for a delegate attending a session of the League and the exclusionary nature of its design is very much in order with the League's politics.

The second object is an aluminium medal which probably also served as a badge, judging by the small hole at 12 o'clock (**FIG 14**). It depicts Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his very familiar image, wearing a suit jacket, a necktie and a woollen cap, popularly called as the 'Jinnah cap'. His look is austere, befitting the political hardliner he was. On the reverse, we see the map of the British 'Indian Empire', with Burma shown as a separate entity. The 'crescent and

star' flag of the League flutters at top right. Also outlined and marked are the Muslim-majority areas, roughly corresponding to the League's demands of the Muslim homeland. One of them, eventually to correspond to West Pakistan, has the inscription *Pakistan Zindabad* ('Long Live Pakistan') in Gujarati while the other, corresponding to East Pakistan, has the name *Pakistan* written over it in Urdu. The rest of the Indian mainland is identified as 'Hindustan' and a derogatory slogan, *Hindustan Murdabad* ('Death to Hindustan'), is inscribed over it in Gujarati. The choice of this depiction as well as the tone of the inscription is guided by the communal 'Two Nations' rhetoric that the Muslim League espoused in the late 1930s. Burma was separated from the 'Indian Empire' by the Government of India Act of 1935, so it is quite certain that the medal-badge was manufactured afterwards. In his speech at the Lahore session in 1940, Jinnah famously declared – "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature ... It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes ... To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state"²¹. This is precisely echoed in the design of the object.

Epilogue:

The paper offers only a tiny glimpse into the exnumia of the Indian National Movement. Inspired by money in aspects of form, use and circulation, these varied objects stand a testimony to how mass-produced and seemingly 'common' objects can uncover a range of social, economic and cultural contexts associated with the growth, spread and consumption of Indian nationalism, through their visuality. The depictions they bear and the inscriptions they carry, much like coins and banknotes, are loaded in multifarious ways. Together, these aspects make these rather simple objects into 'memorials in miniature'.

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