ABSTRACT

OF

PUBLIC OPINION AND INDIA POLICY,

1872 - 1880

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, for the most part, is a discussion of the Indian press discussing the policies of the Government of India. I believe that, within the limits set by its sources, it is an attempt at a comprehensive understanding of the Indian press in the 1870's. We have so far only a very few general statements of the subject and as they cover a much longer period, they are necessarily sketchy. There are a few articles dealing with particular aspects of the subject, but they are necessarily incomplete.

In dealing with this subject, I have derived great benefit from my study of what are called Part B Proceedings of the Government of India, now preserved at New Delhi. These records were not considered important enough to be sent to London, but they give details of circulation, editorship etc. of the Indian papers which are new and unexplored. Together with that I have studied the 'native newspaper reports' compiled by government translators, which give a total picture of the Indian press. This series of documentation has also not been used intensively by researchers so far.

In addition to these two kinds of records, I have tried to understand the implementation and effects of official
policy by examining the relevant volumes of proceedings, private papers, local reports, especially those kept now in Calcutta, and old sets of newspapers preserved in India and England. It has been my attempt to show that a study of the Indian press in the 1870's helps us in an important way to understand this missing decade of Indian history. There were no exciting events in this period, but there was an important process. The government by a flow of legislation touched Indian life at different levels over wider areas than before. The local, regional societies, spread over the subcontinent were stirred up. Although there were considerable variations in the reactions, there was a new awareness among Indians of the government, and in a certain sense a new feeling of common purpose. This was something broader and less articulate than nationalism; it was something more political and precise than the cultural discussion of the earlier decades of the century.

I have tried to understand this diffuse phenomenon, by examining the public discussions round official policy which came to a definable focus in the decade. Thus the attempt to persist with the income tax provoked a unified outburst in India. The Indian and the Anglo-Indian press were at one and there was support for them from sections of the British press as well. It has been said that the Indian zamindar and the British planter were the people behind this
agitation but the documentation shows that ordinary people were affected just as much and resented this new imposition.

A second theme for discussion was the expansion of municipal government. The Government of India was concerned not merely with better sanitation but also with new methods of raising local taxes. In certain areas like Bombay and Calcutta, the Indian public attempted to turn this to political advantage but from much of the country the reaction was once again of resentment against a new attempt on the purse of the ratepayer.

A third theme which was concerned with revenue was the controversy regarding the import duties on cotton. These duties which were thought to be protecting the infant Indian textile industry and earning good revenue for the Government of India were removed at the instance of Manchester. Public reactions in India were sharp and the country rallied to the mill-owners of Bombay. These mill-owners however retained their unimpeded progress to prosperity, and were unaffected by the change.

A fourth major controversy in this decade came over what was called the Baroda affair. The Gaekwar of Baroda, an altogether unworthy ruler, attempted to poison, or so it was alleged, the British Resident at his court. He was tried by a judicial commission, and deposed. This caused intense
annoyance to the public which had little doubt that the Gaekwar was worthless, but would not have him removed because he was an Indian prince.

A fifth topic for discussion was provided by the criminal procedure bill of 1873. Through this the government attempted to tighten up its administration of justice. Most men in India however saw in it a reinforcement of the police and the magistrate who were their natural antagonists. In this lively debate the Indian public reassessed as it were the whole system of justice and found it wanting.

Lastly by passing the vernacular press act in 1878 the government attempted to control the Indian language papers. For the first time it acknowledged how seriously it was taking the criticisms in the Indian press. This in turn obliged the Indian papers to take stock of the situation, and see how far they had strayed from the earlier discussions of culture. The stage was thus set for the tensions of the nationalist decades.
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PREFACE

This is a study of the effects of certain aspects of India: policy on the Indian press, vernacular and Anglo-Indian. I have only dealt with those aspects of policy which concerned the public judging from the varied and voluminous reactions in the press. Another consideration in the choice of these problems has been the extent to which they came to a focus during the decade under study, 1870 to 1880. A negative example would be the agitations in the press with regard to the demand for admitting Indians into the civil service. This was a more or less constant demand during the seventies and the various vernacular newspapers referred to it - sometimes with vigour, at other times perfunctorily - almost at regular intervals. But nothing happened to bring the problem to a crisis. Although Lytton took it up with concern at one stage during his viceroyalty declaring that this was the issue which bothered Indians, he soon dropped it without ceremony. I have, therefore, left this problem out of account. Similarly, on the Afghan question there were some reactions, particularly in the Muslim sections of the vernacular press, but the vernacular press act, which coincided with important developments in Afghanistan, was far more successful in bringing all the Indian papers together in discussing their predicament. So the policy towards
Afghanistan did not seem to me to qualify for discussion. Reactions beyond the press, to the same policies, have also been considered. Thus villagers, who generally did not read or write, complained against their tehsildars to their collectors and commissioners. This was of course also reaction to official policy. Wherever possible these have been taken into account as an important part of a study of public opinion. I have also discussed the efforts of the urban political Associations to make themselves heard by the government through memorials, petitions and organized Town Hall meetings. But the growth of these Associations has not been dealt with as Dr. B.B. Majumdar has done a detailed study of that in his book Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature, 1818-1917 (Calcutta, 1965). Dr. A. Seal's The Emergence of Indian Nationalism (Cambridge, 1968) helps to a greater understanding of the workings of these Associations, their relations and their rivalries.

It has not been my intention in this study to examine the background to the formulation of policy but only to examine the implementation of it and the reactions to it. In this connection it is important to note that India policy, in the later nineteenth century, was to a great extent the product of a London-Calcutta axis and not wholly a matter governed from England. Much of course depended on
the personalities of the people concerned. A strong secretary of state gave Whitehall the upper hand which only a firm viceroy could win back for Calcutta. With the Duke of Argyll at the India Office Calcutta was on the whole left free to decide for itself the policies the Government of India was to pursue. The situation changed with Lord Salisbury who was prepared to go far enough to reject an act already brought into existence in India.

I thank the Principal and Fellows of Somerville College for helping me with a grant for my researches in India. I also thank the Trustees of the Beit Fund for generous help towards my research. In writing this thesis I owe a deep gratitude to Miss Agatha Ramm and to Dr. Sarvepalli Gopal.
List of Abbreviations

A.R. Administrative Reports [by Provinces].
Mun.R. Municipalities Reports.
S.V.P. Selections from Vernacular Newspapers of North West Provinces, Oudh, Punjab and Central Provinces.
List of Indian Terms

acharya = teacher
amlah = clerk of a civil court
beegha = Hindu land-measure, approximating to 3025 square yards or 5/8 of an acre.
chakran = entailed land
halalcore = 'one who eats what is lawful', applied euphemistically to a person of very low caste, a sweeper or a scavenger
havildar = a sepoy non-commissioned officer, corresponding to a sergeant
kharita = an official letter of complaint
khubber-ka-kaguz = newspaper
malangis = salt manufacturers
mookhtar = an authorised agent or attorney
patshala = village school
sethia = a merchant or banker
sudder diwani = civil court of appeals
syce = a groom
vakil = an attorney.
CHAPTER I. THE PRESS, THE PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT

In the year 1768 a notice was hung up on the door of the Council House at Calcutta which read:—

To the Public. Mr. Bolts takes this method of informing the public of the want of a printing press in this city being of great disadvantage in business and making it extremely difficult to communicate such intelligence to the community, as is of the utmost importance to every British subject, he is ready to give the best encouragement to any person or persons who are versed in the business of printing to manage a press, the types and utensils of which he can produce.¹

Had the same Mr. Bolts, a romantic German adventurer for some time in the service of the East India Company, been living in the 1870's, he would almost certainly have been overwhelmed by the number of newspapers then circulating in India, whatever his reaction to their merits. In 1874-75 there were a total of 248 newspapers in the country: 95 in Bengal, 55 in Bombay presidency, 35 in the North Western Provinces, 22 in the Punjab, 8 in Oudh, and 1 in the Central Provinces and 32 in Madras presidency.² They had sprung up

over the last decades since the year 1816 when
the first of them made its appearance.¹

The chief characteristic of these early newspapers
was their concern for society. Some wanted to educate
society, and others wanted to change it. There were some,
on the other hand, which upheld traditional society and
preached for its continuance in defiance of the reformists.
This was true of most parts of the country. In Bengal,
however, in the thirties newspaper battles gained more
prominence than elsewhere because of the excitement which
gathered round Ram Mohun Roy and was kept alive by the Young
Bengal breakaway movement. Each faction had its newspapers.
Ram Mohun's civilizing campaign was carried out through news-
papers such as the Sambad Kaumudi (Lotus of News, 1819-40),
the Brahmanical Magazine, which began in 1821 but disappeared
soon afterwards, and the slightly later Persian Mirat-ul-
Akhbar (Mirror of News), all his own.² The Young Bengal
chose the Gynanneshan (Search after Knowledge), started in
1831, to teach the Hindus the science of government and
jurisprudence. Such was their enthusiasm, and their

of Indian History, Vol. 17 (1938), p. 368; Catalogue of
Newspapers and Periodicals in the Historical Section of
the All-India Exhibition (Calcutta, 1948), unpaginated,
at the National Library, Calcutta.
reverence for knowledge, that for the first thirteen years of its existence this weekly newspaper was distributed free among the 'educated of Bengal'. Presumably these were the English-educated men and women, as Gynanneshan was printed in double columns, one in English and the other in Bengali. Indeed, all forms of European learning were a Young Bengali passion. An opponent of all social change was the Samachar Chandrika (Moon of Information, 1821), edited by a true-bred Sanskrit scholar who, for twenty-five years, upheld with relish the burning of widows (technically known as sati) and all other practices of the old Hindu regime. In 1824 he filled six columns of the Chandrika with a translation of the discussion of sati in the House of Commons, and wrote six more in its defence. But while he was prepared to consider Ram Mohun Roy as a serious threat to the Hindu way of life, he was not really concerned over the pranks of the Young Bengalis whom he discarded as a group of 'Chittagong Feringis' while discoursing on the evil effects of English learning on the Hindu mind. It is important to mention


2. Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government containing Returns relating to publications in the Bengali language in 1857, no.32, p.35. [Hereafter referred to as Selections from the Records of Bengal.]
here that the Samachar Chandrika was the most important newspaper of its time, enjoying a high circulation which fluctuated between 200 and 250 in the forties and fifties. In the wake of this social controversy many other newspapers sprang up in succession, most of them less exciting and more ephemeral. There were the Ratnabali (String of Gems), Dibakar (Sun), Gunakar (Quarry of Virtues), and the Sambad Purnachandrododay (Full Moon of News) of the years 1832 to 1838. With the exception of the last one, all the others lived and died within those six years. Most of these were in favour of sati; only a very few unknown elements were on Ram Mohun's side.

Another prevailing enemy of the traditional paper was the Christian missionary, the first being the Hindu reformer. Most of these newspapers reflected an anti-Christian note, to say the least. The editor of the Samachar Chandrika once congratulated himself in his columns for not believing the report supposed to have been current in society 'that the missionaries received Rupees 10,000 for every convert they made'. However men of the other camp, Ram Mohun Roy and his sympathisers, also demonstrated antipathy for the propagators of Christianity.

1. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
2. Ibid., p. 35.
As the years passed, new and old Bengali newspapers persevered in their interest in society although with changing foci. A new concern was for the peasants in the villages, for their sufferings under the indigo-planters which mofussil newspapers, appearing for the first time in the 1840's, took up. More attention was given to indigenous literature, to the discoveries of European science, women's education and moral instruction, against drinking alcohol and gambling at cards. The Sarba Subhakari (Universal Benefactor, 1850), the Satya Pradip (Lamp of Truth, 1850), the Education Gazette (1856) and the Tattwabodhini Patrika (Journal of Fundamental Understanding, 1872) carried the new word. The Banga Darshan (Vision of Bengal) was also interested in literature. Similar trends in social thinking were evident in the newspapers of Bombay as well. Controversy over social reform was confined solely to the Parsis, and for themselves alone, in these early decades. The appearance of the Rast Goftar (Truth Teller) in 1851 marked the beginnings of this controversy, as indeed it was meant to do. Till then the Jam-e-Jamsheed


(Cup of Jamshed) had concentrated on Parsi society, having come into existence in 1832. But the Jam stood for orthodoxy and was opposed to any outside influence on the Parsi mind. It was anti-Christian as well as anti-Muslim. The Parsis were to remain a closed community, prosperous and charitable among themselves. The Jam had a few opponents but none were very successful. The Bombay Gazette, one of the earlier Anglo-Indian journals, had, in May 1839, gone out of its way to support the conversion of two young Parsis to the Christian religion. This angered the Jam-e-Jamshed so that it led a campaign for the withdrawal of all Parsi subscribers from the Bombay Gazette.¹ The other opponent was the Chabook (Whip), also a Parsi journal, which was no respecter of traditional sanctions within a society. But the Chabook was more hostile than reformist. Keeping true to its title, it struck terror, with its storming against abuses; but it did not help to reform. The Rast Goftar was the first to show 'the true way to Zoroastrians'. A society had been formed in 1850 to purge the Parsi religion of its superstitious practices. This reformist group found a companion in the Rast Goftar. The need for social and 'secular' reform was felt to be so great that the first few numbers

the proprietors of the Rast Goftar were distributed free, losing 10,000 rupees in the process.\(^1\) Other newspapers acknowledged the same need with their appearance. Noted among them were the Satya Prakash (Expresser of Truth, 1852), an extension of the Rast Goftar in urging reform, and the Stri Bodh (Women's Guide, 1857), which advocated the education of women and greater freedom for them in society.\(^2\) One aspect of this freedom for women took the shape of being permitted by society to go out in stockings. The Rast Goftar was once again a champion of the cause.\(^3\) Western education for all was another platform of Parsi journalism.

Marathi journals of these years (circa 1830 to 1866), were also preoccupied with social and educational discussion. Bal Gangadhar Shashtri Jambhekar had brought to them the 'enlightenment' of western knowledge.\(^4\) The first issue of his paper, the Durpan (Mirror, 1832-40), set out as its aim the stimulation of Western learning and social reform among

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Indian society as a whole. Jambhekar was a propagandist of Ram Mohun Roy's activities, and made known Roy's achievements before the people of his presidency. In northern India the trend of reforming society through newspapers became evident only after 1857. Urdu and Hindi newspapers of the 1860's wrote of the 'new inventions' from which followed 'moral and cultural progress'. In 1864 was started the Bharatkhandamrit (Nectar of India), a Hindi paper at Agra, which was sponsored by an association 'for religious and social reform for the Hindus'. Its Urdu counterpart was known as the Abe-i-Hiyat-i-Hind (Lifegiving Water of India). There was also the tendency towards educating the readers. Journals like the Buddhi Prakash (Intelligent News, 1855) published translated extracts from Abercrombie's Intellectual Powers.\(^1\)

This earlier concern for social improvement, generated by contact with the West, was to a large extent replaced towards the end of the century by a concern about the government. This new preoccupation, at a high peak in the 1890's, showed itself mostly in a spirit of hostility to government measures and a call for administrative reforms. It is interesting to note that newspapers in Bengal did not wish

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the Indian National Congress, which had come into existence in 1885, to bother with social reform. A social reformation, some of them urged, was not 'an indispensable condition of national unity'.¹ A new Bengali journal, _Sanjibani_ (Life Giver, 1883) called upon the Congress to emulate the examples of Mazzini, Garibaldi, or even George Washington, with the object 'not of a political revolution but administrative reforms'.² Problems took on a national character; newspapers reflected a growing consciousness for the need of unity. Even the Congress was criticized for being much less representative than was required. Thus the _Bharatbasi_ (Indian) wrote that 'if the interests of the masses were not considered by the Congress, then it was not a National Congress, but a Congress of higher and middle classes'. Others consoled the disappointed by pointing out that 'in all times and countries the educated lead and have led the uneducated and there is no reason why the rule should not hold good in India.'³ Hostility towards the government took the shape of publishing 'official secrets' whenever they could be secured. In April 1889 the _Amrita Bazar Patrika_

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3. _Bharatbasi_, 11 December 1886; _Sanjibani_, 8 December 1888; _Sangskarak_, 8 December 1887, K. Bishui, _op.cit._, in _ibid._, pp. 31–32.
(Journal of Amrita Bazar) reprinted Sir Henry Durand's Minute on Kashmir. To that it added the conclusion that the Maharajah of Kashmir was deposed not for his oppression of the people of Kashmir, but because Gilgit was wanted for strategic reasons. Lord Dufferin's Minute on the proposed re-constitution of the Legislative Councils in the 1880's also was published by the Bengalee.¹ Hope during those years was focussed on a possible change in the constitution of the Legislative Council. This was, according to a section of the press, the panacea for all evil. 'It would prevent famine, and bring about the material welfare of the people by giving them a voice in the imposition of new taxes and control over expenditure', wrote the Sadharani (Commoner). 'It was a matter of great regret that the people had no hand in the framing of the laws which they had to obey and no control over the expenditure of their own money', reiterated another Bengali journal.² These papers were in fact seeking to make the government aware of what was expected of the Indian Councils Act (passed in 1892) which was then in preparation. The publication of Lord Dufferin's Minute on the subject was part of the same campaign.

2. Sadharani, 27 July 1884; Sahachar, 9 March 1892 cited in K. Bishni, op. cit., The Indian Press, p. 25.
This political concern had influenced the Maharathi newspapers as well by the 1890's. The Kesari (Lion), for example, founded in 1881, was preaching the political gospel with fervour. The Kesari was started not by Tilak alone; it was a joint venture with Ganesh Agarkar, a social reformer. But they soon fell apart on the question of reform. Tilak was then only interested in 'teaching the people to criticize the bureaucracy', and not with breaking away from age-old customs.\(^1\) Agarkar on the other hand was more concerned about Hindu orthodoxy and believed that there was a greater need for fighting that before anything else. He broke away, therefore, to start the Sudharak (Moon, 1888) for the purpose.\(^2\) But Hindi newspapers in northern India did not at this time take to political journalism to any wide extent, though a few papers came into existence in the wake of the National Congress, and indeed to support it. Noted among them were the Brahman (Brahmin, 1885) and Bharat Varsh (India, 1889). Other Hindi journals like the Hindi Pradeep (Hindi Lamp, 1877) and the Hindusthan (1883), which were already in existence also propagated the cause of the Congress.\(^3\)

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trilingual paper published in London. It ran columns in English, Hindi and Urdu. Pure Urdu newspapers of the eighties in northern India, such as the Akhbar-i-am (Popular Newspaper), Sahifa-i-Qudsi (Truth), the Rafiq-i-Hind (Friend of India), the Nur-i-Afshan (Light of the Stars), and the Paisa Akhbar (Pice; Paper), gave full publicity to the activities of the Congress. These activities were not always supported and in fact often evoked vigorous controversy among those papers.¹ In the presidency of Madras the first political newsweekly came out in 1885. This was the Andhra Prakashika (Andhra News) edited by an 'ardent nationalist' from Madras.² Newspapers in Mysore came to life with the Congress and much of this was due to the efforts of a single man, M. Venkatakrishniah. A believer in the power of the press in spreading 'democratic ideals' among the people, he himself started no less than nine journals in the late eighties. The Vruttantha Chintamani (Gem of News, 1885) was followed by Sampadabhyudaya (Wealth and Prosperity), Sadhvi (Piety), Hitabodhini (Teacher of Ethics), the Mysore Patriot and others. All of them attacked the government with one mind.³

There was thus a clear distinction between the earlier decades of the nineteenth century and its closing years in so far as the Indian press was concerned. In the earlier years the Government came in for little mention, whereas later in the century there was little else besides. A study of the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century enable us to understand this major shift in public opinion, and also, in a real sense, the origins of a new kind of public opinion. In many ways, these two are the lost decades in the history of India of the nineteenth century. This would be particularly true of the seventies, when the echoes of the Mutiny were dead and the Indian National Congress had not yet been formed.

II

On the whole this was a quiet, by no means spectacular, decade. It was a period of continuing legislative and administrative activity: action at home but 'inactivity' abroad. It was only towards the end of the decade, in the years 1878 to 1880, that Lord Lytton's energy forced a state of war on Afghanistan and India.¹ But throughout the entire decade the central and provincial legislative councils were kept busy with a variety of bills regulating income tax,

¹. S. Gopal, British Policy in India 1858-1905 (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 78-89.
tariff and salt duties, licence tax, rent and land rates, land revenue, village and road police, laws, criminal and civil procedure, prisons and appeals, the movements of European vagrants, arms and murderous outrages, Calcutta University honorary degrees, sedition and the press; and most numerous of all were the bills on municipalities.¹

Most policies were yet in their formative stage; major policies were only in the making. There was little of Curzon's far-sightedness and clarity behind the measures of the seventies. But there was greater decisiveness than in the days of Canning. Much of it was, however, dictated by necessity. Lord Mayo, viceroy till 1872 and a man with constructive ideas, launched the new experiment of decentralization in Indian finance only to make up the deficits left behind by Lawrence, his predecessor. This led to a chain reaction of greater provincial autonomy, more local taxes, and an increasing scope for municipal administration.²

Lord Northbrook, viceroy for four years from 1872, was obviously unhappy with new schemes of taxation and never failed to remind his colleagues of Indian disaffection over government policy. He disallowed a municipal bill for Bengal in 1872 avowedly on those grounds; he was extremely

1. 'Additional Notes', see below pp.451-52.
reluctant to pass the criminal procedure bill of that same year. His governors and councillors were more activist than he, and often pressed him into taking measures of that kind.¹ In the secretary of state at the start of his tenure, the Duke of Argyll, at the India Office from 1870 to 1874, Northbrook had found a convenient partner. The duke did not interfere as long as land revenue was not increased. Always on the side of the land-owner, he wrote characteristically on the rent and revenue bills of 1873: 'I do not approve at all of stopping suits for incremency of rent against the "occupancy ryots" for so long a period as thirty years. The owner of land has a right to share in its increasing value, and to oust him from that share for the period of a whole generation seems to me to be most unjust ...'. Lord Northbrook reduced the thirty years to ten, and immediately the secretary of state approved of it as a 'very reasonable arrangement'.² But it was not as easy for the viceroy to settle differences with Argyll's successor, the third Marquis of Salisbury, who joined the India Office in 1874 and was there till 1878. Northbrook's determined yet

¹ For Lord Northbrook's reasons for disallowing the Bengal municipal bill of 1872, see Northbrook to Argyll, 3 January 1873, Northbrook Papers, vol.9; on Lord Northbrook's reluctance over the criminal procedure bill of 1872, see Northbrook to Argyll, 4 August 1872, in ibid.; on his being persuaded to pass the latter bill, see John Strachey to Northbrook, 30 July 1872, George Campbell to Northbrook, 12 August 1872 and Arthur Hobhouse to Northbrook, 27 December 1872 in ibid., vol.13.

² Argyll to Northbrook, 17 September 1873, and Argyll to Northbrook, 13 November 1873, in ibid., vol.9.
patient policy on tariffs was uncompromisingly rejected, and Northbrook left India. His successor, Lord Lytton's enthusiasm knew no bounds and he took the initiative in a number of matters immediately after his arrival in 1876. He had come out to India with a secret despatch in his pocket suggesting that a mission be sent to Kabul urging the Amir to accept British Agents at Herat. In his Rough Notebook, under the heading 'Things to do in India', he had set out important changes in financial policy of which removing the import duties on British cottons enjoyed priority. Together Salisbury and Lytton worked on these issues. Letters were exchanged on minute details. As the viceroy himself wrote, while preparing for the ceremony on Queen Victoria's assumption of the Imperial title, 'It really seems absurd and humiliating that the time of the Secretary of State should be taken up in the correspondence about the fireworks, gold medals and silken banners'. Their last joint achievement was an act against the Indian vernacular press which, though accepted in principle, was slightly modified by Viscount Cranbrook, Salisbury's successor as secretary of state.

1. Bernard Mallet, Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook (London 1908), pp. 89-92, 109-12; also see below, pp. 243-47
3. Lytton to Salisbury, 28 September 1876, Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
From the point of view of British politics the seventies in India were an unusual ten years. Mayo, a Conservative, was chosen for India by Gladstone. The Duke of Argyll, a Liberal, appropriately took charge of the India Office. Mayo was succeeded by Northbrook, this time in keeping with party politics. He found life increasingly difficult with a Conservative minister in charge of Indian affairs at home. Things eased with the Salisbury-Lytton partnership as indeed was Disraeli's hope. But this was only true of the last few years, much of the decade having gone by.¹

Economically it was a difficult decade, there being two all-India famines between 1873 and 1877, a severe scarcity in northern India in 1873-74, a famine in Bengal during the same year, and a famine in the north again in 1877-78.² Politically the educated Indians caused some concern. In March 1870 an act was passed to give 'additional facilities' for the appointment of Indians in the covenanted civil service of the country.³ By the late seventies Lord Lytton had leaped into the problem, but soon changed his

1. For a study of the effects of British politics on Indian policy during the seventies of the nineteenth century, see R.J. Moore, Liberalism and Indian Politics (London, 1966), pp. 15-27.


mind about opening the covenanted ranks to Indians, however educated. His scheme was one of doling out a few of the higher judicial posts in the uncovenanted cadre among aspiring Indians. At the end of the decade this was again changed when the secretary of state, Cranbrook, discarded Lytton's ideas and went back to 1870.¹

Whatever the politics of the rulers and whatever their relations with each other, the fact, however, remained that they got through an impressive amount of legislation in those ten years. These were not spectacular measures but working steps taken from day to day. Looked at in the mass they acquire a significance which they lose in their detail. The significance is all the easier to detect because the flow of legislation coincided with an appreciable growth in the Indian press. A steady stream of comment began to pour forth from an impressive number of presses which had sprung up like mushrooms all over the country. As we shall repeatedly see all these comments were not necessarily hostile, and it would be a total misreading of the seventies to emphasize the emergence of a hostility to the government in the country. What was important about this spate of comments was that they were concerned with the government. In other words, as the government had through its multifarious

¹ A. Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 139-42.
legislation come to show its concern about the country at various levels, the country was responding through newly-found voices. It is important for our purpose to notice the characteristics and predilections of this new public medium.

At a first glance the most striking feature of the Indian press would seem to be its enormous variety. Most numerous of all were the various vernacular newspapers, unilingual, bilingual and some even trilingual, owned mostly by Indians and a few by European and American missionaries. Then there were the anglo-vernacular journals with columns in English, a fashion of the forties in Bengal spreading to other parts soon afterwards for more urgent reasons. When the purely Bengali Amrita Bazar Patrika moved to Calcutta from its rural headquarters in 1872, it started columns in English as well and thereupon found itself in competition with Calcutta's leading journal the Hindoo Patriot, which was an all-English weekly conducted by a Bengali. A knowledge of English was a passport


to the urbane, educated community in India of the times; and it was also the language of the government. The only direct way of making vital opinions known to the rulers was by communicating in the English language. Anglo-vernacular papers thus acquired an importance for themselves in different parts of the country. In Bombay the Indu Prakash (Moonlight News) and the Native Opinion catered for those needs in western India. In northern India there was the Hindusthan, an English, Hindi and Urdu daily started in 1877. In the south the anglo-Tamil Coconada Athenaeum served the seventies. These again were owned and edited generally by Indians.

Although a vernacular newspaper was usually published in the language of the region to which it belonged, almost every region had at least one newspaper in another vernacular. Thus Bengal, though teeming with Bengali newspapers in the seventies, fitted in three Hindi weeklies, a Persian weekly and an anglo-Urdu weekly. The Persian Jam-e-Jahan Numa (Journal of World Description) also happened to be the oldest Persian newspaper in the country. The Urdu Guide was owned and edited by a Moulvi. The Hindusthani newspapers were the Behar Bandhu (Friend of Bihar), the Bharat Mitra (Friend of India), the Jagat Mitra (Friend of the World), all run by Hindi-speaking men from the north.1

In the presidency of Bombay there were one Urdu, one Hindi, and one Persian newspaper besides the regional Gujarati and Marathi papers. Kushful Akhbar, the Urdu journal, was specifically intended for 'the information and benefit of the Urdu reading Muslims of the presidency'. In upper India, in 1877, there were four Marathi papers, one in Bengali and one in Arabic. Most of the others were in Urdu and some in Hindi, both of which were major regional languages. Samachar Sar (Essence of News), the Bengali weekly, was published from Allahabad by Lal Gopal Chakravarti, himself a Bengali clerk in the Allahabad administration. Its circulation was fairly wide compared with that of other journals of the region, being placed at 500 in 1876-77 as against the highest circulation figure of 650 enjoyed by the Oudh Akhbar. It was distributed mainly among the local Bengali population. The Arabic journal was called Shafah-ul-Sudur (Healer). It was a monthly published at Lahore and edited by the professor of Arabic at the university. Read obviously by a select few, it circulated only a hundred copies. The Marathi newspapers of upper India were all produced from towns in Berar: the Urdu Akhbar (Urdu News) and the Berar Samachar (Berar News) came from Akola, the Berar Mitra (Friend of Berar) from Ellichpur and the

Pramod Sindhu (Sea of Entertainment) from Amraoti. They were all owned and edited by Marathis and their circulation figures ranged between 150 and 250.¹ In Madras presidency there were eight Urdu language newspapers in 1878.— the Shamsul Akhbar (Sun of News), Tilism-i-Hairat (Talisman of Wonder), Muzhar-ul-Akhbar (Theatre of News), Umdut-ul-Akhbar-i-Shahi (Royal Nobles News), Jarida-i-Rozgar (Chronicle of the times), Safir-i-Madras (Madras Envoy), Hakim-i-Madras (Governor of Madras) and Akhbar-i-Pur Bahar (Vernal News). They were all owned and edited by local Muslims, often out of meagre means.² A majority of these vernacular papers were weeklies. A few were bi-weeklies and tri-weeklies. The rest were mostly monthlies with a few bi-monthlies and quarterlies.

A daily was a rarity. In 1870 Bengal could boast only three dailies. Of those the Sulav Samachar (Cheap News) had been launched as a daily pice newspaper (¹ pice = ¹ ½ farthing approximately) that very year. The others were the Prabhatkar, a daily since 1839, and the Sambad Purnachandrodan which had become a daily in 1845. A daily was not necessarily an important paper. The Sambad Purnuchandrodan was a daily only by virtue of having wealthy proprietors. The

¹. Home (Public) Proceedings, January 1877, Part B, No. 293.
². Home (Public) Proceedings, October 1878, Part B, Nos. 143-159.
Prabhakar (Sun), however, played a lively role in its heyday, with poetry and wit, and justified to some extent its existence as a daily. The important Bengali journals of the seventies, the Som Prokash (Moonlight News), the Sadharani and the Amrita Bazar Patrika, among a few others, were all weeklies. The only other daily in the region was the Indian Mirror, a wholly English paper but conducted by a Bengali. Of the twenty-five vernacular newspapers in Bombay presidency in the year 1872, only four were dailies. They were the Akhbare Sowdagar (Commercial News), the Chabook, the Darpan and the Mumbai Samachar (Bombay News). The last was certainly an important journal. Among the weeklies were to be found Bombay's most important papers, socially and politically. They were the Rast Goftar (Truth Teller), the Indu Prakash, the Native Opinion and the Maharashtra Mitra (Friend of Maharashtra). In northern and southern India there were no daily newspapers at the time. In the north the first daily, Hindusthan, began to operate only from 1877.

1. B.N. Bandopadhyaya, Bangla Samayik Patra (Calcutta, 1952), pp. 4-5 (in Bengali); also P.N. Bose and H.W.B. Moreno, op. cit., pp. 20-21, 30-31, 68-69, 73, 90-93; also J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism (Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1955), p. 71.


In the North-Western Provinces more than half of its crop of forty-one newspapers in 1876-77 were weeklies. Three of those weeklies enjoyed a high circulation even by all-India standards at the time. These were the Agra Akhbar (Agra News), the Allygurh Institute Gazette and the Lawrence Gazette. Of the 34 newspapers in the Punjab the most influential and 'best-informed' journal was a bi-weekly. In Oudh too the 'largest and best' paper, the Oudh Akhbar (Oudh News), was a bi-weekly. ¹ The Desabhimani in Madras was its first Indian daily but that only from the year 1886.² Weeklies predominated in the Madras presidency as well, most of the rest being bi-monthlies. Two of the eight Urdu journals of this presidency came out every other day.³ Most newspapers at the time were town based, the concentration being in the capitals of the presidencies.

Of the thirty-six vernacular Bengali newspapers in circulation in 1873, Calcutta produced seventeen. The centres next in evidence were the district towns with growing

1. Memorandum on the Vernacular Newspapers of Upper India by the Reporter on the Vernacular Press (Priya Das, Govt. Reporter) dated 10 May 1879, pp.7-8, 10, in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, No.88. [Hereafter I shall refer to this memorandum as Memorandum On the Vernacular Newspapers of Upper India.]


political consciousness; of these Dacca, Barisal, Pabna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Hooghly and Nadia were most prominent.\(^1\)

In Bengal, however, purely village-centred newspapers came into vogue in the 1840's. By the seventies there were quite a few powerful ones. Among them were the **Grambarta Prakashika** (Village News, village: Kumarkhali, district: Nadia), **Barisal Bartabaha** (Barisal News, village: Jhalkati, district: Barisal), **Murshidabad Patrika** (village: Saidabad, district: Baharampuri), **Kanchrapara Patrika** (village: Kanchrapara, district: 24-parganas) and the **Halishahar Patrika** (village: Halishahar, district: 24-parganas) among others.\(^2\)

Poona and Bombay were the major publication centres of Bombay presidency, followed by district towns which lay midway between the metropolitan centres and the borders of the presidency. Of the 30 marathi journals in 1874 Bombay distributed 5 and Poona 4. Satara and Tanna produced 3 each. Dharwar and Belgaum followed with 2 and 1 respectively.\(^3\)

In the North Western Provinces, Agra, Meerut, and Allahabad were the centres of newspaper publications.

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production. Agra produced 9 papers in 1874-75, Allahabad and Meerut 6 each. Benares was next in importance publishing 4 newspapers in the same year 1874-75. Each of the other important provincial towns, Aligarh, Bareilly and Saharanpur had their local newspaper by the middle of the seventies. In the Punjab, Delhi and Lahore claimed most of the 28 vernacular journals in circulation in 1876-77. While Delhi possessed 12 and Lahore 9, Amritsar followed with four. Ludhiana, Sialkot and Gujranwala could claim one each. There is little evidence of purely village newspapers in the northern regions. In Madras presidency 8 out of 13 vernacular newspapers in the year 1875 were published from the town of Madras.

The reason for most newspapers of those days being concentrated in towns is obvious. The presses, both lithographic and printing, were situated in the towns. This was specially true of Calcutta and Bombay. In Calcutta alone, at the end of the decade, there were 45 presses in the northern part of the city, 13 in the south, and 40 in what was then known as 'middle' Calcutta. These included the government-owned presses which were about half a dozen in number. The

2. A.R. for the Punjab, 1876-77, p. 145.
distribution of the lithograph presses in the north was
13 at Lahore, 7 each at Agra and Meerut, 5 at Delhi, 2 at
Lahore and 1 each at Bareilly, Kanpur and Simla.¹

There was not a great deal of organization behind the
Indian newspaper press of those days. In most cases, the
editor was also the proprietor of the paper, and in some
cases also the publisher of the paper. Joint stock com­
panies owning newspapers were unknown among vernacular papers
at the time except for one instance: in 1857, the proprietors
of the Rast Goftar converted the property into a joint-stock
concern with five partners.² However the proprietorship of
a paper was not uncommonly shared by two or more persons.
But it is doubtful whether they were shareholders in any
modern sense of the term. Mostly they were wealthy friends,
allies or relatives. Financial help was often sought from
local rajas or zamindars. Generally a vernacular journal
was the product of single-handed effort, and a regular body
of staff was not common. Of the two-dozen Bengali news­
papers, in 1879, seventeen were of the editor-proprietor type;

¹ For Calcutta, see A.R. for Bengal, 1878-79, Statistical
Returns, pp.ccix-ccxi; for Bombay, see E.E. McDonald,
'The Modernizing of Communication: Vernacular Publishing
in 19th Century Maharashtra', Asian Survey, vol.8, no.7
(1968), pp. 604-06; for N.W.P., see G. De Tassy, La
Langue et La Littérature Hindoustanie de 1850 à 1869, p.10.
² S.C. Sanial, 'History of the Press in India - IV. Bombay',
for seven of these the editor-proprietor was also the publisher. /cases of joint ownership there were the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the Sahachar (Friend), the Bharat Mitra and the Sambad Purnachandrododay. The first and the last were owned by individual families, the Ghosh's of Jessore district and the Addy's of Calcutta respectively. The Bharat Mitra was owned by Jagannath Mitra 'and others'. The Sahachar's proprietors were Bipradas Banerji, Sashibhusan Chatterji and Nrisinha Mukherji. All three were Bengali brahmins and friends. Mukherji was a well-placed Calcutta lawyer while Chatterji and Banerji were authors of school text books.

Fourteen of the 25 major Marathi and Gujarati journals circulating in western India, at the end of the decade, were again single-handed projects where the same man was editor, owner and publisher of his paper. There were a few joint proprietors as in the case of the Native Opinion, the Gujarat Mitra (Friend of Gujarat), the Rast Goftar, Nyaya Prakash (New Expresser) and the Deshi Mitra (Friend of the Country). But in Bombay presidency often the editor-publisher was financed by a proprietor who knew nothing of editing or publishing. The Maharashtra Mitra was thus

edited and published by Pandurang Balwant Walimbe, but owned by Ganesh Kolatkar. The *Nyaya Prakash* was published and edited by Keshavji Raghunathji but financed by as many as four Gujaratis of whom two, Lallubhai Jamnadas and Lallubhai Dharamdas, were merchants.¹

Newspapers in the North-Western Provinces were all conducted by men who combined the task of editing, financing and publishing. Nineteen out of twenty-four of the journals there were of that kind. The major exceptions were the *Allygurh Institute Gazette*, the *Agra Akhbar*, and the *Arya Darpan* (Mirror of the Aryans). The first was edited by Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan but was produced under the auspices of the Aligarh Institute. The last was the organ of the Arya Sabha. The *Agra Akhbar*, however, was owned by an individual, who was neither the editor nor the publisher of his journal. In this region there were at least two men who owned and edited two papers each. The editor and proprietor of the *Jalwa-i-Tur* (Lightning from the Mountain), an old paper in these provinces, also conducted the *Muir Gazette*, a paper launched in honour of the Lieutenant Governor Sir William Muir. Both newspapers were very similar. Both published extracts from other papers 'without acknowledgement'.² The other instance was

Sadsukh Lal's twin papers published from Agra, Nur-ul-Absar (Sun's Rays) in Urdu and the Buddhi Prakash in Hindi.¹

In the Punjab again more than half the number of newspapers were conducted by editor-proprietors. In the Central Provinces in the seventies all five of the newspapers then current followed the same pattern.² In Madras presidency, a few of the vernacular papers were published by companies, the nature of which remains unknown. The Suthesabhusani (Ornament of the Motherland) and the Vetticodyon (Flag of Victory), both Tamil-language weeklies during the decade, were owned and published by Messrs. Highland and company. It is possible that this company chose one of its own men to be editor of those two journals. The Combaconum Athenaeum was under the proprietorship of the Athenaeum Press. However, there were individual proprietors as well. The Andhrabhasa Sanjivani (Life Giver to Andhra Language) was edited and owned by Kokkonda Venkataratnam Pantulu, and the Amirtavasani (Abode of the Immortal) by Kokkonda Venkata Rao.³ The other south Indian vernacular journals in the region were financed, edited and published by Christian missionaries. The Urdu newspapers

¹ J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism, p. 53.
² Home (Public) Proceedings, January 1877, Part B, no.293.
of the presidency were again all one-man ventures.

These editor-proprietors all over the country, working on their own, not only managed their newspapers, but also wrote nearly all the articles in them. As most of these papers were no more than double sheets, except the few very enterprising ones which went up to as many as six sheets, this was not an impossible feat. Certainly it was an admirable one. Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan, the Bengali pandit who ran the Som Prakash, spent his days in the Sanskrit College at Calcutta where he taught, while the nights were reserved for writing the articles for his journal. He had a sub-editor, who compiled the week's news and reviewed the letters and saw the paper through the press every Sunday. But Vidyabhusan alone wrote all the articles. In editing the Sadharani Akshoy Chandra Sarkar was helped only by his ageing father. Although the Amrita Bazar Patrika came out as a result of the concerted effort of the three Ghosh brothers in the seventies, Sisir Kumar Ghosh was known to have written all the articles for the paper. To the Native Opinion in Bombay Viswanath Narayan Mandalik was

4. B.N. Bandopadhyaya, Sahitya Sadhak Charit Mala, no.54, (Calcutta, 1945), p.9. This is a series of short biographical essays on the different literary figures, published separately. (In Bengali.)
almost the sole contributor. He himself started the journal, but soon afterwards gave over the editorship to Narayen Mahadeo Parmanand continuing however to contribute the articles himself. Similarly when Mahadeo Govind Ranade was editing the *Indu Prakash*, he was in fact writing all the leading columns for the journal.¹ An editorial was of less importance in those days. A journal took its stand on an issue through the many articles it wrote on the subject. In fact north Indian journalists in the seventies were obviously unaware of the concept of an editorial. Quite often their articles were prefaced by editorial announcements like 'a correspondent writes, etcetera'. However vernacular newspapers of those days acquired fame or notoriety on the basis of the articles they published, and the names of the men associated with those articles, and not on the way their editorials were set out. It was not that there were no contributors; they were few but they were well known. But they were not contributors who wrote for money. Indeed there was little chance of their ever being paid. They wrote either as friends of the editors on being desperately requested to fill up space;

¹ V.D. Rao, *op. cit.*, The Indian Press, pp. 59-60; also S.B. Arte, 'Stray Thoughts about Marathi Journalism', *The Hindusthan Review*, vol.65 (1920), pp. 179-81.
or there were those who wrote out of a missionary zeal to give vent to their feelings on the controversial issues of the time. Of the first kind we have evidence of Ram Gopal Ghosh, editor of the *Gyananneshan* in the years 1835-39, writing to his friend Gobind Chandra Basak 'I pray send me something good. You may pen a small article giving the particulars of Martin's conduct at Hooghly'.\(^1\) Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar wrote often in the *Som Prakash* more out of sympathy with its editor, his ideas and his labours, than for any other reason. Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar was a regular contributor to the *Indu Prakash*, and wrote under the pseudonym of 'A Political Rishi'. Gopal Krishna Gokhale wrote many articles during the late seventies in the Marathi *Jnyan Prakash* (Expresser of Knowledge).\(^2\)

Then there were the literary journals, Harish Chandra's *Kavi Vachan Sudha* (Nectar of Poetry) in Benares being one of them, which published contributions from young poets and

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writers in Hindi.\(^1\) Having their works published was enough encouragement; getting money for their labours was too much to expect. The only journals which were known to have paid their contributors were the Urdu papers of Madras presidency. They had set rates of as much as twenty-five rupees for articles on 'foreign affairs'. Government clerks who were Muslims and who knew English, were known to have availed themselves of this opportunity for a supplementary income.\(^2\)

The monthly expenses of a bi-weekly journal of the north in 1874 was as under:\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-editor</td>
<td>Rs.14 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyist</td>
<td>Rs.10 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>Rs. 7 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressmen</td>
<td>Rs. 5 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spongeman and two coolies</td>
<td>Rs. 8 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peon and chowkidar</td>
<td>Rs. 8 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bheestee (= water seller)</td>
<td>Rs. 0 12 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Rs.22 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundries</td>
<td>Rs. 6 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>Rs. 8 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House rent</td>
<td>Rs. 2 8 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear and tear</td>
<td>Rs. 2 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies</td>
<td>Rs. 5 0 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>Rs.98 4 as.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payment to contributors, it will be seen, was not one of the items. The receipts of this journal were 140 rupees. Of this sum 105 rupees was known to have come from the local rajas in return for not criticizing them, or at the most criticizing them in the 'most flowery' Persian.¹

Vernacular newspapers in the seventies led a hand-to-mouth existence. High postal rates tended to limit their circulation to local or nearby areas. Sometimes enthusiasm for a cause led the managers of a paper to distribute several copies of each issue free. Thus Dadabhai Naoroji and Kharshedji Cama lost 10,000 rupees by distributing the first issues of the Rast Goftar free, impatient at the state of Parsi society, obviously in a hurry to reform it.² Sometimes journals failed to continue only because their subscribers discontinued payment. At other times any money which they acquired went on fighting libel suits brought against the owner-editor.³

1. Ibid.
3. The Calcutta paper, Sangbad Rasaraj fell victim to a libel suit brought against its proprietor-editor by Raja Krishna Nath Rai of Cossimbazar (Cossimbazar is to the north of Calcutta) in the year 1843 for having accused the raja and his wife of gross misconduct. The editor was imprisoned for six months and had to pay a fine of 500 rupees as well. The Calcutta Review, vol.132 (1911), p. 35.
Many papers depended on aid from local rajas, wealthy and philanthropic citizens and friends and, indeed, the government. In Bengal, newspapers like the **Rangpur Bartabaha** (Rangpur Courier) and the **Burdwan Sambad** (Burdwan News) were entirely under the patronage of their local rajas. In the Punjab Raja Nihal Singh in fact started a printing press so that some of the newspapers of the province could be printed there.\(^1\) The **Amrita Bazar Patrika** could not have bought a new printing machine in 1872 without a loan from Raja Digumbar Mitra.\(^2\) The **Som Prokash** could not have been started without help from Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who gave it all he had, knowing that its founder, Sarada Chandra Bhattacharya, was a student and a poor one at that.\(^3\) Man Mohan Ghosh started the **Indian Mirror** with substantial financial help from Debendro Nath Tagore.\(^4\) Harish Chandra Mukherji maintained the **Hindoo Patriot** with a monthly contribution of a hundred rupees from his own monthly income which, as clerk in the office of the military auditor, amounted to 400 rupees.\(^5\) Dadabhai Naoroji could not have

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2. J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism, p. 73.
5. Ibid., Note on p. 71.
started the Rast Goftar without his college friend
Kharshedji Cama's financial help. The editor of the
Benares Akhbar (Benares News) would have spent long years
in jail on a successful suit for libel by the Benares
police, had not Raja Shiv Prasad come to his rescue by
paying the fine of a thousand rupees.

The local governments subsidized several vernacular
journals in northern India, though only a few in Bengal and
Bombay. Their subsidy consisted in subscribing to a certain
fixed number of copies of the journals concerned. Most of
the copies were then distributed by the governments among
zilla schools and offices. In Bengal the Education Gazette
was the only government-aided journal in the seventies.
It was a little more than just aided; the editor in fact
received 300 rupees as pay from the Bengal government. In
its turn the government retained some control over the
journal's editorial policy. In May 1869 Peari Charan
Sarkar, then editor of the Education Gazette, published a
detailed account of a railway accident in Eastern Bengal
which did not meet with the lieutenant governor's approval.

1. 'A Chapter of Autobiography' in Speeches and Writings of
Dadabhai Naoroji (Madras, 1910), p. 655; also R.P.
Karkaria, 'The Revival of the Native Press in Western
2. Benares Akhbar 26 September 1875, Selections from Vernacular
Newspapers of the N.W.P., Punjab, Oudh and C.F., 1875,
p. 628. [Hereafter I shall refer to this collection of
newspaper extracts known as 'Selections etc.' as S.V.P.]
This was not the purpose of the Gazette; it could publish the government's bills and acts and even promising Bengali poems. But it could not bring the Eastern Railway into disrepute. Peari Charan resigned, and government happily transferred its patronage to another Bengali.¹ In Bombay the only newspaper to be subsidized was the Mumbai Samachar, its oldest Gujarati newspaper. But it was a handsome help of fifty copies at 24 rupees per copy annually.² In the north west Hindi and Urdu papers received considerable support from their local governments. Aligarh's leading journal, at its high period of fame under Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan in the seventies, was the Allygurh Institute Gazette. Of its 297 copies in circulation in 1877-78, 63 were bought by government. The Nur-ul-Absar sold 40 of its 104 copies every year to its government. Other newspapers of the region which also secured some government patronage were the Lawrence Gazette and the Prince of Wales Gazette (formerly called the Muir Gazette). In Oudh the leading Oudh Akhbar circulated over 700 copies in 1877-78 of which government subscribed to 90.³ These journals created little trouble for themselves being on the whole on the side of the government. The Oudh Akhbar was the only one among the assisted

who attempted to criticize government, obviously unable to resist the temptation. But it did so under the garb of publishing articles translated allegedly from other journals, without naming those. Accusing the English of having plundered the Berars, the Oudh Akhbar put it down to the act of a Marathi paper. Commenting savagely on the Fuller case, when Robert Fuller had beaten his syce to death, the Oudh Akhbar claimed to have taken it from a Berar paper.¹

The Urdu journals of Madras were helped by the government of the presidency which subscribed to them at a higher rate of subscription. Many of these papers, in the south as well as in the north, had higher and lower rates of subscription for the rich and the poor. The owners of the papers decided for themselves who were richer than others, and offered their journals on higher terms. Government always fell into the category of the richest, and so did the rajas. Though the Punjabi journal Koh-i-Nur's yearly rate was 13 rupees, the 'native chiefs' were made to pay as much as 50 rupees.² But the poor were sometimes allowed to pay even less than the set lower limit. Thus the Khair-Khwah-i-Punjab (Benefactor of the Punjab) had the three annual rates of 25 rupees, 15 rupees and 7 rupees and 8 annas; the Lytton

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¹ Memorandum on the Vernacular Newspapers of Upper India for 1876-77, pp. 3-4, in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, no.88; also see below pp. 391-92 for the Fuller episode.

Gazette 26 rupees, 12 rupees and 6 rupees in the year; the Ashraf-ul-Akhbar (Superior News) two rates of 24 rupees and 12 rupees. The Urdu papers in the Madras presidency set their price within the range of 36 rupees to 6 rupees in the year. Although the lower rate for the Hakim-i-Madras was 6 rupees a year, the proprietor did not refrain from selling his paper often at exactly half that price.

There is no evidence that the same phenomenon of discriminating subscriptions was true of Bengal and Bombay. But Bengali newspapers adjusted their subscription limits according to the flow of circulation. Thus while the Sambad Purnachandroday raised its price from the yearly 36 rupees in the forties to 96 rupees by the close of the seventies, the Sambad Bhaskar (Sun of News), obviously doing well, lowered its rate to half, from 12 rupees to 6 rupees in the year, during the same period. Generally newspaper prices in Bengal ranged from 12 rupees to 36 rupees in the year during the decade. There were a few cheaper papers, like the Sambad Chandrodoy and the Januarunaday (Rising Sun of Knowledge), with annual rates of 3 rupees to 2 rupees 8 annas.

4. Ibid., pp. 62, 61.
On the whole newspapers in Bombay were cheaper than elsewhere in the country. The more expensive subscriptions ranged from 6 rupees 12 annas to 9 rupees annually; the cheaper rates varied between 4 rupees 8 annas to 2 rupees 4 annas yearly.¹ The latter were more numerous than the former.

Very few of the papers had any advertisements. They did little or no business in what is today considered the more profitable branch of journalism. A few Bengali journals advertised forthcoming Bengali books and other kinds of literary information. The Sambad Purnachandrododay specialized in this.² It is not known whether it did so free of charge, out of sympathy for the literary cause. The only pecuniary information with regard to advertisements in the vernacular press comes from the Urdu journals of Madras which had set down for themselves a fixed rate of 2 annas per line of advertisement.³ The only person to have made use of the provision at the time was Professor Holloway who inserted an advertisement for his patent liver pills and ointments in all the Urdu papers for about two years at a stretch.⁴

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4. Ibid.
advertisements, especially those of any importance, went to the Anglo-Indian newspapers which basked in the profits of a fairly advanced advertising business. Either the first two, or the last two of their jumbo-sized pages were reserved totally as advertising space, and indeed they did not go empty in the seventies. Government too patronized the Anglo-Indian journals with its notices on railways and the like.

As far as collection of news was concerned the vernacular press was to a large extent dependent on its Anglo-Indian contemporaries, subscriptions to news-agencies being too expensive. The Bengalee in Calcutta was the first Indian-owned paper to take Reuter's service, but this was only in the year 1900. Before this the vernacular press satisfied itself with news from the Pioneer, generally believed to be an official organ. Bombay was the first to receive news from overseas, specially after the completion of the submarine telegraph line in 1860. The Times of India in Bombay was the first to enter into contract with Reuter. This speeded up news, certainly from England for which there was general enthusiasm, sometimes with amusing results. Thus we find the Punjabi journal, Patiala Akhbar, narrating

to its readers how

Lord Disraeli, with the advice of the clergy, forbade drinking and smoking on Sunday; upon this the labourers of London met together, and telling His Lordship that they did not intend to obey the law, began to tear up the newspapers that contained it. Thereupon the Prime Minister yielded, and instantly annulled the law.¹

Calcutta was closest to information emanating from the government, being the seat of power. An additional source lay in the newspapers of the governments, such as the Bengal government Gazette, which was a semi-official journal containing the acts of the legislative council, the circular orders of the sudder diwani, and various government notices. By the end of the seventies of the nineteenth century there were similar government Gazettes elsewhere in the country.²

Government usually published notices of proposed legislation in these Gazettes before putting a bill through its second reading in council, often waiting to watch for the reactions produced. This was carried out as deliberate policy in the sixties and seventies, except when the government was in a hurry to pass the bill without encouraging any reactions.

². The first of these Gazettes were the Bombay Gazette (1831), the Bengal Government Gazette (1832) and the Fort St. George Gazette (1832). In the sixties came the North-Western Provinces Gazette (1862), the Gazette of India (Simla, 1864) and the Sind Gazette (1869). Then followed the Punjab Gazette (1872) and the Central Provinces Gazette (1875). I have obtained this information at the Indian Office Library, London.
whatever. This was true of the bill on the vernacular press. That bill was made an act in the first sitting of the council without any prior notices being served. The North Western Provinces were quite evidently the slowest in obtaining information. While the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in Calcutta converted itself into an all-English weekly with a week of the passing of the vernacular press act, papers in the north were wondering as to what the exact provisions of the act were even after two weeks of its existence. It was not before January 1876 that newspapers of that region began to give descriptions of the visit of the Prince of Wales and the Delhi durbar. The *Rahbar-i-Hind* was the first to mention the levée of the 28th of December 1875 in its columns of the 9th of January next year. Comments on the assemblage and the viceroy's speech hardly began till the end of January. But from then onwards till the end of February, comments on the subjects were numerous in every paper. Once one of the vernacular journals got hold of any information, official, unofficial or semi-official, it went the rounds with every other journal in the region and slowly beyond.


Newspapers did not seem to grudge feeding on each other's information, sometimes without acknowledgement. This however is no proof of harmonious relations. Quarrels were by no means uncommon; sometimes private, at other times ideological. Whereas the Amrita Bazar Patrika at Calcutta prided itself on being a mouthpiece for the indigent peasants, its influential contemporary, the Hindoo Patriot, was under the trusteeship of the wealthiest landlords of the seventies. There was an almost non-stop battle between the two. They differed on the question of the criminal procedure bill; they held rival meetings for the right of Indians to vote in the election of commissioners to Calcutta's municipal corporation.¹ On the occasion of the Prince of Wales' Indian tour, the British Indian Association, the Hindoo Patriot's mentor, collected and spent 80,000 rupees on illuminations and fireworks. The Patrika and the Indian League, both belonging to Sisir Ghosh, commemorated the Prince's visit with the establishment of a technical school, erected soon afterwards out of wide public contributions, calling it the Albert Temple of Science.²

² P.N. Bose and H.W.B. Moreno, op. cit., p. 78.
In Bombay presidency the Jam-e-Jamshed and the Rast Goftar went to some length quarrelling over the state of Parsi society. In this the Rast Goftar (Truth teller) was joined by the Satya Prakash (Expresser of Truth) and the Chitra Gnyan Darpan (Mirror of Pictorial Knowledge) which attempted reform of Parsi society through pictorial means and, in fact, got into trouble by publishing a picture of the Prophet Mohammad, presumably to induce in the Parsis a reverence for Islam.¹ In the Punjab, in 1877, the Khair-Khwah-i-Alam (Benefactor of the World) and the Khair-Khwah-i-Hindusthan (Benefactor of India) fell out on the question of the Patiala regency, the latter supporting the claims of Mohammad Hussain the Khalifa, and the former exposing his tyranny and oppression. A spirited battle raged for several months during the same year between the Rahbar-i-Hind and the Vakil-i-Hindusthan (Pleader of India) over the person of a tehsildar in the Punjab, whom the Vakil-i-Hindusthan had charged with having illegally exacted presents. The editors eventually left the original subject of the dispute to call each other's character into question, and in a long article on 8 August 1877, the Rahbar-i-Hind treated its readers to a full biography of the rival editor showing

how he had been 'fined, flogged, imprisoned and debarred from the public service by the Punjab government'.

Needless to say the tone of a newspaper in the 1870's depended very much on its editor and his background. There was a time, in the early fifties of the nineteenth century, when the educated Bengalis looked down upon the Bengali press. The first host of enlightened newspapers had died out by then with the passing away of Ram Mohan Roy and his age. The following years saw the appearance and disappearance of a number of Bengali journals in quick succession, failing to gain support with their poverty of language and thought. Discouraging notices would be published about a new journal, such as 'Friday December 21, 1841. - A new weekly paper, the Sangbad Soudamini (Lightning of News) has just made its appearance in Calcutta, in Bengalee and in English. The execution is not such as to hold out any expectations of a protracted and useful existence.'

However, the situation was transformed from the late fifties onwards. Papers like the Education Gazette, the

1. Memorandum on the Vernacular Newspapers of Upper India, 1876-77, pp. 11-12, in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, no.88.
2. Some of the Bengali journals which disappeared were the Gyanadipika (1840-51), the Upadeshak (1846-51), the Rasaratnakar (1849-51), the Kanstabh Kiran (1846-51), Selections from the Records of Bengal, no.32, pp.xlv-xlvi.
Som Prokash, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the Sulav Samachar, the Banga Darshan, and Sadharani were welcomed by the urbane Bengali. Observations like 'With the Education Gazette and the Som Prokash the present refined age of Bengali journalism is ushered in' found wide expression.¹ The Som Prokash had behind it Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a towering figure in the Bengali milieu. Its editor in the decade of the seventies was Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan to whom Iswar Chandra had made over charge in the year 1858. A brahmin, Vidyabhusan was born in 1819 at Changripota, a village about ten miles south of Calcutta. His father, a profound scholar in Indian logic and metaphysics, ran a Sanskrit school in Calcutta. Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan was trained first in his traditional village school, and later went to his father's institution. At the age of thirteen he was sent to the government Sanskrit College in Calcutta where he studied for over twelve years, and later taught for much of his life. His course of studies at the college included 'Grammar ... Belle-lettres, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Logic, Theology, Law and English'. But his taste was for Hindu law for which he earned a college scholarship of the first grade for two years from 1842. Quite apart from

editing the Som Prokash, Vidyabhusan was a prolific writer of books among which Nitisar (The Quintessence of Principles) in three volumes produced between 1856 and 1878, Romrajyer Itihas (History of Rome) and Grisdesher Itihas (History of Greece) both published in 1857, and the Bhusansar Byakaran (Essentials of Grammar) were the best known. His social activities included the setting up of an English school in his little village, and a post office in a neighbouring village. He was for the spread of municipalities, punctual in paying his taxes and never tiring to complain of the lack of tarred roads in the country. It was with his efforts that many little villages bordering southern Calcutta were brought within the jurisdiction of the south suburban municipal corporation. Vidyabhusan never earned more than 150 rupees (= £9 approximately) a month. He started work as librarian at the Sanskrit College in 1844 on 50 rupees a month. By the time he left the institution he had become professor of Sanskrit literature on the salary of 150 rupees. He retired early, in the year 1873, on a pension of a little less than 70 rupees. The money from the Som Prokash presumably came out of that paltry sum.

Sisir Kumar Ghosh of the Amrita Bazar Patrika was the son of

1. B.N. Bandopadhyaya, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala, no.31 (Calcutta, 1944).
a reputed pleader practising in the district courts of Jessore. Sisir Kumar was born in 1840 at Amrita Bazar, the ancestral village of the Ghosh family in the Jessore district, and received a village school education. His special interests were in health science, and he later wrote books on the subject. He went to Calcutta only for higher education, first to a high school in Kolutala locality from which he matriculated, and then to Presidency College to study engineering though not for long. He started the Patrika at the age of 28 stirred by the helplessness of the peasants in his district under the high-handed ways of the European indigo-planter. He started off by writing articles on the subject to the Hindoo Patriot as their Jessore correspondent. This was during the years 1859 to 1866. He started to earn in the sixties only after his father's death, first as a village school teacher and then as deputy inspector of schools at a salary of 75 rupees per month. Ultimately he became an income-tax assessor, all the while remaining in his district abode. Sisirkumar had little money to begin with. Most of his father's large earnings had gone into village charity. Sisirkumar was however able to make a start with his earnings and his Patrika cost him about 240 rupees at the outset. He bought a wooden hand press from a widow at Calcutta whose
husband had died soon after acquiring this printing apparatus. But later, when he moved to Calcutta in the early seventies, having converted the Patrika into a bilingual journal, he had to negotiate a loan with Raja Digumbar Mitra for the purchase of a printing press which was to cost 600 rupees. But as Sisirkumar did not wish to have anything to do with rajas, he refused to negotiate this loan directly with the raja and did it only through his gomostha.¹

Sadharani's editor Akshoy Chandra Sarkar came from a literary background, his grandfather and father both being writers. His father was, in addition, a touring government officer. They belonged to Chinsurah, a district town to the north of Calcutta. Akshoy Chandra spent his childhood, till the age of ten, at the village of Ula in the district of Nadia and his youth at the town of Hooghly next door to his ancestral Chinsurah. He went to Calcutta to study law at Presidency College for the first time in 1867, when twenty-seven years old. He knew little English in his childhood and learnt whatever he could by reading the whole of the first and half of the second English primers with his father's help. His academic tastes were literary and,

¹ B.N. Bandopadhyaya, ibid., no.54 (Calcutta, 1945); also J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism, p. 73.
to practise law he went all the way to Bahrampur in Murshidabad district only because, as he himself tells us, the place was most congenial to literary discussion. While there he started a study group in Bengali literature. After about five years of legal life he returned home to Chinsurah to start the Sadharani. He retained his love of literature throughout and wrote as many as fourteen works containing poetry, some comic literature, biographies and literary discourses on old and new Bengali literature. Much of his inspiration came from Bankim Chatterji, an intimate friend, who was Bengal's first great writer in the nineteenth century.¹

These were men who were steeped in Bengali culture and literature; they had little of westernization in them although none of them spurned western learning. Side by side with them there were those Bengali editors who derived a greater inspiration from Shakespeare, Milton and Bacon than from anything in Bengal. They were the enthusiasts for the New Learning, proving it by conducting even their newspapers in English. More noted among them were Keshav Chandra Sen, editor of the Indian Mirror during the seventies, and Kristo Das Pal who was the inspiring element behind the

¹ B.N. Bandyopadhyaya, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala, no.39 (Calcutta, 1944).
Hindoo Patriot during the same decade. They were the upholders of the British India Society. Keshav Chandra Sen, of the Baidya clan, came from a rich and educated Calcutta family of much social prestige. His father was a dilettante, who took an almost equal and active interest in education, literature, culture, medical sciences of the west and east, economics and politics. Keshav Chandra, born in their Calcutta Kolutala residence in 1838 turned out to be brilliant in English and arithmetic. Soon after taking over fully the responsibility of the Indian Mirror in 1865, he went to England to see for himself the progress of the English people. Among his friends there were Mary Carpenter, John Stuart Mill and Professor Max Müller. He is also known to have discussed politics with Mr. Gladstone. He came back to make the Indian Mirror a daily from 1871 with the motto 'veluti in speculum' (As from the watch tower). In 1873 he started the Sunday Mirror with the words 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards men'. He was himself deeply religious and started a movement to include religious and moral education as part of school and college curricula. He also started a

periodical called the **Liberal**, perhaps in memory of his conversations with Mr. Gladstone and to propagates those ideas. Kristo Das Pal, **Hindoo Patriot**'s editor during the seventies, was another of those men who were deeply moved by the teachings of the West, specially of the Christian missionaries. Born of humble caste and poor circumstances in a squalid part of Calcutta in 1838, he was educated first in Gour Mohan Addy's **patshala** (later to be known as the Oriental Seminary), he moved to its English section at the age of 10 and studied there till 1853. One of the people who taught him there was the Rev. Milne, a minister of the Free Kirk of Scotland. He joined the 'Calcutta Literary Free Debating Club', a small group of interested men who would persuade people like the Rev. Morgan, Principal of the Parental Academy in Calcutta, and the Rev. Alexander Duff to lecture to them on various subjects. Kristo Das was their poorest member, and was even unable to pay one rupee eight annas as annual membership fee. However, he started making a living while reading at the Hindu Metropolitan College by writing articles for the **Morning Chronicle**, **Citizen** and **Englishman**, and, of course, the **Hindoo Patriot** which he took over as editor in the year 1861.

But there were also those, among these men who did so much for the Indian press in the seventies, who were less fortunate in their education and their finances. The most prominent among them was Harinath Majumdar who was founder and editor of the *Gambarta Prakashika*. This was the first good journal devoted entirely to a study of the village community in the Nadia district, their wants and difficulties in the sixties and the seventies. Harinath Majumdar had worked in the office of the local money-lender, in his village of Kumarkhali, and had also been in the service of the local zamindar. As he once put it himself, he knew 'by heart' the nature of the oppressions in a Bengali village. He had had almost no schooling at all. With some help from Pandit Dayachand Shiromoni, the local *acharya* of the Brahmo Samaj, he taught himself some English and some literature mainly by reading the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*. He also got hold of the *Sambad Prabhakar* and taught himself how to edit a journal before starting his own. He became for a time the local correspondent of the *Prabhakar*. Then he launched the *Gambarta Prakashika* as a monthly in 1863, which he converted to a fortnightly in 1869 and, finally, a weekly in 1876. In the course of these transformations it lost much of its literary trappings and became an outspoken political journal. It had no
financial support of any kind from any source, and lived solely on its own revenues. As Harinath Majumdar noted in an autobiographical fragment 'I was its editor, the sole writer and for the most part its postman as well'. Naturally the journal went from one financial crisis to another till it folded up with a total debt of 1200 rupees.¹ Some among the early Bengali editors were mere students, mostly from Presidency College in Calcutta. An outstanding example was the Halishahar Patrika, nearly prosecuted by the government for sedition in 1873. It was found that both the editor and the publisher of the paper were twenty-year-old co-students and they were let off with a warning.²

Vernacular newspaper editors in Bombay presidency came, however, from a more uniform background. Certainly most of the prominent ones were tied by education to the one college, the Elphinstone Institution, which contributed many influential figures to the western educated Indian élite of the nineteenth century. Bombay's oldest vernacular journal, the Mumbai Samachar, was owned and edited during the seventies by Maneckji Barjorji Minocher-Homji. A Parsi educated at Elphinstone Institution, he was born in 1840 of

¹. B.N. Bandopadhyaya, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala, no.35 (Calcutta, 1945)
². See below, pp. 408-09.
a fairly well-to-do metropolitan based family with literary inclinations. Except for a short spell at the military accounts department of the government of Bombay, he was all his life a journalist by profession and a novelist by inclination. He began by writing articles to the Mumbai Samachar at the age of twenty, became its joint editor at the age of twenty-three, and finally its editor-proprietor in 1870. At the same time he wrote a series of novels known as the Daturdoc, all based on aspects of social life within the Parsi community. He was a prominent citizen of Bombay city, but was known to have kept strictly away from politics. He took, however, a keen interest in the municipal affairs of the city and was the 'principal assailant' of Bombay's municipal corporation specially during the years of the plague. Among his friends were Viswanath Narayan Mandalik and Ardeshir and Jehangir Moos. Apart from this group, the Marzban family were influential in journalism in western India. By the seventies the Jam-e-Hamshed was taken over by the Marzban family who run the journal to date. The founder of the family was Fardoonji Marzban who was born of a humble, priestly family. It was he who started the Mumbai Samachar in 1822. Such

1. Obituary notices on Maneckji Barjorji's death in the Mumbai Samachar, 30 and 31 March 1898. I am grateful for the translation from Gujarati to Miss Taraporevala of the Gujarati section, Asiatic Society, Bombay. Mandalik was then the editor of the Native Opinion in Bombay; Ardeshir Moos was an astronomer and Jehangir Moos was a writer.
was the involvement of the Marzbans with early journalism that the story goes that the 'regular types on wooden blocks' out of which the paper was to be printed were cut by the women of the family. Fardoonji Marzban was a Persian scholar of some standing, a close associate of Mulla Firoze, and a merchant. He had however to give up the Samachar to his creditors after one of his mercantile ventures had failed, in 1832. Later on in the century his successors in the family resumed their connections with journalism in right earnest. The next of kin was Jehangir Marzban (1848-1928). But instead of trying to recover the Samachar, being orthodox Parsis the family was attracted towards the Jam-e-Jamshed which was by the middle decades an established organ of the Parsi Panchayet. They took it over in the 1870's and have run it ever since. The Rast Goftar was started in 1851, by no less a man than Dadabhai Naoroji. But the paper changed hands rapidly, and within six years of its inception there were three


The editor in the seventies was Kaikhusro Naoroji Kabraji. Born into a Bombay business family in 1842, Kaikhusro Kabraji took to journalism as a profession from the age of 16. Before taking over the Rast Goftar he was editor of the Parsi Mitra. He was the only Indian editor to be made a member of the British Institute of Journalism in the year 1900. The Rast Goftar went through hard times financially. The first proprietors were Dadabhai Naoroji and Kursedji Cama. Having run into a loss of 10,000 rupees in no more than five years, they converted it into a joint-stock company with five partners. Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee was not only one of the partners but in fact also edited the paper for two years without remuneration. Kharshedji Cama's family had made their fortune over the years mainly in overseas trade. They had been trading with China since the late eighteenth century. Kharshedji himself joined the family business after having completed his studies at Elphinstone College. He was keenly interested in literary and scientific education, and himself founded the Students' Literary and Scientific Society in 1848 when 17 years old. Even while working in his uncle's firm at Peking, he would frequently send money for literary

prizes to schools and colleges in Bombay. One of Kharshedji's illustrious contemporaries was Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee, a man less fortunate in family circumstances having lost his father at a very early age. Sorabji joined an English business company at the age of 20, in 1851, on a salary of 20 rupees. He was later to become a successful broker and it was then that he could afford to buy a share in the Rast Goftar and edit it without remuneration for two years.\(^1\) Kaikhusro Kabraji gave the Rast Goftar its financial security, running the paper on sound commercial lines. But he was a man far apart from Dabadhai Naoroji, Rast Goftar's founder, and was later to cause the Grand Old Man much pain by adopting an anti-Congress stand.\(^2\)

Early Marathi journalism centred round Gangadhar Shashtri Jambhekar (1812-46) whose paper the Durpan bore the stamp of all that Jambhekar had acquired intellectually from the Elphinstone Institution. His work was carried on in the seventies by his friend Bhau Mahajan. Born at Poona in 1815 of a highly educated brahmin family, Bhau Mahajan was known to have suffered from the not uncommon disease of

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treat everything Indian with unnecessary contempt.¹
However, Marathi journalism of the sixties and the seventies
had also in it men whose feet were firmly planted on Indian
soil. The Indu Prakash was edited till 1876 by a traditional pandit, a Marathi sastri called Vishnu Parsharam. Born in humble and orthodox surroundings, Vishnu Pandit joined the government's educational service after completing a traditional schooling.² He knew English but was considered more competent to edit only the Marathi section of the bilingual Indu Prakash. Its English section was edited by Mahadeo Govind Ranade. Although Vishnu Pandit came from a traditional background, he himself was a vehement propagator of widow remarriage and such other ideas which no doubt made his ancestors turn in their graves. The Native Opinion, another prominent journal of the decade, was started by Viswanath Narayan Mandalik in 1864. A chitpavan brahmin, Mandalik was the product of a western education and a specialist in law. He began his paper in English but introduced columns in Marathi on public request. Mandalik rose to be mayor of Bombay city and, finally, member of Bombay's legislative council.³

1. V.D. Rao, op. cit., The Indian Press, pp. 53-54, 56.
2. Ibid., p. 59.
3. C.L. Parekh, Eminent Indians on Indian Politics, (Bombay, 1892), pp. 135-38.
With very few exceptions, editors of vernacular papers in northern India were men of much less illustrious stature than their contemporaries in the west and east of the country. The only all-India figure in north Indian journalism during the decade of the seventies was Sir Sayid Ahmed Khan, an anglicized Muslim of an aristocratic background. The only prominent Hindu was Harishchandra, editor of the Kavi Vachan Sudha, a brahmin and a poet. From Harishchandra the paper was taken over by Chintamani Sharma at the close of the decade, again a brahmin and a Sanskrit pandit. There were few university graduates, only two were mentioned to be so. One of them was the editor of the Kashi Patrika (Benares Journal) and the other was Meva Ram, editor of the Urdu Nairang Mazamin (Essays of Different Colours). Many who ran these papers were supposedly without any education. There was at least one instance of a man starting a paper only because he had learnt the art of lithography while in prison.

Little is known about the antecedents of Tamil and Telugu editors of the early nineteenth century. The first journalist/

2. Memorandum on the Vernacular Newspapers of Upper India, p. 3 in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, no. 88; also Selections from the Records of Bengal, No. 32, p. lxiii.
importance was Veeresalingam Pantulu who started the **Vivekavardhini** (Promoter of Wisdom). He was primarily a social and religious preacher who initiated the Brahmo movement in the Andhra country. Veeresalingam Pantulu was born in 1840 in a fairly wealthy and literary Telugu brahmin family. Although Veeresalingam was educated in English, he was devoted to the development of his own language. He is regarded as having led the renaissance movement in Andhra: a renaissance of language and literature, social and religious reform. To counteract such progressive movements, emerged men like Kokkonda Venkataratnam Panthulu with his *Andhrabhasa Sanjivani*. The latter's editor was an old world traditional scholar who was opposed to all sweeping change.\(^1\) Of the eight editors of the Urdu press of Madras during the seventies, many were unemployed men who had somehow got hold of lithographic presses of their own. They earned only what they got from their little newspapers. In this category were Sayyid Abdul Gaffur, Sayyid Murtuzu Kedari, Mahommad Anwar and Sayyid Mahommad Ali Kedari. Each owned a press; neither of them knew any English. The exceptions were the editors of the *Shams-ul-Akhbar, Tilism-i-Hairat, Umdut-ul-

Akhbar-i-Shahi and the Safir-i-Madras. Of them the first was a railway clerk on a salary of 50 rupees a month; the second was an Urdu teacher at a missionary school on 30 rupees a month; the third was a bookseller who also owned a press, and the last was a vakil in the city who had little legal practice.¹

Although we know a little about the men behind the Indian press in those days, we know even less about the nature of its readership. Who were the people who read those papers? How extensively were they circulated? A general estimate of the state of the vernacular press made in 1873 gives us about 100,000 readers of 'native papers' with the highest circulation for any one paper of about 3,000.² This appears, from what detailed figures are available, a reliable estimate on the whole. It has not been possible to obtain newspaper circulation figures of all the regions for the whole of the seventies. But those that have been found indicate the following results. In 1872 the Gujarati Rast Goftar enjoyed the highest circulation in Bombay presidency, and indeed among the vernacular papers in the whole of India although there are no circulation

figures available for the Bengali journals of those early days. However, by the end of the decade the Banga Mitra, a monthly in Bengal, was leading in circulation with 4,000 copies in 1877-78 and the Sulav Samachar following it with 3,000. The Rast Goftar circulated 1200 copies in the year 1872. The Maharashtra Mitra and the Indu Prakash came next with 1,050 each in the same year. The Native Opinion, the Chabook and the Akhbare Sowdagar followed with 550 each, the Loke Mitra with 500. Next on the ladder was the Mumbai Samachar then circulating only 400 copies. The figures of the Arya Mitra, the Dnyan Prakash, Arunodaya (Rising of the Sun), the Belgaum Samachar (Belgaum News), the Kaira Wartaman (Kaira News) and the Dnyan Bodhak (Teacher of Knowledge) ranged between 125 and 300 in the year 1872. The lowest figures were those of the Ahmedabad Samachar, Broach Wartaman and the Nasik Writ (Nasik News); they sold between 50 to 95 copies each. In five years time, in 1877, the picture of the Bombay press was only slightly changed. The Rast Goftar again topped the list with 1,650 copies in circulation. There was a clear increase of 450 copies within the five-year period. As before the Indu Prakash

followed, again with an increase, with 1,200 copies in circulation. The Mumbai Samachar had, however, shot up to 700 copies and so had the Dnyan Prakash. Both these papers had a circulation of about 300 in 1872. Other papers like the Belgaum Samachar and the Nasik Writ showed only small rises: from 268 to 300 in the case of the former, and from 95 to 100 for the latter. The Chabook showed a sharp fall as it was about to wind up at the close of the decade. The Maharashtra Mitra's circulation fell more spectacularly from 1050 to 250, but it was to carry on in that state for the decade and later. The Native Opinion lost 150 in circulation during those five years, from 550 to 400; the Arunodaya from 300 to about 268.¹

In the North-Western Provinces, in the same year 1877, the largest circulation was claimed by the Arya Mitra and the Arya Patrika being 600 and 599 respectively. Next was the Samachar Sar which sold 500 copies that year to the domiciled Bengalis of the north. It was followed closely by the Nur-ul-Absar which sold 450 and the Dabdaba-i-Sikandari 350. The number of Allygurh Institute Gazettes

¹. For the circulation in the early years of the decade in Bombay presidency see Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1875, Part B, no.525; and for the circulation figures in 1877 see Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, nos.298-99.
circulated in the year 1876 was 297 approximately; the Kavi Vachan Sudha was close behind with 275. A large number of the newspapers of the region circulated within the range of 100 to 250 copies. Among those were fairly important papers like the Shola-i-Tur (Flame of the Mountains), the Agra Akhbar, the Hindi Pradip and the Bharat Bandhu. Not more than 7 out of the 41 vernacular papers had insignificant circulation, fluctuating from 80 copies down to about 50. The Oudh Akhbar could boast of having sold the highest number in Oudh: circulation stood at 719 in 1876. The rest of the ten journals in that area kept up a fairly healthy standard of circulation, the lowest figure being 100. At least three of the ten papers, the Oudh Punch, the Gulkadah Riaz (Bunch of Flowers) and the Kaukab-i-Hind (Star of India) sold 375, 351 and 320 copies respectively. The Karnamah (Big Deed) ran closely with 250. The rest of the figures were known to have ranged between 132 and 100. A Punjabi newspaper, the Akhbar-i-Am (General Newspaper) circulated more copies than any other paper in upper India. The number stood at 1,245 in 1876. It could certainly compete with its few enterprising contemporaries elsewhere in the country. The Khair-Khwah-i-Punjab, the Aftab-i-Punjab, the Rafu-i-Am were all in the 600 to 700 limit, the first leading with the higher number.
At least three newspapers circulated 400 and more copies each. Next on the rung were the *Punjabi Akhbar*, the *Mihir-i-Darakshan* (Shining Diamond) and the *Vakil-i-Hindusthan*, selling about 350, 300, and 235 copies respectively. There were a couple selling about 200, and only one, a highly select Arabic academic journal, which sold a mere 100 copies. Berar did not do too badly. All its four newspapers circulated from 150 to 250 copies each.¹

In the central provinces the *Malwa Akhbar* sold 175 copies, the highest figure in the region. Rajputana had only two papers in 1876; the *Jaipur Akhbar* with a circulation of about 125 copies, and the *Marwar Gazette* 100.² In Madras presidency there were a few papers which indicated a mild rise in circulation from 1874 to 1878. Among these were the *Sathiavartamani* (Honest News) whose circulation increased from 350 to 430 in those years; the *Amirtavasani* which sold 180 copies in 1878 added 20 to the number sold in 1874, and the *Kerala Pataka Peschima Taraka*’s number was raised from 230 in 1874 to 260 four years later. The figures for the *Andhrabhasa Sanjivani* and the *Combaconum Athenaeum* remained constant during these years, the former at 150 and the latter at 190 approximately. The *Dinavur-thamani* (News of the Day), the earliest Tamil weekly,

1. For the circulation figures of N.W.P. and Oudh, Punjab and C.P. in 1876 see *Home (Public) Proceedings*, January 1877, Part B, no.293.
however fell in circulation from 400 in 1874 to 360 in 1878. The circulation of the Urdu papers in this presidency was not bad in comparison. The oldest of them was the best sold. This was the *Shame-ul-Akhbar* with a circulation of 350 in 1878. The next in line were the *Jarida-i-Rozgar* and the *Hakim-i-Madras* selling 300 and 250 copies respectively. The *Umdut-ul-Akhbar-i-Shahi* printed only about 200 copies for each of its issues, and the *Safir-i-Madras* 100. Two of the Urdu papers were poorer with circulations between 70 and 40 copies per issue.

However, the circulation figures were not wholly proportionate to the number of people that the newspapers reached. Just as on the one hand they tended to be exaggerated at times by individual newspapers, on the other hand, the society touched by these newspapers was not confined merely to the reading public. In India the ancient oral tradition was never completely wiped out,
specially from religious life. It was certainly known and reported not by the Indians alone but by contemporary Englishmen as to how newspapers were read out by individuals to groups of people, who were either too poor to buy a newspaper or who were not good enough at reading. 'How then do these vernacular sheets affect the life of the people of India? To understand this we must begin with the village,' wrote Everard Cotes, an English journalist in India, 'even till the first two decades of the twentieth century'. 'The school-master, the honorary magistrate or the local pleader may be the only actual subscribers, but the contents are read out aloud and discussed in the long evenings to an extent that makes the effective circulation very much larger.'¹ On the reading of the vernacular press bill in 1878 in the Viceroy's council at Calcutta, one of the points most emphasized was the danger of these vernacular papers being commonly read out in 'the bazaars'.²

As to the class of persons who actually subscribed to the papers, we have only very general information of the kind that they were 'government officers', 'zemindars',

2. See below, p. 415
'vernacular school-masters', 'mukhtars' and 'court: and zemindari omlahs'. We are told that papers like the Navabhivakar, which came into existence only in 1878, the Bharat Mihir and the Sadharani were read 'mostly ... [by] ... the educated, higher and middle classes of the native community ... in the metropolitan districts.' The Sulav Samachar, Bengal's and indeed the country's first pice-paper, was supposed to have been 'generally purchased by school-boys, half-educated clerks, shop-keepers with some knowledge of letters, /loungers in bazars'.\textsuperscript{1} In Bombay presidency subscribers to papers like the Indu Prakash, the Native Opinion, the Dnyan Prakash, and the Arunodaya were 'Native officials of government, educated subordinates of railways, a few well-to-do persons, and the libraries in cities and towns'. The Mumbai Samachar, the Jam-e-Jamshed and the Rast Goftar were circulated 'among the educated Parsis and Gujerati-speaking merchants at the presidency ... among the Gujerati-speaking population generally, particularly the educated portion of it'.\textsuperscript{2} There is also evidence that Europeans personally patronized a few of this region. Sir Bartle Frere was himself on the

\textsuperscript{1} Memorandum on the Vernacular Press of Bengal, pp. 2-4 in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, no. 330.
\textsuperscript{2} Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, nos. 298-99.
subscriber's list of the Native Opinion. The Mumbai Samachar had fourteen 'regular' European subscribers.¹

The Benares Akhbar in the north received more money in the way of subscriptions from Europeans than from Indians. Of its monthly receipts of 44 rupees, 23 rupees came from the Europeans and the rest from Indians.² In the long run, however, there were, as was only to be expected, many more Indian subscribers to the vernacular papers than there were of any other group. Of the total 6,380 numbers of copies in circulation in the North-Western Provinces in 1874, Indians took 3,688 copies altogether, government subscribed to 1,329 copies and the Europeans came next with 534. The rest of the papers, the number being 829 for the North-Western Provinces in 1874, were exchanged between the various editors presumably as complimentary copies.³ At the district level we are told by the divisional commissioners of the Bengal districts, that the vernacular papers were read by the 'influential classes' as well as by the 'middle classes', who were described as people with 'no employment, including the ignorant as well as those who are more or less

¹ V.D. Rao, op. cit., The Indian Press, p. 60; also a list of subscribers in 1871 available at the Bombay Samachar office. I am grateful to Mr. Gama, the present managing director of the Samachar for access to such information.
² J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism, p. 51.
³ A.R. for N.W.P., 1874-75, pp. 197-98.
educated and are fresh from college or school'.

It is, however, evident that there was a fair amount of distribution of regional newspapers within the four corners of the region itself, that is from town to village and no doubt vice versa. Quite a few of the Calcutta papers penetrated the districts, however small the circulation. In the district town of Bogra, to the north of Calcutta, there were 15 subscribers for the Sulav Samachar, 12 for the Education Gazette, 7 for the Banga Darshan, 6 for the Hindoo Patriot, the same for the Amrita Bazar, 1 for the Urdu Guide and the Banga Bandhu and only 1 for the Indian Mirror. Of inter-Indian circulation there was little in the seventies. The only papers in Bengal which had subscribers elsewhere in the country were the Indian Mirror, the Hindoo Patriot and the Amrita Bazar Patrika. The principal external centres were Allahabad, Kanpur and Poona. Both the Indian Mirror and the Patriot had subscribers in Jammu, but the Patrika had obviously not reached that far. Later on the Bengalee under Surendra Nath Banerjea was to have a fairly nation-wide distribution.

1. Divisional and District Annual Report, Rajshahye Division, 1877-78, para.48, p. 20. [Hereafter I shall refer to these records as District Report with the name of the division.]


Of Indian newspapers having subscribers abroad we have evidence of only one such instance. This was the Sambad Bhaskar. We are told as early as the late fifties that this paper had readers among those Europeans in England who wanted to 'keep up' with Indian affairs.¹ This could well have been true because in 1878 we find the Pall Mall Gazette describing the Bhaskar as 'exceedingly clever ... having been started by a man as witty as Roche-fort, and far more good-humoured'² while speculating on the merits and demerits of the vernacular press Act.

The process of printing of these vernacular sheets was yet in its infant stages in the decade of the seventies. A lot of it was lithography, specially in the north where the Urdu script was well suited to lithographic form. The wooden hand press was prevalent to some extent in Bengal, although the more important papers were acquiring printing machines during the decade. Bombay was the most advanced for the times. Its first vernacular paper, Mumbai Samachar, was printed in the press which had been in existence since 1777 and had been used to print the Zend Avestha, the Parsi gospel. The story goes that Furdoonji Marzban, the founder of the Mumbai Samachar bought the press in the year 1800

¹ Selections from the Records of Bengal, no.32, p.xlii.
² Spectator 16 March 1878.
before he started the paper twenty years later. Then being dissatisfied with the Gujarati types of that machine he ordered 'one Gujarati fount from England'. He ran into a debt over this and, as we know, had soon to give up the press and the paper to his creditors. This same press printed other contemporary journals, the Chabook and the Satya Prakash among the noted. This was a phenomenon of wide application in the rest of the country as well. One lithograph stone in the region catered for more than one journal. Similarly a press already in existence in a city was relied on by aspiring newspaper-editors before starting their papers, and of course afterwards. The Sanskrit Press in Calcutta printed many journals from Ram Mohan's Sambad Kaumudi in the thirties to the Som Prokash in the sixties. The Som Prokash acquired its own machine, which was set up in rural Changripota, only in the year 1874. The Sadharani was printed with Banga Darshan in another Calcutta press. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, which had started with a wooden press carried over from Calcutta to the village, acquired a more sophisticated instrument on moving to Calcutta in 1872. The art of printing was known to only a few, and the Amrita Bazar Patrika not only carried


2. P.N. Bose and H.W.B. Moreno, op. cit., p. 70 and p. 91.
its press from Calcutta, but also hired a printer from the city for the purpose. A printing workshop was thus set up with the help of the village carpenter, the proprietors themselves – comprising the three Ghosh brothers at the time – along with a few others training as compositors. They had to cast rollers and types and manufacture their own printing ink. Motilal Ghosh, the youngest brother, is reputed to have become an expert compositor and pressman.¹

The vernacular press industry in Bombay, however, was by the early seventies well on its way to possessing 'editorial offices' and 'flat-bottomed presses run by oil-engines'. In the other provincial towns printing offices were found mostly in 'odiferous gullies'. 'Here could one see the reed pen of antiquity still industriously at work on the lithograph stone' wrote Everard Cotes in his diaries while in India. 'Here inking was done by hand, and wooden presses creaked to the straining muscles of brown-skinned coolies, and imperfectly clad editors, managers and printers

¹ B.N. Bandopadhyaya, Sahitya Sadhak Charit Mala, no.54 (Calcutta, 1945).
who toiled cheerfully through the hours for remuneration that the poorest European would have refused...¹ As we know the pressmen were paid 5 rupees and the coolies 4 rupees a month each.

The European press in India was conducted on an altogether higher plane. Even the Indian Daily News in Calcutta, one of the lesser Anglo-Indian journals, employed University graduates as printers and pressmen.² When Robert Knight left Bombay for Calcutta in 1863 he was armed with a packet containing a lakh of rupees. This was his farewell gift as retiring editor of the Bombay Gazette. With that he started the Indian Economist and bought a share in a large coffee estate. Three years later, he bought the slowly declining Friend of India, to merge it with the Indian Statesman started only a few months earlier, with 30,000 rupees.³ A few years earlier Joachim Stocqueler had bought the Englishman press for the slightly lesser sum of 18,000 rupees.⁴ The circulation of such sums of money must have been inconceivable at the vernacular level. Suren-dra Nath Banerjea had purchased the Bengalee from Becharam

² Ibid., p. 423. Everard Cotes was editor of the Indian Daily News in the 1890's.
Chatterji for the sum of 10 rupees only. The Amrita Bazar Patrika had run into a big debt for the purchase of a printing machine with 600 rupees.¹ The Indian Statesman had as its shareholders 24 of the leading merchants in the town.² The Pioneer was started by George Allen in Allahabad who had been making 'big money' in tea-planting in northern India since 1855. Within a year of its existence it started a weekly called the Pioneer Mail, which was nothing but 48 quarto-sized pages of advertisements containing 'personal' columns, notices of sales of ponies, wearing apparel and pets.³ The Times of India, the leading English journal in Bombay, specialized in advertising 'shigram, britzka, phaeton or Clarence carriage', as well as seats in Church, ales and wines, boarding schools at home and abroad. The monthly edition of the Times of India was known to have circulated about 40,000 copies in England. They were sent in packets of 3,000 each via Marseilles in about 34 days from the date of departure from Bombay on a postal charge of two pence per packet carried to any part of the United Kingdom. By Southampton it took 37 days and

¹ S.N. Banerjea, op. cit., p. 64; also, J. Natarajan, History of Indian Journalism, pp. 72-3.
² Golden Jubilee Supplement of The Statesman, (Calcutta, 1924) (unpag.), article on Robert Knight.
was free of all postage. In India the *Times of India* printed a little over 3,000 copies daily. A third of this daily printing was sold to two large circulating libraries in Bombay city at 2½ annas per issue. Copies were circulated for use from about 6 o'clock in the morning to 9 a.m.; then they were collected and delivered to other subscribers for reading until noon, and a third batch of readers had them until 5 o'clock, when the 'well-thumbed' copies were ironed and posted to the mofussil by the night trains. The rest of the daily copies were individually sold.¹ Both the *Times of India* in Bombay and the *Statesman* in Calcutta used 'fast-running rotary presses', the most modern of the devices till then invented. For the first few decades much of the printing materials came from England, specially the newsprint.² So did the editors. Those who came in the fifties and sixties were men 'chiefly ... from the public schools and the universities of England.' William Martin Wood, 'an Oxford scholar', was editor of the *Times of India* in the early seventies. He had been on the staff of the *Lancaster Guardian* and had come out to India as a journalist. In 1878 he started another paper called *The Bombay Review* and in the eighties published an

1. *One Hundred Years in India, The Times of India Centenary Supplement* (Bombay, 1938), pp. 5-7.
autobiographical work on his editorial life in India under the title Things of India Made Plain.\(^1\) In 1876 the editorship was taken over by Henry Curwen, a literary critic who had by then earned a reputation in England for having written 'with discrimination' on the French poets. He had also written a book of short stories, the first of which was called 'Within Bohemia, or Love in London'.\(^2\)

The proprietors of the Times of India were also men of learning, apart from being men of wealth. In the fifties it was jointly edited by Robert Knight and Matthias Mull, both men of business with large shares in tea-estates. Matthias Mull had come out to India in 1852 to look after the Education Society's Press, a missionary organization. A man with strong academic inclinations he began to work as an assistant with Dosabhoy Framjee, the Parsi historian. When he retired from the Times of India in 1879 he devoted his whole time to editing Paradise Lost and Macbeth.\(^3\)

The paper was bought from Mull by William Nassau Lees, who had served in the Bengal Army and who had for some years been the principal of the Calcutta Madrasa. He had a reputation as an oriental scholar and wrote a large number

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1. One Hundred Years in India, The Times of India Centenary Supplement (Bombay, 1938), p. 9; also Buckland, Dictionary, p. 460.
2. Ibid., pp. 9-10; also Buckland, Dictionary, p. 104.
3. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
of books, the more well-known among them being his edited works in Arabic and Persian. The Pioneer's editor from 1872 was Anthony Sinnett, a man who had made his name by editing the leading English journal in Hongkong. In India, however, theosophy began to replace journalism as his main interest.

Giving up the Pioneer he wrote books such as *Esoteric Buddhism* and *Karma and the United*. However, it was under Sir George Chesney's editorship that the Pioneer came to be acknowledged as the most powerful Anglo-Indian journal. Chesney's top-level official contacts, being himself head of the P.W.D. Accounts department from 1860 to 1880 and then a secretary to the government of India in the Military Department, gave his paper the importance of a government gazette and more. The Englishman, which considered itself the 'characteristic mouthpiece of the British race in the East', was owned and edited from the fifties to the seventies by J.O'B. Saunders. The son of the proprietor of the Dundee Advertiser he had come out to India in the early fifties as an indigo-planter. In 1857, he bought the Englishman and devoted all his time to it. In Calcutta

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Robert Knight was the most prominent journalist amongst Indians and Englishmen. A talented economist, a shrewd businessman and an energetic liberal he described his own policy to be a 'sympathising, unselfish interest in the people'. He was the first in the field of Anglo-Indian journalism to venture into what came to be known, in some quarters sarcastically, as 'one-anna journalism'.¹ The daily Indian Statesman began to be sold for the equivalent of a penny 'at all the ghats and railway stations and at every great centre of transit in the city'. Important as they were, these Anglo-Indian journals attracted some of the best official minds in the country, so much so that a law had to be passed in the mid-seventies forbidding all official connection with the newspaper world.²

III

This then was the world of Indian journalism. In it there were immense diversities. From the ex-convict running his lithographic press in a little north Indian town to the intellectual giant Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar investing all his property in a Bengali daily in Calcutta, from the penurious but idealistic villager hawking round

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¹ Golden Jubilee Supplement of the Statesman, article on 'One Anna Journalism - The Statesman', unpag.
his Grambarta Prakashika to the hard-headed European editor in command of the immense resources of an Anglo-Indian daily, this was a world of marked contrasts. There was, however, one feature fairly clear in all the details and that was the fragmented character of the Indian press. It would seem to be in the nature of things that two hand-operated presses, one in a bamboo-grove in Bengal, the other in a dusty town in Rajputana circulating their papers among a few hundred in the neighbourhood would not come into contact with one another. The remarkable feature brought out in the present study is how through the measures of the government these little men, lost in the vast distances of India, were brought together round specific issues. Further, as the government moved from measure to measure in its administrative necessities, it touched India at new and different levels. Again the little presses went into action and expressed opinions where none had been in existence. The government was not aware of the consequences of its administration. Nevertheless as it strove for much-needed revenue, took political decisions affecting a native state or even attempted to simplify its judicial procedure, it was stimulating fragmentary societies in the Indian world into action and bringing disparate elements together, as it were, in a new awareness. This was not nationalism, but something
broader than that. It was the making of a public mind in India. There were no sensational events in the 1870's, but there was a deeper and more important process at work. In these ten years it is possible to see the birth of a public opinion in India.

It was grave financial embarrassment which led the government of India to introduce the income tax. The tax was at the time a new experiment even in Europe and naturally there was much hesitation and administrative groping in trying it out in India. As far as public opinion was concerned the most remarkable development, at first sight, was the unanimous reaction of the Indian and the Anglo-Indian press. For once the 250 odd journals in India seemed to speak with one voice. In this united denunciation, however, the Anglo-Indian papers repeatedly deplored the curious company they found themselves in, warning the government of the political danger that was signified by this unnatural alliance. There was also a measure of support from the press in Britain for the agitation in India. This agitation was one of the very few which appears to have obliged the government to retrace its steps, and it has sometimes been said that this was the outcome of the alliance between the Indian zamindar and the European

1. I have discussed the problem of the income tax below in chapter 2.
businessman in India. There is some truth in this as obviously these influential communities were the worst hit by the tax. But for us the real importance of this debate lies in the fact that through it we are able to look a little beyond the articulate world of the affluent and the influential. There are moments when we can in this investigation go beyond the Indian press. There can be no doubt that the urban poor and the cultivator were alike affected by the tax but to them the important thing was not the tax itself but the method of its collection. To them the government came in the shape of a chaprasi who took down the names of all who refused to pay him a bribe. Thus were the lower depths of India made aware of the government. It is important to note this dimension of the public mind because it is only rarely that we come across it.

Similarly the attempt to expand municipal administration in the seventies was in part the result of the government's financial embarrassment.¹ Municipalities, properly spread out and administered, would mean the harnessing of local resources for looking after local needs, thus taking them off the government's own budget. There was also the odd dream of West European towns in the marshes of Bengal

¹. See below, chapter 3.
and the deserts of Rajputana. As an Anglo-Indian daily explained at the time, the money to build these would be taken from the Indians and the municipalities would be the means to that end. But they turned out to be many things besides. There was, for one thing, the attempt to turn them into political weapons at Bombay and Calcutta. A little self-government went a long way in those days in these towns. But politics was by no means the major concern, if we take India as a whole. The most important factor over much of the country was a marked disinclination to part with money. In various modes, this point was made all the time from Madras to Lahore. There were also important regional differences. Thus while Bombay and Calcutta clamoured for local self-government, the Punjab prayed to be delivered from the democratically elected local representatives. Further, tensions within Indian society were released through the operation of these municipalities. There was the open clash of interests between the affluent sethias and the lower middle-class rate-payers at Bombay. In rural Bengal there was the old complaint of the influential men using the local rates to make the poor still poorer, themselves claiming the improved facilities in the process. Taken together, the different issues involved in the question of local self-government produced a wide range
of lively debate in which all the areas joined. There were no clearly marked distinctions, no easy divisions in sides, as the debate progressed. Thus it would be false to see later politics in this early discussion. What can be seen is an unexpected churning up of the society at measures taken by the government. Needless to say the government neither suspected nor clearly saw the consequences it was producing as it persevered with what it regarded as routine administration.

Still pursuing matters involving money we come to the controversy regarding the duties on cotton. Here we have an element in the situation which is entirely absent in other debates of the period. This is the Manchester Lobby in England which continually pressed the English parliament to adopt anti-Indian postures in the name of free-trade. This created a cleavage in the ranks of the administration for sometime and the viceroy in India, on behalf of India, resisted the pressures put upon him to remove the duties on the imports from Manchester. The secretary of state, however, proved in the event to be stronger and free trade had its way. In retrospect this would seem to be a school-book case of imperialism, a throw-away gift to all anti-imperialist theorists. The significant point for us is

1. The passing of the tariff act is discussed below in chapter 4.
the demonstration this classic exercise of power provoked in India. It is well to recall that the Indian industries which were affected by this favour done to Manchester were almost all located in and around Bombay and drew their supplies from the fields of Gujarat. Men who had set up in business in textiles formed a small group and as it happened weathered the storm well. The great victory for Manchester did not have the slightest effect on the growth of a textile industry in India. Nevertheless, Indian opinion was greatly exercised on behalf of a small region and a handful of affluent men who knew how to look after themselves. This paradoxical element is a common feature in several of the controversies of the period. From representatives of an effete aristocracy to the emerging men of a new plutocracy, some men for some time stood for things beyond themselves. India, as it were, was beginning to see things in a broader perspective and these controversies were taking the regional presses out of their parochial world. As apprehensions grew about the future of the Indian textile industry, newspapers in Madras and Calcutta, Benares and Kanpur, joined those in Bombay to express their versions of the approaching cataclysm. Characteristically the press in Bombay concentrated narrowly on the particular point at issue, reserving its fire for
the English conservative party and the electoral bargain it was thought to have made with Manchester. The press in Bengal saw in this a sinister confrontation between India and England, extracting as much political enthusiasm as the issue would bear. The generous emotions of northern India alluded to the yellow silk which the avatar Ramchandra had worn and referred to the distress which would undoubtedly be caused if the attempt to refloat such a worthy enterprise foundered. Thus in the unanimity of the Indian press it is possible to see shades of regional approaches to the problem. The mental worlds of Bengal and Bombay, of the Tamil and the Hindustani were in a way coming together, but much of the rich diversity was retained in the end-product.

Turning from money to power, we consider the sensational attempt to murder the British Resident at Baroda which in 1875/provided the government with food for thought and the public with an exciting topic for discussion. Colonel Phayre, the Resident, was convinced that it was the ruling Gaekwar himself who was behind this attempt on his life. But there was another issue at stake. The government had to decide whether Baroda was in such chaos because of

1. See below, chapter 5
continued misrule that an intervention by the paramount power was called for. This raised the broader problem of the government's relations with the Indian princes. There were thus two distinct issues which got mixed up. There was the issue of misrule in Baroda and there was the charge of an attempted murder against Malhar Rao, the Gaekwar. In the event the government acted in the context of the second issue and appointed a committee of enquiry to investigate the criminal charge. When the committee failed to arrive at an agreed conclusion, the government deposed Malhar Rao. In doing so it was acting in the first context without making that clear. This appearance of bungling combined with the spectacle of a ruling prince being treated as a criminal, produced a remarkable outburst in the Indian press. Initially the stories of misrule in Baroda had evoked much criticism of the Gaekwar, specially his entourage. But the intervention of the government changed the picture completely. The Indian journals decided that the prince was an Indian symbol of power and as such must be respected. This change in attitude and the broadening of the issue were matters of great significance. Even more significant was the universality of the reaction from all over the country. True enough it was a sensational case, but once again the action of the government was uniting the regional presses on an issue which had little interest in itself.
As in the case of cotton tariffs where opinion had rallied to the support of a handful of sturdy capitalists, in the matter of Baroda, articulate public opinion in India united behind a decrepit prince.

In those uneventful days the deposition of a prince was naturally a sensation and the Indian press can be excused its flutter. The quiet discussions about the criminal procedure bill [1873], however, provide an excellent example of the public mind at work, without imperialism or patriotism being at issue in a major way.¹

The government was trying, as all governments would, to codify and simplify procedure. The task of administering justice in a country of varied legal traditions and a multiplicity of local customs had never been easy. The criminal procedure bill was one step in a process through which the British government sought to come to grips with the reality of Indian societies. To the men at the top, like the Law Member/Fitzjames Stephen, nothing more was in contemplation than a step towards better administration. There was, however, the obdurate question of the 'white' man's right in India. Previously to this, all 'white' men had been tried only by the High Courts. Now, that the number of 'whites' in the countryside was on the increase, the government wished to

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¹ I have discussed the passing of the criminal procedure bill below in chapter 6.
make arrangements so that they could be tried, if accused of a crime, by local English magistrates without being sent up invariably to the presidency town. It was, again, an administrative measure, which did not contemplate racial equality. Indian opinion had by this time reached a stage when this casual reaffirmation of racial superiority provoked a united outburst, from Calcutta to Bombay, from Delhi to Trivandrum. This, however, was only one aspect of the spirited discussion which came in the wake of the measure. Far more important than this, the act provided the occasion for a reappraisal, as it were, of the law-enforcing machinery in the Indian society. In some parts of the country the principal figure round whom the controversy raged was the village policeman, in others it was that of the local magistrate. What Indians were interested in discussing was not the simplicity or otherwise of the law, but what it felt like to be at the receiving end of it. There was thus a chasm between Sir/Fitzjames Stephen who looked for tidiness and the small-town babu who looked apprehensively at the approaching red turban. All over the Punjab and the Uttar Pradesh, men wrote feverishly denouncing the corruption in the ranks of the police. The government was not the object of criticism, neither was the law being assailed. The excellence of British justice
was acknowledged and the newly won peace in the countryside extolled. But there should have been much more of it; and, according to the Punjabi, there would have been but for the mischief made by the police. The law was a good thing but it required more teeth and the police had somehow to be restrained, so that they saw to the enforcement of the law and not to its exploitation. In Bengal, the magistrate was seen along with the policeman as a figure of terror. The Bengali bhadralok found it difficult to live with honour when such petty tyrants were on the rampage. The question to them, therefore, was not whether the new law would simplify procedure, but whether it would restrain the local tyrannies. The answer was that it would strengthen the hands of the police and the magistrate. In this the Indians saw a misfortune which was totally beyond the comprehension of the government. The arm of the law was reaching out into the inner recesses of Indian society and in the process was making India uneasily aware of the fact that it had got a government.

The passing of the vernacular press act in 1878 under Lord Lytton, was in many ways a fitting finale to the decade which had seen a significant growth in Indian journalism.¹

¹. I have discussed the passing of the vernacular press bill below in chapter 7.
Lord Lytton himself was perhaps persuaded that in retraining the vernacular papers in India he was dealing a shrewd blow at Russia. The argument for this was somewhat tortuous and involved a rather exaggerated appreciation of what damage might be caused by a paper like the *Kalwa Akhbar*, publishing from the territories of the Sindhia, making unflattering *comparisons* between Britain and Russia. The more weighty consideration however was doubtless the accumulated annoyance felt by most senior officials at the irreverence of the babus. There were of course odd cases of sharp practice by individual editors which looked like blackmail. But there was no overwhelming case for censorship. Nevertheless the government moved. The reaction to the move is of profound interest. In Bengal it unleashed not so much a wave of anger, as almost an orgy of self-examination. One of its most influential dailies, the *Som Prokash*, was forced to close down; yet the mood was one of sorrow rather than anger. In part, public opinion was incredulous: 'How could they do it to us?' It was repeatedly pointed out that only twenty years ago, when the nasty sepoys had gone at the Raj with a will, the Bengali babu had stood fast and pushed his pen in the good cause. The fortunes of the Bengali, as every one knew, were inextricably mixed up with those of the Raj. In injured
innocence the Bengali papers reminded themselves that no
one could take away from them the original universe they
had, the discussions of social improvement, the effort at
literary culture. What had happened was that somewhere
along that line, between the thirties and the seventies, they had strayed from the narrow path. And now they must
return. It did seem, however, a pity. The papers asked
in some confusion, were they really that important that the
mighty Raj would take them so seriously. The press
obviously had one kind of image of itself: that of a
precocious child in a world of indulgent adults. But at
the same time another image was obtruding itself. In the
discussions it was often observed that the press was the
interpreter between the people and the government. In
shackling the press the government was cutting itself off
astute
from the people's mind. The Statesman, as ever, pointed
out the fallacy in regarding the Indian world as divided
between the ignorant villager and the westernized townsman.
There was a third group, men who had little education, who
had remained close to their village world and who were
interested in public affairs. The vernacular press was
the press of this unrecognized third estate. The govern-
ment was ill-advised in not knowing the men it was moving
against. There was as we have seen some truth in this.
The Indian press had moved a considerable way from the genteel days when burning questions like whether the good Parsi ladies should wear stockings had engaged its attention. The concern for politics had proved heady and there had been no guide rules of conduct. But now that the blow had fallen, there would be no going back. The public mind had grown to some maturity; it must now find the way to conduct itself in a world of adults.
CHAPTER II. THE DISCUSSION ON INCOME TAX

The introduction of the income tax in India was an attempt by an embarrassed government to share in the wealth of its wealthier subjects. In the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century income tax had not become the inevitable part of life which it is today, and the seeming injustice of it was therefore keenly felt by the tax-payer. Naturally there was considerable division of opinion about it within the government itself. In India the agitation against the tax and the discussions about it brought the public mind to an angry focus. As can be expected, the Indian zamindar and the European businessman had to pay the tax, disliked it and said so. There was a unique entente between the Indian and the Anglo-Indian press, never to be repeated on this scale on any other issue. Beyond these men however, village India also reacted to this new device of extortion. It is important to realize that what was a reasonable tax as seen from the Government House in Calcutta became, when translated into the idiom of the village, an unintelligible source of oppression. There was a great divide between the top bureaucrat and the men who were at the receiving
end of his policy. The existence of this gulf was often ignored by men who ran the government.

In the spring of 1860, on 24 March, Mr. Wilson's income tax bill passed into law. Sent out from England as the council's first finance member, Wilson was appalled by the financial situation left over by the mutiny. India's public debt in India and in England had increased by £38,410,755 between the years 1857 and 1860. The tax was instituted for five years at a rate of 4% on incomes above 500 rupees and 2% on those between 200 and 500 rupees. That it was not a success right from the beginning is quite evident. Even before two whole years had gone by the 2% tax on incomes was taken off. In 1863 the remaining 4% tax was lowered to three per cent. And exactly two years later the tax itself was withdrawn.

It was, however, evident that the government could hardly do without the tax. It therefore decided to continue with the 'experiment'. The income tax was brought

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back in 1869 while in the years between 1867 and 1868, the people were made to pay a licence tax followed by a certificate tax. These were nothing but taxes on income with the sole difference of being confined to certain distinct groups, for the most part merchants and tradesmen. Soon after the income tax reappeared in 1869 it was substantially raised within the course of a few months. Act IX of 1869 came into force on the first of April at 1% on all incomes and profits from 500 rupees a year and upwards. A panic situation arose in October of the same year resulting in a new act which enhanced the tax to 1½%.\(^1\) While companies were taxed at two pies a rupee, individuals were made to pay fixed fees varying from 6 rupees to 1,140 rupees on incomes from 500 to ₨110,000 rupees.\(^2\) Further changes came and, in 1871, the point of exemption was raised to 750 rupees, and the rate reduced to 2 pies in the rupee. In 1873 the tax was repealed, to be brought back again at the end of the decade.\(^3\) This, in a nutshell, was the Indian


income tax of the sixties and the early seventies. Yet though the story of the imposition, abolition, and re-imposition of the tax was a fairly simple one, the varied reactions it set off and the divided opinions, both private and official, it exposed, were somewhat complex. Moreover, the administrative machinery used for collecting the income tax raised some insuperable difficulties for the government itself.

It will be useful for us to look first of all at the Indian world, follow the Indian vernacular press, the reactions of the 'gentle folk' expressed through learned letters and efficient meetings, and add to all this finally some glimpses of what the tax meant to the inarticulate in the urban slums and villages. We shall then turn to the reactions in the Anglo-Indian press which in this debate were of considerable importance. The opinions expressed in Britain were also of some significance. In conclusion there was of course, and always, the government divided in council, wondering whether it was doing the right thing.

Indian newspapers were uniformly excited about the income tax. The Hindoo Patriot denounced 'the grievous burden of taxation' that lay on the 'people of India'. In its determination to condemn the income tax and to convince
the government of the futility of all enquiries into incomes in the Indian context, the Hindoo Patriot pointed out that according to the Shastras a Hindoo was 'justified in concealing from another certain things which included his age and his income'. Other newspapers in Bengal took up the cause with equal enthusiasm. The Bangabandhu pleaded for 'deliverance from the insufferable torments of the Income Tax'. The Kanchrapara Patrika, a paper which was devoted solely to describing the condition of the village of Kanchrapara in Western Bengal, lamented the 'present condition ... under the orgies of income assessments'. Following this up, the Som Prokash wrote that it was all the fault of government. 'If it would select native officers of a higher class than it now does,' the Som Prokash wrote, 'if it would assign them subdistricts, and if it would not press them to produce a certain income, rightly or wrongly, justly or unjustly, there would not be so much injustice or oppression.' The Amrita Bazar Patrika made it clear that 'the natives can bear no further taxation.'

2. Bangabandhu, 5 February 1872; Report on the Native Newspapers of Bengal, 1872. [Henceforward referred to as R.N.P., Bengal.]
Impose them and you will ruin them and the Government'. Assuring the administration that their purpose was 'not to create a sensation' the Amrita Bazar asked them to 'inquire privately what the bazar gossip is at present; not the same faith in the British Indian Government as of yore, and the reason is simply heavy taxation'. Referring to the contemplated cess on roads the same newspaper added despairingly, 'the Government means to impose an additional taxation in the shape of a road cess upon a people who think themselves already overburdened, and who are already crying loudly for redress.'¹

Vernacular newspapers published in the Punjab, the North Western Provinces, Oudh and the Central Provinces were impressive in their campaign against the tax. The Agra Akhbar wrote of the French reaction to the introduction of an income tax in France. The editor praised M. Thiers' 'stubborn opposition' to that tax in the French National Assembly and in an editorial called upon his government to emulate Thiers.² Another newspaper belonging to the same region, the Shola-i-Tur, wrote of the injustice of double taxation which the income tax imposed on some. 'Unlike the

¹ Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17 February 1872.
² Agra Akhbar, 20 January 1872; Selections from Vernacular Newspapers published in the North Western Provinces, Oudh, Punjab and Central Provinces, 1872, p. 53 [henceforward referred to as S.V.P.].
people of England' the Shola-i-Tur maintained 'who, besides being in more opulent circumstances than the natives of India, are exempt from the payment of land-revenue, the tax is felt as a most oppressive measure by the latter, who have to pay it over and above the land tax.' The Punjabi Akhbar contested the statement made by the finance commissioner in his income tax report that the tax had created no discontent in some districts of the Punjab such as Gurdaspore, despite the fact that the levy had been increased three times in the past year. Against this the editor of the Punjabi Akhbar asserted that the reasons why the inhabitants of Gurdaspore and a few like districts did not show discontent were, '(1) the fear of the authorities; (2) their ignorance of the bearing of the income tax act; (3) the trouble and the loss incurred in preferring complaints against the severity of the tax; (4) pride which prevents the people from publicly confessing their incomes to be less than the high estimates made by the authorities.' When the income tax was removed in 1873, the report on vernacular newspapers of the Punjab, Oudh, the North Western and Central Provinces compiled the various reactions to the abolition and put them together under the title 'the public

1. Shola-i-Tur, 7 May 1872; S.V.P., 1872, p. 305.
2. Punjabi Akhbar, 22 February 1873; S.V.P., 1873, p. 147.
joy at the abolition of the Income Tax'. The Oudh Akhbar of 26th March called upon the 'native gentry of the different presidencies of India, to convey public expression of gratitude to the viceroy for the boon which he has been the first to confer on the natives of India, by means of public addresses'. Several other newspapers of the region, all writing on the same day, joined in the jubiliations. Notable among them was the Nur-ul-Absar. Some of them in fact took the opportunity to ask for the abolition of some of the other taxes as well. The Nur-ul-Absar chose the octroi.

This was also true of the Marathi and Gujarati newspapers in the Bombay Presidency. There were strong reactions to the income tax in that region and 'public joy' at its disappearance as well. 'In India the Income Tax was essentially a war tax, the creature of the mutinies and their results. It ought to have ceased at the end of the first five years', the Native Opinion spiritedly wrote. To prove the cruelties involved in the operation of the tax over the 'smaller people', this journal narrated in its columns the story of Sonatan Napit, a barber who worked and

2. Nur-ul-Absar, 26 March 1873, S.V.P., 1873, p. 239.
and lived at Dumdum which was a tiny village about north eight miles to the / of Calcutta. There he served as barber to eight or ten houses, and earned from 6 to 8 rupees in the year. He did not own any land but had hired four beeghas for which he paid 20 rupees a year. To increase his income he worked as a day labourer. His total income was estimated at 60 rupees, while the produce from his little piece of land brought him about 30 rupees more during a favourable year. But he had been assessed for income tax on an income of 600 rupees in the year. The Native Opinion's information regarding Sonatan Napit had come from a missionary also working at Dumdum at the time, the Reverend George Kerry, who had published those findings in the Indian Daily News.¹ What the Native Opinion objected to was not so much the tax itself, but the taxable minimum which had been too low. The barber had been placed in the category of those who earned 500 rupees and more. The Native Opinion therefore wrote

if the taxable minimum were raised to 2000 rupees, and if there were a strong press in the interior and a healthy and powerful public opinion, we should not object to go in for it...but so far as the mofussil is concerned, there is so little publicity and the check of public opinion is so weak, that the tax becomes a source of oppression, which may be reduced by considerably raising the minimum.²

¹ Native Opinion, 22 September 1872.
² Ibid., 11 February 1872.
The Jam-e-Jamshed went further and described the income tax as the 'blood-sucker of the Indian ryots'. A very similar sentiment was echoed in the columns of the Suryodaya of 13 January 1872. The Samsher Bahadur was of the opinion that the very existence of such a tax at a time when the imperial exchequer was in a 'perfectly satisfactory' state was proof of the administration's 'evil intentions'. When therefore the tax was removed the Bombay papers expressed joy. But the Indu Prakash thought that an abolition of the 'local land rates' at the same time would be most welcome. The Native Opinion, on the other hand, selected the municipal taxes. Lesser newspapers like the Yajdan Parast and the Naya Sindhu among others were however content with what they had secured.

News of the retention of the income tax early in 1872 was an unpleasant surprise for the vernacular press in the Madras Presidency. 'What a fortunate thing it would be if the Viceroy would interfere and adopt some plan by which he can advert this evil which is of a nature to annoy the

1. Jam-e-Jamshed, 10 January 1872, in Report on the Native Newspapers of Bombay, January to June 1872. [Hereafter referred to as R.N.P., Bombay.]
3. Samsher Bahader, 3 January 1872 in Ibid.
4. Indu Prakash, 31 March 1873 in Ibid., January to June 1873.
5. Native Opinion, 30 March 1873; also Yajdan Parast, 30 March 1873 and Naya Sindhu, 2 April 1873, in R.N.P., Bombay, January to June 1873.
people and destroy fidelity' wrote the Telugu Dinavurthamani. Every new budget during those early years of the seventies raised hopes of the withdrawal of this tax which nobody liked. Rumours of a deficit made their hearts sink. However agitation against the tax in England, as the Sukirthavachani informed its readers later on that year, was sufficient hope that the tax was to go in the near future. 'It has at last been discovered that the horse is dead, and the belabouring the carcass in the idle hope that it will get on its legs and work is at length to cease,' the Tamil journal wrote. This same Sukirthavachani described the distress which the collection of the tax had created in the districts. The editor was of the opinion that there were not more than twenty or thirty men in any district who drew 'as large a salary as 200 rupees a month'. 'In Madras itself the number is somewhat larger' he continued, 'but even there very few salaries range as high as 500 and 700 rupees.' However when the tax on incomes was eventually removed many of the southern papers murmured that the salt tax was a worse evil and that

3. Sukirthavachani, May 1872 in Ibid.
the abolition of that tax would have been more opportune.¹

The more prominent among the Indian agitators was perhaps the British Indian Association, the organization of a group of wealthy, as well as influential, landowners. In March 1871 their secretary, Jotindro Mohun Tagore, wrote a lengthy, and rather academic letter of protest on the income tax bill of 1871 and addressed it to the Government of India. He wrote:

This Bill alters the principle of assessment recognized by the Legislature since the introduction of the Income Tax in this country. It declares ... that every assessment ... being income other than salary from an office under Government, Municipal body or Public Company or Pension or Profits of a Public Company, shall be based upon an average of the assessee's income for three years ending on the 31st of December next before the date of assessment. This Rule, though it might not entail a loss upon Government, would lead to great injustice and hardship in individual cases, in as much as a person having made larger profits in the last year and smaller profits in the two preceding years, already assessed, and smaller profits in the immediately preceding year would be assessed on a higher average, and therefore twice upon the same amounts.

In the same letter the Indian landlords took up the case of the tax-payers on a point of law. 'No Advocate, no Pleader or other practitioner', they argued in reference to the act 'shall be allowed to appear or plead on behalf of any other person for the hearing of any petition or appeal'. On this they observed that the provision was 'repugnant to justice' as far as the tax-payers were concerned. 'The

¹. Combaconum Athenaeum March 1873, Sathivarthamani October 1873 and Sukirthavachani 6 December 1873 in R.N.P., Madras 1873.
Collectors are as a body,' the Association continued, 'well versed in law at any rate in the law with the administration of which they are charged, whereas the majority of the taxpayers, being without such knowledge and deprived of legal assistance, would be placed at a great disadvantage.' But in another letter, more significant, they criticized the disparity between the estimates of the current year and those shown by the actual results. To counter such arguments, Chapman, who was then secretary to the Government of India, set down the figures of the financial estimates and compared them to the actual financial results in Great Britain to prove that the disparity was not due to inefficiencies in the Indian system. 'In Great Britain,' Chapman wrote, 'the difference between the estimates and the financial results of the ten years ending with 1869-70 has been on an average £2,132,766 a year. These differences have never been held to detract from the high character borne by British financiers. In India during the same period the actual annual average difference between the estimates and results has been £1,874,678.' But these Indian zamindars


3. Letter from Mr. R.B. Chapman, Secretary to the Government of India, Finance Department, to Jotindro Mohun Tagore, dated Calcutta, 23 March 1871, Ibid.
were not to be pacified. They challenged the government for being in possession of 'cash balances ... so much higher than was expected. The cash balances are nothing more than accumulations of revenue ... and they may therefore justly be counted as assets of the state,' they wrote.

The Indian aristocrats did not speak entirely from self-interest although, undoubtedly, they were stressing their own difficulties more than anybody else's. But that they had some sympathy for people out of their class is evident from a change in their reactions as the years went by. Every year from 1870 onwards the exemption-limit of the income tax was steadily raised aiming to relieve the lower income groups. But to make up for the loss local cesses were imposed instead — and from those rates there was no escape for poor or rich. By 1873 octroi duties, supplemented by a house rate, a wheel tax, liquor cesses, a water rate, tobacco duty as well as tolls levied on roads, ferries, canals and rivers existed in almost all parts of India. In 1871 the district road cess act was passed again to the alarm of the poor.\(^1\) Soon afterwards the committee of the British Indian Association wrote to the government that the surplus of the year should be used 'to the relief

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1. P.J. Thomas, *Federal Finance in India* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 191-92. Also, for grievances against such municipality taxes, see below chapter 3 on municipal taxation.
of the poorer tax-payers who have of late been burdened with various local taxes or cesses', rather than to repeal the income tax 'as rumoured'. 'In the rich province of Bengal,' the zamindars argued, 'the Income Tax ... touches only 43 among 10,000 persons, but the road cess, which is a quasi-income tax upon land profits, would press upon one and all, for a person with even Re 1 profit per annum would not escape it ... It is infinitely preferable that a few well to do persons should be subject to a limited income tax than that the vast multitudes of poor persons should be compelled to pay the Road Cess.' The zamindars themselves were subject to that road cess and, once again, they cannot be taken as being entirely neutral in their efforts. That cess in fact destroyed the immunity which they claimed, from other kinds of taxation, under the Permanent Settlement. However, they were quite justified in saying that the road cess and such other provincial rates affected the poor more. They could not go too far wrong in that even if they tried.

Beyond the excitements of the press and the legal arguments of the zamindars, concern over the tax was no less present among the inarticulate men and women in the Indian towns and villages. There were clearly a large number of

people who did not belong to the well-to-do strata in Indian society. Of those taxed in 1870, there were 133,731 persons in Bengal alone who earned meagre yearly incomes ranging between 500 rupees and 1000 rupees. Of the total assesses 34,375 were cultivators. The cultivators even outnumbered the traders paying income tax, who numbered only 33,308 in the same year. It is possible in the relevant documents to follow the reactions of these men about whom usually we know nothing. This is a rare glance into the submerged dimension of the Indian public mind. In a minute on the number of cultivators assessed to pay the income tax George Campbell, who was in the early seventies the lieutenant governor for Bengal, wrote with some apprehension:

I gather that these assessments on cultivators are made by estimating the profits of the land at so much per beegha. I have seen I think an allusion to a circular of the Board [of Revenue], in which the rates are stated to have been taken at from 5 rupees to 20 rupees per beegha; at any rate I have learned from the Member-in-charge that very high rates have been ordinarily assumed. Nothing is more difficult than to get at the profits of the man who actually farms the land. In England it is found impossible to do so, and the income tax of the farmer is, by law, roughly taken at half the rent.  

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1. R.I.T., Bengal, 1869-70, Appendix A, pp. i-iii.
2. Minute by George Campbell, Lt. Governor of Bengal, dated 8 August 1871, pp. 1-2 in ibid. (Separate pagination for the Minute.) The circular of the Board of Revenue referred to is to be found in India, Separate Revenue (Financial) Proceedings, January 1871, Part A, nos.20-22, vol.665.
In its report of the situation in 1870 the Board of Revenue stated clearly that among the cultivators 'more than others a strong and bitter feeling has been excited by the tax.' The Board's report also gave the rather illuminating piece of information that the cultivators had in fact threatened to migrate to Nepal where an income tax was unknown.\(^1\) The fact that protests from lower down persisted is beyond doubt. In minutes written by J. Reid and J. Mayne, both members of the Board of Revenue in the North Western Provinces several cases of mal-assessment were reported, and these indicate to an extent the helpless reactions of the people in the villages.

On the 3rd May last (in 1871) the tehseeldar (a sub-collector) ... was called upon to frame lists of persons believed to be liable to pay income-tax. He divided the city into circles and intrusted the preparation of the lists of those circles to different members of the tehseel establishment. To the peshkar (clerk of the court) he assigned Mohulla Behareepore [in the district of Bareilly] ... Directly as I set foot in Behareepore [reported by Mr. Mayne] complaints were loudly made, and after a time it was openly asserted before the peshkar's face that he had taken no part whatever in the preparation of the lists, but had sent round his familiar, a chuprassy [peon] of the name of Prag Singh, who had framed the lists by the simple process of causing the Mohurrir [legal assistant] who accompanied him to write down the name of every person who declined to pay him two rupees. A number of men then came forward and said that they had paid money to Prag Singh, and I regret to say that there is no doubt as to the truth of their statement.\(^2\)

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1. Minute by George Campbell, 8 August 1871, p.2 in R.I.T., Bengal, 1869-70.
Such cases were by no means rare. In fact in the same
district of Bareilly, where Prag Singh had harassed the
government in 1871 the Collector found 'a number of new names of wretchedly poor men' in the village of Tandah among the assessed. On enquiry into it he found that these were the people who had refused to pay the putwaree (village accountant) 5 rupees.\(^1\) At an Agra village the tehsildar in charge had made out a list of all the persons who earned only 500 rupees in the year and asked them which they preferred, paying him a rupee each or paying 8 rupees to the government which was the minimum rate of income tax payable.\(^2\) But worse was the tehsildar in Mozuffurnagar, also in the North Western Provinces, who not only collected the due tax but also a bribe. Such was his stupidity that the entries in the putwaree's books contained the sum paid as tax to government and, side by side, the sum paid as bribe. Protests from villagers ultimately drew the attention of the authorities and the man was brought to book. Much of the 'oral testimony' against him was supported by the entries in these books.\(^3\)

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were lodged by the village communities presenting the oppressions practised in the name of the income tax. In Bombay presidency, in Sholapur district alone, there were 27 appeals to the Revenue Commissioner against over-assessment. In 11 of these cases the assessment was remitted, in the rest confirmed. The most striking of the petitioners was Dhurma Dhungur who occupied 'a wretched thatched hut', worth about 10 rupees, cultivated land worth 9 rupees, and had 'a small flock' of sheep. He had been made to pay a tax of 19 rupees 8 annas on the calculation that his yearly income was between 500 and 700 rupees or more. The deputy Collector of the district, who enquired into Dhurma's petition, found that in fact his earnings were no more than about 350 rupees. He wrote thus:

Making enquiries about the number of heads forming his flock - it had then gone out to the field to feed - I received differing accounts from those present [in the village], varying the number from 150 to 35. Without speaking anything at the time, and without dropping a hint as to my intention, I returned to my tent, and without a minute's notice, rode up to the man's Daddi, or sheepfold, at about 9 o'clock at night the same day. I caused the sheep to be counted, and I found that there were altogether 112 heads, of which 46 were kids and lambs. This was done in the presence of the very men on whose information apparently the mamlutdar [sub-collector] had previously assessed the man's income at Rs. 500 to Rs. 750 a year. They all denied that they informed the mamlutdar that Dhurma was assessable to

the tax and declared that they still believe his whole property was not worth more than Rs. 300. Of cattle proper Dhurma had only one buffaloe, and hires another temporarily at the time when he has to till his only field of Rs. 9 assessment.

Dhurma had petitioned the mamlutdar earlier with no results. One reason why Dhurma came under greater notice was because of the complaints which came on his behalf from many of his fellow villagers in taluka Sindgi. A local newspaper called the Kalpataru of Sholapur had also written against this mamlutdar.¹

This kind of protest, it is true, did not go far enough in mending matters, but its existence shows that the zamindars were not alone in feeling the weight of the income tax. In fact some figures indicate that the injustice was felt much more by the small cultivators than their overlords. The Collector of Saharunpore, in the North Western Provinces, calculated that of the 3,152 persons assessed in his district, 2,611 persons had been assessed on incomes below 200 rupees. Of these 1,445 persons belonged to 'the lowest class' and paid at the rate of 6 rupees. Only a little over 500 people were assessed on incomes over 200 rupees. There were no incomes above 4000 rupees.² The

1. Kalpataru 24 July 1870 in Ibid.
2. Extracts from District Officer's Reports in Parl. Papers 1872, vol.XLIV, p. 265. The Collector of Saharanpur's letter was dated 30 April 1870 (no.32).
income tax, as it worked out in those years, imposed a double taxation on agricultural income.¹ Income tax on agriculture was charged under schedule 'Income Tax from Real Property'. The fact was that land paid not only the land tax, but also cesses levied for other local wants such as repair of roads and the upkeep of drains. The government's aim was to get as much as could be obtained from the rich landowners: but it took them some time to realize that the landowners did not pay it all themselves, but in fact shared all such demands on their incomes with the already-strained tillers of the soil. Thus when the income tax was brought back in 1886, permanently for the first time, at least agricultural incomes were exempted from its purview.²

Along with the affluent and the indigent Indians, Englishmen living in India were equally opposed to the income tax. Not only were they united among themselves in opposing the tax, they also attracted a group of Indians of similar background and interests in a concerted effort to remove the tax. This effort took the shape of organized meetings in Calcutta and in Bombay. One such meeting,

² Mehrotra, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
consisting mostly of commercial and landed magnates, European and Indian, was held on 18 April 1870, in the Calcutta Town Hall. Resolutions were submitted and a memorial was drawn up protesting against the tax of $\frac{3}{8}$ per cent as 'impolitic, unjust and uncalled for by the present state of the finances of the country, which are capable of being restored to a sound position by reduction of expenditure.' The motion was proposed by T.M. Robinson who was chairman of the Landholder's and Commercial Association, and was seconded by Ramanath Tagore, of the Pathuriaghata Tagore family, a landholder of some repute in Calcutta and around. The meeting went on to say that according to the then existing system 'nearly one-quarter of the entire revenue raised from the tax-payers in India is expended in England.' It stressed the necessity of measures to be adopted 'to secure an efficient control in India over such expenditure'. This last motion was proposed by Elbridge who was then vice-president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Raja Suttyanund Ghosh Bahadur, an influential Bengali and a member of the British Indian Association, supported the motion. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce, along with the British Indian Association, was

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1. An entire account of this public meeting, together with the resolutions, is to be found in the Richard Temple Papers, Vol. 98.
most active against the tax. They wrote two letters to the finance department of the Government of India accusing them of retaining the tax despite an 'actual surplus of revenue over expenditure of £60,872'. 'Government' the commercial magnates argued 'can no longer maintain the plea of absolute necessity ... [to] justify the retention of what is really a War Tax.'\(^1\) In the city of Bombay the Bombay Association, representing mostly the wealthy Sethias, was equally active in organizing similar meetings in their city. The most important meeting to protest against the income tax, which took place in 1873, was opportunely timed to coincide with the visit of the viceroy to the city of Bombay. An address was presented to Lord Northbrook drawing his attention to 'several important subjects affecting the interests of the people' and a request for the 'total abolition of the Income Tax'. Among those who signed the address were David Sassoon, one of the leading mill-owners of Bombay, and Jugonnath Sunkersett, also a leading businessman in the city; both were members of the Bombay Association.\(^2\) Then there was of course the

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1. Report of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce from 1 May to 31 October 1870 (Calcutta, 1870), pp. 5, 11-12. The two letters written by the Bengal Chamber to the Government of India were dated 10 August and 14 September 1870.

East India Association, in Bombay and in London, which put forward the Indian case before the English government and the English people.¹ The East India men in London were men of Indian experience, whether as merchants or civil servants, and no doubt they considered the income tax an issue worth petitioning about.

Individual Indians also looked to England for help. As early as December 1870, Nowrojee Furdoonji, 'the able and zealous emissary of the Bombay Association' was in Manchester and Liverpool. Although the purpose of his journey is not fully known, it is beyond doubt that getting support in England against the income tax in India was certainly one reason. According to a report on his journey published in the columns of The Athenaeum and the Daily News, ‘Manchester had declined cooperation in denouncing the Indian income tax; but Liverpool, like Barkis, is willing.’²

This then was the joint agitation between Indians and Englishmen in the country. All the time, however, the Anglo-Indian press was conducting its own campaign with its own undertones. The leading Anglo-Indian newspapers did

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² The Athenaeum and Daily News, 6 December, 1870.
not tire of pointing out to government the 'unsuitability' of such a tax 'in a country like India'.¹ They warned the administration of a possible 'political danger' considering the fact that Indians and Englishmen were united against the government on the issue. 'It is not too much to say that the income tax has done more to array Europeans and Natives on the same side (and on the side of the government) than any other event in the history of British India'.² In this lay the threat of 'greater future trouble', a theme repeatedly stressed. With every new Budget they hoped the tax would go. Why could not the salt duty be equalized throughout India, they asked? That would certainly have made up the gap which the income tax, if repealed, would leave behind. The substitution of less obtrusive methods of taxation for some of 'the irritating imposts now in force .../would go far to remove all ground for anxiety'.³ The less liberal among them, however, advocated a reduction in expenditure in place of expanding public works. 'We do not hesitate to affirm', wrote the Pioneer, 'that it is a mischievous error to push on public

1. The Times of India, 26 January 1872; The Englishman, 1 January 1872.
2. The Englishman, 4 March 1872.
3. The Englishman, 1 January 1872.
works, to stimulate the development of the country' when the revenue 'already raised is not enough for the reasonable wants of the country'.¹ The Englishman, taking up an identical position, wrote: 'Every year the cost of this mysterious department [Public Works] is counted by millions ... and scarce a month passes without this or that barrack or palatial building showing signs of collapse.' Their attitude was one of striking the 'least of the two evils' since by then they had less faith in their own powers of convincing the government of 'the harvest of mistrust it is preparing for the future'.² After all they had not stopped talking against the tax ever since its second imposition in 1868. Their hopes were highest in January and March every year, when it was expected that all the coming Budget would once and for/abolish the tax. They would even issue a warning to the Parliamentary Committee on India of the 'heavy work' before its next session. 'We hold', wrote the editor of the Englishman on 13 January 1872, 'that the Committee will utterly fail in the true objects of its existence if it shirks an enquiry into the income tax'. They had their own alternatives to

¹ The Pioneer, 5 January 1872; The Englishman, 8 January 1872.
² The Englishman, 16 January 1872, and The Englishman's Overland Mail, 5 April 1872.
suggest. Although with regard to the income tax there could be no compromise, Englishmen in India did not fail to see that 'with a stationary land revenue and an increasing expenditure, the Government has no alternative except a series of chronic deficits or an enhancement of its miscellaneous imposts'. And the easy answer to that lay in an enhancement of the salt duties. 'There is no doubt that such a measure would be infinitely more productive than the Income tax'. Even more interesting was their argument that 'the wealthier classes can be reached by many taxes which do not touch the masses, and it is not unfair that at least one impost should fall with proportionate weight on the poorer population'.

All such suggestions were, however, ignored in Richard Temple's Budget for the year 1872. The income tax was retained. Much anger and sounds of disappointment were heard. 'Great indeed were the expectations formed by all considerate persons that the tax would be abandoned'. Anglo-Indian opinion could not comprehend why, 'even after there had been a surplus in the preceding year, and the

1. The Englishman, 16 January 1872.
2. The Englishman, 17 January 1872.
3. Ibid.
public credit high', Temple had turned 'a deaf ear to their frequent and reiterated complaints'. To them it was 'impossible not to perceive that the discontent and dissatisfaction which its imposition has excited throughout India is so deep and general'. Another contemporary newspaper, the Indian Daily News, similarly wrote, on 10 April 1872, 'what if the executive machinery of the Government taking alarm at the multiple signs of discontent and dissatisfaction, unites to condemn a particular and obnoxious impost? Sir Richard Temple can see only cause for satisfaction and an excuse for self-congratulation'.

No arguments, no explanations would appeal to the disappointed. Temple's assertion that a good surplus could serve the cause of commerce by enabling the banks to lend to the mercantile world at a good profit what a government places at their disposal without interest, only irritated them more. 'What can be expected of a Minister', asked the Englishman 'who has the audacity to put forward such an object as a plea for taxation of a kind which is not only odious and abominable, but pregnant with danger to the country he serves?' The finance minister was moreover accused of 'deliberately underestimating the opium receipts

1. The Pioneer, 15 April 1872.
2. The Indian Daily News, 10 April 1872.
in face of the clearest data’. The Statesman pointed out how in 1870 the tax was levied upon 240,000 persons yielding a gross revenue of £150,000 only and in 1872 the tax was to be confined to about 180,000 persons and was expected to yield only about half a million sterling. [the Englishman asked] ‘Could figures more certainly show the mistake of imposing such a tax at all? As we have repeatedly pointed out an income-tax is impossible in India on the simple ground that there are really no incomes therein to tax.’¹ Soon afterwards the editor of the Indian Economist, Robert Knight, echoed a similar sentiment when he wrote that ‘the practice of deliberately underestimating the yield of the opium-revenue below what may fairly be estimated therefrom can hardly be regarded as "finance" of a very high order, the safety as it is called of the practice really vitiating the character of the estimate’.² And the Indian Daily News went further by describing their Finance Minister as an 'inglorious and unskilful apologist' of their bitterly hated income tax.

As time went on Anglo-Indian opinion became more and more desperate. Soon they stopped pretending that they

¹ The Englishman, 8 April 1872; and The Statesman, 13 April 1872.
² The Indian Economist, 21 May 1872.
were raising their voices for the mass of the people. Every year the exemption limit of the income tax was being steadily raised, leaving out more and more of the poorer people. By the end of 1872 the government was quite convinced that the tax was being paid by a few well-to-do people who could certainly afford it. In protest the Englishman wrote:

So far from this being the case, we believe that this small body includes the very classes who have the hardest struggle to make both ends meet. Respectable natives with large families to support on a 100 to 150 rupees a month and Europeans in Calcutta are about the least capable of bearing direct taxes of any class in the country.¹

All that Temple had to do, according to the Pioneer, (which, incidentally, of the leading English newspapers in India, was the least agitated over the income tax) was to consent to reduce his 'monstrous cash balances' so that the interest saved would replace all he expected from the income tax.² In short all they wanted was that the tax should go, irrespective of whether it affected rich or poor. 'It is only because we see in this one per cent the germ of far greater future trouble that we do not ourselves surrender to the obstinacy of Sir Richard Temple'.³ The

1. The Englishman, 13 April 1872.
2. The Pioneer, 15 April 1872.
3. The Englishman, 25 April 1872.
trump card they found in their anger, in fact, was this curious threat of 'greater future trouble'.

Exasperated with waiting for action in India, Anglo-Indian opinion looked towards Britain. 'It is we fear to England and England alone that we must look for relief from this irritating impost'. As the reports of the administration of the tax in the various provinces began to be published for each financial year, these newspapers took the opportunity of pointing out the glaring injustices in the assessment of the tax. In a minute written by a revenue member on the income tax report of the Lower Provinces for the years 1870 to 1871, the author testified to the integrity of the assessors themselves but, at the same time, mentioned that 'their subordinates - the mohurrir, who saw the assessee first ... the peon, who served the notices - extracted money in numberless instances from the people'. Referring to all this the Englishman soon concluded that 'the result of the administration of the tax in Bengal is to place the entire population at the mercy of the lowest and vilest set of men in the country'. The report itself confirmed Anglo-Indian

1. The Englishman, 20 January 1872.
2. Minute by A. Money, Member of the Board of Revenue for the Lower Provinces, 1870-71, in R.I.T., Bengal, 1870-71, p. 17.
convictions that the tax was a 'deplorable failure'. The 3½ per cent tax of 1870-71, which in England would have yielded £8,000,000 from 30,000,000 people, returned only £65,000 in Bengal from a population of 40,000,000.¹ At about this time income tax was creating problems in Britain as well. 'Large and influential' deputations were being sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe, praying for the abolition, or at least modification of the tax.² In England, too, much of the 'down with the income tax' demand came from the traders on the one hand, and the poor (with incomes below £200) on the other. On 30th April 1872 a motion was moved in the Commons to the effect that a

Select Committee be appointed to consider the advisability of repealing that part of the income tax which related to incomes derived from Trades and Professions, excepting Joint Stock, Chartered, and other Incorporated Companies and substituting for such Revenue other taxes less grievous and inquisitorial: and to relieve from the operation of the Act all incomes of £200 and under.³

Englishmen in England and those in India were using almost identical arguments to justify their antipathy to the tax. This indeed was not an unusual phenomenon if one looks into

¹. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
². The Times, 8 March 1872.
the history of British thinking in India. Every theoretical argument brought against the tax in England, the Pioneer reflected, 'applies in India with far greater intensity ... and its very justification as a British tax, its productive character, is missing in this country'. Echoing very similar sentiments, the Times wrote that 'from 1860 to the present time it is stated that this tax, in its varying forms, has yielded about 13,500,000 rupees [in India], or an average of a little more than one million sterling per annum'. 'Is this a result', the Times asked in the same column, 'for the sake of which an impost that excites the passions and alarms the cupidity of every native should be maintained.'

Encouraged by the fact that the Times had at last taken up their cause, the Englishman decided 'to have a word with The Times'.

1. The standard formulation of this position is in Eric Stokes, English Utilitarians and India (Oxford, 1959), e.g. when he writes 'British policy moved within an orbit of ideas primarily determined in Europe, although it lost nothing, of course, of its clothing of expediency and its habit of waiting upon events. ... The transformation of the Englishman from nabob to sahib was also fundamentally an English and not an Indian transformation, however much events assisted the process.' pp.xii-xiii.

2. The Times, 10 April 1872. Also, The Pioneer, 29 March 1873.
What we would say to *The Times* therefore and to such other of the English Press as from time to time can spare a moment from the interests of their party to the necessities of India is this. The Income Tax is as ill-suited to the country as you can possibly describe it, and we are thankful that you have realized the fact. But were it not for the dual system of responsibility which English placemen have forced upon Indian Governors and financiers we, the Indian Press, should be strong enough to deal with individual blunders of this sort ourselves.¹

What the *Englishman* suggested was that behind this continuance of the tax in India lay the unworthy friendship between the Indian finance member and an 'irresponsible' secretary of state. Between the two of them they had defied the Indian press. But the *Times* would surely understand the imminent danger that lay in the crucial fact that, for the first time, Europeans and Indians had united against the government. *The Times* however did not need much persuading. It had already pronounced judgement against the obstinacy of the government with regard to the tax. Referring to a statement made in print by the lieutenant governor of the North-Western Provinces on the iniquities existing in the mode of assessing the income tax, citing many cases of simple bribery, *the Times* wrote in an incendiary mood, 'the Government may remain constrained, and may work its arithmetic as it pleases, but the words of

¹ *The Englishman*, 4 March 1872.
Sir William Muir [the lieutenant governor of the North Western Provinces] and his officers would go through India like wildfire.¹

Indian newspapers too were gratified by the reaction of the Times, which they described variously as the 'Jupiter of the English Press' or 'The Thunderer'.² Thus the Hindoo Patriot observed that 'two years ago the people of England would scarcely believe that India was oppressed with taxation, and today we have the emphatic expression of opinion from The Times against the present policy of taxation ... The leading exponent of public opinion in England confesses 'we cannot bring ourselves to feel confidence in the budgets of our successive ministers in Calcutta.' If the Times could write 'in this strain', the Hindoo Patriot cheerfully added, 'we do not hesitate to say that the battle of the tax-payers of India is half won'.³ Yet it was not to the Times alone that Englishmen, in far-away India, turned. The Spectator was also there to help. A popular Bengali song of the times,⁴ depicting people's feelings over taxation, was translated and sent to

¹ The Times, 5 December 1871. For the letter from Sir William Muir, Lieutenant Governor of N.W.P. to Secretary to the Government of India, Finance Dept., dated 3 July 1871, see India Separate Revenue (Financial) Proceedings, October 1871, Part A, no.29, vol.665.
² Hindoo Patriot, 8 January 1872.
³ Ibid.
The Spectator, sometime in 1871, by a correspondent signed 'Anglo Indian':

The assessors are their grandfather's fathers. Instead of a handful, they fill their arms; coming on the poor, like the King of Death, they go from village to village. As a water-melon which may be held in the hand, contains seven handfuls of seeds, so these clever fellows get ten rupees, when the income-tax is one rupee only. The tax used to be on the land; then it fell on water, and oh mother what will the end be? That thinking the wind flew away in terror, saying by and by, they will seize me too by the hair of my head.

The Spectator's reaction was an immediate call for the abolition of income tax in India. 'We say, without data ... Europeans have no means of ascertaining the incomes of the people except those of the richer traders. How in the world is the European to know that Mahachund Singh, the frowsy little money-changer, who lived on a pound a month, whose office furniture is a trestle, and whose dress would not sell for three shillings, is the trusted agent of a firm whose exchange operations rank with Baring's, and is doing a business of tens of thousands a year'. It is interesting, however, that even 'without data', the Spectator could come to such dramatic conclusions. Finally, in keeping with the spirit of the Bengali song, the same paper concluded that 'all alike hate the Government which taxes the land and water, and will soon seize the wind by the hair and tax that'.¹ The Pall Mall Gazette, in June

¹. The Spectator, 9 December 1871.
1873 expressed relief at the abolition of the tax. Referring to the denunciations against the income tax in the district reports the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote that it was 'comforting' to know *that* tax was 'extinct'.

Among the officials, too, the income tax had its opponents. When Richard Temple made his second financial statement in April 1870, the members met silently - 'as in a meeting of the Quakers', creating an atmosphere of question and criticism. By then the new budget had been produced, and it had become evident that the income tax was going to remain. By then a violent cry was raised by the English papers, and the finance member was naturally placed in a vulnerable position. District officers had, at the same time, expressed their unanimous opinion in the income tax reports regarding the hopeless difficulty of assessing incomes. And in the wake of all this, Captain Chapman, who was official member from Bombay, took the lead in denouncing the tax - indeed all additional taxation, and recommended, in its stead, reduction in public works

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2. J. Routledge, *English Rule and Native Opinion in India* (London, 1878), p. 127. Mr. Routledge was a journalist who was collecting information on Indian public opinion by moving round India and taking notes during the years from 1870 to 1874.
expenditure as well as in military establishments. Bullen-Smith, a non-official member went further: 'it is,\textit{he said,}' a tax which falls with peculiar severity on comparatively few, and it is a tax which is attended with much oppression in the rural districts, not only towards people who ought to pay, but to many whom the Government do not expect to contribute towards it.' But unfortunately for Bullen-Smith and others, there were many in the executive council who were all for the tax. Prominent among them was John Strachey who argued that the imposition of the tax was necessary for the 'improvement of administration'. Sir Henry Durand, although not quite a supporter, voted with John Strachey and Fitzjames Stephen. Richard Temple, delighted, added that the tax was, in fact, an 'excellent one'.\textsuperscript{1} So the tax remained; but soon official insecurity became more and more apparent. In a devastating reply to the government, Sir William Muir, a man respected officially for his opinions and experience, revealed the extent of the prevailing abuses as reported to him by his Collectors in the North Western Provinces. One of his Collectors had written to him by way of warning,

\textsuperscript{1} Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India, 1870, vol.9, pp. 271-73, 276, 284-85, 294-95, 301. This volume is bound as vols.8-9, 1869-70.
You can have no idea, Sir William, not having been personally able to watch the working of the Income Tax Act, what a monstrous and disgusting tax it is. And it is no wonder that it has given rise to deep and widespread discontent which we may never perhaps be able to root out. The harm which has been done by the Tax is incalculable.

Thomas Inglis of the Board of Revenue also wrote giving similar warning. The result was that by March 1871, Lord Mayo, almost ready to give up the income tax, wrote to Temple, 'I care very little as to whether the Income Tax is permanent or not. I think it unsuited to India and consider that Mr. Wilson made a great mistake by touching it at all.' Temple, however, refused to be moved.

The opposition, on the other hand, continued to gather strength. Northbrook came out as Viceroy in April 1872. And within the next few weeks we find him writing to the Secretary of State - 'there is, I fear, no doubt that the feeling in India is not satisfactory. The increase of local taxation has much disturbed the minds of the people ... the reduction of taxation seems to me to be the right policy at the present time.' And on 22nd July the Viceroy again wrote to the Secretary of State, convinced 'that, if not its imposition, certainly the increases

3. Northbrook to Argyll, 10 May 1872, Argyll Papers, Reel 316.
[that is, increases in the income tax] in 1869 and 1870, were very serious political errors, and that they have been the main causes of the discontent which prevailed in the country.¹ Discontent set off by this tax became Northbrook's obsession. On 26 September 1872 he wrote to the Duke of Argyll,

I hope you will not suppose that the feeling against the Income Tax or against new taxation expressed in the papers and elsewhere is an English feeling. I believe that there is hardly any one in India, excepting a few at the seat of Government, who would deny the evil effects produced by the Income Tax, and the discontent which it has occasioned in many parts of India.²

Even before actually coming to India, the viceroy had given serious thought to the working of the Indian income tax. Along with Lord Halifax he had drawn up a memorandum in which they had concluded that 'it would not be expedient to continue the Income Tax'. Their fear was that the tax had in fact set in motion 'a serious political risk in India ... animated discussions in the Legislative Council, ... a tax unpopular with Europeans ... admitted to be followed by injustice to the natives in the North West, being carried by a narrow majority.'³ This memorandum was dated 29 February 1872. Northbrook had come out to India

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1. Northbrook to Argyll, 22 July 1872, Argyll Papers, Reel 317.
2. Northbrook to Argyll, 26 September 1872, ibid., Reel 318.
a couple of months later obviously waiting for the financial results of the year. Early next year Temple was ready with the estimates. A surplus of £800,000 had been put down for the year 1873-74. The net estimate of the income tax was £575,000. This meant that even without that tax there would be quite a surplus - in fact a sum of £225,000.

However, Northbrook did not take a hasty decision. First he drew up a scheme in communication with his Finance Minister as to the manner in which the income tax could still be retained for the purpose of remitting other taxes. Their plan consisted in a repeal of the Oudh local cess act, abolition of the repeal of the pandhri (or octroi) tax in the Central Provinces, exemption of the cultivating ryot from the road cess in Bengal, reduction of municipal taxes in Calcutta, taking off the sugar duty affecting the North West and the Punjab, the house tax in Madras and the non-agricultural tax in Bombay. All these were to amount to £474,000. ¹ The Indian Council accepted the proposals. Yet Northbrook was still hesitant. 'The idea was my own', he wrote to the duke, 'and at first sight seemed to have a great deal to recommend it; but having looked at it in

every point of view, I confess that I cannot see my way to carrying it out.' He soon yielded to public demand.

I should be glad to get rid of the inland export duty on sugar, and to equalize the salt tax all over India ... but the answers which have been received from all parts of India to our Financial Circular, with the exception of Bombay and the Punjab, have convinced me that there is no Imperial tax which creates so great and general an amount of discontent as the Income tax.¹

Yet undecided, the Viceroy again wrote to London on 7 March, 1873, 'there is a good deal to be said upon both sides with respect to the income tax; but the balance of argument appears to me to be decidedly against the tax, as is also the weight of authority'. He concluded the letter by saying 'I agree with Lord Canning that an unpopular tax in India is a political danger.' On March 20th 1873 the decision was taken. The income tax was repealed. The non-agricultural tax in Bombay and the house tax in Madras were abandoned as well. The local cess in Oudh and the Bengal road cess however remained. The pandhri tax was kept under consideration. But no new taxes were brought in. 'The sword of Damocles has been removed', the Englishman immediately commented, '... and we trust ... it has been cast away forever.'²

¹. Northbrook to Argyll, 7 March 1873 in Ibid.
². The Englishman, 27 March 1873.
When we consider all this evidence together, it seems at first sight, that the income tax created an upheaval in India in the seventies. This would be a somewhat misleading conclusion. While its opponents at the time did their best to create an impression of catastrophe, in looking back we must see this discussion in its proper perspective. The income tax was certainly not the sole, nor even the most important, cause behind India's distress at that time. In fact so far as the income tax was concerned, the government showed much sympathy for those who needed it. Each year, from the new budget of 1870, the limit of the tax was raised higher and higher. Few Indians then earned over 1000 rupees a year. A large number of the cultivators, who suffered the most, came to be exempted. And those of them who earned more than a thousand rupees in the year could well afford to pay a tax on their incomes. The sensible did not fail to see this. 'Indeed we do believe', wrote the Hindoo Patriot (on 31 March, 1873), 'that the Income Tax in its present form and with the high minimum limit, is not oppressive; that it presses only

1. From the Income Tax Reports of the various provinces from the year 1869 to 1873, it is possible to show statistically, the fall in the number of cultivators assessed in the year 1872-73 as contrasted to the number of cultivators assessed in 1869-70. In Bengal, for example, the number of cultivators assessed was 18,079 (R.I.T., Bengal, 1872-73, p. 5), in 1872-73, whereas in 1869-70, the number of cultivators assessed in Bengal was 34,375 (R.I.T., Bengal, 1869-70, p. 24). Both these volumes are bound in one.
upon the rich and well-to-do'. And if Temple had had his way, as we have seen, the exemption limit would have been raised still further — perhaps to 12,000 rupees in the year, but the tax itself would have remained. Much discontent, however, arose from the methods of assessment and collection connected with the income tax. In fact the point was that there were no methods. No special machinery was set up for assessing and collecting the tax. To add to the troubles, Indians in villages kept no accounts. Given the traditional Indian pattern of society, and an alien system of governing, it was almost impossible to devise a smooth and effective machinery of collection. Like all such attempts from the days of Warren Hastings the British had to settle for what was the best of a bad job. Babu Jadu Nath Chowdhuri, a Collector in Bengal, wrote of the difficulties that beset 'even the most intelligent and honest assessor'. He wrote that his first course was to enquire personally on the spot, but when the villagers saw me come to their village, the respectable people concealed themselves and I found no one to assist me in my work. With great difficulty I could sometimes meet with the chowkidars and gorais from whom I used to take names of one or two of the principal inhabitants, and after inspecting their houses and their granaries, I made a rough calculation, returned to my quarters and issued notices on them. They used to come to me the next day and say that there were other people in the village who were equal to them in their position, and should be taxed; this information I used to compare with what
I received from other sources, and if I found any truth in it, I used to be guided accordingly...

'My second course', Babu Jadu Nath continued,

was to get the assistance of some respectable men to make out a list, but in this I entirely failed, because my supposed respectable men began to say to the people that he could release anyone from taxation if he be gratified. On making local enquiries I found this a fact, and abandoned the course altogether.

From there the Collector's next step was to get help from the local zamindar.

On arriving at a pergunnah I went to the zamindar... but, unfortunately, most of them are mere tools in the hands of their amlahs, and I regret to say that I was obliged to give up this course also, for the same reason... regarding the conduct of the supposed respectable men. My last course,

coming to the end of the narrative,

was to summon eight or ten respectable people from the different parts of the pergunnah; on their information I prepared a list and, after personal enquiry into the state of their circumstances, issued notices on them; and in this way I partially succeeded, and my long experience of this district assisted me very much in 1869.'

In this harassing experience Babu Jadu Nath was not alone.

Babu Kumar Nath Roy in the district of Nadia, also in Bengal, followed similar methods

The course invariably I had recourse to for ascertaining the assessable persons was, firstly to collect information from the headmen of the village

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adjacent to that to be assessed. This was done in respect to assessment of towns and large villages only; secondly, to collect information from chow-keedars of the village to be assessed; thirdly to consult the headmen of the village; fourthly to compare the lists thus prepared with the old income tax and the certificate tax registers, and then to make personal enquiry.

He often had to face two contending parties, both of which were 'very ready' to give away each other's incomes. He obtained lists from both and met the disputants. 'A wrangle ensued, and he was able to get at something like the truth.'

In northern India the work of assessment moved from hand to hand, from collector to tehsildar, from tehsildar to putwaree, from putwaree to mohurir, and down to the chowkidar. According to the Collector of Gorukpur it was only possible for a 'very painstaking' tehsildar, 'possessed of some conscience and a great deal of prestige in his jurisdiction' to keep his putwarees 'in hand' so as to prevent 'gross relative mis-assessments'. It was evidently quite possible, and common, for a wealthy putwaree to put down any amount of figures for the benefit of a Collector or deputy-collector. 'It comes, then, to this,' wrote the Collector of Gorukpur, 'that the tax [was] of the

1. Minute by A. Money, 19 October 1871 in R.I.T., Bengal, 1870-71, p. 18.
nature of a "benevolence" or "aid" and that the Collector [was] the almost irresponsible estimator and fixer of the quota which each man [had] to pay. Reliance was greatest on the tehsildars’ and putwarees. The putwarees were known to have made their fortunes out of the process. Given the situation that the putwaree would only include in his list of assesses men who did not pay him to omit their names, and the tehsildar on the other hand would be expected to state accurately how many people there were, say in 300 villages of 260 square miles and population of 130,000 (the size of an average subdivision in northern India), whose annual incomes exceeded 500 rupees, there was little chance of more success at the assessment level.

The Englishman selected and reprinted Jadu Nath’s experiences as assessor and collector, in their columns of 2 February 1872, and summoned the Government of India 'to read, and learn and inwardly digest it, before again giving orders regarding the assessment of the tax.' But, whether with the help of public opinion or not, the government had to learn sooner or later. The sad fact, however, remains: the repeal of the income tax did little to remove the grievances of the majority of India’s peoples in the

seventies. The salt tax, their greatest worry, continued to oppress them. Despite the deltas of the Ganges and the Indus, the Salt Range of the Punjab, and the Salt lakes and tracts of Rajputana and Central India, the salts of Droitwich and Chester alone were seen in the markets of Calcutta and of Bengal.¹ Salt duties in Bengal were full 50 per cent higher than in other parts of the country and, twenty times the cost of manufacture. 'Now at the average rate of 5 seers or 10 pounds per head per annum', wrote Temple arguing for the income tax, 'a poor man's family could consume 20 seers, or 40 pounds per annum: and say 10 seers or 20 pounds more would be needed for the cattle. On the whole 60 pounds or three-quarters of a maund, per annum, are needed ... and that requires an expense of 4 rupees a year. But what is the income of such a family? Rupees 5 or 6 a month perhaps ... upon which the income of Rs. 4 for salt represents from 5 to 7 per cent on the income'.² Surely the income tax was a less expensive substitute. In fact although the income tax did not touch many such people - its minimum requirement was never below 200 rupees a year - the salt tax was for one and all. Nationalist economists like R.C. Dutt hardly

2. Temple Papers, vol. 98; also R. Temple, op. cit., p. 239.
concerned themselves with the income tax. They were much more disturbed and angry over the increasing land revenue, assessed taxes, customs and salt revenue. 'Twelve years of Crown government had increased the taxation by more than 50 per cent', wrote Romesh Chandra Dutt. And of these salt contributed the most: from £3,610,223 in 1856-57 to £6,106,280 in 1871.\(^1\) In a petition drawn up by the Bombay Association on 29 March 1871, and sent to the House of Commons, it was stated that

the salt tax has been raised 100% in Madras, 81% in Bombay and 50% in other parts of India; the stamp cost has been repeatedly revised and enhanced, and is now so complicated, vexatious and excessive, as frequently to lead to a denial of justice; customs duties have been increased several times; heavy court fees and a succession tax of 2% have been recently imposed; a local land cess of 6\(\frac{1}{4}\)% ... a rural town cess, taxes on trades and callings... and a considerable variety of municipal and local rates and taxes.\(^2\)

All this was undeniably true; but all such petitions were in vain. Remitting the income tax and retaining most of the others, was the easiest way out of a situation which had threatened political danger - the bogey effectively raised by public opinion in India with support from Britain.

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1. R.C. Dutt, *Trade Manufactures and Finances of India* (Calcutta, 1905), pp. 175-76.
We are thus left with the reflection that the income tax was a real grievance for a large number of people, Indian and European, wealthy and, at least for a time, the indigent. There is however no cause to exaggerate its significance in the language of some of the contemporaries. This tax was an attempt among many, made by the government, to share its financial burden with the people. The important thing for us is that because of its novelty it brought about a discussion which showed the public mind at work. In a way which was characteristic of the seventies the government in India, in its routine administration, was touching the people at different levels and stirring up the society as it had never managed to do before.
CHAPTER III. THE EXPANSION OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Local self-government, through the development of municipalities, was an important fact in India in the seventies, and a fact round which the public mind expressed itself. A conglomeration of causes - hygienic, economic and political - was responsible for the spread of municipal organization. Economically, local self-government was the product of a scheme towards financial decentralization which in turn arose out of financial difficulties left over from the big deficits of the sixties.\(^1\) Imperial taxes had become stale and unpopular. An experiment in local taxation brought in its wake the setting up of municipalities and the institution of municipal rates.\(^2\) The interest taken by Indians in the development of their towns and villages and their semi-official participation as municipal commissioners was considered politically to be a safety valve. As more and more Indians completed the round of a university education they claimed a right to

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1. *India Financial Proceedings*, January 1871, /no.20, vol.724. The revenue in 1871-72 threatened to be less by £800,000 due to a falling opium revenue. According to calculations £1.2 million had to be made up for 1871-72 under the following heads:- Opium = 3/4 million; increased expenditure = 1/4 million; surplus = \(\frac{1}{2}\) million.

posts of higher standing and parity with their rulers. This took the shape of a pressure put on the government to open up the civil service to those Indians who were as well qualified as Englishmen. The government solved its dilemma by deciding to offer only certain high judicial jobs, and no executive ones, some posts in the uncovenanted cadre, and a few annual overseas scholarships to the Indian élite.¹ At this point the growth of local municipalities helped to serve a purpose: a gesture of goodwill, as it were, could be offered to the few aspiring men in the middle-class community by inviting them to help in the municipal corporations. Lastly, though of no less importance, was the government's concern over sanitation and conservancy in the country - an uphill task against the Indian climate and traditional attitudes. In small towns the most that could be done at that time was to keep the drains open and tolerably clean so as to prevent their becoming open cess-pools. In these smaller towns a tank was used by the people for bathing, clothes-washing and drinking: this they supposedly did not consider 'necessarily unwholesome', nor the accumulation of filth round their houses as of any consequence.² The

². Bengal Municipalities Report, 1873-74, p. 13. [Hereafter referred to as Mun. R., Bengal.]
situation was hardly better, and the people equally callous, in more urban conditions. The hurdle in the city of Calcutta lay in its festering bustees. In Burdwan the jungle reclaimed in the course of one monsoon the work of clearance achieved during the year. The same was true of forests in Madras. In doing all this the government had to contend with difficulties which varied from region to region. There was a general aversion to taxation and also particular aversion to particular kinds of taxation. There was something of a political struggle in some of the areas. Above all there was a sense of defeat in the battle against traditional society, a failure to reproduce miniature European towns in the Indian countryside.

Municipalities were no novelty in India in the 1870's. By that year in fact there were about 200 in Bombay presidency, 127 in the Punjab, 67 and 65 in the North Western Provinces and Bengal respectively, 44 in Madras and about 40 in the Central Provinces. But most of these belonged to an era in the forties and fifties when town committees


3. Louis Mallet to Lord Hobart, 20 August 1874, Hobart Papers, Bundle 'a'.

had been set up for sanitary purposes at the wish of the inhabitants, mostly Europeans. Such town committees were officered by the justices of the peace who were appointed by the governor-general in council from among covenanted civilians. Popular control was out of the question.¹

Nowhere had the people any voice in the conduct of town affairs. Municipal functions consisted of forest conservancy, road repairs and lighting, the framing of by-laws and their enforcement by fines. Powers of taxation included the levy of indirect taxes. The only municipal act of any importance, in these years, was introduced by the Government of India in 1850. This act took root in Bombay where it was applied in 352 towns and villages.²

But in the great majority of towns the 1850 act remained inoperative, as the setting up of a municipality was still based on the voluntary principle.³ The first breakthrough perhaps came in the sixties when municipal acts were passed for Bengal and Oudh in 1864, for Madras in 1865 and the Punjab in 1867. These acts vested the provincial governments with power to set up committees for municipal needs of water-supply, lighting and sanitation of towns. The


³ Tinker, op. cit., pp. 27-35.
elective principle by which some members of municipal boards could be elected by the ratepayers was also recognized for the first time in the sixties, though only in theory. It was but little applied in practice during that decade. It was only in the Central Provinces, where a municipal act had been introduced in 1868, that the right of election was fully implemented. Out of 629 members in their municipal boards, 390 were elected. Although the North Western Provinces were granted a similar municipal act in the same year 1868, elections first took place there in 1873.¹

Municipal life, however, became more of a reality in the course of the seventies. Certainly for some Indians it became an issue worth fighting for, although most saw in it a new demand on their purse. From the central government came more and more legislation seeking to elaborate the machinery for local self-government. The process, broadly similar all over the country, acquired special peculiarities in individual areas. In some ways the presidency of Madras was prepared for an advance in local self-government. In this area there was some concern for the decencies of civic existence. In its temple-organization at least the local society had kept alive a tradition of

¹. Tinker, op. cit., p. 37.
civic government. Unfortunately there was a marked attachment to property which turned the whole process into somewhat undignified haggling. The fact that municipal self-government was concerned with taxation was indeed evident in Madras.

The Madras municipal bill of 1875 was itself a product of financial difficulties. Although it was to be brought in to consolidate and amend the already existing municipal acts of 1867 and 1871, the immediate cause of the 1875 bill was a resolution of the municipal commissioners at Madras to ask government to allow them 'to levy a toll on boats and rafts conveying goods between the shipping and the shore in order to pay interest due to government on a large loan they had obtained for the water-works scheme.' The municipal commissioners found themselves unable to balance the expenditure with the income of the municipality. The average of six years' income was only 510,576 rupees, while the average charges had reached 568,171 rupees. Speaking for them, D.F. Carmichael put it to the council that 'providing only for the present services, with a larger outlay an Road Repairs, and including Hospitals and Education,

1. Proceedings of the Council of the Governor of Madras, 1875-76, vol.12, p. 20. [This volume contains the Madras legislative council debates for the years 1872-78 bound in one. There is separate pagination for separate years.]
future expenditure may be put down at something over 7 lacs. So here at once there is a startling deficit that has to be made up.' In their order on this bill the Madras government had stated that an additional taxation of 3 lakhs of rupees was required so as to raise the yearly income of the Madras municipality to 8 lakhs.\(^1\) It was thus proposed that taxes for water-supply, lighting, and drainage were to be raised; an octroi tax, which was another name for the town duties of the earlier years, was to be imposed on all articles of consumption entering the city. Every bag of grain containing 164 lbs was to be charged an anna.\(^2\) To take the edge off these new impositions, a reduction of the house-tax so as to spare the poorer inhabitants was also proposed. Talk of reduction of the house tax in Madras presidency had started as early as March 1873, soon after its imposition, when it was found that this tax was causing much distress. Thus Lord Hobart wrote to the viceroy, on 12 March 1873:

_As regards local taxation, - I am satisfied that it has been carried to an excessive extent in this Presidency, and especially that the House tax, which is in course of imposition under the orders of government ... ought to be arrested and suppressed, if only for the extreme detestation with which it is regarded by the people._\(^3\)

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1. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Hobart to Northbrook, 12 March 1873, Hobart Papers, Bundle 'a'.
In the same context he wrote another letter to Lord Northbrook in which he said 'The Hindus of this Presidency are a singularly mild and much enduring race; ... the longer I stay here the more certain I am that even they were becoming dangerous from their desperation, - at all events they were becoming miserable ... which was quite enough.'

Thus it was proposed that of the 31,234 houses in Madras liable to be taxed, 8,216 houses, representing about 10,000 rupees of the tax, should be struck off from the taxation list. The octroi was expected to yield 3 lakhs anyway, while the other taxes were already bringing in, without allowing for any increase, an average of 280,000 rupees. It appeared that the supreme government was in fact demanding over 11 lakhs of rupees in municipal taxation; yet it had asserted that not more than 8 lakhs were necessary for the ordinary expenditure of Madras municipality. But what the supreme government was anxious for was an elaborate drainage scheme, whose cost was estimated at 23 lakhs, as in Madras epidemics and the death rate had increased in an alarming way. A former sanitary commissioner in Madras, in supporting the

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government over the drainage scheme before his legislative
council said:

It was not to be denied that Madras was acquiring,
and justly, the reputation of being one of the most
unhealthy cities of India. When we sneer at sani-
tary returns, we should remember that by losing
sight of the causes and results they indicate ... we are sentencing to death two or three thousand
human beings every year1 ... We have done something
to alleviate [these abuses], a good water supply
has already been partially secured ... we must add
to it a thorough system of drainage ... To do this,
we must have a considerably larger municipal income.2

It was further proposed to revise the constitution of
the Madras municipality. One recommendation was that the
number of commissioners3 should be increased and that half
of them should be elected. The electors were to be those
who had paid over 20 rupees in house and land rate during
the year previous to the election and were above 21 years
of age. The candidates for the election had to be over
25 years of age, have a knowledge of English, and have paid
100 rupees in rates.4 Some liberalizing of the municipal
constitution in this presidency was set in motion when in

1. Population was decreasing in Madras presidency by 1.46% according to census reports between 1871 and 1881: from 31,597,872 persons in November 1871, it fell to 31,170,631 in February 1881. The loss was counted at 427,241 heads. Source: Census of India, Madras, 1881, vol.II, table 2, p. 5.
1871 it was laid down that the number of officials in any one municipality was not to exceed the numbers of non-officials. It was found, with time, that in fact more than one half of each board was appointed from the non-official community. Thus, according to figures in 1882, 342 out of 771 municipal commissioners were officials leaving 56% of the seats for the non-officials.\(^1\)

The unpopularity of municipal rule in general, and the municipal bill of 1875 in particular, among the people of Madras presidency was made fairly evident. That the towns-people were not totally devoid of a civic sense is clear, as they very frequently commented on the very poor drainage and the dirt in Madras town. Thus the Dinavurthamani, a Telugu newspaper wrote on 30 March 1872: 'Madras is just now in such a filthy state that we may with confidence predict an outbreak of cholera. Mischief is brewing in the large drains in Black Town and in the trenches in the Fort.'\(^2\) But what they really complained about was that despite the taxes they paid, their conditions hardly changed. A typical complaint was voiced by the

1. Report on the Commissioners of Local Self-Government in Madras, 1882 (Madras, 1883), p. 16. According to this report the European commissioners were for the most part government officials, except in the hill-stations of Ootacamund and Coonoor and in the large towns on the coast where there was a large mercantile community of European extraction.

Sukirthavachani, a Tamil journal, which wrote: 'The Municipal Commissioners for the Town of Madras are strict enough in the collection of taxes, but they do not pay sufficient attention to proper drainage, nor see that the proper number of receptacles for filth etc. are fixed.'\(^1\) Dissatisfaction with the municipal commissioners was quite widespread. 'Our Municipal Commissioners are most energetic over trifles,' the same Dinavurthamani concluded 'and at the same time most neglectful in matters that affect life.'\(^2\) The municipal boards in several towns in the presidency were not 'as zealous and attentive as they might be'.\(^3\)

In a characteristically mild manner the people of this presidency were demanding a say in the choice of their commissioners. On 15 September 1874, the Tamil Sathiavarthamani expressed disappointment over the selection of municipal commissioners for Madura and Dindigul. 'The Commissioners have not been taken from all classes of people, and are not likely to lend their ears to the complaints of all people ... When the people are able to select committees and arbitrators for the management of temples etc. among

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1. Sukirtavachani, February 1873, in Ibid., 1873.
2. Dinavurthamani, 30 March 1872 in Ibid., 1872.
3. Combacunum Athenaeum, December 1872, in Ibid., 1872.
themselves, no one should consider that they are not competent to nominate members for the Municipal Board.' A similar position was taken with regard to the commissioners for Srirangum municipality by the Amirtavasani, another Tamil newspaper.¹ A few of the newspapers reacted more strongly. The Sukirthavachani, for instance, wrote in September 1872:

The Municipal Commissioners for the town of Madras have elected Major Balmer as a Member ... We would like to know whether a public notice ought not to have been given before making any new appointment? Is there any law authorising them to act as they please?²

The Combaconum Athenaeum openly advocated that headmasters of the provincial schools should be appointed to work for the municipalities in the several towns of the presidency. 'Collectors like to have some men on the Municipal Board as the editor Puppets', wrote, 'and to conduct the work themselves. All I say is what then is the good of the Board?'³

So when a new municipal bill came up in 1875, the people were sufficiently worked up about it to send several petitions representing their opinions to their local legislative council. These came from various sections of the population, the unprivileged and the privileged. Their

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¹ Amirtavasani, 24 April 1874, in R.N.P., Madras, 1874.
² Sukirtavachani, September 1873, in ibid., 1873.
³ Combaconum Athenaeum, December 1872, in ibid., 1872.
objections to the bill were accordingly varied. In one of those petitions eighty inhabitants of the city of Madras protested against the 'too high a scale of salary ... for the President and Vice-Presidents, involving an expenditure of 54,000 rupees a year for these three officers alone, exclusive of a liberal office establishment', and claimed that town duties were being charged under municipal taxes solely for this reason. These citizens were also opposed to the municipality paying for the educational and medical services which were, according to them 'Imperial purposes'. The scale of the profession tax was represented as being unfair, for while it exempted officials drawing salaries less than 200 rupees a month, that tax did not 'distinctly exclude poor tradesmen and petty merchants whose annual incomes fell below 500 rupees. Their major submission, however, was that the money-qualification fixed for election as commissioner - 100 rupees a year in taxes - was too high 'considering the present state of knowledge of the English language among the experienced elder members thereof'.

Two similar petitions came from large numbers of the rate-payers of Madras. One was a protest solely against the octroi (or town duties). It was attacked as being 'a tax

on the food of the people' at a time when 'the commonest necessities' were 'selling at famine prices.' The other came from '3,471 other Native rate payers of Madras'. What they objected to was the retention by government of the power of nominating half the number of commissioners besides, of course, the ex-officio President and Vice-Presidents. This, they held, '[led] to the supposition that Government do not repose sufficient confidence in the discretion and judgement of the ratepayers'. The villagers of Ongole in the district of Nellore petitioned their governor against the drainage and house rates. 'There are no rich people to pay tax here', they claimed. 'All the people are suffering for not paying the taxes of bandies (drainage) and for houses.' Another such protest was made against the Light and Water rates. 'Doors, windows etc. of defaulters are distrained ... the Inspector's oppression is insupportable', they complained. 'Parthasarthy Naidu, Inspector 3rd Division, is known for the stretch of the brief power he has exercised with cruelty and fearlessness. Vencatchellum Noodelly, also an

1. Ibid., p. 49.
2. Duke of Buckingham's Indian Papers contained in Hastings Microfilms, Reel 781. [Hereafter referred to as Buckingham Papers.]
3. Buckingham Papers, Reel 781.
Inspector, is no less tyrannical.' What distressed the villagers of Vesarpadi were the licences which had to be taken out for bullocks and male buffaloes by paying, in advance, a tax of half a rupee for six months on each of them. The petitioners explained that they kept a number of bullocks and male buffaloes for ploughing lands, and not for dragging carts and that those animals were 'never brought into those parts of the town which were improved by the Municipality.'\(^1\)

The vernacular press in Madras also took up the 1875 municipal bill and criticized it thoroughly. The Umdat-ul-Akhbar-i-Shahi wrote of the bill:

\begin{quote}
All the advice in the world will not enable one to wash a blackamoor white. The project for taxing the water supplied to this town, which was for a time crushed by the late, Lord Hobart [Governor of Madras], has now like a scotched snake begun again to raise its head ... but we regret to say there is worse behind, for a Bill ... is in progress of preparation, and the notice of it has been published in the Gazette, which is to impose fresh taxes and increase the present ones ... The Government has in these days entirely departed from its old custom of cherishing its subjects, and delivers them over bound hand and foot to a municipal commissioner who may be a tyrant and unjust.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

These newspapers were most concerned about the increase in taxation. The Vettycodeyon warned the people against a

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rise in prices on account of the levy of Octrois and licence taxes, in its editorial of 25 November 1876. 'An increase of tax on trade and art would certainly induce the merchants to raise the prices of articles to an unreasonable extent.'\(^1\) The *Andhrabhasasananjivani* feared the same, and begged the government to supply municipal wants by putting a stop to 'the system of giving out works on contracts' and by 'reducing' the number of 'high officials of the Municipality'.\(^2\)

The Madras municipal bill of 1875 was the subject of much controversy, and dissension, at the official level as well. The legislative council of Madras debated the bill for days. One of the principal dissenters was Macfadyen, who was opposed to the municipality being charged for the promotion of education and support of hospitals, the sum to be spent being 80,000 rupees for education alone. Madras was a poor town and 'for a poor town like Madras the promotion of education and the support of hospitals were not municipal purposes.'\(^3\) In this *Vembaukum* he was opposed by Ramiengar, the Indian member, who argued that as Madras had been spared the cost of maintaining its

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2. *Andhrabhasasananjivani*, March 1876 in Ibid.
police, it was only fair and beneficial that the munici-
pality should provide for hospitals and schools. Ellis,
who had for long been connected with the affairs of Madras,
was in whole-hearted agreement with his Indian colleague.
'Nothing surely, could be more useful than, when the
working man was out of health, that he should have the
means provided for him of recovering his health and thereby
regaining his livelihood.'

Controversies of a similar nature were current for a
while between Hobart and Salisbury in 1874. Hobart was
against road-making in Madras in preference to education.
Salisbury, on the other hand, was equally in favour of both.
'Both the objects of expenditure - roads and education -
which are now in competition before you, are great civili-
zing agents: and the decision between their respective
claims must necessarily be a painful one to have to make.'
But if a preference was to be exercised in the absence of
adequate funds, Salisbury voted for roads rather than
education in India. He wrote to Hobart:

I am hardly prepared to abandon new road-making
altogether ... Can you not find funds aliunde
in some less objectional quarter? Is it neces-
sary to spend so much on the comparative luxury

1. Ibid., p. 45.
2. Hobart to Salisbury, 22 and 27 November 1874; Salisbury
to Hobart 21 September 1874 in Hobart Papers, Bundle 'a'.
of upper and middle class education when so much is wanted of the mere necessaries of education by so vast a population? ... In the interests of education itself, I would deprecate any relaxation of energy in road making. Nothing so much opens the minds of a stagnant population as facilities for locomotion.¹

However both Public Health and Education won and the opposing amendment was lost. It was thus that pragmatism and genuine emotions got confused in the making of these official decisions.

Other issues also came up in the Madras council while it was discussing this bill. A case was made out against the principle of election in municipal government. 'I fear' Cunningham said 'that it will be found that men elected under the new system will not be as useful, as sensible, as judicious, as enlightened as those whom government, actuated solely by a desire to nominate the best men has been in the habit of selecting for the office.'² Introducing franchise into a municipality was, to Cunningham, 'a most unsound and dangerous idea'. A municipality was the creation of government, in effect an imperium in imperio, and so it must remain an instrument of government. But the most prolix of all discussions was the one with regard

¹. Salisbury to Hobart, 3 December 1874 in Ibid.
to the 'bludgeon clauses' - clauses which empowered the Madras government to intervene in municipal affairs if it thought that the commissioners were not acting satisfactorily. The Select Committee in examining the draft bill had said that these clauses had 'armed the Government [of Madras] with all the powers it craved.' Supporting the Select Committee Macfadyen said that 'the attitude which the Government assumed was like that of the old highwayman, it said to the municipality, "Your money or your life".'¹ Ramiengar agreed with this to an extent, but he believed that it was natural for the supreme government, 'in the interests of the general community to whom they are responsible for the well-being of the town', to retain the power of interfering in cases of municipal neglect.² Ellis was of opinion that the municipal commissioners deserved such treatment. 'It was patent to the world' he told the council 'that the Commissioners had gone on without making any improvement whatever in the condition of the city.'

Gajapathi Rao, the other Indian member, thought that despite the good intentions of the government it would be 'difficult to obtain the services of independent persons as Municipal Commissioners' under the conditions imposed by

1. Ibid., p. 29.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
these bludgeon clauses.¹ These clauses were, however, destined to stay. All objections to them were voted out.

There is little doubt that the legislative council of Madras was, on the whole, concerned about the people, although Macfadyen did not seem to think so. But his quarrel really was with the supreme government. He was inspired by a spirit of protection for his provincial government of Madras. He was opposed to the idea of provincial grants being 'fixed quantities', although when the decentralization scheme was first introduced he was an enthusiast for it. 'It is now obvious' he observed 'that the Provincial Government made the bad, and the Supreme Government the good bargain in this matter, and the Bill before us is an instance of what local funds are now asked to do, many of the objects being such as in pre-decentralization days would have been fulfilled at imperial cost.'² However, whether they were imperial taxes or provincial ones, it was beyond the means of most Indians at that time to pay for progress and civilization. But having given the people their municipalities, government would have it no other way. So the legislative council of Madras had little room to manoeuvre anyway.

1. Ibid., pp. 56-57.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
As in Madras, in the Punjab too there was a burst of municipal activity in the early years of the decade. A new municipal act was passed for the Punjab in January 1873. But the situations were almost totally dissimilar, as indeed were these two areas. Basically the Punjab needed drains as Madras did: but the strongly individual characteristics of the people of these two regions gave different shapes to the development of municipal self-government. In the Punjab 'voluntary' municipalities had been introduced, as elsewhere in India, in the fifties. Municipal functions in those days comprised police, conservancy (of forests), drainage and sanitation. Because of the widespread disturbances of law and order in that province, two-fifths of the total municipal income was spent on the police.\(^1\) The municipal income was derived mainly from the town duties - known under various names such as 'chungi' and later as octroi - which unlike elsewhere in India was the most popular form of taxation. There was no legal basis for levying octroi: the towns' people paid the taxes because a good understanding existed between them and their committees.\(^2\) This in fact was the basis on which the voluntary principle worked in early municipal India. But

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this happy state of affairs did not continue for long in the Punjab. In 1866 serious doubts were felt in several parts of the province as to the legality of the octroi. At this point the government too lost its nerve and decided to legalize the new municipalities and to unite them with the few municipalities existing under the 1850 act. The result was the Punjab municipal act of 1868. Far from encouraging local self-government, this act turned out to be a carte blanche for the exercise of executive authority. Much was left to the lieutenant governor. He was authorized to appoint the members of the municipal committee, ex-officio or otherwise, in any town. He could direct the election of at least five of the members. He could add or reduce, or even remove, municipal members at will. Elective representation however was almost unheard of. The number of municipalities rose rapidly from 49 in the sixties to 321 at the end of 1870.¹

Officialdom was convinced that the system of nomination was better suited to the circumstances of the towns of the Punjab. A majority composed of three-fifths of the members could be officials, and no qualification whatever was

¹. Nath, op. cit., pp. 18, 22.
insisted upon, either in respect of residence within municipal limits, or contribution towards municipal rates. The ex-officio members of a municipal committee comprised the deputy commissioner, the civil surgeon, the senior assistant commissioner, the executive engineer, the deputy superintendent of police, and the senior resident representative of the education department. Thus the municipal government for Punjab province was only an offshoot of its provincial government. True it meant more work for the officials, but at least they were lucky in that they did not have to haggle with a politically conscious Punjabi middle class. Police charges continued to receive priority in municipal expenditure even during the seventies. The second obligatory charge against municipal income was the cost of keeping the public streets, roads, drains, tanks and water-courses of the town clean and repaired. Octroi duties, still the main source of municipal income, were levied on articles of food or drink for men and animals, articles used for fuel and lighting and for construction of buildings, for drugs, gums, spices, perfumes and tobacco.¹

¹. For a complete list of Octroi duties levied, see Mun.R., Punjab, 1871-72, pp. 1-2. The octroi or town duties were very largely on tradesmen. The Punjabi householder presumably did not mind the bania or the khatri trader paying these taxes, although ultimately the consumers in town actually footed the bill. What the Punjabi householder would not have was a direct house tax.
The indigenous method of collection of octroi was, however, replaced by 'direct management' under the authority of the local government.\footnote{1} Act IV of 1873, the next municipal act to be passed in the Punjab, was in fact almost a replica of its predecessor, as it was meant to be. A new bill was brought in only to remove certain doubts about the extent of the powers of municipal bodies. These doubts had arisen from the imperfections of the law under which the municipal bodies had been constituted. As municipal institutions in the Punjab had only had a short life, there was in fact no complete code of municipal laws. Much had to be left to by-laws to be made by the committees themselves.\footnote{2} The municipal act of 1873 enabled any committee in the Punjab to make by-laws 'for defining, prohibiting and abating nuisances which are not public or common nuisances under the Indian Penal Code, or under Act V of 1861 (for the regulation of Police)', 'for securing a proper registration of births and deaths' and 'for carrying out all or any of the purposes of the Act.'\footnote{3} This added further to executive authority, there being no

\footnote{1}{Nath, op. cit., p.}
\footnote{2}{Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India, 1873, vol.12, p. 57.}
\footnote{3}{India Legislative Proceedings, January 1873, Part A, no.146, vol.714.}
other change in the bill of 1873. But this bill was not passed without some dissenting voices. /Reginald Chapman, who had played no part in composing the bill, was distressed at power being vested in the executive for municipal administration in the Punjab. 'I venture with much diffidence to think', he said,
	hat it is a mistake not to recognize in the law the distinction between great cities and centres of trade like Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar, and small towns in remote and uncivilized parts of the country. I think a clear and defined difference should be recognized in the case of cities where there is a numerous, wealthy and intelligent population, and where a certain degree of public opinion exists. I think provision should be made by law for giving such places something in the shape of a constitutional self-government.1

Chapman was also opposed to the powers of taxation vested in the executive government. This was again a repetition of what had been in practice since 1867-68, with only two modifications. Rules with regard to the levying of taxes had to be made in conformity with the Government of India, and proposals for taxation were to originate with the committees themselves. As sixty per cent of these committees consisted of officials and 'no member need[ed] to be either a resident or tax-payer', all safeguards with regard to representing public opinion were reduced to

almost nothing. There would in such circumstances, Chapman held, be no limit to the extent to which taxation could be imposed.¹

Chapman's dissent was, however, drowned in the support which the Punjab bill received from the rest of the governor general's council. The lieutenant governor of the Punjab, present at the proceedings, voted in its favour. 'Seeing that municipalities had been more successful in the Punjab than elsewhere, seeing that the Government of the Punjab had not abused their powers', he was inclined to support the bill. He also took care to point out that whereas in Bombay, with a population of 14 millions municipal taxation amounted to 20½ lakhs, in the Punjab only 17½ lakhs was taken from 19 millions of people.²

The council was fully satisfied with the way municipalities in the Punjab had been working since 1868. Arthur Hobhouse explained:

The Bill was passed with the expression of Lord Lawrence's opinion that it should be passed for five years, and if there was discontent, he said we should hear an outcry. On the contrary, the experience of the Government of the Punjab was, that the working of these municipalities had been very successful, and there was not a scrap of evidence to the contrary.³

². Ibid., p. 64.
³. Ibid., p. 66.
Sir Robert Egerton, who was the member in charge of the new bill, assured the council that there was no discontent in the Punjab over municipal taxation.\(^1\) Supporting his colleague, Richard Temple, who was a member of the committee on the Punjab bill of 1873, said that

It was to be remembered that originally, in the Punjab cities, there were various direct taxes levied for municipal purposes. That did give cause for local discontent ... Afterwards in supersession of the direct house-tax, indirect octroi-duties were imposed; and he believed that in no part of India had such an amount been raised for so long a period, with such absolute content as those duties. They gave great satisfaction wherever they were introduced.\(^2\)

Thus it was that the Punjab municipal bill of 1873, without many hazards, became Act IV of 1873.

A municipal act was introduced in the Central Provinces for the first time in 1873. Being a neighbouring area to the Punjab, and one with very similar conditions, although of less importance, the supreme government did not consider the area worthy of separate legislation. Till 1873 the municipal acts for the Punjab, of 1862 and 1867, had been extended to the Central Provinces under executive powers. Thus municipalities had been set up

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1. Ibid., pp. 61-2.
2. Ibid., p. 68. The fact that the people of the Punjab did not object to the octroi (or chungi as they called it) is also borne out by some of the vernacular papers. Thus the Lauh-i-Mahfuz of 1 January 1875 warned the municipal committee not to substitute the income tax for the chungi. See S.V.P., 1875, p. 13.
there, as elsewhere in the country, despite the absence of a separate municipal act. The act of 1873 for the Central Provinces was again only a duplication of the Punjab municipal act of 1873; but the very fact that it required enactment led to discussion before it became law. Once again Chapman found himself opposing the bill. He could not reconcile himself to the unlimited powers given in these provincial municipal bills to the local executive in constituting a municipality and in levying taxes. 'For my own part I am of opinion that it would be very undesirable that the Government [referring to the local government] should have the power to establish municipalities wherever they please irrespective of the size, population, and tax-producing capacity of the place.'

But the rest of the council could not see eye to eye with him. Chapman had failed to catch the mood of the supreme government. From the viceroy down to almost every member of the legislative council, everyone was determined to rely on the local governments to sort out their own municipal problems. Experience had shown that municipal administration had worked satisfactorily in the Punjab and other like regions. The power of municipal

governments, almost unlimited as it was, had been administered with moderation by the governments concerned. It was not that the people were not consulted regarding the form of taxation they would prefer, as was Chapman's fear. The substitution of the house tax with the octroi in the Punjab was a monumental example of the government's consideration for the feelings of the people. Bayley, who had been a district officer in the Punjab, narrated to the council¹ how, on the occasion of introducing the chowkidari tax in the North Western Provinces, the people without exception, from one end of the Punjab to the other, went to the local officers and said 'We have special modes of raising funds which we are quite willing to devote to this object, but we don't like this new tax.' Bayley, as district officer, claimed to have visited every town in which chowkidars were enrolled, and adopted the particular mode of raising funds demanded by the people of those towns. Taking the city of Amritsar as another example, Bayley explained how the octroi duties levied there were spent by the people themselves on conservancy, lighting, the maintenance of schools and such desirable purposes.² What

¹ I bid., pp. 186-88.
² I bid., p. 188.
greater adjustment could be expected? Answering Chapman's other allegation that the Government of India had failed to legislate on the particular nature of the taxes to be imposed in reference to the tax-payer's capabilities according to the sizes and circumstances of the towns concerned and keeping in mind 'the advancement of intelligence and public opinion in these towns', Richard Temple wound up the argument saying 'we, sitting here as a Legislative Council had not the knowledge nor the experience to enable us to do so ... Under Mr. Chapman's scheme we would be pretending to do what we knew we could not do.'¹ All this was perhaps true. But it was also true that the idea of self-government got lost in the midst of these elaborate administrative arrangements.

An almost identical pattern was discernible in the municipal bill for the North Western Provinces and Oudh, also passed in 1873. This bill was only an advance in that, whereas in the Punjab the number of official commissioners was limited to three-fifths, in the North Western Provinces not more than one-third of the commissioners could be officials.² Its radicalism was confined to such provisions as that stating that no non-official commissioners

² Ibid., p. 213.
could be removed except in case of misconduct. In the Punjab bill 'an objectionably independent' number of two-fifths of non-official commissioners could be removed at any time at the pleasure of the government.¹

However from the newspapers published in the North Western Provinces, the Punjab and the Central Provinces it does not seem that the people of these regions were clamouring to take part in 'self-government' to any extent. If anything, the people of these areas believed that they were making considerable progress towards self-government 'under the beneficent rule of Sir William Muir' who was their governor in the early years of the seventies.

'The steps taken by the Government of Sir William Muir' wrote the Allygurh Institute Gazette of 29 August 1873 'to train up the Natives of the country to self-government are really very laudable. There cannot be a better method of instruction than to make them manage and maintain the useful institutions of the country by the funds placed at their disposal.'² If such was their state of complacency their demands were not likely to be high. But an absence of political ambition does not give us the whole truth. One great difficulty of the people in the Punjab and around was that they had not much faith in the Indian members of

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¹ Ibid., pp. 213-14.
² Allygurh Institute Gazette, 29 August 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, p. 560.
their municipal committees. 'They are generally a set of ignorant persons' was a prevalent belief. The Aftab-i-Punjab, a newspaper of Lahore gave in its columns the story of an Indian member of a municipal committee. It wrote:

The member is a Bania, who once was a poor man, but who had become rich through the grain trade during the late Madras famine. He gave dalis to European officers, and has accordingly been appointed a member of the municipal committee. He is quite illiterate ... He knows nothing beyond saying "yes" to whatever falls from the lips of the president.1

The writer of this column urged that none but educated natives should be appointed to work for municipalities. The Oudh Punch also related a story to indicate the kind of people, 'an ignorant shopkeeper or trader', who were appointed as members of municipal committees. 'If he attends any meeting' complained the Oudh Punch, 'he begins to tremble from fear before the magistrate. All he does at the meeting is to say "yes" to whatever the magistrate proposes.'2 In an article on the Indian members of the municipal committee at Jounpore, a columnist of the Nasim-i-Jounpore narrated his experience of a meeting of the municipal committee which he had recently attended. The debates were conducted entirely in English. At the time

1. Aftab-i-Punjab, 7 March 1878 in S.V.P., 1878, p. 185.
2. Oudh Punch, 20 August 1878 in Ibid., 1878, p. 742.
of the dissolution of the meeting one of the Indian members present 'asked him with surprise what resolution was passed in the day's meeting, adding that perhaps some new taxation scheme was in contemplation.' A correspondent of the Vakil-i-Hindusthan, writing from the Punjabi district of Gurdaspur, reported the oppression of the people by two Indian members of the municipal committee of Gurdaspur. The people, added the writer, dreaded them as 'a sheep does a wolf'. These members bought what they pleased from shop-keepers without paying them for their goods. Self-government at Gurdaspur had come to this that the correspondent in fact appealed to the government 'to free the people' from these two fellow countrymen.

Other newspapers in the region, the Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Punjab for instance, also wrote of 'the mischief done by appointing ignorant and unqualified persons as members of the municipal committees' and pointed out the need for selecting 'able and well-qualified men for the office'. The Karnamah, a Patiala paper, wrote on 24 March 1873: 'Until honest, conscientious and able natives are appointed members of municipal committees, the comfort and convenience

2. Vakil-i-Hindusthan, 16 November 1878, S.V.P., 1878, p. 976.
of the public will not be secured.'¹ A Meerut journal, the Muhibb-i-Hind, as well as the Akhmal-ul-Akhbar reflected similar sentiments when they called for a restoration of 'the old system of punchayets ... in cities and towns under the patronage of municipal committees and the higher European authorities.'²

However, the interesting fact is that none of these newspapers pressed for elections in the municipalities. One reason for this is evident. They were dissatisfied with the way elections were carried out in the few towns where municipal elections had been provided for. The Benares correspondent of the Patiala Akjbar of 14 June 1875 ridiculed the way in which the members of the municipal committee were recently elected. All persons who had a monthly income of 200 rupees, or who lived in a house, the rent of which was at least 2 rupees per month, could vote at the election. The consequence was, according to the correspondent of that paper, that '90% of the voters were ignorant men who did not even know what a municipal committee was, and for what they had been invited'. In Gurdaspur district five out of the six municipal commissioners were jagirdars or landholders.³ At Amritsar the complaints

2. Muhibb-i-Hind, and Akhmal-ul-Akhbar of the 2nd week of March 1873 in Ibid., p. 213.
were of a different kind. When elections took place there in 1874, the people were very unhappy with the 'many illegal means used by the candidates to get themselves elected.' 'The candidates purchased votes' — such was the verdict of the Vakil-i-Hindusthan.¹

The local governments had allowed elections in towns such as Amritsar, Benares and Lahore as they were considered enlightened enough by the governments concerned. Clearly this view was not generally held. Different emotions stirred the people of these regions against their municipalities. One of these was apparently religious, concerned with the celebrations of holi by the Hindus and mohurrum by the Muslims in the municipal towns and villages. In March 1872 communal riots had broken out in certain parts of the Punjab because these two religious festivals were celebrated on the same day. Some municipal committees therefore laid down certain rules with a view to separating the two communities when celebrating their religious festivities for the coming year. The Meerut Gazette and the Lauh-i-Mahfuz, both published at Moradabad, reacted unfavourably to those rules. 'In the editor's opinion' wrote the Meerut Gazette 'these rules cannot but be regarded

¹ Vakil-i-Hindusthan, 29 June 1878 in S.V.P., 1878, p. 571.
by the people as hindrances in the way of religious ceremonies ... Government ought to have made some other arrangements for preventing a disturbance, instead of throwing obstacles in the old religious observances of the people.' The Lauh-i-Mahfuz of 14 March 1873 prayed that the lieutenant governor of the North Western Provinces 'will cancel the rules which have proved to be a prolific source of discontent among the people.' Another common concern was with regard to the real municipal wants of their cities. The Vidya Vilas repeated complaints about the wretched state of the pavements of the city of Amritsar, calling upon the municipal committees to have them repaired. In April 1873 the Benaras Akhbar warned its municipality of the spread of cholera in that city. 'The municipality ought to be impressed with the necessity of ensuring the cleanliness of the lanes and drains.' The Jullundar correspondent of the Urdu Akhbar condemned the proposal of the municipal community of that city which had ruled that the dirty water of the city instead of being removed by sweepers was to be used for watering the lanes. According to the writer the measure was 'likely to prove dangerous

1. Meerut Gazette, 8 March 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, pp. 170-71.
2. Vidya Vilas, 10 April 1873, in Ibid., p. 259.
3. Benaras Akhbar, 24 April 1873 in Ibid., pp. 283-84.
from a sanitary point of view', and he wondered 'if, for the sake of a trifling gain, it can be proper to incur a serious risk'? The Roznamcha, a Lucknow weekly, complained of the 'uncovered drains ... where not only dirty water is collected but passengers and conveyances cannot pass without the greatest inconvenience. It is true that the northerners did not agitate for the franchise or protest against municipal taxation; but it is clear that they, in their own way, cared for things which concerned the municipalities. There was the sturdy, practical common sense of the northerner, undisturbed by political emotion, moved to protest only when religion itself seemed threatened or dirty drains got dirtier.

In Bombay, on the other hand, an elective principle was much in demand. The Bombay municipal act of 1872 was brought in precisely to give the people more elective representation. This clamour for self-government through municipal institutions was of course linked with the character of taxation imposed upon the peoples of Bombay presidency. Being an altogether more wealthy province, the house and land rates were the chief sources of municipal income. The incidence of average taxation per head was

1. Urdu Akhbar, 24 April 1873, S.V.P., 1873, p. 322.
2. Roznamcha, 21 March 1873 in Ibid., pp. 211-12.
highest in Bombay among the three regions of Bombay, Bengal and Madras.¹ Many of the voters paid large sums for their houses and their lands. This made the ratepayers of Bombay an ambitious and a powerful body of citizens. Till 1872 Bombay had been guided by the municipal act of 1865 which gradually began to give way. The municipality was so ill-managed that twice large loans of 15 lakhs had to be raised to meet its expenditure. The law did not give enough power to the justices of the peace to enable them to take efficient action. What was worse, there were too many of these justices, between 300 and 400, and it was quite uncertain what number would support the one side or the other. The new bill of 1872 cut down the number of the justices of the peace on the municipal council and constituted those who remained into an electoral college. Half of the justices were to be selected by government; the other half were to be elected by, and among, themselves. In addition to these men the municipal council was from then on to include a certain number of ratepayers. Sixteen ratepayers were going to be added to the membership of the municipal corporation,

¹ The incidence of average taxation per head in 1880 in the three regions of Bombay, Bengal and Madras was:
Rs.1-11-1 = in Bombay
Rs.1-1-5 = in Bengal
Rs.0-15-1 = in Madras

half nominated by government and the rest elected. This was the class that owned houses and lands in Bombay. To vote as a ratepayer the owner of the house was required to pay at least fifty rupees as rate for his house. These ratepayers were clerks, traders and industrialists. Besides the justices and the ratepayers, there was to be the town council to control municipal finances. The municipal corporation, on the other hand, would be fixing the rates every year and voting the budget. The council and the corporation would supervise each other's duties, and 'above all there will be the government.' Tucker, who moved this bill, explained that although 'there was an earnest desire on the part of a section of the public ... an influential section ... for an extension of the elective principle', he did think this had to be done 'not by sudden jumps or leaps in the dark, but by gradual progress, by well-considered concessions which may be progressively enlarged and increased as the persons or classes to whom they have been granted show themselves fit for the boons given to them.'

Within the Bombay legislative council itself there was much controversy over this position. The advocate-general, who participated in the proceedings said: 'We have a

2. Ibid., p. 37.
Corporation out of which eight only out of a body of eighty are to be elected by rate-payers, and a Town Council out of which two only are to be so elected.¹ Of every ten men entitled to vote only one was to be the representative of the ratepayers. And here again the difficulty was, as the advocate general pointed out, that those men were to be elected not by the ratepayers generally, nor even by ratepayers paying a certain amount in taxes, but only by those who paid owner's house rate.²

Government secures to itself ... the nomination of the whole Bench of Justices, and then it secures to itself the nomination of eight of the ratepayers who are to be members of the Corporation but who are not to be Justices; then in the matter of the Town Council it appoints six of the members, including the chairman ... In addition to this, government has the power of appointing all the municipal officers - the Commissioner, the Executive Engineer, the Health Officer, and the Municipal Accountant-General.³

The select committee on the Bombay bill characterized it as the exhibition of a want of confidence in the people of Bombay. Mungaldass Nathoobhoy, one of the committee, condemned sections 40 and 41 as calculated 'to subvert the independence of the Corporation, Town Council and Municipal Commissioner, and to place them entirely at the mercy of

² Ibid., p. 40.
³ Ibid., pp. 40-43.
Government ... I consider it my duty strongly to object
to the proposal to invest Government with such arbitrary
power, which strikes at the very root of self-government.'

James

What/Forbes objected to was the veiled fact, also in
section 40 of the bill, that it was the government which
would be responsible for the administration of the munici-
patality, and not the corporation. 'I therefore do not
see' he said

what use the Corporation will be in looking after
its own affairs. Any power of considering whether
the carrying out of any work will be compatible
with the means at the disposal of the Corporation
will be taken away from that body, which will be
made merely an instrument to carry out certain
Government instructions.

An amendment was moved, and carried, by which section 40
was limited to apply 'only to the police and the water
supply.' A liberal at heart, Forbes was naturally not
satisfied with such meagre concessions. He maintained
till the end, when he and three other colleagues voted
against the bill, that 'one characteristic of the present
bill is the distrust of the people.'

But quite apart from the problem of representation,
which excited public opinion more than anything else,

1. Proceedings of the Council of the Governor of Bombay,
1872, vol.11, p. 63.
genuine concern was expressed in the legislature over the grand taxation schemes of the new bill. Before the introduction of Act II of 1865 the only taxes known in Bombay were the house rate, which averaged about 6 or 7%, and the wheel tax. The water rate came to be introduced only in 1865. The new bill of 1872 brought in its trail the house rate leviable from 5 to 10%, police rate leviable from 2 to 3½%, a lighting tax, a halalcore and a licence or certificate tax.¹ This, according to Narayan Vasudevjee of the Bombay council, was 'the true cause of distress and discontent, and it is from some portion of this incubus that the people are yearning for relief'.² Forbes warned the government that the citizens of Bombay had for some time felt that there were some outstanding accounts between them and the government which had not been settled.

The matters to which I refer are the Vehar Water Works debt, the amount contributed by the municipality for the railway overbridges, the claim which the municipality have put in for a share of the one per cent income tax which was intended to be devoted to local public works... It is not for me to say whether these claims are altogether justified or to what extent they are justified, but there is no doubt that they have frequently been brought to the notice of the Bombay Government by the public for some years past... I

¹. Masani, op. cit., p. 223. Halalcore was a cess on the sweeper-classes.
think therefore that I am justified in saying that the question of municipal taxation ought certainly to have obtained a larger share of attention than it has during these discussions.¹

In Bombay these discussions had certainly put people on the alert. As early as March 1872 the Jam-e-Jamshed flared up:

the draft Municipal Act for Bombay does not concede all the rights which in justice ought to be granted to the people of Bombay... the Rate-payer's Committee and the Bombay Association have done right in deciding to protest against the Bill.²

At the same time the Akhbare Sowdagar objected to the draft municipal act for Bombay in its columns. 'There is too much State interference in the proposed constitution of the Corporation, the excess of which in the old constitution has wrecked it so hopelessly.'³ 'What does the ryot ask for, and what does Government offer to give' was the Rast Goftar's dramatic heading to an article on the subject of the municipal bill. In this the paper put forward 'the people's demand' to introduce a sufficiently strong popular element in the proposed town council. 'The proportion of the popular element is tantamount to nil, for the other elements can, if so disposed, easily overrule it.' ⁴

³ Akhbare Sowdagar, 27 March 1872 in Ibid.
was worse, the same Rast Goftar complained, was that even this insignificant right of representation was limited to only householders who paid at least 50 rupees in rates annually. The Arya Mitra condemned the draft municipal bill for more than one reason. But the chief criticism was with regard to the representation of the 'popular element' in this bill which was said to be 'insignificantly small'. The Native Opinion directed its anger at the proposer of the new municipal bill for Bombay. 'The Hon'ble Mr. Tucker does not relish "the reformers" and their propositions. He is still for the great mabap theory ... According to the official theory we are advanced enough for everything, except for minding our own municipal affairs.' Other grievances in the nature of oppressive taxation were also voiced by several newspapers. A common complaint was that the government officers who spent the municipal funds never contributed to the funds themselves. 'This state of matters' the Arunodaya wrote 'leads the ryots to believe that Government has created these municipalities not for the convenience and comfort of the people, but to enable its officers to indulge their whims and fancies at the cost of

2. Arya Mitra, 31 March 1872 in Ibid.
3. Native Opinion, 15 September 1872. 'Mabap' literally stands for mother and father and suggests parental imperialism.
the population.' Repeating the sentiment the Wepar Mitra, a Gujarati weekly, wrote that although 'the princely income of the Bombay municipality, amounting to 35 lakhs of rupees, is chiefly raised from the lower and the middle classes of the native community' the officers of the municipal corporation, 'whether high or low', paid no attention to the comforts and relief of these classes. These officers were bitterly accused of a glaring partiality to the European and the rich native residents. The Native Opinion cited what it called the well-known definition of municipal government as being 'the liberty of those living under it "to tax themselves".' The Indu Prakash of 1 April 1872, after giving the substance of the new municipal draft bill for Bombay, requested the public associations of the city to protest against the measure 'without loss of time.'

Many meetings were being held too: according to the Native Opinion these were 'monster meetings'. They were attended by 'the intelligent and respectable people of all classes' and they were held together by the ratepayers' committee who had been given the right of appeal to the Government of India and the secretary of state for India

2. Wepar Mitra, 27 January 1873 in Ibid., January to June 1873.
4. Indu Prakash, 1 April 1872 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1872.
on their behalf. This committee of ratepayers was set up in Bombay at a public meeting held in the city on 9 November 1870. In January 1872 the ratepayers met in the Framjee Cowasjee Institute hall adopting resolutions on the adoption of the representative principle in the contemplated alterations in the new municipal constitution. On the 21st of May, that same year, came another 'grand meeting ... of the ratepayers to adopt a memorial in the matter of the municipal bill now before the Legislative Council.' Several justices of the peace took part: Dadabhai Naoroji took the chair. A memorial was drawn up by Shantaram Narayan, a vakil of the Bombay High Court, stating the demand of the ratepayers for a fully elective municipal corporation for the city of Bombay. Kashinath Trimbak Telang made a speech to the same effect and put his signature to the memorial.

Exactly six months later, in November 1872, the determined ratepayers met again in their old haunt, the Framjee Cowasjee Hall, where Hormasji Dadabhoy spoke against the 'bludgeon' clauses of the new municipal bill. 'It is now agreed,' said Hormasji Dadabhoy

3. Indu Prakash, 26 May 1872 in R.N.P., Bombay, January to June 1872. Kashinath Trimbak Telang was then teaching at Elphinstone College, Bombay.
on all hands, that under the regime of the first Commissioner, there has been a gross, I might almost have said an indictable, maladministration of the municipal revenue. The Government resolution regarding the mode in which the income of the town was squandered by Mr. Crawford [the first municipal commissioner of Bombay city] is the strongest, and perhaps the most conclusive proof in support of what I have now to urge against the Local Government ... There was a species of connivance on the part of Government for some time at the irregularities of the Commissioner. Therefore, to put it in the mildest language, what has happened already might happen again ... Is it the Government or the Corporation that is entitled to ask for a guarantee (embodied in the "bludgeon clause") under the circumstances of the case - the Government that demonstrably neglected its trust once or the Corporation that has not committed a breach of its obligations as yet?¹

Applause echoed through the hall as the speech was made. Public sympathy for the ratepayers was beyond doubt. And the local press was generous in its support for the ratepayers' committee. 'This is the only course to follow' wrote the Native Opinion 'and we are glad it has been resolved upon. The first step to obtain success is to deserve it.'²

There was in fact no shortage of people protesting in the city of Bombay. Its most forthcoming organization, the Bombay Association, was also conducting meetings almost simultaneously. In a meeting held in the Town Hall, on 8 November 1873, a large and influential section of the

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¹ Home (Public) Proceedings, September 1873, Part B, no.61.
² Native Opinion, 21 January 1873.
inhabitants of Bombay city were called 'to remonstrate against the undue haste and precipitancy with which important measures affecting the interests of the people were pushed through the Council' among which were listed the Bombay municipalities bill, the tolls bill and the salt bill.² In addition a petition was sent to the viceroy in the course of the next month on the subject of the constitution of the municipalities in Bombay. Apart from these the vice-president of the Bombay Association, Vinayakrao Sunkerssett, personally called 'a meeting of friends' at his house to agree on the 'necessity of addressing the Legislative Council on the Municipal Bill before it on behalf of the inhabitants of Bombay'.²

In spite of all such remonstrations the Bombay municipal bill became law in 1873, and the overwhelming reaction was that the municipal electors had not thereby been properly treated. The Jam-e-Jamshed warned the 'newly-constituted electors' to exercise 'their newly acquired right carefully, wisely, and conscientiously'.³ The Native Opinion kept a strict watch over the municipal elections. In the first of these elections, held on the

2. Native Opinion, 15 September 1872. The meeting was held on 7 September 1872.
26th of July, only one-fourth of the electors entitled to vote had actually voted. 'We think this is a pretty fair beginning for Bombay' the Native Opinion wrote 'and although some of the methods may be open to objection the tactics used at others may to the uninitiated native intellect appear questionable, it cannot be said that the franchise will not in time become a popular institution in the land.'

One interesting phenomenon in this excitement over the composition of the municipalities in Bombay emerged out of a division among the rich and poor Indians, both classes paying municipal taxes, which became more and more apparent with time. This was a different kind of class feeling, not one rooted in caste but in wealth and power. The vernacular press was found taking sides in this split. Indians who sat on the municipal corporation as justices of the peace represented the city's rich Parsi and Gujarati merchants of whom there were many in Bombay because of the city's phenomenal economic development in the sixties of the nineteenth century. They were propertied men who owned houses and lands. Much of their attention as municipal justices was taken up with keeping the house tax

1. Native Opinion, 10 August 1873.
at a reasonable level while keeping up the incidence of other taxes such as the town duties on ghee and oil and food grains. The membership list of the Bombay Association gave a fairly representative cross-section of such men. Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Juggernathji Sunkersett, Cursetjee Jamsetjee, several members of the wealthy Cama family and Munguldass Nathoobhoy among others were all justices of the peace of their times. They were quite distinct from the group called 'ratepayers' who claimed to speak for the people of Bombay at large. They were the city's shopkeepers and lesser merchants, hardly houseowners, who took a leading part in moulding public opinion certainly on the subject of municipal self-government. In their first petition to the bench of justices in November 1870 the ratepayers described themselves as 'many respectable native merchants, lawyers and government servants, who though not perhaps personally known to the European community fairly indicate the feelings and wishes of the entire native community who form the majority of the rate-payers.' Pherozesha Mehta placed the group of ratepayers in 'the lower strata of the middle classes.' Among their

2. Ibid., p. 241.
3. Speeches and Writings of the Honourable Sir Pherozesha Mehta, K.C.I.E., ed. C.Y. Chintamani (Allahabad, 1905), p. 82. Mehta was then a practising lawyer and a municipal commissioner of the Bombay Corporation.
leaders were some Europeans, the more notable among them being James Forbes, James Taylor and William Martin Wood representing mercantile and journalistic interests. It may be permissible to guess here that some of them were in keen competition with those wealthy sethias seated comfortably in their judge's seats. The Indian leaders among the ratepayers were men like Moolji Thakarsi, Tukaram Tatia, Javerilal Umiashanker Yajnik, Naoroji Manekji Wadia and Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee among others.¹

These ratepayers dominated Bombay's municipal scene from the year 1873, their slogan being 'Taxation should go with representation'.² Every petition they presented was signed by at least two thousand of them.

The press in Bombay admired the work done by the ratepayers. Commenting on one of their meetings which drew up a memorial against the municipal bill, the Native Opinion wrote:

That memorial ... criticizes temperately but with admirable judgement the defects of the Bill. In truth the representations of the Ratepayers have always been marked by these qualities and their proceedings have been most orderly and well-conducted.

¹; D.E. Wacha, Rise and Growth of Bombay Municipal Government (Madras, 1913), pp. 149-50.
²; Ibid., p. 49.
In conclusion the same paper confidently wrote, 'They have thus secured the public sympathy, and their cause has evidently gained greater strength.' But the Native Opinion's reaction to the efforts of the Bombay Association with regard to the 1872 municipal bill were definitely antagonistic. When it became known that Vinayak Rao Sunkersett was sending a memorial to the legislative council against the bill 'on behalf of the inhabitants of Bombay' the Native Opinion exploded.

We have not seen either Mr. Vinayak Rao or his seconder open his lips on behalf of municipal reform, or for the relief of the oppressed tax-payers of Bombay within the last 7 years. All these sethias [men who drew up the memorial] are members of the Bench of Justices and they were rather conspicuous as the dumb followers of a powerful regime, now given up by its best advocates.

In the same columns the Native Opinion wrote with some defiance that the views of the 'oppressed ratepayers of Bombay' had been 'faithfully' represented by that 'independent and true advocate ... the Committee of Ratepayers who had held public meetings in the Town Hall.' The Native Opinion pointed out that Vinayak Rao and his associates were never present at those public meetings. Instead they held 'friendly meetings at home ... and yet they now pretend to

1. Native Opinion, 26 May 1872.
2. John Crawford was the municipal commissioner for Bombay for seven years from 1864-71. See Wacha, op. cit., chapter on John Crawford.
come forward to address the Legislative Council "on behalf of the inhabitants of Bombay". We trust we may be spared this address on our behalf by persons who have no title to represent us.'

Such involvement in the cause of municipal self-government was common to Bengal as well. Never at any stage was the content of the cause clearly defined anywhere in India, as indeed this was difficult to do. It was certainly not a straight fight between the government and the people of India, as some of the people were part of the municipal establishment itself. In fact in every part of India there were many more Indians, working on the municipal corporations, than Europeans. What was more the government's sympathies were divided, as was most clear in the case of Bengal. The Bengal municipalities bill of 1872, even after being passed in the legislative council of Bengal, failed to become an act. The viceroy could not bring himself to assent to the bill. The Bengal municipalities bill of 1872 had been brought in to amend the existing

1. Native Opinion, 15 September 1872.

2. In Madras municipal corporation in 1874-75 there were 18 Indians as against 13 Europeans. Source: Mun.R., Madras, 1874-75, vol.1, p.1. In the Punjab in 1874-75 there were 1,593 Indians as against 344 Europeans. Source: Mun.R., Punjab, 1874-75, p.8. In Bengal in 1874-75 there were 756 Indians working on the municipalities as against 165 Europeans. Source: Mun.R., Bengal, 1874-75, p.

law with respect to the already existing municipalities there under Act VI of 1868. The select committee on the bill had recommended that the government of the municipality was to be vested in the commissioners and they would have full power of control in the administration of it, apart from the routine intentions common to all municipal laws of creating a fund by the imposition of taxes which were most suited to the circumstances of the municipality and expending their income on those objects most desirable for the improvement of the municipality, and the welfare of the inhabitants.\(^1\) The magistrate of the district was to be the ex-officio chairman of the municipal operation. Taxes were named and legalized, and a revised code of conservancy regulations was enacted. Why then did the viceroy object to this particular bill and not to any other although they were mostly identical? His general objections were two-fold. Increased municipal taxation, an object of the bill, was 'unnecessary and inexpedient' for Bengal at the time, and he disliked the tendency to rely too much on the discretion of the local officers.\(^2\) Lord Northbrook wrote several letters to his secretary of state in London expressing apprehension. In one of them he wrote:

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The more I have studied the Municipalities Bill, the more sources of danger I see in it, if it becomes law. The opinion is almost universal among the district officers and others who have the best means of knowing the feelings of the natives of Bengal that they are much disturbed by Income Tax, Census, and the Road Cess, which will soon be in active operation, and which, I fear, will cause much trouble.¹

Being no great believer 'in the discretion of any one man' in whose power the administration of a law may for the time be placed, Lord Northbrook found it trying to rely on the bill for doing any good to Bengal.

While the viceroy's decision made Bombay jealous, it no doubt revived the faith of Bengal. Many Bombay newspapers claimed that if the Bengal municipal bill of 1872 was considered worthy of rejection, so should have been the Bombay bill of the same year. Thus the Jam-e-Jamshed wrote on 20 February 1873:

... the considerations which induced the Viceroy to withhold consent from the Bengal Municipal Bill, hold equally good in regard to the Bill for the Bombay Municipality. The Bengal Municipality Bill was vetoed by the Viceroy because it tended to augment the burden of the municipal taxes on the people. The Bill prepared by the Bombay Legislature for the Bombay Municipality has the same tendency, and yet His Excellency the Viceroy gave his consent to the latter matter.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Mumbai Samachar and the Rast Goftar.²

1. Northbrook to Argyll, 3 January 1873, Northbrook Papers, vol.9.

But before achieving such a moment of success the Bengalis too had their spell of agitation. Petitions had poured in from the inhabitants of Ranaghut, Krishnagar, Berhampore and Jessore, the ratepayers of the suburbs of Calcutta, of Nadia and the nearby town of Pubna. 'People's Associations' at Dacca and Rajshahi sent in their memorials. Groups of zamindars and zamindari organizations, such as the British Indian Association, also protested. Individual personalities like Raja Degumbar Mitra and Jotindro Mohun Tagore, secretary to the British Indian Association, made known their views officially. Degumbar Mitra was not an enthusiast for municipal institutions in the very backward villages where even the traditional panchayet system did not work satisfactorily. 'Much better that the seed should be sown where the ground might be to some extent ready for it, but it would be simply a waste of time and energy to try it in places which are notoriously ill-suited for it.' Jotindro Mohun Tagore, on the other hand, repeated the familiar complaint against the absence of an elective system. The provisions of the new bill, he pointed out,

1. India Legislative Proceedings, 1873, vol.714, appendices B12, B15, B20, B21, B22, B23, B24, B25, B31 and B34.

Mitra was then the sheriff of Calcutta.
that the Magistrate of the district or the division will be invariably the Chairman, that there will always be a certain number of official commissioners from among the salaried officers of Government, that the Commissioner of the division will exercise control in certain matters over the proceedings of the Municipal Commissioners, seem to be quite inconsistent with the principle of a true elective system or self-government.  

As secretary of the British Indian Association, Tagore was the signatory to another protest note sent from the Association. In this the grievance was one of an increase in taxation. It said:

It is true that the new law prescribes the rate of Rs 1-8 per head in the first-class municipalities, and 12 annas in second-class municipalities as a maximum: but judging from past experience, and remembering the numerous obligations imposed on the municipalities, your memorialists feel strongly persuaded that the maximum enjoined would be as a rule resorted to, and that the option given to the Commissioners to levy one or more of the eight kinds of taxes enjoined in the Bill, would practically signify little. Remembering also that a novel tax has been lately imposed in the shape of the road cess, applicable to the whole country ... this enormous increase of municipal taxation has naturally filled the popular mind with alarm.

The zamindars of the districts of Burdwan, Hooghly and Midnapore, however, did not talk of the 'popular mind' in their petition to the viceroy. They had a precise objection in that they thought this bill would take away

1. India Legislative Proceedings, 1873, vol.714, appendix C, pp. 8-9; also Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, 1872, vol.6, pp. 100-01, 105.

2. The memorial of the British Indian Association was dated 29 November 1871, see Annual Reports and Publications of the British Indian Association, 1871-77, vol.3.
some of their authority if not land. The institution they had in mind was that of the village chowkidar or policeman who had been under the zamindar because the chakran land on which he subsisted belonged ultimately to the zamindar.¹ The government obviously thought differently about the matter. George Campbell, then lieutenant governor of Bengal, did not acknowledge that the zamindars had any traditional right over these chakran lands.

The zamindars have long been anxious to add to all that they have legally and illegally acquired under the Permanent Settlement, these chakran lands to which they have no right, and were very nearly doing so in 1870. This I have most strongly resisted.²

Now this bill threatened to make over village policing to the local municipality which could take away the zamindar's right over the chowkidar and probably deprive him of the ownership of the chakran land.³

The anxieties of the 'Peoples Association' of Rajshahi again were of a different nature. Led by Pramatha Natha of Deghapatea, their petition was against the power of the chairman of a municipal corporation who could be the magistrate of that district as well. The fear was that

¹. This petition of the zamindars, signed by 28 of them, was led by the famous zamindars of Uttarpara - Joy Krishna Mukherji and Raj Krishna Mukherji. See India Legislative Proceedings, 1873, vol.714, appendix G; also Ibid., February 1873, Part A, no.47.

². Campbell to Northbrook, 18 September 1872, Northbrook Papers, vol.17.

'the chairman being the head executive of a district, the commissioners will act, and have to act, the part of mere cyphers.' The petition explained that municipal institutions of the past had virtually consisted in the government of towns by magistrates and other government officers in respect of sanitation, roads, the police and such other things. 'Yet the system', continued the memorial, 'was never in favour with the people who were concerned in it. They generally expressed themselves against it, and complained of its working. Government of municipalities virtually by the executive heads has thus proved itself not very successful.' If anything, the Rajshahi Association was advocating legislative interference on the part of the municipal governments and not claiming to take these over themselves.

The relief in Bengal on the rejection of the 1872 bill was only short lived. In January 1875 another municipal bill was introduced into the legislative council in Bengal to consolidate and amend the law regarding municipalities. Sir Richard Temple, who was lieutenant governor of Bengal, took an active interest specially with regard to the municipality of Calcutta. In a minute dated 2 April 1875 he wrote:

The Native Justices probably represent fairly well the various classes in the upper portion of native society, but they hardly represent the middle classes, and not at all the lower classes of municipal taxpayers. The Justices are 153 in number – 98 being Europeans, 46 Natives and 9 of other Nationalities. It is understood that while some of the Justices take an active part in municipal affairs, others do not. It may be thought that a smaller body would be more suitable for executive purposes ... for defining the powers of the chairman, and for causing the several classes of rate-payers to be represented in the Corporation which exercises the powers of the Municipality.¹

Old criticisms were thus revived. However this was a little more exciting/year for the Bengalis as Calcutta was granted an electorate for the first time. As the Amrita Bazar Patrika aptly commented 'Municipal affairs necessarily move Calcutta much more than any other question. The people of Calcutta care very little for the oppressions of the road cess collectors or the highhandedness of Magistrates and District Superintendents'.² From the first half of the nineteenth century Calcutta was developing a society of its own with 'the newly rich'. Association with European trade had not only brought money to this class of Bengalis but had also inspired them to look towards the metropolis and its suburban surrounding. Traditionally famous centres of gentry habitation slowly broke down to

2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17 February 1876.
make way for the importance of Calcutta.¹ The Bengali poet Nabin Chandra Sen, in his autobiography described a zamindar of the village of Chakradaha who came from Calcutta to meet the amlahs and settle the accounts of his estates, but never went beyond the railway station for fear of catching malaria.² This probably explains why the Amrita Bazar Patrika, a Calcutta newspaper par excellence although it had originated in a village in Jessore district, represented the people of Calcutta as having little thought for the particular susceptibilities of the villagers.

Another interesting trend in the Bengali's thinking at the time was that he had little doubt that the government, which had not granted the elective principle to municipalities in Bengal generally, would not hesitate to confer the privilege on the inhabitants of Calcutta. Every spirited Bengali at that time had great hopes for Calcutta. What the people of that city wanted most was the elective system of municipal administration. There was not much concern over increased taxation. Referring to Sir George Campbell's scheme of a municipal act for the city, the Education Gazette wrote: 'The scheme as calculated ... to teach self-government, is really important'.³ The

3. Education Gazette, 4 February 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
Bharat Mihir warned the Bengal government that municipal organization in Calcutta could never be successful 'unless the entire power in connection with the municipal administration be vested in the ratepayers'. The draft municipal bill for Calcutta proposed to reserve for government the right of direction in matters of police, taxation and works of public utility. 'This will seriously interfere with the work of "self-government",' wrote the Bharat Mihir.

Bengali newspapers objected most to sections 21, 22 and 58 of the new bill, all of which imposed limits on the freedom of the franchise. 'Under this arrangement' the Saptahik Samachar wrote, 'competent men, even if elected, will not probably consent to the commissioners, for their power and doings may be at any moment upset by the government'. It was added that Kristo Das Pal, editor of the Hindoo Patriot, had spoken of these sections in the bill as 'the last straw on the camel's back'. The Som Prokash was certain that no able Indian would want to be a municipal commissioner under conditions of being 'entirely subject to government ... and so a number of half-educated and

2. The Bengal Municipalities Bill of 1872, in India Legislative Proceedings, Jan.-Feb., 1873, vol.714, Appendix A, pp. 4, 8 (pagination for the appendix only).
3. Saptahik Samachar, 8 February 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
ambitious persons alone will be elected.' According to this journal Sir Richard Temple was only 'playing a double part at one and the same time. While he promises to confer the elective franchise on the citizens of Calcutta, almost in the same breath he is taking away all power from their hands.' The Bharat Sangskarak of 3 March 1876 observed that 'public opinion' was 'singularly strong in condemning the Calcutta Municipalities Bill'. It added how 'really difficult' it would be for 'Government to reconcile, as it has sought to do, the power of self-government asked by the people, with the absolute control of affairs which it wants to reserve in its own hands.'

All this indicates to an extent the high expectations of the Bengalis of Calcutta. The Calcutta municipal bill was certainly a step forward in encouraging the right of election when seen in the context of other municipal laws. Yet one would doubt this from the disappointments the bill had brought with it. The British Indian Association was of opinion that the elective system 'as at present offered, is worse than the system which now obtains.' On 23 February 1876 the Indian League, represented by thirty-eight members from 'the highest families in Calcutta'

1. Som Prokash, 21 and 28 February 1876.
2. Bharat Sangskarak, 3 March 1876 in R.N.F., Bengal, 1876.
presented themselves in deputation to the lieutenant governor at Alipore. They claimed that sections 22 and 58 of the bill 'had created some anxiety in the public mind'. The best course under such circumstances' the Indian Leaguers wrote in their address 'would be ... to correct any obvious delinquencies which the elected commissioners may possibly commit in the discharge of their duties by a recourse to the High Court of Judicature instead of summarily imposing increased taxation by a Notification in the Calcutta Gazette'. They contended that the nomination of not more than one-fourth of the total number of commissioners by the government would be quite sufficient for supplementing any possible deficiency in the elections. The bill provided for the election of two-thirds or 48 of the entire number of commissioners and gave the government power to appoint 24 of them. Section 6 of the bill also gave two ex-officio members the power of voting. 'There are also reasons for expecting' the Indian League continued 'that at least 14 Europeans under government influence will be returned at the elections. This would increase the number of voters in favour of

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1 March 1876.
2. The entire address of the Indian League dated 23 February 1876 is to be found in Richard Temple Papers, vol. 221.
government to 40 leaving only 34 to the native commissioners.' The League wanted a reduction of the number of government nominees from 24 to 18. Each ward in Calcutta could thus elect at least three representatives. An important, though small section of the Bengali press objected to such adverse reactions.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, in its usual way, disagreed with the British Indian Association. 'Now is this a fact,' the Patrika asked '... that the system as at present offered is worse than the system which now obtains?' The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* warned the people in its columns that 'in future ages the people will relate with sorrow and indignation, that at one time in Calcutta, there was a party, which, when a portion of freedom was offered to them had actually rejected it.'

When the municipal bill for Calcutta was actually passed the same newspaper called upon the people of the city to treat the bill as a trial to its title as an elective municipality. 'We have long agitated over claims to citizenship-proper, and we must now make ready to vindicate them'. At this point the Patrika's tone became defiant: 'A formidable host of adverse witnesses have been testifying both avowedly and insidiously against our fitness for self-government, and the time is

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1. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 February 1876.
hastening on, when ... their slanderous tongues must be hushed into eternal silence.' ¹ Another newspaper, the Samachar Chandrika, although less known, reflected a wiser stand. It was not wholly pleased with the city's municipal bill as it stood, but its advice to the people of Calcutta was to urge them 'to accept the elective system with all its restrictions, and then gradually endeavour to remove them.' This newspaper believed that the citizens of Calcutta deserved more independence as they were 'really most interested in the proper management of municipal affairs.' ²

A bill for mofussil municipalities in Bengal was also long in contemplation. Since 1850 mofussil government in Bengal had been conducted under four successive laws, the last to be enacted being Act VI of 1868. This bill was new in that it was dividing municipalities into three classes, each with a different maximum rate of taxation. The rates were to include a tax on persons according to their circumstances and property, a tax on the annual value of houses and lands, a tax on carriages, horses and elephants, a tax on trades and callings, tolls on roads and on ferries. As experience had shown that town duties were not popular

¹. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 30 March 1876.
². Samachar Chandrika, 30 March 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
in Bengal, unlike as in Northern India where the municipalities reaped a large income out of octroi, bazar dues were thought of instead. Bazar dues, the legislative council argued, were 'well known all over Bengal; indeed it would seem as if no bazar or market could be comfortably established until somebody put dues upon its frequenters.'

One other new tax was proposed. This was a tax on public processions through the towns and villages, with the exception of strictly religious ones. Unlike the bazar dues the procession-tax was certainly not popular. A memorial containing over two thousand signatures collected from the suburban population, was sent to the legislative council laying down 'the evils' to which it would give rise.

'True it is the section exempts "processions exclusively religious" and "processions not requiring the attendance of the police". But who is to decide' the petitioners asked 'what processions are exclusively religious and what do not require the attendance of the police, and where is he to decide it?'

Increased taxation and dictatorship of the magistrates were the two great fears in the interior of Bengal. That

1. A tax on processions, thought necessary only in Bengal, is perhaps an interesting reflection on the charged political atmosphere in Bengal. Calcutta today is commonly described as a 'city of processions'; the municipal tax on processions suggests that this was in a line of tradition.

2. India Legislative Proceedings, 1873, vol.714, appendix B20, pp. 2-3. This memorial carried 2114 signatures from the office-bearers and members of the 'Suburban Rate Payers Association and the Inhabitants of the Suburbs of Calcutta.'
it was taxation, and not self-government, which hurt the people in the districts is borne out by the divisional commissioner's tour reports of Bengal during those years. Writing of the Presidency division, C.T. Buckland, who was its commissioner, reported that the new municipal bill of 1875-76 had created a stir. This was traced back to Act VI of 1868. Buckland wrote that 'a considerable amount of public spirit ... [had developed] among the educated gentlemen who serve on committees'. But in his paragraph on the 'state of public feeling' he made it clear that this public spirit did not in fact extend beyond the doors of the committee rooms. 'The people as a whole only grumble at the pice they spend in taxes.'\(^1\) In Chittagong division there was, again according to its commissioner, 'a most violent demonstration ... by the people of the town' over the new municipal bill.\(^2\) In Midnapore the house-tax under the road cess act and the village chowkidari act 'were all very unpopular.'\(^3\) Local officers who were consulted on the subject of taxation in Bengal testified to this. Babu Iswar Chandra Mitter of the revenue department wrote in answer to his secretary:

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1. Divisional and District Annual Administration Reports, Presidency division, 1875-76, paras. 16-19, p. 9.

2. Ibid., Chittagong division, 1875-76, para. 64, p. 13.

3. Ibid., Midnapore division, 1877-78, para. 51, p. 10.
Municipal taxes are generally abhorred. I speak only of the taxes imposed under the District Towns and Chowkidaree Acts ... If it is proposed to introduce [more rates] (I allude to Ferry tolls, Road cess) into any village or knot of villages, the inhabitants are sure to cry out "our ghoties and baties (metal water vessels and cups) must go"; that is they will disappear under the hammer of the distraint officer. For this feeling the administration of the tax has much to answer ... the burden of taxation falls more heavily on the poor than on the rich ... the rich are more benefited than the poor. The assessor, necessarily one from the upper section of the community, has more friends and acquaintances in that section than among the friendless poor ... the community have no voice in adjusting the expenses suited to their wants; and when some twenty villages are joined to form a "town" or "union", those which form the headquarters of the executive officer, or in which the rich and influential congregate, receive most of the advantages which the surplus proceeds afford to give, while most of the outlying villages are scarcely thought of.'

Referring to Act VI of 1868, concerned with municipal taxation in district towns, Rakhal Das Mukherji wrote in 1872 that 'In the suburbs of Calcutta and in the sudder stations, the taxes imposed under the first Act have become generally obnoxious, especially to the lower classes of people as there is no provision in the Act to exempt people on the ground of poverty.'

Writing on this mofussil bill the Rajshahye Samachar observed that it was well known that many labourers in towns could only pay their assessments with great difficulty.

1. India Financial Proceedings, December 1872, Part B, no.309.
2. Ibid., October 1872, Part B, no.53.
If the municipal law is successful in adding to the comforts and happiness of the people, the income might certainly increase by the existing rates of taxation. There is striking resemblance between the manner in which government generally proceeds ... and that followed by zamindars, if, during the settlement of an estate, a ryot were to propose a reduction of rent. In all such cases the rent is invariably raised, never reduced.\footnote{1}

The Grambarta Prakashika wrote of the abuses of municipal administration at the village-level, 'constantly exposed in the native papers ... but never redressed.' 'We hoped much from the new Municipal Bill, but it has sadly disappointed us.'\footnote{2} A common complaint in mofussil municipalities was that all the benefits arising from municipal roads, ghats and sweepers benefited only the zamindars and their protégés. Commenting on this the Suhrid of 9 May 1876 wrote that 'it was not at all to be wondered at that they should be found so partial to the system.' Writing of the Muktagacha (Mymensingh district, Bengal) municipality the same newspaper wrote that despite the contributions of the three villages belonging to that municipality to the municipal funds Muktagacha had no dispensary.\footnote{3} 'We hope that Lord Lytton will reject the Bill', wrote the Sahachar,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{1.} Rajshahiye Samachar, 27 April 1876 in \textit{R.N.P.}, Bengal, 1876.
\item \textbf{2.} Grambarta Prakashika, 6 May 1876 in \textit{Ibid}.
\item \textbf{3.} Suhrid, 9 May 1876 in \textit{Ibid}.
\end{itemize}
for if passed into law, it will undoubtedly prove a source of incalculable misery to the people. Local governments are unadvisedly empowered to devise new systems of taxation at their pleasure. The road cess has been introduced, and from this fund streets are to be paved and repaired; while the levying of toll will continue to exist in full force. Our rulers do not understand that to levy toll is to hinder trade.

The inhabitants of the town of Pubna petitioned the government against the duties on articles sold at markets or hats as that would hinder the trade of the internal market. 'The poor cultivators of this part of the country' the petitioners wrote 'are in the habit of taking the produce of their lands to the neighbouring hats for sale, and the profits which they gain by this means is very small. The imposition of duties upon these articles will therefore cause great hardship to those cultivators, and would probably deter them from resorting to markets for the sale of their goods.'

As soon as news spread of this new bill an impressive public meeting was held at Baranagar, in the outskirts of Calcutta, on 21 May 1876. The journalist Sambhu Charan Mookerjee presided. Leading public men of Baranagar and

3. India Office Tracts, P/T, 526. Sambhu Charan Mookerjee was the editor of Mookerjee's Magazine and Reis and Raiyat.
the neighbouring towns and villages were all there. Many cases of municipal oppression were cited by men like Bihari Lal Pal B.A. B.L., and Principal Jadu Nath Ghosh of Seal's Free College, Calcutta. Many of these speakers dealt with the horrors of municipal assessment. One of those cases, a gem in its way, was that of a man having no house or land of his own, but dwelling in the house of a relative, who had been called upon after the late assessment, and for the first time since the introduction of the chowkidari act more than twenty years ago, to pay his house tax separately. When he refused to pay, the chairman, according to Bihari Lal's story, directed that municipal agents were 'to take off his clothes when they found him in the streets.'

The speaker then described in detail what was the 'notorious gate-case' of Babu Iswar Chandra Ghosh who, while he earned a salary of 300 rupees paid an annual rate of 12 rupees, was made to pay, first, 40 rupees and then 72 rupees after retiring from his job. This man then left his house and deserted to Calcutta, whereupon the municipality took away 'his splendid iron gates which were permanent fixtures'.

Principal Ghosh, who was a resident of Calcutta, explained his presence at the Baranagar meeting by listing the

1. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
2. Ibid., p. 5.
metropolitan rates which had 'within a comparatively short time ... been well nigh quadrupled.'

People of comparatively limited means and resources like myself,' he said 'are accordingly driven ... to think of giving up residence in the metropolis and shifting to towns less oppressed by the same weight ... But after the passing of the Mofussil Bill ... so far as municipal rates are concerned, it will simply be flying from the frying pan to the fire to shift residence. ¹

But what really produced panic in the mofussil came from the conduct of the district magistrates. The case of Babu Lal Chand Chowdhuri, municipal commissioner at Chittagong in 1876, who was insulted and in fact thrown out of the municipal corporation by the presiding district magistrates, brought to life this latent fear.² In its opening article the Sadharani of 21 May 1876 wrote that 'in most of the institutions founded in this country by the British government, the natives are invited to take part as members or otherwise for the management of affairs; but they meet with nothing but disgrace, in return for their services, at the hands of men set to preside over them.' This was written in the context of Lal Chand Chowdhuri's traumatic experience. 'One cannot always manage to keep himself safe from attacks that may be unjustly made against him by a District Magistrate', the Hindu Hitoishini reflected.

¹. India Office Tracts, P/T, 526, pp. 10-11.
². See below, pp. 387-88.
It is only because Babu Lal Chand Chowdhuri is a rich zemindar that he has been able to save himself by spending a vast sum of money. Who is there that is not inspired with fear at seeing such unjust behaviour in a man in whose hands lie the safety and protection of the property, honour, and life of a great number of people?

This particular cause for panic was removed when Kirkwood was transferred from Chittagong by the government. But he left behind him a trail of reactions in which the magistrate became a hate word in late nineteenth century village Bengal.

Municipal acts in succession also agitated the Anglo-Indian press in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, although with no great animation. Their political instinct assured them that there was not much 'self-government', but in fact a lot of taxation, involved in all this. Writing of the Bengal municipal bill of 1872 the Pioneer wrote:

We may be assured that no Bengalee municipality will be permitted to carry on business according to its own views and predilections. And this being the case, it may be best plainly to say at once what is meant - that we have determined our duty to be to sweep and garnish Indian towns up to Western notions of decency and respectability; that we hold ourselves to be strong enough to do it whether the people approve of it or not; and that we propose to raise the needful money by local rates. These points having been resolved upon, we desire to consult notable citizens as to how these rates can best be imposed, and,

within certain limits, as to how the cash should be allotted in the spending of it, and with those objects we pass an Act to convene a representative body, as our earlier English kings summoned knights and burgesses, not to decide whether taxes were wanted, but to find the lump sum among them.\

Englishmen running these newspapers warned their government that legislators were labouring day after day on a municipal bill 'which only accords to free men the most limited degree of presentation and management of local matters and civic questions that was ever conceded to an English-governed community under the name of representative institutions'.

Writing in the same strain, the Times of India added:

In America we behold 700,000 enfranchised negroes, who were 8 years ago the chattels and appurtenances of masters, voting in all the reality of freedom, or preparing to give their votes as free and independent citizens and electors, in the appointment of the first Magistrate, military commander, and president of that great Republic.

The one universal feature among the Indian reactions was a distaste for further taxes, emphasized strongly in some regions and less so in others. Apart from the general disinclination of men to part with money it is possible that the attempt to raise this local taxation, specially on urban property, coincided not with a phase of marked urban expansion but rather with one of stagnation and decline. This is quite clear in the case of Madras where people spoke of their 'poor town'; and it would also appear to be true of

1. The Pioneer, 8 October 1872.
2. The Times of India, 5 October 1872.
3. See above, p.162
Calcutta though not of Bombay. The evidence from the countryside and from lesser towns also emphasized this fact of poverty and decline. Needless to say, local cultures also differentiated attitudes. Thus the Punjabi and the Tamil reacted quite differently to the first municipalities, and in some areas men took advantage of this to claim a political advance. Although this was perhaps the most interesting and certainly the most passionate reaction, we must not be tempted to exaggerate its extent. Few men beyond the two presidency towns of Bombay and Calcutta saw in the new municipalities a political weapon. Nevertheless over wide areas of the country a diverse variety of local communities awoke to the fact that the government was in their midst. This in many parts of India was a/phenomenon.

1. Population in Madras City fell from 397,552 persons in 1871 to 200,170 persons in 1881. The number of occupied houses in Madras City fell from 51,741 in 1871 to 48,286 in 1881. This was a decrease of 6.6%. Sources: Report on the Census of Madras Presidency, 1871 (Madras, 1874), vol.I, p. 68; Imperial Census of 1881, Operations and Results of Madras Presidency (Madras, 1883), vol.I, table 1, p. 3 and table 5, p. 18.

Population of Calcutta City fell from 409,036 in 1876 (year of the last census) to 401,671 in 1881. This was a decrease of 1.8%. The number of occupied houses in Calcutta City fell from 38,864 in 1872 to 34,534 in 1881. Sources: Report on the Census of the Town and Suburbs of Calcutta taken on 17 February 1881 (Calcutta, 1881), tables 2 and 3, pp. ii-iii; H. Beverley, Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872 (Calcutta, 1872), General Statement A, p. 6.

2. For the evidence from the countryside, see, for example, the figures for Madras presidency as a whole in Imperial Census of 1881, Madras, vol.I, p. 17.
A singular controversy gathered round the Indian tariff acts of the 1870's. By these measures some of the protective duties on the import of cottons into India were removed. It seemed to be a clear victory for the Manchester free traders. Official circles were deeply disturbed. Lord Northbrook, the viceroy, resigned and there were sharp differences of opinion within the council of the secretary of State for India. There was some reason to think that the principle of the legislative independence of the Government of India was at stake. At another level the Indian public rallied round the mill-owners of Bombay. They were under the impression that this act would destroy the developing Indian textile industry. In the event the official circles settled down quickly enough, and nothing happened to the textile industry in India. But the act of 1875 again focussed attention from all over the country round a specific issue at a particular time.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the cotton industry in India was still very young. The year 1854 saw the first of the pioneering enterprises in western India. An Englishman, James Landon, and two wealthy Parsis,
Cowasji Davar and Maneckji Petit, were the first entrepreneurs on record. The results were seen in the erection of the Broach mill and the formation of the Spinning and Weaving Company. At the end of the next decade there were only three more spinning mills and five weaving mills. The cause of this rather late growth of the indigenous industry was that much of India's raw cotton had been shipped to Britain since the close of the eighteenth century. American and Indian cotton were simultaneously imported into Britain to feed its infant cotton textile industry. Till the close of the eighteenth century India had exported a considerable amount of cotton fabrics which constituted her main foreign trade. There had however been a sharp change. In the first half of the eighteenth century exports of bullion from England to India stood at £27 million, while the merchandise sent out was worth only 9 million. In contrast, in the first half of the next century, the export of bullion came down to £14½ million and merchandise shipped to India rose phenomenally to £48½ million.

Within a few decades of the nineteenth century Lancashire had stepped in to capture half the exports, and sent to India goods that once composed India's own export trade. From 818,000 yards of cotton goods exported to India and the

East Indies in 1814, the exports rose to 57 million yards by 1832. This impressive take-over of the market in cotton cloth, however, made Lancashire wild with expectation. Discussions began on the way in which more raw cotton could be brought over from India so that more Manchester manufactures could be sold to the world at large. But soon the scene changed when 'a combination of pests, Mississippi floods and cholera with its heavy toll among the slaves' threatened an end to supplies from America.

The scene changed not only in Britain, but in India as well. Manchester, deprived of America's resources, turned her attention to India. Apart from increasing English demands on its raw cotton, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 helped towards an expansion of India's own cotton mills. By 1894 there were 141 cotton mills - most of them working, others being erected - throughout the country. Over 3½ million spindles had been brought into action. This was, by all standards, a sharp rise from having only 28 mills in 1875. All this coincided with a growing intensity of

2. Ibid., p. 58.
Lancashire's interest in the cotton industry in India. Between the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Cotton Supply Association, also of Manchester, Lancashire manufacturers had taken on themselves the responsibility for India's development and prosperity: producing more, and better, cotton in India for India's good and thus, by the way, benefiting the English industry six thousand miles away.

The Chamber of Commerce at Manchester had for long experienced disappointment with the East India Company's administration in India. When after 1819, and for the next twenty years, raw cotton shipments from India steadily declined, Lancashire did not hesitate to blame the Company. Therefore, when in the sixties, the crisis was worse, Lancashire could no longer remain satisfied with simple complaints. The Chamber made a bid for a share in the control of India's development. Railways and irrigation canals in India, its tariff and other matters connected with settled Europeans in the country became as much the concern of Lancashire as they were, quite understandably, of the Government of India. The tension over the 1875 tariff act was a direct result of the two factors: growth of the Indian textile industry, and Lancashire's attempt to expand operations.

The act itself emerged out of demands for revaluation of the goods on which export and import duties had to be paid. The government had regulated the previous customs tariff on valuations worked out in 1869. In four years' time the Chambers of Commerce, of Bombay and Bengal, organizations which spoke for Lancashire in India, claimed that those valuations had become out of date. On 20th August 1873, and later again in September next year, the Bengal Chamber wrote to the financial department of the Government of India asking for fresh valuations. In addition they wrote to the Bombay Chamber of Commerce urging support for the cause.

In anticipation of that measure [referring to the possibility of government revaluing the goods as demanded] being adopted, your Chamber will no doubt carefully consider what amendments are required in the interests of the trade in cotton manufacturers imported from the U.K. which are, to some extent, prejudicially affected by local productions unfettered by fiscal charges, and to the question whether cotton goods and yarn thus competing with British imported manufactures burdened with Customs duties should not be subject to duties of excise.

In their second letter to the government, that of 23 September 1874, the Bengal Chamber in fact tabulated the market and tariff values of piece-goods and yarn, constituting the existing bulk of the import trade, to satisfy the government of the need for revaluation of these items. The duty/charged was

2. Ibid.
price which on a / exceeded the selling price of the article.

Market and tariff values of piece-goods in 1874:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Latest selling price</th>
<th>Duty charged on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39 grey shirtings of weight 6 lbs.</td>
<td>Rs 3-13 as.</td>
<td>Rs 4-2 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 grey shirtings of weight 7 lbs.</td>
<td>Rs 4-3 as.</td>
<td>Rs 4-13 as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 grey shirtings of weight $\frac{81}{4}$ lbs.</td>
<td>Rs 5-3 as.</td>
<td>Rs 5-10$\frac{3}{4}$ as.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 grey madapollams of weight 3 lbs.</td>
<td>Rs 1-14 as.</td>
<td>Rs 2-1 as.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Figures sent by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to Sir Louis Mallet, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 13 August 1874 in India Separate Revenue (Financial) Proceedings, November 1874, Part A, no.194, vol.2.

Behind the scenes, at the same time, Lancashire was feeling its way towards the demand for a total abolition of all import duties on the cotton piece-goods and yarn. Merchants and traders there claimed that the excess of officially estimated value over actual price of these goods added nearly one per cent to the rates of duty. Many petitions began to be sent from Manchester, and the first of these was written to Mr. Gladstone, then prime minister. This was immediately followed by one to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, on 31 January 1874, in which the Manchester Chamber of Commerce wrote that the import duties were found to be

'absolutely prohibitory to the trade in yarn and cloth of the coarse and low price sorts.' ¹ It was made quite clear that the Chambers of Commerce in Britain and in India were united against allowing Indian manufacturers to grow prosperous at what they thought to be Lancashire's cost.

The campaign in India in favour of Lancashire developed simultaneously. Preceding even that of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce came a petition from Wallace and Company, a member of the Chamber at Bombay, to the secretary of the Chamber. ² John Bright had spoken to a committee of that Company, on 12 November 1873, explaining the protectionist effect of these import duties on cotton cloths charged in India. Wallace and Company, writing to its Chamber at Bombay on the same day, took its stand on the injury done by this protective tariff to the consumer.

We venture to say that the consumers do not get the benefit of freedom of a certain proportion of the Piece goods and Yarn used by them from duty, in as much as the price of such Piece-goods and/or Yarn is, and in the nature of things must be, regulated by the competition of the much larger quantity of Piece-goods and Yarn imported from Europe, which, although differing no doubt in many ways, could take the place of that made in the local mills, and indeed has only lately been displaced by the local manufactures. If, then, the consumers do not get the benefit, it is clear the mill-owners do. In other

words, the consumers throughout India are paying a tax of $5\%$ and $3\%$ to the mill-owners of Bombay, without any advantage accruing to the Revenue which, on the other hand, is falling off annually from the growing displacement of imported goods by those made in the local mills, - a very serious consideration for government.¹

Within a few days, on November 27th, another joint-stock firm, Messrs. Nicol and Company, petitioned the government. They wanted the import duties to go, but for different reasons. They did not agree that the Bombay mill-owners were being treated to a 'bonus' because of the existing import duties; they did not think that the consumers were being deprived either. Their contention was that, because of the existence of import duties, 'in the first place local manufacturers [did] not obtain prices equivalent to those obtained for goods made at home, and, in the second place, they wrote, (and this is a most important matter), 'that local mill-owners ... sold goods much less sized than those which, under the same designation, reach us from Lancashire.'²

These complaints arose principally because certain coarse cloths of English manufacture, such as 'Lonymcloths', 'T-cloths' and 'Domestics', had lately been under-sold in the

². Ibid., p. 34.
Indian markets in competition with local produce. Angry remonstrations from Wallace and Company, and other similar interest groups, called for an excise tax on Indian manufactures. Free traders though they claimed to be, they had obviously lost their nerve in a way to shock even a sister-firm like Nicol's by asking for an excise duty, which was abhorred in the field of free trade.

The viceroy and his council could hardly remain passive much longer. A resolution was drawn up on 25 November 1874 by which a special commission was set up to re-assess the values on cotton goods used for export and import. Anthony Money, then member of the Bengal Board of Revenue, was chosen to preside over the committee of four members. Bengal was represented by its Collector of Customs,

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1. Figures indicate that between the years 1868 and 1873 there was a fall in the percentage of import trade of cotton piece-goods into Bombay and Calcutta although an increase in Madras, thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Piece-goods</th>
<th>Increase or Decrease</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1849-68</td>
<td>Bombay % 10</td>
<td>Calcutta % 12½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase (as from previous years 1849-64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849-73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. Ibid., pp. 33-37.

and Madras by a member of its Board of Revenue. T.C. Hope, who later introduced the tariff bill to the legislature, was Bombay's representative as the Commissioner of Customs and Opium. The mercantile community was represented by Bullen-Smith, leading merchant and member of the Bengal legislative council and Murrey, the then chairman of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. The European merchants of Madras and Bombay chose to remain unrepresented. But the Bombay Chamber of Commerce drew up a detailed statement of 'fair' tariff values and sent it to the Commission for consideration. No one was chosen to represent the Indian merchants. With due deliberation a tariff act was passed in a year's time, but with unexpected results. The act pleased neither Indians nor Europeans. Moreover it divided the government.

Manchester's proposition that the 5% import duty was 'absolutely prohibitory' to the trade in coarse cloth was almost wholly rejected by the tariff commission. Their findings indicated that the duty levied all over India on the coarse goods was only about 4 lakhs of rupees, or 5% of the entire duty on cotton goods which amounted to about 80 lakhs. Only half of that sum, or one-fortieth of the whole, was collected in Bombay 'where alone there was as yet any considerable local manufacture'.

1. Ibid.
were ruled out of consideration, as neither India's growing cotton industry nor the existing import duty affected the equilibrium of trade in those regions in any perceptible manner. Bombay was the really sensitive area as it was the most enterprising. 'The case therefore stood thus', Hope explained to the legislative council, 'that because one-twentieth of the cotton goods imported were subject to a local competition, which only seriously affected one-half of that twentieth, the Government were asked for the total and immediate repeal of the nineteen-twentieths of the duty, paid by the remaining cotton goods on which local competition had no present effect whatever.'¹ The Bombay Chamber had pressed for exemption from duty only for the coarser sorts of yarn and cloths which were subject to local competition.² But even this the Commission found difficult to concede. Their objections were that while it was impossible to draw a well defined line between coarse and fine cotton goods, any line drawn between them would only lead to 'elaborate evasions' and frauds on the part of the Lancashire manufacturer. Hope explained it by saying:

There were two principles on which a line might be drawn - the principle of value and the principle of description. By the principle of value was meant saying, for instance, that all cotton goods valued at nine, or ten, annas per pound and under should be

¹. Ibid.
². R.Ch.Com., Bombay, 1874-75, pp. 3-7.
exempt. By that of description was meant specifying that certain kinds of cloths under 18 x 18 reed, should be free. "Value" was objectionable in that it was not only a matter of opinion but subject to a double fluctuation - one following the market, like a tariff value, and another following the advance to higher and therefore more valuable kinds of cloth in which the local mills would be encouraged. "Description" threw on the customs officers the onus of deciding whether the varieties of cloth which existed and the new ones, such as with 18 x 17 reed, which would spring up, were within the exemption or not.1

The tariff committee had come to its own conclusions as to what should be done. A duty on raw cotton imported into India, which was not the produce of Asia or Ceylon, was introduced for the first time. Manchester had complained of a proposal to import American and Egyptian cotton into India free of duty. This would have induced Indian manufacturers to weave finer cloths. As far as the tariff committee were concerned there was no cause for any more fear. Local Indian manufactures were still within reasonable proportions. Hope thus said

If in spite of such precautions the Indian mill manufactures should assume more important dimensions than at present, then there appeared no doubt that the proper course would be not a repeal of the import duty with its concomitant resort to more objectionable taxation but the imposition of an excise duty. Home and imported goods would thus be put on an absolute equality, and the revenue unobjectionably derived from clothing would be preserved.2

2. Ibid., p. 177.
Thus the tariff committee was also prepared for a contingency measure, but left the decision for the future.

As far as the import trade was concerned, all that the 1875 tariff act did was to impose the 5% duty on long staple raw cotton and to reduce the general rate of import duties to 5%. The duties on spirits and wines were however raised. The act was more forthright in regulating export tariffs. All export duties, except those on indigo, rice and gum lac, were abolished. The total loss to the Indian revenues effected by the new tariff act of 1875 was £308,000. But by retaining the import duties on cotton yarns and goods, Northbrook saved the Indian revenues from a possible loss of £800,000. However, more was to be subtracted from those revenues within the next years. The tariff act of 1875 was by no means a decisive point in the history of Indian tariffs. Manchester was not to be pacified before a total abolition of import duties on British cotton goods in India. The India Office was given no peace till that was achieved.

In India the tariff act provoked some discontent. The imposition of a new duty on imported long-staple cotton was widely detested. But there is little doubt that, on the whole, the contents of the act must have come as somewhat of a relief. As the pressures for the total abolition of Indian revenues.

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import duties became increasingly evident, the Indian public had grown pessimistic. Commenting on the first deputation of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to Lord Salisbury, very soon after he had joined the India Office, the Native Opinion of Bombay wrote:

We fully admit the view of some papers in the Native interest of this country that the chief motive of this move on the part of the Manchester mercantile community to introduce a merchant into the Council of India is selfish, and set on foot to promote increase of wealth there.¹

Indian newspapers quite definitely, although in vain, dis-Andrew approved of/Cassels, a Manchester man, being appointed to the India Council. There was apprehension that Indian interests would be slowly forgotten as mercantile Manchester gained in influence.² Convictions of this nature grew as news came through of the visit of the secretary of state for India to Manchester on 23 January 1875. Ominous cheers had resounded in the Town Hall at Manchester as Lord Salisbury had made his speech.

I have a very strong conviction that the duty ought to go [he told the gathering] and - though I am fully alive, as everybody who has charge of matters of such magnitude must be, to the necessity of attending to qualifying circumstances ... we will do our best to get rid of it ... I confess I heartily sympathise with the phrase which I see in the address regretting that any undue encouragement should be given to men who are

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¹. Native Opinion, 26 April 1874.
². Ibid., also Indu Prakash, 29 March 1874, Belgaum Samachar, 28 April 1874 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1874.
basing their hopes upon a protective duty. Undoubtedly this is very unjust; and men are basing their hopes and expending their money in the hope that this duty will last; I warn them that any evil consequences which may ensue will be upon their own heads.¹

Writing of the same occasion the Mumbai Samachar noted with regret the telegraphic news of the 25th of January 1875 that Salisbury had assured the memorialists of Manchester 'of his conviction that the customs duties must be abolished'.²

Rumours to the effect that the secretary of state had in fact sent orders to the viceroy to abolish the duty on 'twist no.20 and lower kinds of cloth imported from Manchester' were in circulation. One such story was given publicity in the Bombay Gazette.³ Accepting it without question, the Jam-e-Jamshed on 19 July 1875, reprimanded 'His Lordship' for having issued 'the above order'. 'His Lordship' the Jam-e-Jamshed wrote

instead of lending a helping hand to the infant cotton industry of this country, has dealt it a serious blow. Besides this it is very difficult to distinguish between lower and higher sorts of cloth. European importers will try to pass several kinds of cloth as lower ones to avoid the duty, and will often succeed in their attempts.⁴

Bengali newspapers jumped to similar conclusions. 'These

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¹ Salisbury's speech was reproduced in Native Opinion, 28 February 1875.
² Mumbai Samachar, 28 January 1875 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.–June 1875.
³ Bombay Gazette, 12 July 1875.
continued their importunate requests till His Grace's opinion also changed, and the same Lord Salisbury, who pitied India before, has now written out [sic] to the Government to change the law as to customs duties. Now what doubt can there be as to Manchester's victory; for are not most of the members of Parliament and even Lord Salisbury on its side?}

In this mood of pessimism, Northbrook's tariff act could hardly have been unwelcome to the Indian public. The only really objectionable item was the new tax on imported long-staple cottons but, on balance, many export duties were at the same time removed aiming to ease indigenous trade considerably. The sensible among those concerned did not in fact fail to acknowledge this. The East India Association at Bombay took the initiative of writing a memorial to Lord Northbrook, on 20 August 1875, on which they hailed the Indian tariff act 'with great pleasure'. The Association had, in the past, prayed for an abolition of export duties on cotton yarns and goods from India. The act had done so. 'They now desire [the memorial noted] to convey their grateful acknowledgements for the considerably extended scope afforded to production and trade, in the removal from the export tariff of all duties except those on opium, rice, indigo and gum lac.'

Kashinath Trimbak Telang, then the honorary secretary to the East India Association and later to be a nationalist leader, was the signatory to this memorial. The memorial did not of course refrain from denouncing the new duty on long-staple imports. It was 'the great blot' on the new tariff bill; it was 'an invidious impost'.

Early in 1876, and of course later, when the hard fact of Manchester's continuing pressure for the repeal of the import duties on their cottons on a gradually mellowing India Office came to be felt, many more Indians came to see much less evil in the tariff act of 1875. However, as any move to regulate tariff on imports had come to be regarded as an ominous thing, much steam was let off in the Indian vernacular press in the wake of this tariff bill.

'To strangle the Indian cotton industry at its very birth and secure Manchester from all future competition must be the practical effect of the new Tariff Act' wrote the Native Opinion without delay, heading the column 'Act No. XVI of 1875: India for Manchester'.

When Manchester moved to get the import duties abolished on English cotton goods, we had a downpour of sermons on the advantages of free trade from the Secretary of State downwards. But now that the very same principle has been sacrificed, in imposing a heavy duty on raw cotton, will the same philanthropists, who preached free-trade and decried against protection, now come forward and see that justice is done to India?

1. Native Opinion, 15 August 1875.
A threat of political danger\(^1\) was held out in these columns, emphasizing the effect that the new 5\(^\%\) import duty on raw cotton will have on 'the people's mind'. It was argued that there was no doubt that the duty was levied to prevent the further development of the Indian cotton industry: a conspiracy on behalf of Manchester.

If these concerned think [the Native Opinion said] that as a fiscal measure the new duty has nothing to do with political effervescence, we can only say that none is so blind that will not see. This blow to one of the main sources of the nation's prosperity and the impartial justice of British rule must be severely felt by the people at large, and must rouse in their breasts feelings which we can only deplore.\(^2\)

Other vernacular journals went ahead with similar criticisms and threats. The Sadadarsha of Oudh, in an article on the tariff bill, asked 'Could anything be more unfair and calculated to raise suspicions in the public mind?'\(^3\)

All attention was concentrated on the duty on long-staple cotton from America and Egypt and, curiously, no objection at all was raised to the general reduction of import duties on cotton goods from 7\(\frac{1}{2}\)\(^\%\) to 5\(^\%\). 'There is no longer any hope [the Sadadarsha continued] of the Indian mills producing better kind of goods ... The prohibitive duty of 6\(^\%\) on raw

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1. A similar threat of political danger was used by the Anglo-Indian press on the issue of the income tax. See above, pp. 120-22
3. Sadadarsha, 23 August 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 383-84.
material is sufficient to check the development of the Indian manufacture'.¹ The Telugu Andhrabhasasanjivani found fault with the act on the ground that while the cotton imported into India was heavily taxed, threads and cloths of foreign manufacture imported were lightly taxed: '... this cramps trade in India, and is, it is believed, done at the instance of the Manchester merchants.'² At the conclusion of his critical article the editor implored 'the Hindu merchants to memorialize the Home authorities on the subject.' So did the Saptahik Samachar in Bengal ask its countrymen 'to unite and represent to Parliament the grievances of the country'.³ They had not even the money, the Sahachar complained, to entertain the Prince of Wales while on his visit to India. They had been impoverished by 'the selfishness of the English merchants.'⁴

Besides the vernacular press, the Anglo-Indian newspapers also made the tariff policy a target of attack.

'How can we' asked the Englishman

any longer credit England with that desire of which we hear so much, to see India become a great manufacturing country? ... We cannot think that England is so deeply steeped in shopping as to value India only for the market she affords for English goods, and not for the glory of raising 200 millions of people to the level of her own civilization.⁵

¹. Sadadarsha, 23 August 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, p. 385.
². Andhrabhasasanjivani, September 1875 in R.N.P., Madras, 1875.
³. Saptahik Samachar, 10 August 1875 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1875.
⁴. Sahachar, 16 August 1875 in Ibid.
⁵. The Englishman, 23 August 1875.
The *Statesman*, on the other hand, suggested a way of getting round the new import duty on long-staple cottons, fooling the ambitious merchants of Lancashire in the process. Thus it/

Nothing more is needed than to obtain the addition of two words only to the New Tariff as it now stands. Those two words are "or Zanzibar" to follow the word "Ceylon". The effect of this would be to render inoperative the 5½ tax. What need has India of cotton from Egypt or from the southern states of America, when close at her own door is a far finer cotton-field than those countries put together would make?¹

The *Pioneer* however was neither so imaginative nor so devastating about the act. In a reasoned editorial on the subject the *Pioneer* approved of all the provisions of the act except the one introducing the duty on raw cotton imports into India. The *Pioneer* believed that to make peaceable citizens of Indians, it was very necessary to give their industry and intelligence 'proper direction'. The development of local industries was one way of supplying the want. But 'the duty just imposed on the import of long-staple cotton ... [was] ... not calculated to promote these ends.'

The *Pioneer* contended that although Manchester and India had been placed on an equal footing in India by the 1875 act, this was not so in the markets outside India. It was suggested therefore that

   a drawback to the duty paid on the raw material ... should be allowed on all manufactured goods sent out of India. The Indian mills would then be placed in

a position to compete with Manchester on equal terms in other markets.¹

The Pioneer wrote more² on the subject, and wrote reasonably, amidst a rather angry chorus of epithets - 'iniquitous', 'odious', 'injurious', 'discreditable', 'shameful', 'indefensible' and, of course, 'protective' - all thrown at the tariff act of 1875 by the vernacular press.

Dissatisfaction over the 1875 tariff measure was not confined to Indians and Anglo-Indians alone. The secretary of state for India, then Lord Salisbury, found it no less difficult to accept the act as it stood. It involved him in a severe difference of opinion with the viceroy. It seems to have been Northbrook's destiny never to have a secretary of state approving of his economic policy. The Duke of Argyll had disapproved of the abolition of the income tax in India, although he had let the viceroy go his way. In 1875 however Lord Salisbury was about to disallow the tariff act.

Certainly the tariff act of 1875 brought matters to a head in the relations between the India Office and the Indian government in an almost unprecedented manner. The telegram announcing the passing of the tariff bill in the legislative council, on 5 August, came as a rude shock to Salisbury.³

1. The Pioneer, 23 August 1875.
He had only a fortnight before that / sent a despatch to India, dated 15 July 1875, urging a radical solution of the question of the cotton duties. 'It is impossible to believe' Salisbury had explained in this despatch that ... the duty can be permanently maintained. The entire acceptance of the system of free trade by England is incompatible with the continuance of an exception apparently so marked. Parliament ... will not allow the only remnant of protection within the direct jurisdiction of the English Government to be a protective duty which ... is hostile to English manufactures.

Putting all such arguments together he had urged on the viceroy

the policy of removing, at as early a period as the state of your finances permits, this subject of dangerous contention. Some soreness even now will be felt, and more will be expressed, by persons who will trace such a policy to a preference of English over Indian claims. But the irritation will only extend over a wider surface if action is delayed, and may if the delay be too far prolonged, become a serious public danger.2

This despatch; alas, was to arrive a little too late. The secretary of state therefore found himself faced with an accomplished fact. But was the tariff act of 1875 taken to be the last word on the subject? What followed in sequence was to prove the contrary. 'You did not communicate to me the Tariff Bill' Salisbury began in the aftermath of the event,

2. Ibid.
nor did I receive any intimation of the changes upon which you had resolved until the Act was passed, when I was apprised of the result by telegraph; and the reason stated for your speedy enactment ... I cannot concur ... in thinking that the urgency of the case was such as to justify your failure to inform me of your intentions to legislate upon the subject.

In a private letter to the viceroy he was more frank:

'... the Act just passed reducing customs £408,000 and leaving the duty on cotton practically where it was, is at variance with our declared policy, and duty. I fear the Act will have to be disallowed.'

Lord Northbrook was taken by surprise with this outburst of adverse reactions. He was full of hope, and also of confidence, that the proposals, which, taken as a whole were a step forward in the direction of free trade, would be acceptable at home. On 7 August 1875 he wrote to Sir Louis Mallet: 'I hope you will be satisfied with our little attempt at improving the tariff. If it is not original, it is safe enough. I am working on the lines of Gladstone, but at a very considerable distance.' He was convinced that by reducing the general rate of import duty he was successfully carrying out a 'financial resolution of the class of Mr. Gladstone's measures' by which trade could 'in a small

2. Salisbury to Northbrook, 6 August 1875, Salisbury Papers, Letter Book No.1
way' be developed without a permanent sacrifice of revenue. In a speech on customs tariff at the time he had said:

I do not dare to borrow the proud metaphor with which Mr. Gladstone illustrated a policy similar in character, but on a far grander scale than that which we propose for the abolition and reduction of customs duties. He likened it to the tree of golden leaves described by Virgil, from which his hero was ordered to pluck a branch, and on whose trunk the moment one branch had been plucked another took its place. We believe that the humble plant we are about to pluck will, if not at once, assuredly ere long, be replaced by a healthy and vigorous offspring.

But very soon afterwards Northbrook was taught to know better. The secretary of state's telegram of disapproval arrived on 9 August 1875. On that very day the viceroy wrote, still retaining faith, 'I hope that in reading the papers you will think that we have done all that is right to relieve Manchester.'

With time attitudes hardened on both sides. Lord Salisbury made a determined move for the repeal of the duties in question. In his last despatch of the year dated 11 November 1875, on the subject of tariffs, the secretary of state announced his intention to send Sir Louis Mallet, then under-secretary of state for India on 'a Cotton Mission to India'. Mallet's journey was to be a cover for the more

1. Northbrook's speech on customs tariff, 1875, can be found in Richard Temple Papers, vol.218.
2. Northbrook to Salisbury, 9 August 1875, in Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
radical step of the future - disallowance of the 'whole' measure. The despatch also carried a critique of Northbrook's conduct, and made it clear that 'the entire removal of the duty should, however, not be adjourned for an indefinite period, but [that] provision should be made for it within a fixed term of years.' Northbrook, who was obviously coming to the end of his tether, wrote a despatch to the secretary of state saying

the expressions of censure you have used are in themselves damaging to the position of the Governor General ... I must impress upon you that sharp writing does more harm than you can suppose at home. We are at antipodes from you in regard to the value put upon things. The Natives used to believe the Viceroy to be a very great man, and it is good policy that they should continue to believe it, and such language is a complete puzzle to them.2

Lord Northbrook soon resigned. But before doing so he made it sufficiently clear that the import duties on Manchester's cotton goods in India could not easily be removed while he remained viceroy of India. Moreover he strongly emphasized the constitutional position of the governor general and his council in conducting legislative business in India. Much of the argument rested on the question as to whether an important bill of the nature of the tariff act of 1875 could be passed by the Indian council

1. Ibid., p. 553.
without a prior reference to the secretary of state and his council in London. But the fact that this was a bill regulating customs revenue made the situation more bitter as far as Northbrook was concerned. Several customs acts had been formerly passed in India without the previous sanction of the secretary of state. Thus Northbrook wrote:

By Act XI of 1862 the customs duties were reduced by £450,000; here ... there was no previous communication with the Secretary of State. By Act XXVI of 1863, Act XXIII of 1864 (which reduced the general rate of the import duty from 10% to 7½% - a measure of precisely the same kind as the reduction of those duties which we made last year), Acts XVII of 1865, XVIII of 1866, XVII of 1867, XII of 1869, XVII of 1870 and XIII of 1871, alterations of more or less importance were made in the customs tariff ... in every case Bills were introduced and passed into law on the responsibility of the Government of India without being referred to the Secretary of State ... A similar course has been followed so far as we are aware, with regard to all other measures affecting the finances of India.1

In their determination not to yield to such interference from London, the viceroy's council in Calcutta made things as difficult as possible for the India Office. In a most forthright minute which they drew up on the issue, they wrote,

We certainly should think it no part of the duty of the Government of India to send up to the Secretary of State a measure which it is known from beforehand that he will advise the Crown to disallow. There may be circumstances of supreme necessity

(though we do not know that they have ever occurred) in which it would be the duty of the Secretary of State to determine on the immediate passing of a law, and to issue instructions accordingly which the Government of India should do all in their power to carry into effect. But neither of these things nor both combined seem to us to constitute any reason why under ordinary circumstances the constitution thought best for India by Parliament should not be left to work.¹

The councillors in India had made up their minds to oppose Mallet. In his letter to the finance secretary of the Government of India Mallet had given the reason for his journey to be 'to agree with that Government upon a mode of giving effect to Lord Salisbury's wishes with regard to the import duties on cotton manufactures and upon foreign raw cotton.'² Lord Northbrook's opinion was obviously not desired. The Calcutta council as 'the faithful bodyguard of an aggrieved Caesar',³ - the description was that of Lytton in the context of the cotton issue - pointed that out as they wrote, 'the only question which the Government of India were invited to discuss was the "mode of giving effect to Lord Salisbury's wishes".'⁴ They took up firm positions on two issues. The secretary of state for India, to begin

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1. Minute to follow despatch no. 9 of 17 March 1876, p. 4 in India (Public) Proceedings, March 1876, Part A, no. 357, vol. 998. (There is separate pagination for the Minute.)
with, could not press the government in India to pass a law
on which they could not conscientiously give reasons in the
legislative council as to why it should be passed. The
British parliament had conferred the function of making
laws for India on the Indian legislative council. Secondly,
the repeal of the duties was being urged from London under
pressure from 'powerful classes in England'. The interests
of those classes were not the interests of India, and under
those circumstances the political and financial bearing of
such a measure could only be ascertained 'by communications
with the responsible Government in India ... or the views
and sentiments of our Indian subjects.'

Sir Louis Mallet's exasperation over an obstreperous
Calcutta council is borne out by the telegram which he sent
to Lord Salisbury on 14 January 1876. 'Cannot get nearer to
agreement, Viceroy and present Council being strongly com-
mitted against total abolition of import cotton duty. Bill
will provide reduction of cotton duty to 3½%, but no further
... I therefore recommend this compromise.'

With Northbrook out of the way by March 1876, one
chapter in the history of Indian tariffs was brought to an

1. Minute to follow despatch no. 9 of 17 March 1876, p. 6 in
   Ibid.
2. Minute to follow despatch no. 9 of 17 March 1876, pp. 6-7
   in Ibid.
end. The next viceroy, Lord Lytton, had been successfully indoctrinated against the cotton import duties, even before he set foot on Indian soil. In his 'Rough Note-book referring to Indian Affairs', written while still in England, repeal of those duties was given priority. But extraneous circumstances like the fall in the value of silver and a famine prevented its immediate realization. Mallet's talks with Northbrook had brought out these difficulties in part. The Budget estimate of March 1876 confirmed the discouraging anticipation. A careful study of that Budget led Salisbury to conclude that, 'The probable loss of about a million upon exchange has reduced the expected surplus to the small sum of 147,000 l., and has therefore not left any margin capable of being applied to remissions of taxation.' Lytton came to the same conclusion as he wrote 'the policy of "masterly inactivity" which I deprecate in diplomacy seems, for the

1. Lytton Papers, vol.33. Undated ESS volume, but all these notes must have been made before Lytton actually left for India because they contain such information as: (1) 'To call on Lord Salisbury at I.O. at 11½ p.m. Tuesday' and (2) 'Things to do in India'.

2. For information on the fall in the value of silver see Parl. Papers, 1877, vol.LXIII, pp.587ff: for the famines and scarcities of those years (1873-74 in Bengal and 1875-76 in Bihar) see B.N. Bhatia, Famines in India 1850-1945 (New Delhi, 1963), pp. 82-89.


present, almost inevitable in regard to finance.' It was generally agreed to give up the tariff issue for a time.

The question was however not allowed to lie dormant for more than a year. In March 1877 it was revived, perhaps with greater vigour. Sir John Strachey, then finance member in India, took up the cause of Manchester. In his speech on the financial statement of the year 1877 he observed:

There is one thing which I wish to take this opportunity of saying: we are often told that it is the duty of Government of India to think of Indian interests alone, and that if the interests of Manchester suffer it is no affair of ours ... For myself personally, if I had not confidently expected to take part in this great reform [the repeal of the import duties on British cotton goods], I doubt whether anything would have induced me to accept my present office, and I trust that I may still have a share in the performance of a task which I look upon as one of the most important which this Government has before it.²

Strachey's feelings on the subject no doubt strengthened the hands of the secretary of state. More so did Strachey's figures. The net sea customs revenue proper of India had come up to £2,475,530 in 1875-76. The cotton duties had yielded £850,000. 'Excluding the duties on cotton goods' Strachey calculated,

the export and import duties together give £1,550,000; many of these are so objectionable that it is impossible that they can last, and can it be supposed that we should long continue to maintain huge establishments for the purpose of levying the small remnant of revenue that might survive?1

According to Strachey's figures cotton goods were the sole article of foreign production which the people of India largely consumed. The largest amount of customs revenue was also derived from it. But, Strachey predicted, 'whether we see it or not, the time is not hopelessly distant when the ports of India will be thrown open freely to the commerce of the world.'2 Both arguments and accounts appealed to Lord Salisbury who, in his turn, drew the attention of his viceroy to 'the long list of articles still retained on the Indian tariff, the duties derived from which are actually not worth collecting.'3

Lord Lytton was only too eager to take the first steps in the direction of repeal. A year earlier he had aban-
doned the project unhappily, and he was therefore now pleased to return to it. 'If the abolition of the cotton duties is not effected by one single stroke next year (which is probable)'.

he wrote to Salisbury in February 1877,

I see no reason why we should not complete it in two. The process of extinction once commenced ought, I think, to be as rapid as we can make it. I have a wild ambition to get rid of customs duties altogether, and I rejoice to find that Strachey with whom I have talked much about it, does not regard as an impossibility the attainment of such a result in the course of the next 4 or 5 years.

More action was taken in that direction in the course of the next few months. A resolution was drawn up in the House of Commons, on 11 July 1877, branding the import duties on Manchester cotton products as 'protective' and 'contrary to sound commercial policy'. It was agreed that those duties were to be repealed 'without delay', as soon as the 'financial condition of India will permit'.

The India Office in London was convinced that mills and spindles at work in India were increasing in enormous proportions. The viceroy had informed the secretary of state in a despatch, dated 11 June 1877, that five more mills were about to begin work, and that it was estimated that by the end of March 1877 there would be 1,231,284 spindles employed in India. The dimensions of the inter-portal trade within the country evidently also made the India Office wary. Between 1875 and 1877 exports of home-

1. Lytton to Salisbury, n.d., February 1877, in Salisbury Papers, Box 3
3. Ibid., p. 759.
made piece goods and yarn from Bombay to Bengal, Madras and other Indian ports had increased considerably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exports from Bombay</th>
<th>1875-76</th>
<th>1876-77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ports in Bengal:</td>
<td>372,400 lb. (twist)</td>
<td>4,308,524 lb. (twist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,161,575 yds. (piece-goods)</td>
<td>3,497,966 yds. (piece-goods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ports in Madras:</td>
<td>4,667,209 lb. (twist)</td>
<td>5,850,365 lb. (twist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,090,314 yds (piece-goods)</td>
<td>946,558 yds (piece-goods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To other Indian ports:</td>
<td>502,533 lb. (twist)</td>
<td>538,149 lb. (twist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,420,128 yds (piece-goods)</td>
<td>12,595,642 yds (piece-goods)</td>
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The secretary of state noted with apprehension some of these figures in his despatch of 30 August 1877.

Before the end of the next financial year, in March 1878, Lytton did succeed in exempting certain goods of the coarse variety from customs duties. Raw cotton, grey piece-goods of the category 'T-cloths under 18-reed', 'Jeans', 'Domestics', 'Sheetings' and 'Drill', containing no yarn of a higher number than 30s, were among the exemptions. It was made sure that these were goods with which Indian

1. Ibid.
manufactures could compete successfully. But even these changes in tariff were not enough to satisfy the hawks at Manchester. Once again, therefore, the familiar proposal of appointing a commission to enquire into customs tariff was mooted. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce put forward its specific demand for 'all goods not finer than 30s' to be included in the exemption list. The Chamber in Bengal again called for a revision in tariff valuations. They complained of the 'considerable disaffection' among importers of cotton goods only because of defective valuations. As an illustration the Bengal Chamber of Commerce drew attention to a certain description of stout or domestic cloth which, for convenience of sale, importers had been in the habit of receiving in pairs of about 10 yards in length. These goods are used very largely by the Natives as chudders, and consequently this name has been given to them by importers, and is their recognized designation by the Custom House authorities. This being so, it follows that the cloth is in all respects, as far as quality is concerned, a domestic; still with the present Notification before him, the Collector of Customs is unable to pass it free of duty.\footnote{3}

The Bombay Chamber, although silent at the beginning, also ultimately adhered, resolving 'that the Govt. of India be urged to exempt from customs duty all cotton goods of every size and domination, if made of yarn of No.30s and under.'\footnote{3}

By the end of 1878 Lord Granbrook, who had replaced Lord Salisbury at the India Office, became concerned. A tariff commission was appointed in February 1879 to determine which of the cloths were liable to exemption. The commission headed by T.C. Hope, who was a member of the legislative council at Calcutta, did not take long to come to a decision on the question. Four mercantile firms in Calcutta, four in Bombay and four in Madras, all of which were members of their respective Chambers of Commerce, were consulted by the commission in the matter. They were unanimously of opinion that 'all cloths of the same texture, irrespective of the lengths and widths in which they happen to be made up, or the names by which people may choose to call them' should be exempted from taxation. Within a month the commission's report was ready. So was Lord Lytton with his consequent decision. On 13 March 1879 the long-drawn controversy on cotton duties was for a time brought to a close. Abolition of import duties on all piece-goods below 30s was achieved.

As far as the economics of those import duties was concerned, the year 1879 was hardly the right moment for their abolition. Famine in southern India was still doing damage and, generally, finances were at a low ebb as the

viceroy himself admitted, saying: 'It certainly cannot now be asserted, in the face of the great and increasing loss occasioned by the fall in the value of silver in relation to gold, that the financial condition of India is satisfactory.' 1 Politically, however, it had become almost imperative to abolish the duties: both the secretary of state and the viceroy openly acknowledged this. By allowing Indian industry to grow unchecked they were running the risk of disturbing the 'well-being ... of the Empire' by placing the two manufacturing communities, the one in Lancashire and the other in Bombay, in a state of 'political hostility to each other'. 2 This was the case made out by the secretary of state for India just after the 'unsatisfactory' tariff act of 1875 was passed. A year later he was more candid when he wrote to Lytton 'if no change is made there will be an open and dangerous sore for many years'. 3

Lord Lytton knew better. He had found out, through personal enquiry that the removal of the duties would arouse, and not pacify hostility among Indian manufacturers. One of his first ventures in Bombay, the day after he arrived, was to visit a cotton mill. 'The mill I visited' he wrote

1. Lytton to Salisbury, 19 January 1877, in Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
to Salisbury,

belongs to a wealthy Parsi, who though protesting that no one in India regards the 5% import duty as a protective one, or advocates its maintenance as such, yet averred that the Bombay manufacture would seriously suffer by its withdrawal, and that the stoppage of the Bombay mills would throw a large population out of employment ... His main points were that these mills can only spin one kind of staple, - that wages are higher in Bombay than in England (varying from 5 rupees to 50 rupees per month), and that the amount of work which 200 or 300 hands can turn out in England, requires here the employment of 1000. That all the machinery being imported from England, the slightest derangement in it is difficult to repair here, and frequently involves heavy loss or a prolonged stoppage of work, for repairs which could be quickly affected in England.1

In April 1877, as Lytton himself reported to London, he had received a very long and elaborate protest against our declared policy on the tariff question 'from an Indian member of the Bombay council'.2 Yet he chose to ignore what he really knew and emphasized the political necessity of responding to Manchester. He explained thus to Sir William Muir:

The agitation in England against the Indian cotton duties, although in its origin a local one, is not so in its effect. It is rapidly growing; and the Manchester people have on their side all the best economists, as well as the general trade instinct of an essentially manufacturing nation.3

1. Lytton to Salisbury, 8 April 1876, in Lytton Papers, vol.518/1.
2. Lytton to Salisbury, 23 April 1877 in Salisbury Papers, Box 3.
What worried Lytton in 1879 was the fact that since 1875 the Bombay mills had not only increased their exports of yarn and piece goods to foreign countries by 26% and 51% respectively, but had more than doubled their exports within India. The total value of these exports which amounted to 432,000 rupees in 1875-76, rose to 945,000 rupees in 1878. It had by then become statistically conclusive that there was a real competition in the coarser qualities of cotton goods between English and Indian manufacturers. What was more, early in 1879, the members of

1. The Indian Textile Journal Directory, ed. J. Wallace, (Bombay, 1894), p. 3. [Hereafter referred to as The Indian Textile Journal Directory.]

2. In a comparison of the average of imported piece-goods of coarse variety sent from Lancashire to Bombay per year of 1858, 1859 and 1860 with the average per year of 1872, 1873 and 1874, there was the following decrease in each of these descriptions of cloth:—

(1) T-cloths fell by 381,111 pieces
(2) Longcloths fell by 275,261 pieces
(3) Domestics fell by 170,699 pieces.


That the shipments from Lancashire were far in excess of the demand at Bombay could be proved from the stocks of grey piece-goods remaining in bond during the years 1877 to 1879:—

In 1877 there were 5,503,918 yards of piece-goods in bond.
In 1878 " " 6,814,330 " " " "
In 1879 " " 10,274,904 " " " "

the Mill-owners' Association at Bombay resolved to close their mills for two days in the week, during the period from 15 February to 15 April 1879, on the ground of over-production.¹ What greater proof did the authorities need to assert that the import duties on Lancashire cottons were, in effect, protective? 'The moral I derive from all this' Lytton wrote to Salisbury, 'is that there is no time to lose in getting rid of the duties.'²

However, not all the men in power thought alike: there was in fact considerable opposition from the Supreme Council at Calcutta and no less from the India Council in London. A majority of the viceroy's councillors opposed the measure. The occasion was unique as the viceroy found himself using his 'extraordinary authority' (under Act XXXIII, Victoria, cap. 3) by which he overruled the objections and carried out the finance minister's proposal by executive order. Whitley Stokes, Rivers Thompson, Sir Alexander Arbuthnot and Sir Andrew Clarke all dissented, and all of them feared the provocation of political danger, in India, from those exemptions of duty on Lancashire produce. 'I am convinced! Arbuthnot said

² Lytton to Salisbury, 23 April 1877 in Salisbury Papers, Box 3
that I do not overstate the case when I affirm my belief that there are not at the present time a dozen officials in India who do not regard the policy which has been adopted ... not in the interests of India, not even in the interests of England, but in the interests ... of a political party, the leaders of which deem it necessary at any cost to retain the political support of the cotton manufacturers in Lancashire. This, it appears to me, is a most unfortunate state of things.¹

Whitley Stokes reflected identical feelings when he told the council that

nothing [would] ever induce the people of India to believe that the proposed exemption, if made, has been made solely in their interest. They will be convinced by their newspapers (which are read aloud in every bazaar) that it has been made solely in the interest of Manchester and for the benefit of the Conservative party who are, it is alleged, anxious to obtain the Lancashire vote at the coming elections ... the evil political results likely to follow from this popular conviction should not be ignored, and should, if possible, be avoided.²

Sir Andrew Clarke recorded his complete agreement with Alexander Arbuthnot's dissent.³ The remission of those duties on cottons of 30s and below was to mean a loss of 20 lakhs of rupees. The remission was obviously, and solely, the achievement of the attitude of men like Salisbury, Lytton and Strachey.

'This is what is meant by justice. This is what is meant by the light of civilization ... Now is the time for

2. Ibid., p. 346.
3. Ibid., p. 353.
the Manchester weaver to sing jubilee over his loom' wrote the Kavi Vachan Sudha of Northern India.¹ Other newspapers of the region followed suit. The Nur-ul-Absar called it 'a new calamity'.² 'The Rulers in these days are like robbers' observed the Benares Akhbar.³ But quite apart from these somewhat immediate reactions, Indians who were concerned about the future entertained a few genuine fears in connection with the government's tariff policy. One such concern was that the remission of the cotton import duties would mean its substitution by some other tax, much more detestable in nature. It was generally believed that the import duties on cotton existed only to bring in more revenue and not to protect the indigenous industry. The Som Prokash had asserted more than once that the cotton duties were retained solely for the financial solvency of the government in India. As they were indirect taxes they created little or no problem in India.⁴ After all many of those import duties were there during the days of the Company when there was no trace of a developing cotton industry anywhere in India. So 'protection' could not have been even a veiled objective.

4. Som Prokash, 2 April 1877.
The vernacular papers were clearly not impressed by the free trade propaganda put out from Manchester and London. Calling it 'The Free Trade Bugbear' the Rast Goftar observed that the reason advanced by Lancashire, and accepted by the secretary of state, was that these duties were against the principle of free trade which England so advantageously follows herself.

To point out [the Rast Goftar continued] the falseness of this reason, it is enough to observe that in India several more objectionable taxes are levied; but the people of Manchester do not show any concern for them. The heavy salt duty is a tax on an indispensable necessary of life; and if the abolition of any tax would conduce to the happiness of the people of this country, the abolition of this barbarous tax would.\(^1\)

Referring to the advocacy in the Times of the doctrine of free trade for the good of India the Amrita Bazar Patrika frankly admitted that:

\begin{quote}
those friendly offices on their part rather inspire us with fear. By showing a similar friendliness, the rulers have gradually weakened and impoverished the natives ... Hence ... whenever the English shed tears over the ... misfortunes of the peoples of India, we, as it were, die with fear.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

It was made sufficiently obvious that Indians took all advocacy of free trade with a pinch of salt. 'It is impossible to regard the question' the Amrita Bazar Patrika explained

1. Rast Goftar, 5 March 1876 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1876.
2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2 April 1876.
as one simply of free trade versus protection. The Indian cotton duties have a protective effect, but they are not imposed for protective purposes; they are imposed for the purpose of raising revenue which cannot be obtained from other sources.¹

The fact of a government monopoly of the salt trade, even though the salt was mined in India, was what irritated the Bengali press most. The Sahachar wrote that 'The advocacy of free trade does not come well from the English. It would become them first to abolish the duty on salt.'² The Sahachar wrote an article explaining to its readers how the salt industry had been destroyed.

A clamour was all of a sudden raised by an Englishman that the way in which salt was made in India had reduced the malangis to a form of slavery; hence the introduction of a system of monopoly, under which the poverty-stricken peasantry have reached the point of starvation.³

It was also suggested in the Bengali press that the unsatisfactory state of the system of revenues in Bengal proved the insincerity of the free-trade argument. The logic of this position was not quite clear, but the Bharat Mihir wrote

We are obliged to say, though with much regret, that the British rulers have not, up to this time, been able to win the confidence of the people in connection with their system of revenue ... Is it not truly ridiculous to speak of free trade, in a country where the people have no choice in connection with their system of revenue.⁴

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21 March 1878.
2. Sahachar, 7 May 1877 in R.N.P. Bengal, 1877.
3. Sahachar, 7 July 1877 in Ibid.
4. Bharat Mihir, 19 March 1877 in Ibid.
The salt duty was invoked by other newspapers as well to prove the insincerity of free trade in India. The Akhyar-ul-Akhbar of the North Western Provinces wrote of the 'sheer injustice' of the government taking possession of the salt-producing areas after giving a 'nominal compensation' to the owners of those lands. 'Taking away the right to manufacture salt from Indians was like disarming them' wrote the Akhyar-ul-Akhbar.

No man in India can well afford to dispense with the use of salt even for 3 or 4 days [the paper continued]. When the people of India are made to depend for such a great luxury on the Government, no other ideas but those of loyalty and adherence to the British Government will ever enter their heads... Such wise measures which tend to secure a double object did never strike any other king since the creation of the world. 1

In Bombay the vernacular press was terrified of the imaginary tax about to be thrust on the people. Without even waiting for that tax to appear the Native Opinion went ahead and wrote 'Parliament has no right to take away from the Indian revenue a tax which did not bear hardly on the people, in order to substitute a heavier burden'. 2 'The moment the cotton import duties are abolished', the Gujarat Samachar predicted, 'elaborate schemes will be drawn up to

fleece the natives ... The Government will ... recoup the loss of £900,000 sterling, incurred by the abolition of the duties, by imposing new taxes upon the people.'

Other Indian newspapers were also convinced that the loss would have to be made good by some other means. One newspaper in Bengal feared a rise in the land tax of Bombay and Madras, following the example of Bengal. The land tax in Bengal had been increased in 1877. 'The financial policy of this country is a wicked device' wrote the Sahachar angrily.

The finance minister is not answerable to the country; he simply fixes the amount of revenue which shall be placed at the disposal of each province, and the proportions in which it shall be made up respectively from the proceeds of local taxation and from grants from the imperial exchequer. Thus, in the name of local improvements, new imposts will be levied which will replace the cotton duties.2

Another real anxiety among Indians was the feared destruction of their newly-revived cotton industry. Memories of past greatness were still strong. As the Benaras Akhbar of 20 December 1878 wrote

It is beyond dispute that the Manchester cotton fabrics were not available in the country in the time of Ramchandra. But pitambar (a kind of yellow silk worn by the god Ramchandra) and the Dacca muslin were surely to be had then, and they are prized even by Englishmen.3

3. Benaras Akhbar, 20 December 1878 in S.V.P., 1878, p.609
The invention of the spinning jenny in Europe (1733) had struck the death blow for the Dacca muslins. More than a century later, Indians along the western coast of the country were once again trying to establish themselves in the world cotton market. All eyes had been turned towards the enterprising men of Bombay. 'Crores upon crores have been launched upon cotton enterprise in Bombay' wrote the Mumbai Samachar.1 Any tampering with those precious efforts by the rulers tended to raise an alarm, and so did the successive tariff regulations with regard to cotton trade during the seventies.

Bengalis despaired the most. 'Commerce is ruined, while foreign competition has destroyed native industries and indigenous manufactures' was a characteristic sentiment.2 The Sahachar of course needed no convincing that the government was out 'to ruin the native industry';3 and many of its contemporaries were of the same view. 'This is the destruction of our rising cloth industry' the Bharat Sangskarak wrote 'which should rather be fostered with care than treated in this way by Government.'4 In its editorial of 21 April 1877 the Hindu Hitoishini dwelt on the 'hostility shown by

3. Sahachar, 23 July 1877 in Ibid.
4. Bharat Sangskarak, 6 August 1877 in Ibid.
the merchants of Manchester, encouraged by the Government of India, towards the growing cotton industry in India.'¹

'Manchester has become the weaver,' echoed another Bengali paper, 'Hamilton the goldsmith; Gosnall and Rogers come in for their shares; in fact the manufacture of everything used here has been monopolized by European makers.'² In its tirade against Salisbury the Bharat Mihir wrote that all his measures had been 'calculated to impede the progress and development of the Indian cotton mills.'³

Such was their state of agitation that the Bengali press went to the extent of calling on the nation to boycott Manchester piece goods. Deploring the absence of combined efforts among the natives, the Bharat Mihir asked the people to unite and resolve only to use the products of the Bombay mills and of the native looms of Dacca.⁴ 'The products of the Indian mills are sufficient to clothe the people of India' echoed the Amrita Bazar Patrika. 'These mills should be patronized as far as possible to protect them from the selfish attempts of Manchester.'⁵

The vernacular press of the North Western Provinces was also among the prophets of gloom. As early as March

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1. Hindu Hitoishini, 21 April 1877 in Ibid.
2. Pratikar, 1 June 1877 in Ibid. 'Hamilton' and 'Gosnall and Rogers' were mercantile firms in Calcutta.
3. Bharat Mihir, 8 March 1876 in Ibid., 1876.
4. Ibid.
5. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 March 1878.
1877 the Shola-i-Tur wrote:

In India there are all sorts of artisans and manufacturers, but their productions have been turned out of the market by English manufacturers ... We are at present dependent on Europe for the most trifling articles of our use ... it is no wonder that India has been reduced to poverty.¹

The Kashi Patrika went so far as to say 'the Indian cotton mill owners would soon be ruined,'² and the Kavi Vachan Sudha confidently predicted that the Indian manufacturers would never again be in a position to compete with the English.³

In Bombay too there were similar fears of a collapse of the indigenous industry as expressed by one of its most important weeklies, the Native Opinion. 'To strangle the Indian cotton industry' the Native Opinion wrote, 'at its very birth and secure Manchester from all future competition must be the practical effect of the new Tariff Act.'⁴ But, on the whole, there was less lament, and more anger, in the vernacular press of Bombay presidency. Protests to the effect that the government had fallen a prey to Manchester were more in evidence. Headlines such as 'India, a mere Shuttlecock in the Party-Loom of England' and 'India sold to Manchester' appeared in the Native Opinion.⁵ Here the

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1. Shola-i-Tur, 6 March 1877 in S.V.P., 1877, pp. 170-71.
2. Kashi Patrika, 31 March 1877 in Ibid., pp. 233-34.
5. Native Opinion, 5 and 12 March 1876.
complaint was not so much that the cotton industry in India was going to be ruined, but that all changes in tariff were aimed at pleasing Lancashire and thus securing long life for the Conservatives in England. 'Lancashire assisted to put the Conservative Party into power' the Indu Prakash wrote 'and sought, as a reward for their assistance, the abolition of the import duty on English cotton goods in the hope of nipping all local enterprise in India in the bud!'

The Indian press was also alarmed at the way proceedings were conducted at the official level, in order to achieve what Lancashire and the Indian government together desired. The viceroy had used the 'extraordinary' veto in 1879 against the wishes of the majority of his council. In the House of Commons member after member had risen to plead the cause of Manchester. The Conservatives joined hands with the Liberals on the issue. Referring to all this the Native Opinion concluded: 'They demonstrate that, when there is a purpose to be served, neither the principles of Indian administration nor the laws of political economy or of high Christian morality will stop those at present in power from going astray.'

1. Native Opinion, 5 March 1876.
feelings. 'Is the Parliament, in the matter of taxation, competent to interfere in the affairs of India?' asked the Sadharani. 'Can a body, among whom there is none to represent India, discuss any measure bearing upon the financial policy of this country?' The legislative council was alone competent to take decisions on Indian taxation as they had 'members representing the different provinces ... [and] also native members,' the Sahachar contended.

There was a general tone of complaint against the British parliament's lack of interest on Indian affairs. Thus the Vritt Dhara of Bombay presidency wrote that India ought to be represented in Parliament, just as Scotland and Ireland were. And the Vritt Dhara was not alone in this demand. The Amrita Bazar Patrika in Bengal and the Rast Goftar in Bombay made it a subject of frequent discussion. Parliamentary indifference to Indian affairs was such a grievance that Parliament's interest in this one issue of tariff duties was much resented. 'It was an unholy alliance of the rich against the poor, and the strong against the rich' wrote the Hindoo Patriot. The Sahachar published a warning to the government against including India in their

1. Sadharani, 9 July 1877.
5. Hindoo Patriot, 13 August 1877.
party struggles. The government's tariff policy in the seventies thus found no acceptance whatever in the country. 'The Indians cannot consent to the measure' wrote the Mumbai Samachar, summing up a wide range of reactions.

Apart from the agitation in the press, other public organs in the Indian cities, as well as individual Indians, were also protesting against the cotton policy of the government. These took the shape of learned articles in journals, petitions, open letters to the viceroy, and speeches in the provincial legislative councils. Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee, then a prominent member of the Bombay legislative council, gave vent to his feelings in a letter written to Lord Lytton, on 16 April 1877. In it he argued that an abolition of the import duties on cotton goods would be necessary if, and only if, even a moderately large proportion of the articles imported under the comprehensive name of 'cotton goods' could also be produced in India for commercial purposes, manufactured with European machinery and as cheaply as in Lancashire. Otherwise, as he explained, the Indian mill-owners could add to his legitimate profit nearly the full amount of the import duty and still undersell his English rival, so that the Indian consumer of cotton goods would pay the Indian manufacturers nearly 5% on the price.

of his bargain for nothing. But the kind of cotton goods which India imported was not quite the kind which Indian mills could produce, or did produce.

Her industry in the finer varieties of cotton goods has given way [Shapurji Bengalee wrote] to cheaper importations from outside; but in the preparation of coarse goods for the great mass of her people, India possesses natural advantages in the home-produced, home-spun cotton which enable her to defy the world.¹

A striking feature of this letter lay in the argument that foreign cotton goods imported into India were on the whole classified as articles of luxury. The bulk of these goods was not required by the mass of the Indian people for their everyday use. Of the 19 crores worth of imports of cotton manufactures of all kinds, at least 15 crores worth of items were consumed by 'the higher and middle classes of people for their daily requirements, and by the poorer classes as articles of occasional use not subject to everyday wear and tear.'² Products of indigenous handlooms made from the cotton of the country still provided for the poor.

Kashinath Trimbak Telang read papers and spoke from public platforms in support of the cause.³ In one of those

1. Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee, 'A Letter against the Repeal of the Duties on the Import of Foreign Cotton Goods into India', addressed to the Right Hon'ble Lord Lytton, dated Bombay, 16 April 1877, pp. 3-4, in India Office Tracts vol.505 (pagination for the letter only). [Hereafter referred to as Bengalee's Letter.]

2. Bengalee's letter, p. 11, in Ibid.

3. Telang's legislative council speeches with Sir Raymond West's essay on his life, ed. D.W. Pilgamker (Bombay, 1895),
papers read at the Sassoon Mechanic's Institute, on 29 March 1877, he refuted one of the appeals made in the House of Commons, for the repeal of the cotton duties, on behalf of the Indian consumer. It was believed, according to the laws of political economy, that abolition of protective duties would lead to a reduction in the price of goods on which those duties had been laid. The repeal of the corn duty in England was the classic example. It was true, Telang said, that the import duties on Manchester had kept their prices high making out a case for clear loss to the consumer. 'But it must also be admitted' Telang continued

that in many ways this country is even better suited to the manufacture of cotton goods than England. The raw material is several thousand miles nearer; the labour required is enormously more cheap; and even the coal that may be necessary is not inaccessible. If then you have the capital and other perquisites necessary to start the industry fairly, so as to bring the manufacture into full working order, without being nipped in the bud by losses or infinitesimal profits at the very beginning, it appears to me to be plain, that in such a case the price of the goods must ultimately be reduced.¹

In this paper Telang found himself advocating protectionism in the short run for an ultimately lasting benefit. Another strong argument of his was that a loss of revenue from the contemplated repeal of the cotton duties could be made up

¹ Kashinath Trimbak Telang, 'Free Trade and Protection from an Indian Point of View', a paper read before the Sassoon Mechanic's Institute on 29 March 1877, p. 9, in India Office Tracts vol.503. [Hereafter referred to as Telang's paper.]
by means of two alternatives, both objectionable. One was economy in expenditure, and the other the levy of a new tax. Repeal of the cotton import duties would merely mean remission of taxation. But there were other taxes which were 'more proper' to be remitted than those import duties. According to Telang 'the evidence afforded by the Deccan riots, and by the awful famine now prevailing in this presidency, must to most minds, be conclusive to show that the land tax ... has some claims to be taken into consideration when a remission of taxation is contemplated. A similar argument may probably be urged with much force as regards the Salt duty.'\(^1\) Kashinath Trimbak Telang was all for giving protectionism 'a fair trial in India'.\(^2\)

Some of the associations held public meetings in different cities. The Indian Association of Calcutta called a meeting in the Town Hall on 23 March 1879 to protest against the reduction of the import duties.\(^3\) The meeting was 'very well' attended and the feelings exhibited on the occasion were intense. The townsmen of Bombay presidency also gathered in public meetings, and the result of one such meeting held in May 1879 was a memorial drawn up and addressed to the House of Commons. It stated that even if the duties

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1. Telang's paper, pp. 6-7, in Ibid.
2. Telang's paper, p. 70, in Ibid.
3. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24 March 1879.
on cotton goods were retained permanently, there would be no opposition 'because they were remarkable for the lightness and equality of their incidence'.

It has been calculated [the memorial continued] that the duty on cotton goods falling on a total population of 240 millions, including the population of the Native States, which bear their share of this duty does not come to more than \( \frac{1}{2} \) an anna, or something less than 3 farthings per head per annum.¹

The British Indian Association also contributed its share to the memorials on the tariff question.² In addition a few of its members went on a personal deputation to the viceroy. Lytton, who had obviously become weary of all such memorials, reacted in a hostile manner to the British Indian deputation and gave an ill-tempered reply. In it he pointed out that the wealth of the zamindars was entirely due to the favour of the government and reminded them that some gratitude was called for on their part. This made the Bengali press more livid than ever. The Sadharani, Som Prokash, Sahachar, though not otherwise friendly to the British Indian zamindars, did not let the viceroy's offensive remark go by unanswered.³

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1. Native Opinion, 11 May 1879.
3. Sadharani, 16 March 1879; Som Prokash, 17 March 1879; also Sahachar, 10 March and Burdwan Sanjivani, 18 March 1879 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1879.
The Anglo-Indian community in India wholeheartedly sympathized with Indian feelings on the issue. They were agreed about the injustice of Manchester's demands, and deplored the incessant pressures put upon the government from that group. 'Still another Manchester deputation!' was a typical reaction of antipathy from the Times of India, and more interesting still was their encouraging call to the Indians to 'agitater! agitate! agitate!' Aided by philanthropic Manchester cotton spinners and the new Bill the Times of India wrote in another column, 'the impetuous Marquis will carry all before him if he be not checked in time by public opinion.' Throughout the year 1877 much tension was revealed in the Anglo-Indian press as to the fate of the import duties on Manchester cottons. On 14 August 1877 the Englishman was found writing with some apprehension that they had been informed of the Manchester party having resolved 'to bring the subject before Parliament in an even more direct manner next Session, and to repeat the effort each succeeding year, till the duties are abandoned. Under such circumstances the relinquishment of the impost complained of becomes only a question of time.'

1. The Times of India, 1 March 1876.
2. The Times of India, 28 March 1876.
3. The Englishman, 14 August 1877.
What the English in India feared was that an order abolishing the Indian import duties on cotton would come from England, and there would be no way of rejecting it in India. This fear was well illustrated in the Pioneer's reaction to the return of the Conservative candidate in the Blackburn bye-election at the end of the year 1875. Blackburn was a large manufacturing town near Manchester with powerful mill-owners. 'The conservative candidate' wrote the Pioneer

... was of opinion that the import duty was hurtful to Blackburn interests, and considered [that] a full and sufficient ground for advocating its immediate repeal. What is said at Blackburn, and done in the House on behalf of Blackburn, will be said and done for every other town in Lancashire by the members returned by men ... and if Manchester and its allies resolve to stand out against the import duties, entire repeal might really have to be feared.¹

Lytton's budget speech of 28 March 1877, which had emphasized the protective effect of those duties, only hardened the attitude of the English press in India. 'We decline to shift our ground and take up an untenable position in order to oblige Lord Lytton, and enable him to pelt us with epigrams,' the Times of India retorted. 'When India can dispense with £800,000 a year without adding to her deficits, it will be time enough to consider what the interests of Manchester require at our hands.'²

¹. The Pioneer, 30 October 1875.
². The Times of India, 2 April 1877.
The Anglo-Indian press in fact took a great deal of interest in the developing cotton industry of the country. Each time a new mill was set up in the seventies there was enthusiastic reporting of it in the Times of India, which being a Bombay paper, was closest to the sites of these mills. When a spinning and weaving mill was opened at Coorla, by the wealthy Wadia family of Bombay, on 5 July 1876, the Times of India happily noted that this mill was placed 'nearer the cotton fields and within easier reach of the great markets of the interior rather than in the immediate neighbourhood of Bombay.

We believe the tendency will be henceforth to plant the mills in the midst of the fields where the cotton grows, for it will be possible thus to secure important advantages now quite unattainable.¹

A similar note of satisfaction was expressed when a mill was started in November of the same year, and financed by Maharajah Holkar himself. The Times of India described in detail the poojah ceremony conducted by Holkar's eldest son to mark the occasion.²

Much publicity was given in the Anglo-Indian papers to the address of the Bombay Mill-Owner's Association presented to Sir Louis Mallet for perusal on his homeward voyage from India. This document contained information about the steam

¹. The Times of India, 5 July 1876.
². The Times of India, 7 November 1876.
cotton manufacturers of India, and much interesting argument bearing on general fiscal policy in India.\(^1\) One of Manchester's many efforts to control the Indian cotton industry took the shape of pressing the government to introduce a factory act in India.\(^2\) John Robertson, a cotton spinner at Glasgow, was sent as a representative of the English manufacturers to report on the working of the cotton mills in India. In a report which he later wrote he stated that mill-operatives in India worked 'from a little before 6 in the morning to a little after 6 in the evening, varying slightly according to seasons, with a stoppage of half an hour at noon'. The address of the Bombay Mill-Owners Association, given to Sir Louis Mallet, was written in protest against these apparently misleading statements. Robertson had been staying in Bombay in the months of April and May, the period of longest daylight in that region. The Bombay mills worked only in daylight, but during most of the year there was not twelve hours of daylight. The *Englishman* took the side of the Bombay millowners, and so also did the *Times of India*. 'In common with the Bombay millowners [the *Englishman* wrote] we trust that Lord Northbrook, whether in India or England, will see that

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1. *The Englishman*, 16 February 1876; *The Times of India*, 14 February 1876.
the clamorous Lancastrians do not get what they ask for.'¹

The Times of India was of opinion that there was a good
deal of misplaced zeal on the part of the philanthropists in
England for the factory operatives in India. 'Indeed, the
Bombay factory operative is better off now than ever he was
in his life ... The men now working in well-ventilated
rooms, for Rs 10 a month, would if they returned to their
original occupations earn by incessant toil about 4 annas
a day.'²

The support of the Anglo-Indian press for the develop­
ment of an Indian cotton industry becomes understandable
when one notes that a large proportion of the settled
Europeans in India were in fact connected with the industry
in various capacities as, for example, promoters, engineers
or managers.³ They were a group apart from those who belonged
to the Chambers of Commerce; these, despite their similar­
ity of circumstances, were really there to promote the trade
of Lancashire. The only Anglo-Indian journal which sup­
ported the tariff measures of 1878 and 1879 was the Bombay

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1. Ibid.

2. The Times of India, 14 February 1876.

3. At the 48 spinning and weaving mills in 1894 in Bombay
island alone, 33 Europeans worked as managers of those
mills and 28 as engineers. Many among them also worked
as spinning and weaving masters. However most of the
owners of the mills were Indians. Of the 48 there were
only 5 European owners in the island of Bombay. See
Gazette whose editor in the seventies was the secretary of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce.

The press in England in the 1870's however was more concerned with free trade, its survival and its spread, than with the problems of underdevelopment. In a straightforward manner, it wanted more prosperity for English trade. If the existence of import duties on Lancashire cottons hindered this progress towards more prosperity, those duties could not be supported. Accepting the 1875 tariff act with mixed feelings the Times was confident that once the 'process of amendment' had begun, it could not fail to go on. The Times thought that Indian tariffs had been allowed to remain much the same as the British tariff was before Sir Robert Peel 'began his beneficent career of sweeping it clear of duties which were either petty and profitless, or protective and pernicious'. But, continued the Times, 'Lord Northbrook and his advisers have attacked the Tariffs, and they will not be able to stop with what they have done'.¹ The Pall Mall Gazette's reaction to the tariff act was almost one of anger, not aimed at Northbrook in India but at their own manufacturers in England.

Now, too late, our home manufacturers see the evil practice of "dressing" their exported goods, and attempting by that and other means to pass off

¹. The Times, 9 September 1875.
inferior articles on the natives. The result has been that India is no longer a market for Manchester, and that an important native industry has revived.¹

The fact was, as Raynsford Jackson, an important Lancashire manufacturer, explained, that of about 70 million pounds worth of cotton goods which England exported, India and Ceylon topped the list of customers taking 17½ millions worth of cotton goods between the two countries. Was it then surprising that if the capital invested in the Bombay industry increases by the astonishing amount of 50% in a single year Lancashire, and indeed all of Britain, should take alarm?² 'The entire export to India is evidently in jeopardy', the Pall Mall Gazette wrote,

and one would have supposed that the whole statesmanship of the empire would have been occupied with speculation as to the possibility of saving it. Little more than a hundred years ago a general war would have been thought a cheap price to pay for the avoidance of such a calamity as its loss.³

The Manchester Guardian advocated that, under those circumstances, the import duties ought to be repealed even if fresh taxes had to be imposed in India. It also pressed for 'reform of the charges for railway carriage ... for the freer distribution of commodities', in other words a reduction in the railway freight.⁴ The Spectator was about the only

1. The Pall Mall Gazette, 3 August 1875.
3. The Pall Mall Gazette, 6 June 1876.
4. The Manchester Guardian, 6 August 1875.
English paper, interested in India, to be unconvinced about both tariff and the English cotton trade overseas. What agitated the liberal Spectator was the secretary of state's interference on the tariff issue. 'We do not believe India can be governed so' it wrote.¹

In spite of all the concern about its future the cotton industry in western India made good progress with each successive year of its new existence. In 1875, while the Indian press agitated against injudicious legislation on the part of government, a few enterprising industrialists in Bombay founded the Bombay Mill-Owner's Association. The membership was preponderantly Indian, although the chairman was Hugh Maxwell and its secretary James Gordon, both millowners in Bombay. A committee of twenty was elected for the management of the Association, whose object was 'to protect the interests of millowners and users of steam, water and electric power in India.'² With time the Association gained in influence and won the right of being represented in the legislative council of Bombay, the Bombay Port Trust Board, the City Improvement Trust, and the Municipal Corporation of the city. As part of its many activities, the Association published, annually, all

1. The Spectator, 4 March 1876.
statistics regarding the cotton mills working or in the course of erection, their capital, the total number of spindles and looms used, the approximate quantity of cotton consumed, and of the exports and imports of piece-goods and yarn from and into Bombay. Thus the structure of a well-organized industry was being built under watchful eyes.

More associations of that kind were formed in the next few years. Noted among them was the Bombay Native Piece-Goods Merchants' Association, formed in 1881 to bring about unity among merchants in the city of Bombay dealing in piece-goods.¹ So while one section of Indian society discussed, criticized and lamented, another worked hard for its own salvation. Through this self-seeking hard work of a few men in Bombay, and fewer elsewhere, industrial development in India made some progress. The pragmatism of such men rubbed off to an extent on the others. Colloquiums were held on 'The Conditions and Methods of Industrial Progress in India'. On one such occasion, in a discussion held under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, Kashinath Trimbak Telang advocated the compulsory study of Natural Sciences in schools and colleges 'as it materially aided persons in industrial pursuits'.²

¹. Ibid., pp. 42-43.
It was not enough to have a cotton industry in Bombay, a jute industry in Calcutta, and tea-plantations in Assam. Geological surveys in India had pointed to the existence of extensive coal and iron mines in the country. 'It was therefore to her people' asserted Viswanath Narayen Mandalik, a pleader at Bombay and a member of the local legislative council, before the audience assembled in the Framjee Cowasjee Institute for the occasion, 'to develop themselves towards the utilization of those products.'\(^1\) The meeting was brought to a close with Javerilal Umiashunkar Yajnik, a leading sethia in Bombay, calling upon the nation to invest more capital and to apply more skill and knowledge of the resources of the country towards building up 'an industrialised class'.\(^2\)

This controversy over cotton tariffs showed how nearly the whole of India was brought together on the issue. The different vernacular presses, the Anglo-Indian press and the Indian administration joined forces. It was a fairly straight fight between the secretary of state, the Manchester lobby and the English press on the one hand and India on the other. At another level the different regional reactions

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within India were interesting. The reaction from Bombay was practical, more oriented towards industrial development and unwilling to stray much beyond the obvious. But it was Bengal which turned a pragmatic, concrete dispute into an abstract political one, while several papers in Northern India struck their characteristic note of simple piety condemning the ruling class for their wickedness. The South joined in but without enthusiasm and was almost non-committal. At the end of the decade it was seen that in spite of the new tariffs the progress of the Indian cotton industry was uninterrupted. Perhaps reassured, Indian public opinion fell to discussing other problems but somewhere in its consciousness remained the decade of discussion on King Cotton.
CHAPTER V. THE BARODA AFFAIR

In the Maratha kingdom of Baroda, on 4 November 1874, a drastic attempt was made to murder the British Resident. Diamond dust and arsenic were added to the sherbet Colonel Robert Phayre was accustomed to drink every morning after an hour's walk. This was not however the result of a sudden fit of anger against the Resident. A 'cold war' had been waging between the Gaekwar of Baroda and Resident Phayre ever since the first months of the year 1873. The colonel had come to Baroda on the 18th of March that year and was determined on reform. The decadent Gaekwar was, on the other hand, determined to remain decadent. The clash between the two was widely known, and it was believed that the Gaekwar himself took part in this crime. But there was not enough evidence. In the trial which followed no conclusive answer could be arrived at. The European commissioners enquiring into the matter agreed that the Gaekwar was guilty, while their Indian colleagues took a negative stand. Nevertheless Gaekwar Malhar Rao was deposed and exiled, and this became a social, perhaps political, issue of some importance at the time. Many Indians were distressed at the fate of their prince; the British were
busy asserting their supremacy over the 'native states'. There was thus a lively debate over the Baroda affair. For the Indian public it was not a matter of money any more, as in the discussions we have surveyed, but a question of honour. True enough it was middle-class India speaking through its press, which expressed its outrage at the humiliation of a prince, while aristocratic India remained unmoved. Nonetheless it was a serious and therefore important emotional outburst. And it united once again diverse peoples of different regions.

Although a miniature kingdom, Baroda was the largest independent native state in western India, with an area about 8,100 square miles and a population of 1,950,000 in 1900. 1 The capital, also Baroda, was 250 miles to the north of Bombay, its nearest seat of British political power. The Gaekwars were military adventurers who had established their principality in Gujarat in the 18th century. By the turn of the 19th century their dependence upon the British had been acknowledged. In 1802 they had accepted British help to get rid of their own Arab mercenaries who had got out of control. There was no real government in Baroda at the time. Most of the military posts were occupied by the

Gaekwar's Arab troops. At this point the British, left with almost unlimited powers of interference, started negotiating with these mercenaries. The Arabs were offered all arrears of pay on condition that they left the country. A British force replaced the Arabs in the town of Baroda, and instead of the Arabs the British became the guarantors of security and, of course, peace. The Gaekwar ceded districts yielding 780,000 rupees in revenue for the support of the British force, and more lands worth 1,295,000 rupees were given up as payment for the Gaekwar's debts to the government. Given all this, it was less difficult for the British to take charge of affairs in Baroda when trouble arose from Malhar Rao's misrule. It was a story in continuity.

When Malher Rao came to power in December 1870, he was in fact coming out of prison having attempted to kill his brother who was an early rival to the throne. Thus from the beginning the new Gaekwar was a vulnerable suspect.

The first two years of his rule, however, went by without


event. Colonel Barr followed by Colonel Shortt were the two British Residents who did not really bother the Gaekwar and were not, in return, bothered themselves. 'They had solidly accepted what was very ill-described as the non-interference policy; and this was sufficient reply to all persuasion from outsiders'. But soon the scene changed when, from the very outset, Colonel Phayre seemed determined to bring all wrongs to light. The state of Baroda was undoubtedly in turmoil; it had in fact been so for many years. Horrifying tales of oppression were heard. 'We hear, as we have heard at many other times, but more emphatically now, that a dangerous discontent prevails in nearly every part of the Gaekwar's dominions', wrote a contemporary Bombay newspaper.

We are told that a score or more villages have been deserted, the people having been reduced to despair by the systematic plunder, which the useless and illiterate Dewans appointed from time to time, either connive at or are powerless to prevent, themselves being the puppets or nominees of the cormorants who are gorging themselves on the unfortunate ryots and traders of the districts.

The Samsher Bahadur, another Bombay newspaper also wrote: 'The accounts heard of the immoral acts of the reigning Gaikwad himself are such that one is alarmed to relate them'.

At this stage, however, public anger was directed less against the Gaekwar than against his councillors. The Gaekwar's durbar was picturesquely described as 'the cage of unclean birds'. The Bombay government too was accused of a certain indifference to Baroda and the necessity of 'sincere and cooperative support of an experienced and liberal-minded Resident' was called for. The Times of India wrote somewhat sadly, if flamboyantly, that Mulhar Rao was 'being drifted along in a fool's paradise, the avenues to which are jealously guarded by those cormorants of the Durbar, who thrive under the stern Khunderao but gorge themselves under Mulhar Rao'.

In contrast, Colonel Phayre was recognized as 'a man of character, firmness and skilled as a detective'. Although only one newspaper, the Times of India, had actually come out in praise of the British Resident, that others also were in sympathy with Phayre is proved by the fact that there were desperate calls to the government drawing attention to the Gaekwar's entourage and urging action. 'If the present Gaekwar is so weak minded as to allow himself to be surrounded by a set of scoundrels who usurp his power, and use it to such disadvantage to the people, why does not the

1. Times of India, 11 July 1873.
2. Times of India, 28 July 1873.
3. Times of India, 11 July 1873.
Government interfere? 1 When in September that year Malhar Rao actually dismissed Nana Khanwelkar, his unworthy dewan, a newspaper in distant Calcutta promptly thought it was an opportune moment for government to appoint a man who was 'totally unconnected with any of the local factions'. 2 Word went round that the Gaekwar had been trying to silence the Times, the Bombay Gazette and the Statesman by paying them 5000 rupees each. The Indu Prakash, an Anglo-Marathi journal published in Bombay, confidently refuted the charge, saying 'our opinion of His Highness' misgovernment remains wholly unchanged, and we have not ceased to give full expression to that opinion ... We hope these respectable papers will not stake the public interests at such a paltry inducement'. 3

As for the Gaekwar himself nobody, then, was quite prepared to hold him personally responsible for Baroda's predicament. Instead they preferred to think of him as the 'demented or bamboozled prince', who remained 'content to know the outer world only through what his cunning and unscrupulous councillors tell him'. 4 According to the same newspaper, Malhar Rao's predecessor had at least some

1. The Poona Observer, as reprinted in The Pioneer, 4 January 1873.
2. The Englishman, 19 September, 1873.
4. Times of India, 28 July 1873.
'active common sense' and he would 'now and again ... insist upon knowing what the khubber-ka-kagus was saying about Baroda'. But Malhar Rao's conscience was wholly in the keeping of his courtiers. Colonel Phayre however did not think so. To him Malhar Rao was certainly the villain of the piece. On the 18th of March 1873, the day Phayre took up Residency eight people were flogged, one of them to death, on the streets of Baroda. Putting all tales of horror together the Resident immediately drew up a report of charges against the Gaekwar. These were of course many in number, the chief complaints being of oppression against British subjects, British trading and banking houses, the sirdars and such other military classes of the Baroda state, the agricultural classes in the collection of land-revenue, and the former Gaekwar's own family. That the government had affected ignorance of such affairs till then is clear from the viceroy's letter to the Duke of Argyll, written on 21 September 1873. 'The Government of Bombay have for some time been writing to us very bad accounts of the state of the Gaekwar's dominions on the authority of the report of Colonel Phayre', Northbrook wrote, 'and Wodehouse has


supported them strongly in private letters'.

The Government of India appointed a commission of enquiry which produced its report in March 1874, confirming Malhar Rao's misdeeds and failures. Composed of Sir Richard Leade, who was then Commissioner of Mysore and Coorg, W.W. Ravenscroft who was chief secretary to the government of Bombay, Colonel Ethridge of the army, and Nawab Faiz Ali Khan, dewan of Jaipur, the commission concluded that it was impossible to avoid the conviction, from the vindictive nature of His Highness Malhar Rao's proceedings towards a large number of persons, and his violent and spoliatory treatment of many of them, as also his measures towards certain Bankers and Inamdares, and the general character in other respects of his administration during the last three years, that he is not a Prince who can be reasonably expected to introduce, of himself, the change of system absolutely necessary to entitle it to the confidence and support of the British Government, and the loyal and willing obedience of all its subjects.

A period of grace, lasting only eighteen months, from July 1874 to December 31 1875 was therefore allowed the Gaekwar to reform himself and his state. Colonel Phayre was to watch over proceedings.

A new dewan had in the meantime been appointed in December 1873 by the Gaekwar himself and, in fact, despite the disapproval of Resident Phayre. He was Dadabhai

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1. Northbrook to Argyll, 21 September 1873, Argyll Papers, Reel 317.
3. Aitchison, Treaties etc., vol.6, p. 293; also Gazetteer, Baroda, pp. 281-82.
Naoroji, then secretary to the East India Association at Bombay. In the months that followed, reforms were not introduced in Baroda. Within the four months, December 1873 to March 1874, despatches were exchanged with the Government of India, one being a second report from Colonel Phayre on the still hopeless situation and the other a khureeta from the Gaekwar pleading with the viceroy for the removal of his Resident. In the meanwhile relations had further deteriorated between them. They had disagreed over the selection of the dewan. Malhar Rao had had a son born to him by Lakshmibai whom he had married in the month of May that year. Adding insult to injury Phayre refused to recognize the child as Baroda's next heir. The period of grace was not even halfway through when, on 9 November 1874, the British Resident was nearly poisoned to death. Colonel Phayre, who was any way wary of his surroundings drank only a little of that mixture. The Residency doctor was summoned. He testified to the presence of arsenic and diamond dust in the sherbet.

The attempted murder did not bring matters to a standstill; it only heightened the crisis. The Baroda situation lost its local character and began to stir the country. The basis of relations of an Indian prince with the government in India was brought to question. The Gaekwar, being suspected
of the crime against Phayre, was brought to trial. First accusations against him however came from Phayre himself who needed no convincing against Malhar Rao. He instituted energetic enquiries into the matter immediately. On the very next day, 10th of November, he summoned those servants in the service of the Residency who had access to his private office room. Abdulla made the sherbet everyday, usually out of pummelo juice. He had been with Colonel Phayre on and off for about eighteen years and was, according to the Resident himself, of 'the highest character'. 'I do not suspect him of any complicity in the crime', Colonel Phayre wrote to Bombay. Those who remained were Rowji, who was havildar of peons, Govind Hamal, Yellapa Hamal, and Lakshman peon. They were individually examined by their master, and ultimately arrested and jailed. All that was found out was that when Abdulla left Colonel Phayre's room after having placed the sherbet in its usual place at 6.30 in the morning, the four others stayed behind in the room.¹ When Phayre's inquiry had reached this point, orders came from the government of Bombay asking the Colonel to leave Baroda. But he refused to obey. Instead he continued his investigations into the conspiracy while,

on 25 November 1874, Lord Northbrook wrote to Malhar Rao that he had appointed Sir Lewis Pelly to be the government's next representative in Baroda since 'the duties of Resident could no longer be entrusted to Colonel Phayre with the reasonable prospect of a satisfactory result'.

Till then it was the Gaekwar's victory. He had also wanted Phayre to be gone. But the situation changed course rather quickly within the next months. A clue was said to have been found to the attempted murder. Rowji, who was one of Phayre's suspects, in fact confessed to having poisoned the sherbet under precise instructions from the Gaekwar himself. A proclamation was issued by the Government of India on January 14th of the new year declaring the decision 'to enquire into the truth of the charge, and to afford His Highness Malhar Rao Gaekwar every opportunity of freeing himself from the grave suspicion which attached to him'. In the meanwhile Baroda was to be administered 'temporarily' by the Agent of the Governor-General and Special Commissioner, Lewis Pelly who was then commissioner in Rajputana. Malhar Rao was arrested, and lodged in a nearby house awaiting judgement. The commissioners of

1. India Political and Secret Correspondence, 1875, vol.1, pp. 1027-1029.
2. The Trial and Deposition of Mulhar Rao Gaekwar, p. 9.
3. Aitchison, Treaties etc., vol.6, p. 294.
enquiry chosen were Sir Richard Couch who was then chief justice of Bengal, Sir Richard Meade, Phillip Melvill who was at the time judge of the chief court of the Punjab, Sir Dinkar Rao who was a member of the viceroy's legislative council, and the Maharajas of Gwalior and Jaipur. Sargent Ballantyne, a lawyer of renown at the English Bar, was invited from England to take up the Gaekwar's defence.

The situation moved on. The trial which lasted for over three weeks could not provide any more substantial evidence. As before, Rowji, havildar of peons at the Residency, stated that he was commissioned by Malhar Rao to poison the sherbet. Rowji's confessions were confirmed by Nursu, also a peon at the Residency. He explained to the court how they were tempted towards the crime by promises of rewards. 'If the thing is done it will be good for you ... You will be well provided for, so that it will not be necessary for you to serve, and you will be maintained'. These were the inducements that the Gaekwar had allegedly offered. But there was a crucial gap: the person who had sold the poisonous ingredients could not be traced and brought to court. It was however Damodur Punt's examination that brought the trial to a close. Punt was a brahmin, then private secretary to the Gaekwar himself.

On the fourteenth day Damodur Punt told the court how he too had worked for the poisoning at the request of his
prince. Finally Malhar Rao's own statement was read out by Ballantyne as the Gaekwar was not brought physically to court. 'I solemnly declare', said Malhar Rao, 'that I never personally or through any agent, procured or asked the procurement of any poison whatsoever for the purpose of attempting the life of Colonel Phayre; that I never personally nor through any agent directed any such attempt to be made.' He appealed to the commission to regard the evidence of Punt and Nursu and Rowji as 'absolutely untrue'.

The commissioners found themselves sharply divided in opinion - and this division coincided with nationality. The verdict of the European commissioners was that Colonel Phayre's sherbet had been poisoned 'with the intention of causing Colonel Phayre's death'. The poison had been administered jointly by Rowji and Nursu, 'instigated by some other person'. 'It is our belief', concluded the European commissioners in their report 'that the Gaekwar Malhar Rao was the person who so instigated them'. Their evidence was based solely on what Rowji, Nursu and Damodur Punt had said before the commission. Quite contrary to this, each

3. The Trial and Deposition of Mulhar Rao Gaekwar, p. 235.
4. Ibid., p. 235.
of the Indian commissioners wrote separately to say that proof against the Gaekwar was not adequate. Both the maharajas asserted that while the three witnesses on whose evidence the charge was made, widely differed in their statements, some of the servants who were in favour of the Gaekwar were not even heard.¹ The seller of the poison had remained a mystery. Reinforcing these assertions Sir Dinkar Rao stated that there was in fact no proof of the purchase of arsenic or diamond nor of any money spent in this connection. Punt's confessions were highly suspect as he had himself admitted that he had suffered while in custody and had decided to stand witness.² Neither Nursu nor Rowji had even mentioned Damodur.

Whatever the truth be, after the commission had submitted its report the Indian prince was deposed. In its proclamation the Government of India announced the suspension of Malhar Rao Gaekwar from the exercise of authority. Although the charge against the prince was almost where it had stood before the trial, the commissioners having failed to agree, the situation took a decisive turn. Malhar Rao was to be no longer the ruler of Baroda. The proclamation was silent about the charge of poisoning, and laid down that

¹. The Great Baroda Case, p. 68 (at the back of the book).
². The Trial and Deposition of Malhar Rao Gaekwar, p. 240.
Ilah Har Rao was unfit to govern because of his previous misrule. He was to spend the rest of his life as a citizen of British India enjoying merely civil rights. 'Nalalhar Rao will be permitted to select some place in British India, which may be approved by the Government of India, where he and his family shall reside with a suitable establishment and allowances to be provided from the revenues of the Baroda State'.\(^1\) Baroda was to wait for a prince till the next of kin came of age. Not Ilah Har Rao alone, but his issue was also deprived of any claim to the throne. Instead the late Gaekwar Khunde Rao's widow was asked to choose any member of the Gaekwar household to be their future sovereign. The British, however, washed their hands of the domestic administration of the Baroda kingdom at this stage. Sir Madhava Rao, then dewan at Indore, was appointed the dewan of Baroda.

The vernacular press as well as the English language papers took up the issue at this point. Needless to say their sympathies were not the same. What excited the Anglo-Indian press most was that Baroda was a test case in the relationship of the paramount power with its dependant feudatories. It was aware that the question whether Baroda

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\(^1\) Aitchison, Treaties etc., vol.6, p. 377.
was to be ruled by a good or bad government was of short-lived interest. What mattered more was how firmly the Raj could still assert itself. But the Indians could find little consolation in such imperial concerns. The prince was an Indian symbol of power. A public trial of one of them was a crisis in the eyes of the Indian press. It filled up column after column analysing the sinister motives of the government, denouncing the enquiry commission as a 'mock trial', and calling for justice in the prince's favour. The curious fact was that whatever its feelings towards the aristocracy in ordinary times, there was an impressive rally behind the Gaekwar in his moment of disaster. 'In dealing with a Native State the Government should remember that they are jealously watched by the eyes of all India' was an early note of warning from The Allygurh Institute Gazette in the north.¹ 'The present Gaikwar is now the observed of all observers', noted the Sadharani in Bengal. 'The world's eyes' the Sadharani added 'is now upon him, for the British lion seems to be offended with him'.² 'The Anglo-Indian can hardly form an idea of the interest which we take in such cases', wrote a Madras journal, the Vartala-hari. 'In his eyes', continued the paper, 'the deposition

1. The Allygurh Institute Gazette, 20 February 1874 in S.V.P., 1874, p. 100.
2. Sadharani, 8 June 1874.
of a Prince, who though every facility is afforded to him to clear himself from the serious charges laid against him, could not establish his innocence and secure an honourable acquittal, would have nothing in it capable of creating a sensation throughout the country ... To us it would simply mean the removal, just or unjust, of the rightful heir to the Baroda throne. Insult to royal blood cannot be supported.¹

The vernacular journals were no longer interested in whatever mistakes the Gaekwar might have committed, as they were at the beginning of the story. To them, after the trial, Colonel Phayre was the sole creator of all evil in Baroda. As the Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote 'possibly Baroda would never have come to such a crisis if Colonel Phayre had not been appointed to it'.² 'Not only did the Colonel tyrannize over the Guicowar [sic] and place obstacles in the way of a good administration, but his advice made the subjects rebellious; and when the Guicowar would punish them, the Resident reported him to the Indian Government as an oppressive Chief.'

An interesting point to note here is that several plays, written in the Bengali language in the 1870's, adopted the fall of the Gaekwar as a tragic theme. Some of these plays in fact portrayed Phayre as surreptitiously inciting the people of Baroda city to rise against their prince. One

¹. Vartalahari, 9 September 1875 in R.N.P., Madras, 1875.
². Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 January 1875.
of these Bengali plays, called 'Hirakchurna' or 'The Diamond Dust', portrays a scene with Colonel Phayre immersed in conference with Damodur Punt as to how they could take revenge on the Gaekwar for his having sent a kharita against the Resident to the government. It is shown, in the play, that the poisoning plot in fact emerged out of this conspiracy. In another such play, entitled 'Gaekwar Nataka' or 'The Mirror of Baroda', the first scene opens with the Residency servants, Dowji and Abdulla reporting to each other how so many people had come to see Colonel Phayre in the recent past, how they all talked in whispers, and how absent-minded the master himself had become. Abdulla added that even they had been forbidden entry into Colonel Phayre's rooms.¹ The government was blamed for placing confidence in such a man. When Malhar Rao was allowed those eighteen months to reform, the government had advised their representative to give disinterested counsel to the prince whenever needed. 'The result was', the Hindoo Patriot wrote that from the very outset Colonel Phayre constituted the Residency an imperium in imperio, and instead of acting upon the distinct guarantee given by the Vice-roy that Malhar Rao should be perfectly free to choose his own minister, he arrogated to himself the right of accepting or rejecting the Dewan whom the Prince should appoint.²

¹ By An Actor, Hirakchurna (Calcutta, 1875), sub-title 'The Diamond Dust', and U.C. Mitra, Gaekwar Nataka (Calcutta, 1875), sub-title 'The Unfortunate Molhar Rao', India Office Tracts, Vr.1429. (In Bengali.)
² Hindoo Patriot, 14 December 1874.
The Gaekwar had risen in their opinion by having appointed Dadabhai Naoroji as dewan of Baroda.

Those Indians who were worried about Baroda seem to have pinned all their faith on Naoroji to put things in order in that troubled state. Many vernacular journals at the time wrote fulsome articles on the abilities of Dadabhai Naoroji. Here again Phayre came out as a villain. Soon after Dadabhai had taken up office in Baroda it became evident that he and the Resident could not get on with each other. 'It will be sufficient for me to say', the dewan wrote to the Bombay government, '... that from the very beginning, Colonel Phayre has taken a jaundiced view of me and my colleagues' motives and actions'. In fact the same document has it that Colonel Phayre had threatened to 'girenga or giraenga' (throw down) Dadabhai Naoroji. It was under such circumstances that the dewan departed from Baroda, leaving behind the chaos that already was. Indians did not fail to mark the situation. The Hindoo Patriot

1. Dnyan Chakshu, 11 March 1874 and Rast Goftar, 17 January 1875 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1874 and Jan.-June 1875; also Sadharani, 15 November 1874.

2. From Dadabhai Naoroji to E.W. Ravenscroft, Govt. of Bombay, 25 November 1874, 'A Statement in Reply to Remarks in the Baroda Blue Book of 1875, concerning Dadabhai Nowrojee and his colleagues', p. 3 in Secret and Political Letters from Bombay, 1875, vol.1, p. 785. Also Dadabhai Naoroji's letter to the editor of the Times of India in which he wrote 'I had more occasions to thank Sir Lewis Pelly in one week than I had for thanking Colonel Phayre in three months', n.d. 1875 in Report of the Baroda Commission, p. 92.

3. A Statement in Reply to Remarks in the Baroda Blue Book of 1875, concerning Dadabhai Nowrojee and his colleagues, p. 1, in Secret and Political Letters from Bombay, 1875, vol.1,
observed that

Colonel Phayre from the beginning allowed himself to be influenced by the most perverse and exaggerated dislike of that functionary. He all but ordered the Prince to dismiss him, and when Mulhar Rao, standing upon his rights refused to accede to the advice authoritatively urged upon him, the Resident, strangely losing sight of his obvious duty in the matter, reported to the Bombay Government against the continuance of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, urging that he should not be recognized as Minister, and that Mulhar Rao should be compelled to choose some other administrator.¹

The Indian public were forthright in expressing their opinion about the Resident's contribution to the Gaekwar's troubles. 'The trial and the deposition of Mulhar Rao furnish one great lesson to the public, viz., the power of the Residents in the courts of Native Princes to do them harm, or good,' the Bharat Sangskarak observed on 30 April 1875. 'So long as the latter continue to be servilely obedient to them, and act according to their dictates, and keep them in good humour, every thing goes on smoothly.'² The Oudh Akhbar wrote how some people had affirmed that Colonel Phayre had himself taken action against the Maharaja with the view of having him displaced; and the writer hints that even the poisoning episode was well planned beforehand for the purpose of dethroning the Gaekwar, 'who having no reputation in this

¹ Hindoo Patriot, 14 December 1874.
² Bharat Sangskarak, 30 April 1875 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1875.
world, it was not difficult to ruin entirely'. A similar verdict came from the Akhbar-i-Alam which wrote:

Where such clear motives for Colonel Phayre's enmity exist against the Guicowar, it is not at all out of place for certain people to suspect that this gentleman administered the poison with his own hands in his glass, and caused a letter to be written in the Maharajah's name also, for hatred and enmity can stoop to even more than this.  

The Mayo Memorial Gazette, an English-language newspaper published in the North Western Provinces, went so far as to write that 'while the Maharajah was preparing a kharita to the Viceroy, Colonel Phayre was concocting the poisoning plot.'

In fact in some of the Bengali plays as well there were vivid suggestions to the same effect. In the play 'Hirakchurna', already referred to, the Residency doctor is shown trying out one experiment after the other, determined to prove that the sediments in that glass of sherbet contained arsenic and diamond powder. The Mumbai Samachar, writing in the same strain, cheerfully concluded that 'in this state of things the real criminal was Colonel Phayre himself and not the Maharajah.'

1. Oudh Akhbar, 5 February 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, p. 74.
2. Akhbar-i-Alam, 11 February 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, p. 76.
3. Mayo Memorial Gazette, 1 May 1875. Other newspapers of the North West also believed the whole case against the Gaekwar 'to have been fabricated by the police, and to have completely broken down on enquiry.' See Badardarsh, Punjabi Akhbar, Vakil-i-Sindhusthan, Koh-i-Nur, all of 1 May 1875, in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 185-92.
4. India Office Tracts, Vr. 1429.
Baroda State is not entirely the work of Malhar Rao', wrote the Mumbai Samachar, '... Extreme ill-feeling had arisen between the Gaikwad and the late Resident at his Court.' The Bengali press also had its say in this, and the Saptahik Samachar quite confidently wrote: 'The unpopularity of the Guikwar is due to the enmity of Colonel Phayre and some of his partisans.'

There is little doubt that there was considerable excitement in the country over the Gaikwar's fall from power. Although all this took place in the isolated state of Baroda, newspapers voiced common sentiments in Bengal, Madras, the North-West, and of course in Bombay. 'Like wild-fire', a Bombay paper wrote,

the saddening news of the arrest of His Highness Malharrao Gaikwad on Thursday last, spread through this city [Bombay] early in the afternoon of that day and people felt sorry ... at the dire calamity which has overtaken the Baroda Prince. All India, at least the city-stations, must have known of the event the same day and it must have excited the greatest concern and interest if not alarm in the minds of the princes and the population of the land.

The climax came when Malhar Rao was deposed despite the fact of his guilt not being proved before the tribunal. A Telugu newspaper, the Lokaranjini demanded to know the reason why the prince 'was deprived of his regal power

before any charge was proved against him.1 The Malayalam Paschima Taraka Kerala Pataka recorded how 'very awk­ward' it was considered to appoint a commission to enquire into certain charges brought against the Gaekwar and then to ignore its proceedings. 'By these useless proceedings', reflected another Telugu journal, 'it does not appear that the English Government have gained the slightest advantage, the people of Baroda either happiness or satisfaction, or the Guikwar justice.'2 Newspapers in the North Western Provinces also reported discontent with the decision. 'The event is the common topic everywhere', wrote the Akhbar-i-Alam of 15 April 1875. 'The public is much disheartened [the paper continued] at the course adopted by Government so precipitately ... and looks upon the whole proceedings with wonder and surprise.'3 In distant Bengal there was much excitement as reflected in its press. Thus the Hindu Ranjika wrote on 12 May 1875, that 'though the greater portion of the Bengalis are ignorant of the geographical position of Baroda, and the history of its late king, still the intelli­gence of its misfortune, apart from any consideration, whether he deserved it or not, has evoked a strong sympathy ...'4

3. Akhbar-i-Alam, 15 January 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 146-47.
The Sadharani laid all the blame on fate. 'If destiny turns against one,' the Sadharani wrote 'not only men, but birds and animals too, cannot escape.'

Whether the G-aekwar was at fault or not was an issue which had been erased. What remained was regret, and perhaps anger mingled with regret, over the government's decision. Addressing the prince of Baroda the same Sadharani wrote an article saying to him 'what was yours yesterday is somebody else's today'. A more militant Bengali newspaper, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, however, felt more sorry than angry in those circumstances.

There is no symptom of indignation in the country, but blank despair. We must write something however. But what to write? Some Englishmen think that sentiments and emotions cannot reside in a sable breast. It is a great mistake. We too have our feelings and aspirations, joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments. We hoped and we are disappointed, deeply disappointed.2

of the Baroda prince

The announcement of the deposition and the long-awaited visit of the Prince of Wales to India occurred almost at the same time. Commenting on this the Sadharani expressed how 'delicate' and 'difficult' it was for the Indian public to be called upon to rejoice at the visit when 'their hearts are sad' with the 'deposition and misfortunes' of Balhar Rao.3

2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29 April 1875.
3. Sadharani, 8 August 1875.
Amrita Bazar was convinced that the Gaekwar was punished not because of his guilt. 'His Lordship insisted that whether guilty or not, he must be deposed.' The Basantak produced a cartoon entitled 'Le Roi est mort' and wrote:

In spite of all efforts the three judges decided that the accusations were based on a tissue of lies. Government agreed that although there was some doubt about the charge of poisoning, as to being deposed from the throne there was none!

There was, however, one circumstance which afforded some consolation in the midst of this great sorrow. The great attempt which the Indian Government made to fasten a heinous charge on Mulhar Rao has utterly failed,

wrote the Subodha Patrika in Bombay. The Native Opinion went a little further and explained how the injustice of deposing the Gaekwar for his 'past sins' as none other could be proved, would affect the reputation of a 'so-called enlightened despotism', as the British government in India was reckoned to be. 'Government [continued the Native Opinion] to the amazement of all unbiassed men deposed the Gaikwad on account of his previous misconduct, which had been condoned in the solemn state documents, and damned his posterity for ever ... We repeat, is this not a moral triumph for the Gaikwad?'

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 6 May 1875.
Here again, with regard to the Gaekwar's 'past sins', the question was whether Malhar Rao was responsible for them all. In a letter to the *Times of India*, Dinshah Ardeshir wrote:

It would be selfish and ungenerous for the British Government to act on the principle of might being right, and cast on His Highness the whole burden of the long existing collapse at Baroda. By far the greater part of this disgrace rests on two or three agents of the paramount power, referring to the last twelve years only and no further.\(^1\)

Other Indians also underlined the government's complicity with the long years of turmoil in Baroda and protested against the Gaekwar being suddenly punished as a result of the efforts of a new Resident. 'Their treaty engagements [the Government's] gave them a far greater control over Baroda affairs than over those of any other similar state', wrote the *Native Opinion*,

and yet during successive generations not only no control was sought to be exercised but even the veto on the appointment of the Diwan was withdrawn, and the Residents year after year told the bland tale of the good administration of the Raj and our Government complacently accepted the assurances.\(^2\)

To them, as the *Oudh Akhbar* put it, the government and their representatives in Baroda had 'sinned far more' than 'the worst Gaikawad.'\(^3\) The *Native Opinion* in fact compared the Gaekwar's trials with the controversial Tichborne Case then

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1. *The Times of India*, 17 November 1873.
creating much excitement in London. 'Arthur Orton', it wrote,

is a convicted felon, but from the "Tichborne Demonstration" recently held in his favour in Hyde Park, it appears that even in the metropolis of England there are still many thousands who fully believe him to be an innocent man; would it then be a matter of astonishment if a man, who denied his guilt and was not proved guilty, in the opinion of at least the major portion of the English and the Indian Public, should be held innocent?¹

The Indu Prakash in Bombay, reflected on the unity of feeling on the Baroda issue.

Properly speaking Mulhar Rao never enjoyed any respect or good opinion of the Native public or the Native Press, nor was there any likelihood of any sympathy being shown to him in his misfortune by either. But the thoughtless, unjust and high-handed course adopted and a series of blunders committed by the paramount government in disposing of the late Baroda question effected what was once believed to be simply impossible, namely an extensive sympathy with the cause of the ex-Gaekwad.²

As the Vakil-i-Hindusthan explained:

If the people of India were of one caste and one nation progress would perhaps be more rapid, but the frequent disagreements and disputes which arise among the people tend greatly to bring disgrace and ruin on them. Still one thing must be admitted, that, notwithstanding this, the national feeling of sympathy is to be found among them to a great degree. Now it

¹. Native Opinion, 26 February 1875. In the Tichborne Case, which was a cause célèbre in England at the time, a New South Wales butcher laid claim to the Tichborne estates as its long-lost heir. He was given fourteen years imprisonment for perjury. There was strong feeling among the British working class that he was treated in this way because he, a poor man, had challenged the rich and the powerful.

². Indu Prakash, 28 June 1875 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.–June 1875.
is clearly observed that the present position of the Gaekwar is open to all sorts of opinions, and the public in general are watching, with great anxiety, the result of this unhappy case.¹

An idée fixe in the Indian mind was that a prince was a prince and should remain a prince. Whether the Indians in fact cared much for their many aristocrats scattered all over the country, in ordinary times, was not relevant. To treat a prince like a 'common offender'—imprisoning him, then cross-examining him and, finally deporting him to Madras was just 'not done'.² Sambhucharan Hookerjee, an energetic journalist who was the sole proprietor and editor of Hookerjee's Magazine, explained the sentiments of the Indians when faced with a Baroda-like situation, in a special number of the Magazine entitled 'The Baroda Coup D'état'.

'We are loyal to the Government,' the Magazine began,

loyal from immediate personal advantage, loyal from the sympathy of education, loyal far more from unselfish calculation of what is best for our fatherland, and our race, in the present as well as in the future, have had as yet no cause to repine at the uninterrupted career of British success.³

Yet, with all their loyalty and their conviction in the

¹ Vakil-i-Hindusthan, 10 March 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp.121-22.
² The vernacular press strongly objected to their prince being treated as, what they described, a 'common subject' or a 'common criminal'. See: Som Prakash, 25 January 1875; Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 January 1875; Saptahik Samachar, 16 January 1875 in R.H.P., Bengal, 1875; Native Opinion, 2 May 1875; Sadadarsh, 5 July 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 340-44.
supremacy of the Raj - 'great, brilliant' - they could not put up with an insult to one of their princes. 'We share with all our countrymen a tenderness for the Native States.' The deposition of Malhar Rao reflected a diminution in the status of an independent prince of the country. This did not necessarily involve, Hookerjee's Magazine pointed out, a 'sympathy of the native community with the crimes of their Princes'. All they wanted to insure against was that the state of Baroda, and thus other such native states, would not in future be so degraded. The Native Opinion in Bombay shared the same concern. 'By every means trace out the perpetrator of the dastardly resort to poison,' the Native Opinion wrote 'and let him have his desserts, whatever the motives which have prompted him. But let not the state suffer for the crimes of any individual.'

The Indian public, those of them who were politically aware, had by then conjured up in their minds an image of their viceroy, Lord Northbrook. He had satisfied them with his tariff policy and with his efforts in repealing the income tax. Throughout the period of the Gaekwar's trial, the press had therefore reiterated their faith in Northbrook.

1. Ibid., p. 98.
3. Many vernacular journals expressed their faith in Lord Northbrook. Notable among them were Hookerjee's Magazine, Special No. on Baroda, p.100; Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 January 1875; Murshidabad Patrika, 18 December 1874 in R.N.F., Bengal, 1875; Rast Goftar and Indu Prakash of 5 and 19 August 1874 in R.N.F., Bombay, 1874.
But the viceroy turned out to be disappointing in his attitude towards Malhar Rao. To the Indian the Baroda prince was entitled to a 'special regard' even if he had to be punished for his crime. But Lord Northbrook had 'failed in exhibiting that regard.' Such was their sympathy for the ruler of Baroda that a generally radical newspaper like the Amrita Bazar Patrika held out a promise of obligation to the government if, and only if, the government restored the Gaekwar to his throne of honour. The government will then, according to the Patrika 'succeed in extending its power over the natives to such a degree, as centuries of powerful and armed rule have not secured.'

The press apart, the Gaekwar's tragedy evoked messages and some demonstrations of sympathy from various sections of the community. The Jarida-i-Rozgar in Madras wrote that '35,000 people have petitioned the Empress of India to reinstate the Gaikwar.' While the Gaekwar was on his trial an early, and considerably influential, meeting was held in Bombay on February 9th 1875 in the hall of the Framjee

1. Mookerjee's Magazine, Special Number etc., p. 100.
2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22 April 1875.
Cowasjee Institute. The meeting was composed of 'respectable and well to do native citizens of Bombay' and Sir Mangaldas Nathoobhoy was in the chair. It drew up a memorial to the viceroy and his council, thanking him for 'the assurance that Baroda will not be annexed and that it will be made over to a native administration'. Among those who wrote the memorial were Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Gadgil, and Badruddin Tyabji. This meeting, however, was concerned more with Baroda than with its prince. They were agreed about the 'guilt' of the Gaekwar. Their resolution said 'Leaving Mulhar Rao aside, the whole country feel as one man on the matter, and not a minute should be lost'. This memorial pleaded against annexation. The other important town in the vicinity of Bombay, Poona, also played a part in the agitations. More than one memorial came from the people of Poona and one of their earliest petitions, that of 18 January 1875, was for a mixed commission of

1. Native Opinion, 14 February 1875.

2. The fear that all this was a pretext for the annexation of Baroda by the Government of India was quite strong among the vernacular newspapers at the beginning. See: Native Opinion, 31 January 1875; Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 January 1875; Som Prakash, 21 January 1875; Bishwa Dut, 20 January 1875 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1875; Vakil-i-Hindusthan, 10 March 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp.121-22.

3. Native Opinion, 14 February 1875.
enquiry composed of Britons and Indians. Later they confidently drew up more petitions, some of them expressing anger over 'unfounded suspicions against Mulhar Rao'.

Their anger seemed to be directed less against the government than against the English press in India 'which seemed to possess the confidence of persons high in office', wrote the Native Opinion and 'prejudiced his case in a most reckless manner'.

Poona's sympathy was undoubtedly for the Gaekwar. A later petition, dated 11 April 1875 from the 'citizens of Poona' reflected on the relations between the British government and the Native States.

The British Residents and Native Chiefs are perpetually at cross-purposes with one another; each employs spies to obtain information of the other's movements. In this connection it was a most unhappy circumstance that Your Excellency's Government allowed itself to be persuaded to add the charge of poisoning to the other trivial charges regarding the bribing of the Residency servants for obtaining secret information. If such conduct can be crime, Colonel Phayre was equally guilty of it with His Highness Mulharrao.

Many other letters of protests and appeals poured in to the viceroy from people inhabiting the several small towns dotted over Gujarat. The citizens of Dhoolia sent in their memorial, dated 1 March 1875, thanking the government for its promise against annexation of Baroda, and urging the viceroy to free

1. Native Opinion, 4 April 1875.
2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15 April 1875.
their Gaekwar from all charges whatever they be. Inhabitants of Surat and Tanna did likewise. 'Your Lordship's memorialists', read the one from Tanna, 'might be justified in saying they do not remember any other instance in which a single individual had ever succeeded in winning such unanimous and warm sympathies of all classes of people.'

In Bengal as well, sections of the people, independently of the press, expressed sorrow. The Hindu Ranjika wrote, on 12 May 1875, that an agitation had been produced by the deposition of Malhar Rao in the country. 'Even the shopkeepers are bewailing his fate.' There were militant demonstrations in Baroda. The Sahachar, referring to the 'recent disturbances in Baroda, following which there were disturbances in Calcutta', wrote 'the sooner the agitation about Mulhar Rao ceases, the better it will be for the public.' The Som Prakash of 3 May 1875 filled up a whole column on the demonstrators of Baroda. Three persons were arrested in that city while procuring signatures to a memorial intended to have been presented to the viceroy, pleading for the Gaekwar. The vernacular press of the North Western Provinces was of the opinion that the 'recent disturbances in Karipatan (Baroda)' were 'the result of unjust procedure adopted by

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15 April 1875.
3. Sahachar, 10 May 1875 in Ibid.
Government in the case of Maharajah Mulhar Rao, and of its foolish adherence to the opinions of the English members of the Baroda commission. ¹

Letters were written to the editors of newspapers putting in a good word for the Gaekwar. Unfortunately it is difficult to tell who were writing these letters as most of them were anonymous. Two strongly-worded letters were written by 'Justice', who was one of Malhar Rao's most earnest apologists, to the editor of the Times of India.

It is really not a defence from me for His Highness, but I am only bound to reveal before the Public such matters that are known to me from my personal knowledge, [he wrote] 'and of which I am thoroughly acquainted; as, whilst I was serving under the British Government and the other native states in the Guzerat zillah, I knew what was the practice going on thither, and when I read your papers and also the papers of the other Editors, describing great many complaints against His Highness the Guicowar and his Karbharees, I was greatly astonished to see such publication. I knew His Highness, his Councillors and Dewan have been trying to be most discreet, and are endeavouring to protect the Baroda Ryots in every respect, as often as possible; in fact I am an eye witness as well. ²

Another letter, written on 28 August 1873, and signed by none, questioned the editorials on Baroda and its Gaekwar in the Times of India as being drawn from unauthentic information.

'One thing ... is plain and incontrovertible [the letter said] and it is that you cannot be said to know much by personal observation, either good or bad, about the Baroda State;

¹ Rohilkhand Akhbar, 15 May 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 217-18.
² The Times of India, 19 September 1873.
nor have you made any marked efforts to get correct information about it.'¹ 'Will you, Sir, as a professor of Christian-  
ity,' the author of the same letter asked, 'conscientiously declare that such rumours are true?' One such letter,  
however, was written by Dinshah Ardeshir. He gave much attention to the Baroda issue and wrote pamphlets on the  
subject as well. In his letter to the editor of the Times of India he raised objections about the constitution of the commission of enquiry.

From one point of view, the formation of the Commission may seem one-sided, for even the native member from Jeypore may be expected to be more inclined towards the British power, if it be safe so to infer from certain members in connection with that state ... Much better could have been said of the commission, had some worthy member of the Guicowar family, or a nobleman, coupled with an entirely disinterested native gentleman been included in the commission.²

What was important about this great furore over the Gaekwar's predicament was that some Indians associated the incident with a broader cause: the cause of the princes of India. It was believed that the princes were becoming weaker. The princes themselves, it was agreed, lacked vitality and superior political ability. But the government took advantage of this and appointed crafty British diplomats as Residents in the various principalities. It was believed

1. The Times of India, 2 September 1873.
2. The Times of India, 17 November 1873.
that pressure, both domestic and political, from these men suffocated the local rajas. 'It has become hard for Native Princes to preserve their freedom in the presence of the British Lion', wrote the Murshidabad Patrika. Baroda was looked upon as a test-case in the destiny of the Native States. 'The destiny of Baroda will satisfy our curiosity.' But when it did satisfy, it did so with a blow. 'The English public might have expected a deposition wrote the Amrita Bazar Patrika, 'but the Hindoos never.'

It was as if, they felt, although the Indian peoples at large were protected by law under the British government, the princes were not. The all too sudden realization that in relation to the Indian princes government was in fact 'absolutely powerful', as the Bharat Sangskarak observed 'and that there [was] no check, even if it were guilty of a thousand crimes against them', had a startling effect. The Indian vernacular press, doing its duty, began to ask whether Jeypore, Gwalior or Indore might not, some day, share the fate of Baroda. 'What should they do now?' asked the Amrita Bazar Patrika. 'Shall we advise them to rebel against the Government? Never!' The events of 1856 are

2. Samaj Darpan, 25 February 1875 in Ibid., 1875.
3. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29 April 1875.
never to be forgotten.' It was urged that all the powerful Indian princes, Sindhia, Holhar and others, should deliberate and petition Parliament. A clear statement of relations between princes and government - as well as those between princes and political officers - especially in situations of future dispute, was called for. The Lauh-i-Mahfuz suggested an anjuman or council of Indian chiefs. Some Hindusthanis, however, did think in terms of the Gaekwar having recourse to his troops and resisting the British. But even if the Gaekwar had thought of it there was very little hope that he could have done anything at all with the appearance of the army that Baroda had. The armies of these princes were merely decorations to their states. It is doubtful whether in all the Baroda artillery there were even two guns from which a salute could have been fired. There was of course the British artillery to fall back on if occasion demanded.

What made the worried Indians more concerned was the secretary of state's despatch of 3 June 1875 in the Baroda issue leading, perhaps, to a statement of policy with regard to the future of such principalities. Of course as far as Malhar Rao was concerned, the despatch contained the last

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21 May 1875.
4. Agra Akhbar, 28 February 1875 in S.V.P., 1875, pp. 111-12.
word of the home government's decision on the State of Baroda. A sort of policy relating to Native States was set out in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, a document pleasing to the princes as it had reassured them of 'rights and privileges'. Judgement on Baroda proved the contrary, and it was therefore expected to have the effect of destroying their peace of mind. Certainly, this was what was reflected in the press. 'The Government of India lays it down as a proper policy', wrote the Indu Prakash that when a Native State seems to be mismanaged, the responsibility of reforming it should not be undertaken by the Imperial Government, but should be thrown on the chief of that State; and if he is found unequal to the task he may be deposed and even his progeny disinherited and the State given to any branch whom the Supreme Government is pleased to make a present of it; and the Secretary of State for India approves and sanctions this course."

Other newspapers also felt that the new ruling was a threat to princely rights in India. 'His Lordship says in that despatch', wrote the Sudhakar 'that the fact that a native prince is unable to improve the administration of his state is a sufficient reason for depriving him of his powers ... No one can say', and here lay the crux of the fear, 'with confidence how many things are comprised under the phrase "improvement of administration", nor will the interpretation put upon it by one person be acceptable to all.'

1. Indu Prakash, 26 July 1875, referring to the despatch of the Secretary of State for India on Malhar Rao Gaekwar of Baroda, in R.N.P., Bombay, July-Dec. 1875.

Native Opinion, of all the newspapers, was perhaps most agitated. In a long article tracing the history of relations between princes and government since 1857, it noted how the first drift away from the policy of pleasing the princes came in Canning's sanads in 1862. But what occurred in 1875 seemed to them more critical than anything that had preceded it.

It is now openly asserted [the Native Opinion wrote] that not only the British Government has the right of deposing Native Princes on the ground of misgovernment, but that they are liable to be punished like common persons whenever a crime is proved against them! Thus without entering into the old treaties and engagements, the subsequent voluntarily declared principles of conduct of the British Government towards the Native States be looked into; the professedly neutral policy of the Proclamation seems to have developed, within the last twenty years, into that of de facto interference.¹

The 'tenderness' expressed for the prince in trouble, the self-imposed duty of protecting him by rallying round, gained in impetus after Halhar Rao's deposition. This was in evidence soon after when the Prince of Wales arrived in India. A government notification, published in the government Gazettes, announced the day, hour and minute at which the different princes and chiefs, assembled in Bombay awaiting the Prince of Wales' arrival, were to visit His Excellency the Governor of Bombay after which they were to be presented to the Prince by their respective Political Agents. 'This

¹ Native Opinion, 1 August 1875.
notification', observed the Arunodaya 'creates painful astonishment in its reader. It is very strange that His Excellency should have insisted upon seeing so many personages of so high a rank as the Princes and Chiefs, within so short a time as two days and in so great a hurry.' Sensitivity had reached a stage when the Indians, who had caught the mood, did not any more like the idea of the officers of the administration arranging the visits of their princes to the Prince of Wales. And when there was a suggestion made in the Times, as well as some of the Anglo-Indian journals, notably the Pioneer, as to the propriety of dissolving the armies of the Native States, the Som Prokash in Bengal promptly wrote that the step 'will be degrading them to the rank of Zemindars'. Even 'the mere existence of a body of troops' was a symbol of power. The Indian press wished this symbol to remain.

English opinion in India, on the other hand, emphasized the 'strictly judicial character' of the Commission, which was not at all what the viceroy intended it to be. The potential, but then uncertain, significance of bringing a prince to trial was generally noted. Introducing the year

2. Indu Prakash, 1 November 1875 in R.N.P., Bombay, July-Dec. 1875; Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11 November 1875.
3. Som Prokash, 2 August 1875.
4. The Indian Statesman, 5 November 1873, and The Englishman, 8 November 1873.
1874 in its columns, the **Englishman** wrote 'there can be no doubt that this quasi-judicial trial of a great feudatory is one of the historical events of this year.' Tension mounted as the enquiry went on. The **Times of India** maintained their own correspondent in Baroda who reported the proceedings from day to day. 'Within the next few days' wrote the **Englishman** on 24 January 1874, 'the Commission now sitting upon the affairs of Baroda will have completed its task.' Those newspapers anticipated trouble if the British overshot their limits of interference.

It may be expedient that we should step in between the people of Baroda and pitiless misrule, but above all things it is necessary that our motives for doing so should be placed beyond the reach of misconstruction in Native Courts throughout India.

Anglo-Indian opinion was hoping that the results of the commission 'would affect only the military organization and control of the Baroda Contingent'. 'This will be good news' continued the **Englishman** 'not only to the Guikwar, but to the native courts throughout India.' The **Times of India** too believed that the commissioners were to deal mainly with the organization and efficiency of the forces at Baroda. Their position was that 'it should hurt no one's feelings to have the military police put in good order.'

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1. The **Englishman**, 24 January 1874.
2. The **Englishman**, 24 January 1874.
3. The **Englishman**, 23 March 1874.
4. The **Times of India**, 31 October 1873.
Generally speaking, the English journals in India came out against the government's meddling in the affairs of the princes. The appeal was to continue with the experiment of 'Native Rule'. A good and competent Indian minister was all that was necessary, they thought, to keep these princedoms in reasonable order. The Pioneer never stopped supporting Dadabhai Naoroji as long as he remained the dewan of Baroda. It thus wrote

Will the Viceroy recognize the official status of the new Dewan thereby infinitely multiplying his already proved influence for good, or refuse to do so—that is to countenance a further experiment in native rule—putting the Baroda state under the British Administration direct. If the answer to this question were to turn in the last six month's history of Baroda administration [referring to the time since Naoroji became dewan] we would be inclined to think that the state was pretty certain of being allowed one more chance of ruling itself in its own way.¹

It was only if the experiment failed despite the 'high character' of the dewan that Baroda could be brought under 'direct British management'.² British thinking in India at the time, on their relations with the more important Indian princes, was all for allowing them internal independence almost as a basic right.³ The times had changed, and so had

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¹ The Pioneer, 25 June 1874.
² The Pioneer, 14 August 1874.
³ The Principality of Baroda was of considerable civil and strategic importance. The Baroda territory interlaced with the British districts of Gujarat; its capital city was a railway station on the Bombay Line; and to the west and south of it there were some cotton factories and mercantile establishments. Baroda affairs figured prominently in the Surat local newspapers.
opinions. Baroda would not have been an issue twenty years before; annexation would have been the easy answer. But since then 'many fair words' had been spoken and 'high sounding despatches' written.\textsuperscript{1} Annexation had become a tainted word. But, at the same time, it was no longer the time when chaos within a native state, produced by the shortcomings of the ruler himself, could be ignored. There was a phase when political officers would 'wink hard at whatever was not intended to be seen, and at whatever it was not expedient to report'.\textsuperscript{2} Colonel Phayre's energetic activity in fact inspired his fellow Residents in other parts of India to similar moves, although the news of the attempted poisoning must have been a damper. 'Recent events in Baroda', wrote the \textit{Pioneer},

have operated in a curious way on the imagination of Residents in other native states. Complaints of mal-administration are coming in on us from all sides ... But we have found on enquiry that in two cases, represented by correspondents as extremely shocking, there is really no serious ground for remonstrance.\textsuperscript{3}

Malhar Rao however was taken by surprise. His predecessors had had Residents who had remained silent while the system within the state had continued to creak. He was the first \textit{in his line to} be called to account for his mistakes.

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] \textit{The Englishman}, 24 January 1874.
\item[2.] \textit{The Englishman}, 24 January 1874.
\item[3.] \textit{The Pioneer}, 15 February 1875.
\end{itemize}
'For the Gaekwar's trial', the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore observed, 'we have introduced a novelty; the first result of this novelty is the disgrace of the Ruler of Baroda; innocent or guilty, he stands before us, as he does in his own sight and in those of his countrymen, as one who has undergone the public disgrace of an accused'.\(^1\) He was perhaps a convenient martyr to the cause though doubtless an unwilling one.

Broadly speaking, the turn in government policy came from, and after the Mutiny. Malhar Rao only afforded government an opportunity to try out the reality of British power in India. The impact on the public mind came in the demonstration of this power. And despite its campaign for the internal independence of the feudatory states, however, the English press in India were conscious of their government's supreme authority and, of course, quite convinced of its good. 'So long as we sustain the Native States we must, of course, respect their internal independence' wrote the *Pioneer* on 29 September 1874, 'but we must also be careful to see that they do not misuse the power they derive from their reliance on the Imperial authority to perpetrate all the abominations of Eastern despotism without the corrective dread of its natural checks'. Thus when Malhar Rao was

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\(^1\) *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 12 March 1875.
thought guilty of having 'committed an act of hostility against the British Government', it was within their rights according to the Pioneer 'to make war upon him'. 'There is no fighting because he is too weak to fight' continued the Pioneer.

So we take possession of his country and take him prisoner; after which we proceed to enquire into the specific act of hostility ... In fact the power of the British Government in a case like this is absolute and supreme. This is a view of the case which will probably be unpalatable to natives in general, but it is very desirable that they should clearly understand the nature of a Paramount Power, and the sooner they understand it the better.

The Anglo-Indian papers, in particular the Pioneer, were indignant with the critical tone of the press in England.

The English Papers [the Pioneer wrote] would have been untrue to their principles if they had correctly appreciated the Baroda affair. About a week ago we pointed out the way The Times was allowing its readers to be coached, as the evidence was telegraphed home by the agents of the Gaekwar's solicitors.

In England the press, that section of it concerned with Indian affairs, considered the commission of enquiry to have taken on the appearance of a judicial tribunal which, according to the Times, was causing widespread irritation.

1. The Pioneer, 24 February 1875.
2. The Pioneer, 6 April 1875.
3. The Times, 21 January, 3 February, 1875.
To the **Pioneer** the commission was a liberal gesture.

'This failure to graft liberalism, [the Pioneer wrote] though now productive of harm, will in the future, if its teaching be taken to heart, give far more than equivalent good'.

This was only an unfortunate outcome, not something that could make the government guilty of its judgement.  

Although the members of the Commission were divided in opinion [the Pioneer observed] there was only one natural and just termination of the whole investigation of the Gaekwar's fitness to govern. The Government have after mature deliberation adopted this conclusion and acted upon it as right conjoined with might required. 

What impressed the Europeans in India was no doubt the fact, no longer hidden, of the British government's supremacy over Native Rule. 'The whole theory of England's rights and duties as regards the administration of Native States is contained in the title "Paramount" as in a nutshell,' the **Pioneer** concluded on a note of satisfaction.

The fact that two Indian princes had even consented to sit on the commission was also counted on by the **Pioneer** as illustrating 'that the English power is paramount'.

Malhar Rao's future had however posed a difficult question for the authorities, at any rate which was much

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discussed. The secretary of state for India and Lord Northbrook together took the bold decision of removing Malhar Rao from his seat of power. But in doing this they had to deal with more than one dilemma. The men on the commission of enquiry did not unanimously pronounce the Gaekwar guilty of poisoning Colonel Phayre, which was the charge on which he was then being examined. The government found itself in a delicate situation. It could not discard the Indian judgement, as that would have made nonsense of its own deliberate policy of 'placing natives of great distinction on the Commission.' And yet, there is little doubt that the government was determined to punish Malhar Rao Gaekwar and punish him severely. 'We are anxious that whatever course you take at Baroda it should be sufficiently penal to deter Princes from so simple a plan for changing their Resident...' This was written at a time when the trial was about to begin, in other words when the results were quite uncertain.

One of the two penalties, considered by the secretary of state, was annexation. A less tempting one was deposing the prince. At the beginning Salisbury did in fact consider annexation a justified desire. What encouraged him in this was the conviction of his council that Baroda should suffer

2. Ibid., 14 January 1875, Salisbury Papers, Letter Book No.1.
if its prince was proved guilty. Suffering in this context meant annexation. But Lord Northbrook never wanted annexation. 'I need hardly tell you' he wrote to Lord Salisbury at a time when many of the local newspapers were agitating against annexation, 'that I am entirely against a policy of annexation. I quoted the Queen's Proclamation almost ad nauseam when I was first appointed, but in no way as a matter of form, and any idea of a change of policy is incorrect.' But despite temptations the astute secretary of state was hesitant as he pondered, writing 'I agree in the argument, but not in the practical application'. To him the 'recollection of Oudh' was 'too green ... to annex by way of penalty, except in case of absolute rebellion.' What Lord Salisbury was prepared to do, however, was to indulge in 'some rearrangement of territory', which would not give the British more territory but would involve a loss to the Baroda principality. There were ways of doing this, one of which was to drive Baroda back from the sea-board. A more detrimental step, which had also been thought of, was to deprive the Gaekwar of the tribute due to him, as the

suzerain prince, from a number of chieftains, in the area. 'No one could complain if we punished Baroda by giving them (the chieftains of Kattywar) independence.' And all this because Baroda had to be made to suffer.

From that point of view, of course, the results of the commission were definitely disappointing. The government had to fall back on what was quite obviously the second best under the circumstances. The Gaekwar was indeed deposed, but even on that subject much was said. Deposition of Malhar Rao, when the commission had failed to convict him, was a step which, as Salisbury put it in a classic statement, 'though possibly right in policy is very hard to defend in argument'. The government in India as well as the India Office in London were placed in a tricky situation. 'I find a general consent', Salisbury wrote to Northbrook on 23 April 1875, 'that from the English point of view it would have been impossible to assume the Gaekwar had been guilty of poisoning in face of the three native commissioners. Both Lord Halifax and the Duke of Argyll were of that opinion.' At the other end, the viceroy, strongly backed by his council, was quite prepared to depose the ruler of Baroda. Lord Northbrook believed the Gaekwar was guilty of poisoning

2. Ibid., 16 April 1875, Salisbury Papers, Letter Book No.1.
Colonel Phayre, and had found the evidence produced sufficiently convincing. The viceroy in fact was even impressed with Damodur Punt's confessions and took it 'to be true in the main', as he explained in a private letter to Lord Salisbury.¹ What the Indian commissioners wrote in their reports made little difference for the viceroy.² 'To restore him under any conditions would, in our opinion, be a miscarriage of justice and a fatal political error', was the verdict sent to London from the viceroy and his council.³

The only concession Lord Northbrook was prepared to offer under the circumstances was that he would not bring about 'a revision in the relations' existing between his government and the state of Baroda.⁴ The government in London thought the same; whatever happened the Gaekwar and his descendant were to give up the throne of Baroda. But there was a difference. The authorities in London found the fact of a divided opinion from the commissioners somewhat embarrassing. London therefore advised Calcutta to depose Malhar Rao, but only on 'general grounds'.⁵

2. Ibid., 21 April 1875, Northbrook Papers, vol. 12.
3. Despatch No. 80 of 1875, Govt. of India, Political, 15 April 1875 in Parl. Papers, 1875, vol. LVI, p. 525.
4. Ibid., p. 526.
5. Secretary of State for India's despatch No. 69 of 1875, 3 June 1875, in India Political and Secret Correspondence, 1875, vol. 1, pp. 971-75.
proclamation to be published announcing the deposition, was
to say nothing of the charge of poisoning. The viceroy saw
the point and did not consider this a difficult task, as he wrote

We had no difficulty in accepting and carrying out
these instructions, for we were thoroughly convinced
of the substantial justice of deposing Mulhar Rao.
The reasons upon which his deposition was to be
based we considered to be a point of secondary,
though doubtless also of great, importance.¹

All having gone well, a proclamation was issued on
19 April 1875, formally deposing the Gaekwar Malhar Rao 'and
his issue' from sovereignty on general grounds of having mis-
governed his state. He was silently sent to Madras, as
though he was a prince banished. But soon after a resolu-
tion was published in which the entire history of the
Gaekwar's downfall was given, including his attempted crime.
Unlike Salisbury, Northbrook considered the commission's
failure to come to a decision was no obstacle to punishing
Malhar Rao as they desired. For Lord Northbrook the com-
mission had no legal basis. 'Its function was to report to
the Government of India with whom the decision was ultimately
to rest.'² The possibility that the commissioners could
differ had been taken into account by the Government of India,
and it was the deliberate opinion of the Government of India
[Northbrook explained] that, bearing in mind the character.

¹. Despatch No.85, Govt. of India, Political Dept., 22 April
². Minute by His Excellency the Viceroy, 29 April 1875, in
and antecedents of Mulhar Rao, he should not be restored to power unless he should be able to clear himself fully from the suspicion which attached to him.'¹ And in Lord Northbrook's mind 'there was no shadow of doubt ... as to the correctness of the view taken by the Chief Justice and the English Commissioners that the guilt of the Gaekwar has been proved.'²

Lord Salisbury however did not feel as confident. Although he was sure that 'there can be no moral doubt of his [the Gaekwar's] guilt', as he himself wrote to the viceroy, for him the legal base on which the decision was based had been weakened. He found it difficult to reconcile himself to the position that 'a decision upon facts come to by judges who have heard Counsel, and seen witnesses under examination', was, as Lord Salisbury put it, in fact 'reversed or changed adversely to a prisoner by authorities who have not those advantages'.³ 'You may find precedents in Courts martial', he wrote to Northbrook, 'but they grate harshly upon a civilian's ear and they have no parallel in non-martial law.'⁴ However the secretary of state was by no means sorry for the

1. Ibid., pp. 566-67.
Gaekwar. He undoubtedly wanted the deposition of Malhar Rao and in fact in his last despatch on the subject, dated 3 June 1875, Lord Salisbury made it quite clear that had Malhar Rao been convicted of the crime against a Representative of the Crown, he would have been punished as a criminal. The government, then, would not have stopped at simple deposition. Thus the secretary of state explained:

If Mulhar Rao had been found guilty by the Commission of the heinous offence imputed to him, there would have been no ground for inflicting on him any milder punishment than that which would have been thought just if he had occupied a humbler position. His crime would have been aggravated by the character of the office held by the person against whom it was directed, and it would not have been extenuated by his own exalted position.

He differed from his viceroy on the issue - 'I have a bone to pick with him' - only on a constitutional point.

Lord Salisbury looked upon the proceedings of the second, or final, commission of enquiry as not in essence distinguishable from a trial, although Northbrook had designated its proceedings as an enquiry, not a trial. The trial was to be hidden behind an enquiry and this was where, to the shrewd secretary of state, the viceroy had erred. However, Salisbury's real regret was that three Indians had at all

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1. Secretary of State's despatch of 3 June 1875 in *India Political and Secret Correspondence, 1875*, vol.1, p. 974.
2. Ibid., pp. 973-74.
been chosen to sit on the commission. What seemed worse to him was that of the three, two were distinguished Marathas, Dinkur Rao and Scindhia. 'It is evident that their "solidarity" is stronger than we imagined and they have carried poor little Jeypore with them.' 1 What was more, he believed that 'the absence of the seller of the poison, the prevarication of the seller of diamonds and the absence of all the condemnatory powers' were all due to skilful manoeuvring on the part of the defendant's attorneys during the period of the Gaekwar's arrest. 2 The secretary of state had taken two lessons from this long-drawn experience of having had to depose an Indian prince. If ever an Indian prince was to be tried in future, it would be essential to have only English lawyers. 3 No others were to be trusted. Lord Salisbury was also of opinion that the witnesses had not been sufficiently protected between their first examination and their production in open court. 4 Malhar Rao's case had sufficiently indicated, as he explained to Lord Northbrook, 'that an open enquiry and native members of the tribunal are instruments in advance of present Indian requirements'. 5

2. Ibid., 7 May 1875, Salisbury Papers, Letter Book No.1.
4. Ibid., p. 973.
There is little doubt that Gaekwar Malhar Rao was somewhat of an irritant to the otherwise gentle viceroy. In 1874, in a letter to Lord Salisbury on the question of reducing the number of salutes due to the Gaekwar, Northbrook described Malhar Rao as 'a wretched creature', a person to whom 'no encouragement' could be given.¹ In June 1875 the viceroy assured himself and the government that no serious want of confidence has been created, by Malhar Rao's deposition, in the minds of other Indian princes, his character being 'so notorious'.² And perhaps he was right: it is a curious fact that although the public was worked up over the Gaekwar, the princes did not stir when he was deposed. The viceroy became anxious about the reactions of the people in Baroda and its immediate surroundings, and had therefore asked for reports from persons who knew the region well.³ One of them was Thomas Hope, Collector of Surat; the others were Sir Richard Meade and Sir Lewis Pelly.⁴ From what they said Lord Northbrook convinced himself convinced himself that there was apprehension 'not of annexation, but of temporary British management or of delay or

¹ Northbrook to Salisbury, 22 May 1874, Northbrook Papers, vol. 11.
² Ibid., 7 June 1875, Northbrook Papers, vol. 12.
³ Ibid., 8 April 1875, Northbrook Papers, vol. 12.
imposition of conditions in re-establishment of Native ad-
ministration.' Some sirdars had expressed a demand that in
the event of Malhar Rao's removal nomination of another
prince to the gadi ought to be simultaneously notified.¹
In this the viceroy felt secure and, he was not much dis-
turbed by the reactions of the vernacular press, or of the
people in general. His only possible source of fear could
be the princes. 'Any real fear of distrust among the Native
Princes would be a serious evil', he wrote.² But in this he
was clearly out of danger.

With regard to the rumblings of the Indian press, the
viceroy's attitude was one of rather nonchalant tolerance.
'We can well afford to treat with indifference the misrepre-
sentations of our motives which will probably continue to be
made in the Press', he wrote to Salisbury.³ Lord Northbrook
was, at the most, exasperated with the Indian press, and had
once thought of having recourse to the law against the Amrita

1. Telegram from Pelly to Northbrook, 1 April 1875, Salisbury
Papers, Box 2.

2. Lord Northbrook had been nervous about the reactions of the
Indian princes to his choice of the tribunal as well. This
is evident from a letter he wrote to the Queen on the sub-
ject. 'The Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir Richard Couch, who
is the highest legal authority in India, has consented to
preside over the Commission which will be formal for the
purpose of investigating the charges against the Gaekwar.
Lord Northbrook hopes that Sir Dinkur Rao, one of the most
distinguished of Your Majesty's Indian subjects, will con-
stitute a tribunal which will commend the confidence of the
Native Princes of India who will naturally watch with anxi-
ety the conduct of the Govt. of India under these novel
circumstances.' Northbrook to the Queen, 15 January 1875,
Northbrook Papers, Vol.8.

3. Northbrook to Salisbury, 8 April 1875, Northbrook Papers,
vol.12.
Bazar Patrika for 'its aspersions on the Baroda affair'.

Lord Salisbury was perhaps more concerned with what the indigenous newspapers were saying than was his viceroy. 'We are a little puzzled here at the impunity you extend to Native Editors who write up poisoning', he wrote to Northbrook. However what did bother Northbrook was the 'tone' of the press in England. Replying to Salisbury, he wrote 'The manner in which the Native Newspapers have written upon this case has certainly done harm in India, but the greatest culprits have been the English papers at home. In this Baroda case', Northbrook continued a little bitterly, 'they have evidently looked upon the Government of India as a foreign and hostile Government or as an unpopular Government at home and fair game for any attack.'

The press in England was undoubtedly critical of the Government's treatment of the Gaekwar Malhar Rao. The Times and the Pall Mall Gazette both denounced the tribunal as an unnecessary instrument used by the supreme power. Fitzjames Stephen who had then returned to England after having retired as Legal Member of the viceroy's council in India, had written as many as three letters to the editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, analysing the case against the Gaekwar, and making

1. Northbrook to Salisbury, 7 June 1875, Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
it known that had he sat on the commission of enquiry, he would have unhesitatingly convicted Malhar Rao.\(^1\) His main points were two. One was that the evidence incriminating the Gaekwar was in itself worthy of belief, and, moreover, the theory on which the defence strove to discredit it involved greater improbabilities than the case it was meant to combat. Replying to these letters the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} wrote that whatever be the individual opinion of a lawyer 'of great acuteness and professional experience' as was Stephen, the fact was that the evidence failed to convince a Commission appointed and selected by Government of India. Lord Northbrook himself settled the conditions of the unusual and utterly unnecessary ordeal to which he chose to subject the question in dispute, and it is idle to argue that if the conditions had been different the result would have been different.\(^2\)

The English press did not blame the government in India for having deposed the Gaekwar of Baroda; its quarrel was, as that of the secretary of state, with the way this was brought about. 'The Guikwar has been tried without having the benefit of a trial', the \textit{Spectator} wrote 'and has been removed just at the moment when the beneficial effect of removal is spoiled by its apparent injustice. An immensely strong act has been made to seem a weak one, and a bad Prince

\(^1\) The \textit{Pall Mall Gazette}, 26 April, 28 April and 29 April 1875 (containing Mr. Stephen's letters dated 24 April, 28 April and 29 April 1875).

\(^2\) The \textit{Pall Mall Gazette}, 30 April 1875.
thrown into the position of an oppressed victim.¹ Lord
Northbrook was indeed distressed with such sentiments aired
publicly. 'The Times appears to be unfortunate in its
correspondents', he wrote to Salisbury in a letter of 15
April 1875. The Spectator went even further, and advocated
the restoration of Kalhar Rao.

That the Guicowar misgoverns has nothing to do with
the matter. He was not tried for misgovernment [the
Spectator wrote]. The immense benefit to the people
from a change of rule is just as little to the pur­
pose, and would be just as little even if they desired
the benefit, which the balance of the evidence, in the
cities at all events, tends to show that they do not.²

Why all this disturbed Lord Northbrook was because he believed
very strongly that the English press exercised 'a very large
influence over the sentiments of the educated natives'.
'The articles about Baroda', Northbrook added 'are translated
into all the native papers.'³

The viceroy went further to warn Lord Salisbury that
was the press in England/taking a course 'which if continued may
become a serious danger to British Rule in India', and in the

1. The Spectator, 1 May 1875.
2. The Spectator, 3 April 1875.
3. There is, however, not much evidence to show that whatever
was written in the English press was translated by the
vernacular press, although there is evidence that what the
English press wrote on such sensitive issues had either an
encouraging or discouraging effect on the Indian press, and
perhaps the people as well. Quite often extracts from the
English press were published in the vernacular papers, and
of course also in the Anglo-Indian newspapers, which provided
the main link between the press in England and the vernacular
press of India.
same letter asked if anything could be done to divert them from that sinful path. The secretary of state also realized that it was necessary to keep the English public in a good humour, but for entirely different reasons. He expressed this characteristically in a letter to the viceroy in which he wrote:

As a rule I am disposed to think it is necessary to pay more attention to the guidance of English than of Indian opinion. If Indian opinion goes wrong you can always disregard it: but if English goes wrong it takes the form of a vote in the House, which pushes you irresistibly into a line of action that may be pernicious.

This was one reason why Lord Salisbury was unhappy with the resolution published by the viceroy, which made it known that the opinions of the Indian Judges had in fact been ignored. The proclamation had not mentioned this as that was strictly forbidden. Salisbury explained his position thus:

The great difficulty arises from the fact that your overrule of the opinion of the Native Judges though not inserted in the Proclamation was inserted in the Resolution ... It seemed to us objectionable both as regards European and Indian opinion: as regards Indian opinion, because to overrule the opinion of the three Natives was inconsistent with the policy of "giving confidence in the character of the tribunal" by putting the three natives on it: as regards European opinion because, whatever its technical character might have been, the enquiry had to every English eye assumed an aspect indistinguishable from that of a criminal trial.

3. Ibid.
However he ended the same letter with a note of defiant support, as he wrote, 'I despair, after the publication of the Resolution, of blinking the difference [between the secretary of state and the viceroy] altogether, I must minimize it to the best of my ability.'

One importance of the Baroda issue was that it became a landmark in the government's policy towards the Indian principalities. The British government in India prided itself on having maintained a well-defined relationship with those principalities. This was however by no means the result of any consistent policy. The years before and after the Mutiny saw sweeping changes in relationship. ¹ The principle of non-annexation was maintained in the case of Baroda. Annexation was militarily possible. But the temptation was checked. What was made clear was that non-annexation did not relieve the princes from being severely punished in other ways such as deposition. This was the first time ever that a ruling prince was deposed. However, a greater significance of the Baroda question lay elsewhere. A struggle for political centralization on the part of the Government of India was involved in the issue. ² Baroda had, till the coming of

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the crisis in the seventies, been looked after by Bombay. Colonel Robert Phayre, who had just then been removed from his office as Political Agent in Sind for his high-handed ways, was chosen by the Bombay government to preside over Baroda. The Indian government was convinced it was time for a change. Now through this crisis, Baroda was brought under central jurisdiction as part of a broader scheme of exercising direct control from Calcutta.

The fate of a decadent Maratha prince thus provoked a national discussion in India in the 1870's. Clearly the government had to do something about the charges of misrule, although it appeared to do too much and too late. The press in India was partisan without having much idea as to the exact issues involved. Middleclass India seemed to say like the British working man in the *Punch* cartoon on the Tichborne case, 'I don't care if he's [the claimant] Sir Roger Tichborne or who he is, I hate to see a poor man done out of his rights'. The fact that in the Indian case Malhar Rao was a very rich man should have given the government serious food for thought.
CHAPTER VI. CRIME, LAW AND THE POLICE

Like any other government the British government in India touched the lives of its subjects at an intimate level through its administration of justice. Naturally therefore the public reacted to it, and in this reaction it is possible to study the public mind in India from another point of vantage. It has to be remembered that the administration of justice, unlike the measures relating to income tax or municipal self-government was not a novelty in the 1870's.

The British government had formulated its first comprehensive legal code in 1794. It sought to put together Hindu and Muslim law under an English umbrella. This was not however considered very satisfactory and James Mill went so far as to call it 'a code of procedure loaded with minute formalities ... a disorderly compilation of loose, vague, stupid or unintelligible quotations and maxims, selected arbitrarily from books of law, books of devotion, and books of poetry ... a farrago by which nothing is defined, nothing established.' In the wake of this vigorous criticism came

the penal code, the work of Macaulay, which became the general criminal law in India in 1860. Other such codes followed and some of them were consolidated together. A code of criminal procedure was enacted early in the year 1862, and six years later a new bill was brought in for its re-enactment.\(^1\)

In the decade of the seventies a new code for criminal procedure was introduced in 1872. It is in this context of flowing legislation and a system of justice which was steadily sinking its roots in the country that we have to consider public reactions to administrative policy. Here, as elsewhere, the Indian public mind is revealed - inchoate, confused, varied but sharp in its reactions.

Criminal law as it stood in 1870 left the work of administering to the magistrate and the police. It lay with the police to make the arrest while the warrant was issued by the magistrate of the district. The magistrate could then try the accused himself or, alternatively, the accused could be committed to the Sessions or the High Court, depending on the nature of the offence.\(^2\) The law's liberality lay in the

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1. Narrative of the Course of Legislation during the year 1861-62, p. 7 and ibid., 1868-69, p. 28. (Bound together as one volume under India Office Reports.)

2. Minute by the Hon'ble J. Fitzjames Stephen on the Administration of Justice in British India, Calcutta 1872, in Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department, no.89, pp. 49 ff (pagination for the Minute only). [Hereafter referred to as Minute of J. Fitzjames Stephen on Administration of Justice in British India.]
latitude of appeals it allowed. Any person convicted on a trial held by an officer exercising powers less than those of a magistrate could appeal to the Court of Session (section 409) and, finally, if convicted by the Court of Session the accused could appeal to the High Court (section 408). Appeals were only disallowed in cases of acquittal or from conviction in which the sentence did not exceed a month's imprisonment or a 50 rupees fine (section 407).¹

Several contemporary authorities testified to the existence of an enormous number of appeals at the time. In explaining this love for appeals Fitzjames Stephen, then Law Member, suggested two major reasons. On the one hand the administration had little faith in the legal talent of the judges of the courts of first instance as they were men of no first hand legal training. They were magistrates who had been promoted to judgeships as a reward for their seniority of service. The other, and perhaps more interesting, reason given was that Indians were, almost by nature, addicted to appeals in law courts. 'Many persons who have had long experience of the Native character tell me' Stephen wrote

that Natives of all parts of India care, above all things, to be heard, to be able to say all that they have to say about every part of their cases, that they care less for time than English people, and are less impressed with the advantages of promptitude and decision. ¹

In the seventies the law of criminal procedure went through further crystallization. What Act X of 1873, which came into operation on 1 January 1873, did was to clarify the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrates and to define the position in which the subordinate magistrates stood to the magistrate of the district. Magistrates were divided into three classes according to the maximum sentences they were entitled to pass. First class magistrates could sentence a criminal to up to two years imprisonment and a 1000 rupees fine; second-class magistrates had to limit their sentences to six months imprisonment and 200 rupees in fine, while the third grade of magistrates could imprison only up to a month and impose a fine of up to 50 rupees. ² The new act also provided for magistrates sitting together as a bench, and in such cases made the magistrate of the district practically a kind of chief justice over the magisterial courts of his district. ³

¹ Minute of J. Fitzjames Stephen on Administration of Justice in British India, p. 63.
An additional power was given to the magistrates in the shape of summary trials, another innovation in the 1872 act. Offences worthy of summary trial consisted mainly of theft, the value of stolen property not exceeding 50 rupees, receiving stolen property, house-trespass, criminal intimidation, and offences relating to weights and measures. No appeal was allowed from a sentence of three months imprisonment, or fine not exceeding 200 rupees (section 274). What was unique about the system of summary trials was that, instead of the usual record of proceedings there was to be a mere register of non-appealable cases. Summary trials were meant to be a device for reducing the burden of record-keeping. As the lieutenant governor of Bengal explained, in his speech on the passing of that act:

The administration of the criminal law was entrusted to the executive officers of the Government, and if they were overburdened by a cumbrous procedure, they would have no time to attend to their multifarious duties ... A great deal, then, that had been done by the Committee [which had drafted the bill of 1872] ... had been done to lighten the labour of the Magistrates ... They proposed that a very large class of petty cases should be recorded in a more summary manner ... they hoped that in this way they might hit that happy medium in which there should be a record sufficient for the purpose of justice, but not so long as to overburthen our officers in keeping it.²

1. J.H. Nelson, Commentaries on the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act X of 1872), (Madras 1873), p.226; also Currie, op. cit., pp. 119-20. According to Fendal Currie the procedure of summary trials was substantially the procedure then followed by the English Courts of Petty Sessions. Currie was Barrister-at-law of Lincoln's Inn who was, in 1874, the City Magistrate of Lucknow.

Although the 1872 act embodied in it the original code of criminal procedure, certain novelties were introduced which were considered relevant in the context of the new legal experience over a decade. Some of those innovations were also the results of a conscious attempt by Fitzjames Stephen to transplant English law in India. Power was given, for the first time, to the High Court of setting aside the verdict of the jury and ordering a new trial, if in its opinion the jury had been misdirected by the judge.¹ Trial by jury was also modified. Instead of convicting a man, if found guilty by a larger majority of the jury, and trying him again if found guilty by a smaller majority, 'the concurrence of the judge was proposed to be the condition of the triumph of the majority' (section 263). Radical changes were made in the law of appeals. Enhancement of punishment on appeal was introduced for the first time (section 280). The lieutenant governor claimed before the council that such a change had become inevitable as the Courts could hardly cope with the criminal appeals every year. In some districts, the lieutenant governor said, 'there was no such thing as a

¹ Currie, op. cit., p. 161. According to Currie this power given to the High Courts in India of setting aside the verdict of jury was similar in principle to the procedure followed in the English courts, where the court could grant a new trial when they were satisfied that the verdict was in contravention of law, whether the error had risen from the misdirection of the judge, or from a misapprehension of the law by the jury, or from a desire on their part to take the exposition of the law in their own hands.
A more controversial element introduced into the pattern of Indian justice in the seventies lay in the sphere of jurisdiction over European British subjects. First class magistrates, sessions judges and justices of the peace were endowed, for the first time, with limited powers to punish by law Europeans living in the mofussil. Until 1872 only the High Courts exercised such power. Judicial officers up-country had no legal jurisdiction over European British subjects. By section 74 of the new act any magistrate could entertain against European British subjects, such complaints as he was authorized to entertain in the case of any other person. If the offence complained of was a 'Magistrate's case' he could proceed with the trial and sentence the offender to imprisonment for no longer than three months, or fine him up to a 1000 rupees. There was only one qualification: the magistrate, sessions judge, or the justice of the peace in question had to be a European himself.

This last proviso, new in Indian criminal law, gave rise to voluminous controversy, its leading opponents in the government being Sir Barrow Herbert Ellis, Sir Richard Temple and the then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Napier of Magdala.

3. Ibid., pp. 82-84.
Richard Temple and Ellis were agreed on the basic principle that Europeans should not be tried by Indians in general. But they were willing to rely on particular Indians - those, for example, who had been appointed justices of the peace only as late as 1869. Ellis stressed that there were 'abundant reasons why we should not trust Native Tahsildars and Deputy Collectors to deal with the class of European offenders'. But he saw 'no reason why Natives who were qualified to be appointed justices of the peace should not have cognizance of these cases in common with their European compeers'. Sir Richard was of opinion that the inference was undeniable that

if the Natives were eligible to all the great offices of the administration, it seemed improper and unreasonable to say that they should not sit as Judges over Europeans in the Mofussil for offences of the most trivial nature over which it was proposed to give justices of the peace cognizance.

No such ideas were, however, accepted, and the law for European criminals remained much the same. Fitzjames Stephen defended it on the ground that 'personal as opposed to territorial laws', although unknown in Europe, prevailed in India on a large scale. 'The Muhammadan has his personal law. The Hindu has his personal law. Women, who according

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1. Indians could be appointed justices of the peace by an act passed in 1869.
to the custom of the country, ought not to appear in Court, are excused from appearing in Court. Natives of rank and influence enjoy, in many cases, privileges which stand on precisely the same principle; and are the English to be told' Stephen asked 'that, whilst it is their duty to respect all these laws, scrupulously, they are to claim nothing for themselves.'

The commander-in-chief went even further. He wanted to retain the old system in its strength. Only the High Court was good enough to try Europeans. At the most district magistrates could try European 'loafers', but not the planters nor the soldiers. 'What have they been doing lately to require greater severity of treatment?' asked the commander-in-chief in council. But he was fighting for a lost cause: the government was determined to bring Europeans up-country within local jurisdiction.

What worried the government was the increase in the number of Europeans coming into the country at the time. The lieutenant governor of Bengal affirmed that 'planters and merchants' had become 'now a much more numerous class' although they were 'not a worse class of men' but 'a more

1. Ibid., p. 398.
2. Ibid., p. 428.
loyal and much better class of men'. It was not an easy job for the government to take on, and they could hardly make it worse by allowing Indians to punish members of their 'ruling classes'. Every European in India at the time felt tied by kinship to the ruling community in the country: that was the basis of his loyalty. It was the government's duty to reciprocate in this joint venture. Indeed, some members of the council spoke of a 'pledge' to the European community that an Englishman should retain his privilege of being tried by an Englishman.

Reactions of the Indian public to the Criminal Procedure Code of 1872 were critical. The law was no doubt accepted as something with which they would have to live, and some of it was even appreciated. But those Indians who had any control over the instruments of expression - men who wrote in newspapers or drew up memorials for public associations - made it clear that it was being accepted with reservation, and with the feeling that it would cause much misery in the countryside. As it was, agrarian legislation of the later nineteenth century, rent laws and the civil procedure code,

1. Ibid., pp. 431-32. Some of the Anglo-Indian journals like the Times of India and the Pioneer, which claimed to be in touch with the European community in the country agreed with the lieutenant governor about the increase in the population of planters and merchants in recent years, and wrote columns to support this move of bringing Europeans within the criminal jurisdiction of the country magistrates. See The Times of India, 29 August 1872, also The Pioneer, 6 January and 9 February 1872.

had disturbed traditional relationships between peasant
and proprietor within the rural community. Litigation
had increased enormously in the Bengali countryside: \(^1\)
while the civil code had empowered zamindars to take their
tenants to court, the ryots too found themselves making use
of tenancy legislation in competition with the zamindars.
This the peasants could hardly afford, and were often ill-
advised by their 'dewaniya' to go in for litigation which
was beyond their means. \(^2\) To this was added more law - in
this case, more power over the people in the villages to
be exercised by magistrates and policemen.

Bengal reacted widely, to an extent even wildly, to
the powers given to the magistrates, that of summary trial
being the most unpopular. In Bombay the press reflected
uneasily on the summary powers of the district magistrates.
The Punjabis and the inhabitants of the North Western Provinces
on the other hand, were so menaced by their police that they
thought of their magistrates as a possible counterweight and
pressed for more powers to be given to them. Restrictions on

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1. P. Sinha, Nineteenth Century Bengal, pp. 30-31; also
Sadharani, 12 and 19 July 1874; Som Prokash, 9 July 1873
and 6 August 1875; also Murshidabad Patrika, 11 April 1876
in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.

2. The word dewaniya, meaning a village solicitor, is known to
have come into the Bengali vocabulary for the first time
during the '70's. The chapter on 'The Agrarian Society'
(chapter 1) in Pradip Sinha's Nineteenth Century Bengal
tells us about the changing pattern of rural life in Bengal
in the later 19th century for which the infusion of foreign
legal ideas was partly responsible. We are however not con-
cerned with the broader problem of the impact of law on
Indian society but specifically with that part of the law
which provoked sharp reactions among the public - in other
words, the criminal procedure code.
appeals in the new code was however generally disliked. There was no uniformity of feeling about the jury as to its good or bad effects. Similarly there was more animosity against the police in some regions than in others.

The one issue on which Indian public opinion was wholly united concerned the privileges of Europeans before the law. 'There is nothing to justify this invidious distinction ... the exceptional privileges enjoyed by Europeans in this country in the matter of criminal trials', wrote the Hindu Reformer in Bombay at the very rumour of what the new criminal code was likely to enact.¹ The Native Opinion reflected on the helplessness of the rural population under such a law. If a zamindar, 'even a very big, rich and influential one' committed a crime, a couple of years in jail 'would not only cool his head for ever but cool the heads of many others in his position'. But what could be done to a planter, invariably European? In this context the same newspaper related a 'typical' instance of injustice such law was bound to lead to. Roger Bainbridge, magistrate in Saran district, northern Bihar, had found a poor ryot confined in the godowns of a certain factory in the town of Mirgunj. Bainbridge committed the planter to the court of sessions where he was fined 300 rupees. But 'other ignorant

¹ The Hindu Reformer, 12 January 1872 in R. N. P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1872.
Natives, who abetted him' reported the Native Opinion, were all sentenced to hard labour and a few years of imprisonment.¹ Reading the report of the select committee on the future jurisdiction of European British subjects in 1872, the Native Opinion could hold its anger no more. In an article entitled 'Race Legislation: our New Criminal Code' it wrote:

While men like the Hon'ble Sir Albert Sassoon and Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy are amenable to the jurisdiction of any Magistrate in the land, be he a J.P. or not, be his colour what it may, a British-born mechanic is not so. No Magistrate unless he is a J.P. and also a British-born subject, can call him to account for any offence whatever ... Upon what principles we ask can such distinctions and inequalities be justified?²

There was some hope among these Indians that the privilege which had allowed the Europeans to be tried only by the High Courts at the presidency towns for over a decade would be done away with as more Indians were being put in positions of power with the progress of the nineteenth century. Referring to some of the important posts open to Indians at the time the Native Opinion of 11 February 1872 wrote:

A Native Civilian may become a Political Resident or a Commissioner, or if he proves his competence he may even aspire to enter into the Council Chamber. But if he be in the Mofussil, he must not think of trying

¹. Native Opinion, 14 January 1872.
². Native Opinion, 9 June 1872.
even a common pickpocket if he be a European British subject.

The Arunodaya claimed that such a law would be a sin against Christianity. ¹

Apart from the principle of equality being violated, the complaint was that the law caused much personal inconvenience to the mofussil Indians. In a petition to the viceroy the Bombay Association explained the difficulties which arose in some detail.

A large number of Europeans scattered over the country, and residing in the interior, [the Bombay Association wrote] violate the law with impunity, whilst only a limited number of offenders, who are sent to the High Court at a very heavy charge to the state and serious inconvenience to the people, are brought to trial before a purely European British Jury. The necessity of being obliged to leave their homes and abandon their trade or profession for several weeks, in some cases, months, in order to proceed to the Presidency to prosecute European offenders, compel the large mass of your petitioner's countrymen, who reside in the mofussil, to suffer the wrongs inflicted on them, and to give up the idea of seeking redress at an enormous sacrifice ... During the last two years no less than 43 cases have been sent up to Bombay from different and distant parts of this Presidency for trial by the High Court. Of these cases only three were charged for murder, three for homicide not amounting to murder, and two for forgery ... the others were acquitted and discharged. The remaining 35 cases were for misdemeanours and petty offences. Of these there were 4 cases of grievous hurt, 9 cases of theft, in which the value of the stolen property ranged from 4 rupees to Rs. 133 ... In all these cases the number of witnesses for the prosecution ranged

¹. Arunodaya, 18 February 1872 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1872.
from 5 to 32, and they were detained from 2 weeks to 3 months in connection with each trial ...
Many of these cases came from such great distances as Mekran, Rajpootana, Deesa, Jubulpore, Bhosawul, Carwar, Belgaum, Asserghur, Jacobabad and Kurrachee. 1

In the Punjab and north western India, however, vernacular newspapers contended that if such a privilege for the European was to remain, it should also be extended to at least a few Indians. 'In case an absolute reversal [of the policy towards European British subjects] thereof should appear to be undesirable', as the Puttiala Akhbar put it,

it should at least be modified so far as to extend to the élite among the natives the privilege of having their cases tried only by the High Court, which is now enjoyed exclusively by Europeans, in order that the partial distinction now existing between the two peoples may be removed to some extent. It could not be unreasonable that among a population of 19 crores of natives, there should not be even one or two thousand persons, at least, who might be assumed to be equal in respectability to the common people of Europe. 2

Similar views were echoed by the Urdu Guide and the Punjabi Akhbar and the Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Punjab among others. 3

Makran is in Baluchistan, Deesa is in Palanpur district, Western India, Jubulpore is in the Central Provinces; Bhosawul, Karwar and Belgaum are in Bombay, Asirgurh is in Central Provinces and Jacobabad in Sind.


Reaction in Madras presidency was one of fear. There it was believed that the law, though prejudicial to Europeans, would not affect wealthy and educated Indians adversely — specially those Indians who, according to the Paschima Taraka Kerala Pataka, "[had] intercourse with Europeans in Travancore and Cochin". The danger lay elsewhere. 'Suppose' wrote the Sathiavurthamani that a Sahib beats his horse-keeper to death on some distant hills; suppose that the horse-keeper's relations do not hear of his death for some months, that no trace of the body can be found, and that no special witnesses come forward to give evidence; in such a case would the Special Magistrates convict, and, if not, what remedy is there against the offender?

The same article concluded on the note that it cannot be asserted that the Legislature pays no regard to differences of caste, blood and colour.'

Several complaints of Europeans being favoured in law-suits were cited by the regional vernacular journals as argument against the new law. The Native Opinion in Bombay narrated in its columns the case of Regina versus Sheppard then brought for trial before the Bombay High Court. William Sheppard, who was a European planter in Dhar in Central India, it was alleged, had set fire to Hazarimull's hut and had killed his calf. Hazarimull, who was a cowherd in a nearby village, was sitting

by his fire with two others one winter evening, inside the hut. All of a sudden sounds of shooting were heard, and within minutes a European turned up armed with gun and sword and accompanied by two Indians. William Sheppard wanted to be shown the road to Dhar. Hazarimull agreed to send his son with them as soon as the lad had finished his meal. But the chance never came. In the meanwhile Sheppard surprised his audience by drawing his sword and pointing it at them. In panic they fled while Sheppard evidently went at the calf standing under a shed nearby, wounded it, and set fire to both the hut and the shed. The damage was calculated at 84 rupees. But Sheppard was let off without punishment as the jury failed to find him guilty.¹ The Native Opinion condemned this as 'a failure of justice'.² The Marathi weekly Dnyan Prakash, commenting on the same case, wrote that this could only happen because the 'English jury was partial to European criminals charged with crimes against the natives of this country.'³ According to that journal the law had left the judges helpless against the jury.

The Punjabi Akhbar related the story of a European officer who was known to have entered the shrine of a Muslim saint in Sylhet (in Eastern Bengal) and shot at pigeons and

other birds which flocked there, and which were as sacred 'as the birds within the enclosure of the temple of Mecca'. One of the wounded pigeons fell into the house of the guardian of the shrine. The English officer thereupon entered the guardian's house, even after being forbidden to do so, to take away the bird. The guardian of the shrine sued the officer for 'criminal trespass'; the officer sued the guardian 'for use of abusive language'. While the officer was fined 5 rupees by the local magistrate, the guardian was sent to prison for a month and fined 50 rupees as well. On that the Punjabi Akhbar wrote: 'The distinction between races is thus carried to the extreme'.

Several years later, in 1877, the Oudh Akhbar was found repeating the complaint.

The law favours Europeans against Natives ... Any indulgence to the former in matters of criminal justice which affects both life and property is not a mere indulgence to them, but, on the contrary, it is an oppression to the natives. Any Government officer - European as well as Native - can try and punish a native offender, but the cognizance of crimes committed by Europeans is fenced about by many conditions. The prevalence of a general complaint against British justice is nothing but the result of this distinction. Were the law to recognize no such distinction, no European would have dared to use violence towards natives in every street and thoroughfare.

2. Oudh Akhbar, 16 May 1877 in Ibid., 1877, pp. 341-42.
While the law had taken away one privilege from the European in India in 1872 - the right of trial by High Courts exclusively - it had substituted another in its place. But for the Indians it was all the same, one discrimination making way for another. While the people in the villages could do little but learn to live with it, public-spirited Indians, whether in town or in village, never tired of carrying on their little agitations.

After the privileges of the Europeans, the next target was the police. In the North Western Provinces and the neighbouring Punjab the police became almost the sole focus of dissatisfaction. Common crime in those regions consisted mainly of small thefts and some dacoity. Incidents of kitchens being broken into, and property such as kettles and simple utensils being carried away was quite typical of small thefts.\(^1\) Banias and weavers being robbed of their property worth anything between 50 rupees and 100 rupees was also a common form.\(^2\) Dacoities were mostly gang robberies where at least a group of four or five thieves would attack a marriage party on its way to the ceremony, or an inhabited house at night, armed with lathis and swords. All available valuables would be taken away, and any attempt at resistance

1. Oudh Akhbar, 30 July 1872 in S.V.P., 1872, p. 413.
2. Saiyid-ul-Akhbar, 1 February 1874 and Oudh Akhbar, 19 July 1872 in S.V.P., 1874, p. 45 and ibid., 1872, pp. 394-95. respectively.
on the part of the inhabitants would end up in killings.¹

Almost everywhere in the north the complaint was that
the police were oppressive, interfering in the lives of the
people—and often dishonest. In an article on the way
in which police investigations were conducted, the Karnamah
wrote that 'truth was converted into falsehood and vice
versa'.² Echoing the opinions of the Karnamah, the Urdu
Guide wrote that in cases of dacoity or murder 'the police,
instead of endeavouring to find out the offenders—in the
former, arrest innocent men as being guilty of the offence,
and in the latter, charge the deceased with having committed
suicide.'³ The same newspaper sympathised with the govern­
ment for having assigned 'liberal salaries' to Police
Inspectors 'in order to prevent them from taking bribes'.
It was a pity, thought the Urdu Guide, that the government
should be thus defeated in its object.

In its leader on the police the Allygurh Institute
Gazette warned judicial officers not to place 'too much
reliance on their reports in passing judgement on criminal
cases, unless they have satisfied themselves as to the truth
by means of personal and private investigations.'⁴ The

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¹ Kukhbir-i-jadid, 2 August and Roznamcha, 9 September 1872 in S.V.P., 1872, pp.426,554; also Rohilkund Akhbar, 14 February, 1874 in ibid., 1874, p. 69.
² Karnamah, 1 July 1872 in S.V.P., 1872, pp. 354-55.
⁴ Allygurh Institute Gazette, 27 September 1872 in S.V.P., 1872, p. 629.
Akmal-ul-Akhbar, in its turn, questioned the propriety of leaving the prosecution of criminal cases committed to court by the police in their hands. According to that journal the police usually attended the court with the criminals and conducted discussions there 'like pleaders and mookhtars'. The Urdu Akhbar went so far as to say that the police themselves were responsible for the prevalence of theft in India at the time. The editor began by saying that robberies had become 'as common in this age as/the native rulers of India such as Neer Khan or the Mahratta rulers ... Nothing is more common in these days than to hear of gangs of thieves entering houses with lathis and other weapons, wounding the residents, and carrying away their property'. Commenting on the role of the police in these incidents, the Urdu Akhbar wrote 'The police are only a poor defence. Even where they are honest, and do not carry on an intrigue with thieves, they find it beyond their powers to cope with criminals.'

Following the same trend the Rohilkhund Akhbar, a journal of the Central Provinces, wrote on 12 April 1873: 'The very persons who lose their property are called to account for the theft, although the fact is that the police officers are often themselves guilty of the crime, or have a secret understanding with the thieves.'

1. Akmal-ul-Akhbar, 8 December 1872 in S.V.P., 1873, pp. 24-25.
3. Rohilkhund Akhbar, 12 April 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, pp. 263-64.
The city of Delhi, according to the Khair Khwah-i-Alam, wrote had been taken over by the police ever since the Mutiny. Thus it/

Each constable, to say nothing of the Deputy Inspectors and the Inspectors of Police, is a lord of his sphere, and they are all on the most familiar terms with budmashes. Poor persons who have no money to satisfy the rapacity of policemen have no resources but to submit to their oppressions ... Should any criminal case happen, the police take advantage of it to vent their fury on the gentlemen of the city.[Delhi].

Illustrating the behaviour of Delhi policemen, the editor of this paper reported that 'they manage to drop a few counterfeit coins into the pockets of passers-by ... and then by threatening to take them to the Court, compel them to pay whatever they may have with them at the time.' The Allygurh Institute Gazette also referred to a similar sad state of affairs in Delhi in several of its columns.² According to the Koh-i-Nur 'the present police force' were worse than the thieves and budmashes whom they are meant to suppress... Taking advantage of the law which leaves the owner of the stolen property at liberty to withdraw his complaint, they do all they can by fraud or force to make the sufferer hush the matter up.³

Writing towards the end of the decade, the Vakil-i-Hindusthan was of opinion that considering the 'frequent complaints that reach the Government against the illegal proceedings of the

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1. Khair Khwah-i-Alam, 5 July 1873 in J.V.P., 1873, pp.469-70.
police', the government ought to be convinced 'by this time that the police department far from serving any useful purpose is oppressing the people.'

A different kind of grievance against the police in the north came from their attempting to discipline the lives of the people during periods of religious activity. The Benares Akhbar, writing of the approaching Buddha Luxtapal fair at Benaras, warned the authorities against the conduct of the police on such occasions and 'the discontent created by it among the people.' A specific complaint was that instead of going about in the boat set apart for the police for the supervision of other boats, they pushed their own boat 'close to the scenes of dancing and show, removing all others, in order themselves to enjoy the sport best.' On the occasion of another fair, the Ram Naumi, usually held at Fyzabad, the police were accused of having ill-treated the pilgrims who had gone to the fair. According to the Roznamcha, the police at Fyzabad forbade the pilgrims to travel on the main road and instead sent them away on 'a round-about and difficult route'.

A correspondent of the Punjabi Akhbar reported that police constables of the Kirzapore police force

1. Yakil-i-Hindusthan, 19 May 1877 in S.V.P., 1877, p. 363.
2. Benaras Akhbar, 13 March 1873 in Ibid., 1873, p. 171.
3. Roznamcha, 12 April 1873 in Ibid., 1873, pp. 279-80.
4. Punjabi Akhbar, 2 March 1872 in Ibid., 1872, pp. 143-44.
had made it a practice of disturbing the worshippers in a certain temple during their prayers.

Thus in the discussion touched off by the criminal procedure bill, it was the behaviour of the police and not the law itself that seemed to engage distressed attention in the north. Their only complaint against the law seems to have been in the leniency of punishment. 'The English Law inflicts very light punishment on thieves' wrote the Urdu Akhbar on 24 March 1873. A different newspaper, Oudh Akhbar in fact advocated 'the principle of limb for limb, life for life'. Besides imprisonment, according to the Oudh Akhbar, thieves also deserved 'corporal chastisement'. Methods suggested by the same paper consisted of 'flogging daily while in jail, say, for a month'. Moreover where fervent loyalty mixed with blood-thirstiness and a somewhat imperfect awareness of the state of affairs in England, remarkable outbursts could be the result. Thus a writer in the Delhi Gazette, obviously obsessed by thieves and murderers set down what he thought ought to be 'a more adequate punishment' for murderers of Europeans.

First he shall be branded in the forehead with a large "M" [wrote the Delhi Gazette] to denote his crimes. Second, his arms shall be amputated above

1. Urdu Akhbar, 24 March 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, p. 214.
2. Oudh Akhbar, 23 August 1872 in Ibid., 1872, pp. 489-90.
the elbow. Third he shall be transported to England for 21 years, sent round the Cape confined in an iron cage, whipped once a month ... exhibited with the wild beasts in the Tower of London during the whole period of his transportation. Fourth, if he then survives, put to death by decapitation. his body given for dissection, and buried if the felon be a Mussulman, and burned if he be a Hindoo. ¹

It is well to remember that hanging was the usual punishment for murder under English law.

That being their criticism of English criminal law, the inhabitants of northern India were on the whole glad of its existence. Other minor criticisms of the working of criminal law consisted in complaining of the delay caused by the judges of the Sessions Courts in taking decisions on criminal cases sent up to them by the subordinate courts 'not on account of excess of work', the Akhbar-i-Alam wrote on 3 October 1872, 'but simply through idleness'.² That the jury system was held in some regard is apparent from the praise it received in some of the local newspapers. Referring to the order of the Punjab government, under section 236 of the new criminal procedure code, fixing the number of persons

¹ Delhi Gazette, n.d. March 1872. I have got the reference from the Pall Mall Gazette, 27 March 1872. This urge for such brutal punishments can be understood in the context of their past history in the sphere of criminal law. This region was the heartland of Muslim criminal law - Delhi, Agra and Lucknow being the seats of Moghul power - for over two centuries. One of the reasons strongly urged for reform of that law by the British was with regard to the brutal punishments in practice. See G.C. Rankin, Background to Indian Law (Cambridge, 1946), pp. 172-80 and M.P. Jain, Outlines of Indian Legal History (Bombay, 1966), pp. 503-10.

² Akhbar-i-Alam, 3 October 1872 in S.V.P., 1872, p. 624.
to compose a jury to assist the Sessions Courts to be nine in Delhi, Lahore and Peshawur, five in Umbulla, Mooltan and Sealkote and three in the other districts, the Akhbar-i-Alam, which belonged to Meerut, denounced it as 'discrepancy' and asked if the people of some districts had greater claims to justice than others.¹

The Allygurh Institute Gazette wrote of the importance of the jury in criminal cases tried before Sessions Court and stressed the importance of selecting the jury with 'great care ... from amongst natives who are learned and acquainted with the law, especially pensioned Government officers.'²

Vernacular journals of Oudh and the Punjab advocated, as one solution to their serious difficulties with the police, an extension in the powers of the magistrates and commissioners of the districts 'so as to make them perfectly independent to try and investigate criminal cases, without the intervention of the Police'.³ Another was sought in demanding recruitment of better men for the police forces, a solution recommended popularly.⁴

Bombay had difficulties with its police as well, but the resentment was neither so intense nor so widespread. In

¹ Akhbar-i-Alam, 20 February 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, pp.133-34.
² Allygurh Institute Gazette, 15 August 1873 in Ibid., pp.544-46.
³ Oudh Akhbar, 6 February 1874 and Punjabi Akhbar, 22 February 1873 in S.V.P., 1874, pp.67-68 and S.V.P., 1873, p.147.
⁴ Mufid-i-Am, 15 January 1873 in S.V.P., 1873, p. 44; Allygurh Institute Gazette, 27 September 1872, in Ibid., 1872, p. 629; Abe-i-Hayat-i-Hind, 15 April 1874 and Koh-i-Nur, 18 April 1874 in Ibid., 1874, pp.159, 161; and Vakil-i-Hindusthan, 19 May 1877 in Ibid., 1877, p. 363.
fact one of the newspapers of the region even spoke of the 'peace and tranquillity prevailing through the breadth and length of the country'. Although this could not be taken too literally, it would be fair to deduce from this that neither criminals nor the police disturbed the life of the presidency and the neighbouring western coast to any extent. The only case exposing the oppressions of the police, reported in the pages of the local press during the seventies, occurred at Nasik, about 75 miles to the north and east of Bombay city. A chief constable of police and two other subordinates had tortured and killed Yemaji, a villager, in the process of inducing him to confess to an offence of theft with which he was charged. Yemaji died after he had been taken into custody by the police. The news created panic in the village where Yemaji lived, Yemaji's daughter, Gami, going mad as a result. A case was instituted by the magistrate at Nasik and sent to Sessions Court at Thana near Bombay. The chief constable was sentenced to ten years hard labour, and his two juniors to five years and three years respectively.

Although the Nasik case evoked a few exasperated comments such as 'This is the Police [the Native Opinion wrote] which guards our liberties and property', the law itself was hailed

1. Native Opinion, 6 April 1873.
2. Native Opinion, 22 June 1873; The Times of India, 21 May 1873.
as 'good and just' by several vernacular journals. 1 What the Bombay press objected to most in the new criminal code was the power given to the appellate courts to increase the punishment on appeal. Reliance on appeals was common to all India: this was one aspect of the system of justice with which they did not like any tampering. 'According to the old law', the Mumbai Samachar explained,

appellate courts could lessen, mitigate, or altogether cancel the sentence of the lower courts, but they had no power to aggravate it. That law encouraged appeals, and thereby decreased the chances of injustice being done through the ignorance or carelessness of the lower courts. 2

The Gujarat Mitra denounced the innovation 'as a virtual abolition of the just right of the people to appeal.' 3 And the Dnyan Prakash warned the government of extreme unpopularity of the measure among the people for whom it has been passed.' 4 So did many of the other papers. 5 It would not be an exaggeration to say that the vernacular press in Bombay was united on this stand. Gujarati and Maharathi newspapers reacted sharply on this one point in the new law.

1. Loka-Kalyanechchu and Arya Mitra both of 3 July 1873 in R.N.P., Bombay, July-Dec. 1873; Nassik Vritt, 29 June 1873 and Belgaum Samachar, 30 June 1873 in Ibid., Jan.-June 1873.
4. Dnyan Prakash, 17 April 1873 in Ibid., Jan.-June, 1873.
5. Surya Daya, 26 May 1873, Samsher Bahadur, 16 April 1873, the Arunodaya, 12 January 1873 in Ibid; also Surya Prakash, 2 January 1875 in Ibid., Jan.-June 1875; and Native Opinion, 17 May 1874.
Some Bombay journals claimed that the few grievances which they had against the system of justice could be largely remedied by appointing Indians as judges of the High Courts. Indians would then have a voice in the judiciary, explained the Indu Prakash. The same paper reminded its government that parliament had authorized local Indian governments 'to appoint Native Judges in the High Court'. Bombay had not done so, although Calcutta had led the way by appointing at least one Bengali as High Court Judge in 1873. Other journals such as Dnyan Chakshu and Rast Goftar pleaded for the same cause.

In Bengal there was less concern over dacoity and crime although an equal, certainly a more pugnacious, annoyance with the police. The Bengali press abused their police in no uncertain terms. Unlike as in the north, complaints against policemen in Bengal were not always quite specific. A very general complaint was that men of culture and position in Bengal, presumably the bhadralok, found it difficult to get along with the police. Only irregular characters, gamblers and the like, could do so. Isolated incidents of clashes between the public and the police brought out the existing tensions in the relationship. But what was more

1. Indu Prakash, 12 May 1876 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1876.
2. Dnyan Chakshu, 26 March 1873, and Rast Goftar, 7 June 1876 in Ibid., Jan.-June 1873 and Jan.-June 1876.
serious in Bengal was the Bengali's grievance against certain aspects of the law: against the law of summary trial and the powers it gave to the magistrates in the districts. A target of more vigorous attack therefore was these magistrates, the police remaining in the background. 'Next to the Police the people hate the Matistrates!', was the fairly representative sentiment of the Amrita Bazar Patrika.¹

What the Bengali objected to was the allegedly highhanded manner of the police. 'The police officials look upon themselves as so many petty nawabs' wrote the Som Prokash. They seem to believe [the Som Prokash continued] that, though it is their duty to protect the life, honour, and property of the subjects from thieves, robbers, and other wicked characters, they have a perfect right to make use of their powers for the attainment of their own objects, for the exhibition of authority, or the promotion of self-glory. To this belief alone are due the manifold oppressions of the police.²

On 8 March 1876 the Bharat Mihir in an editorial appealed to his countrymen 'to unite and memorialize the Government on the oppressions of the Police, which have grown intolerable.' 'The people should no longer remain quiet' concluded the Bharat Mihir.

¹ Amrita Bazar Patrika, 18 March 1876.
² Som Prokash, 12 June 1876.
³ Bharat Mihir, 8 March 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
Oppressions of the police, according to one Bengali journal, took the form of 'entering one's house by force, and not departing till they have beaten the inmates.' This was one reason why, the Sahachar argued 'people of position in the town look upon them as enemies rather than preservers of the peace.' There was also the complaint, the Sahachar continued, that frequently the police failed 'to respond to calls for help when bones were being broken in the open streets.' As in the North Western Provinces or the Punjab, it was urged upon the government to appoint 'better men', 'honest and educated men' as the Hindu Ranjika put it, as policemen. The same paper entreated the government to give up 'the prevailing system of giving promotions to head-constables ... men of no education and of hardly any moral principle.' Characteristically, the Som Prokash made the Hindusthani constables, men from the north, in the Bengal police responsible for it all.

These hate the Bengalis [the Som Prokash wrote] who, in their turn, fear them. Under these circumstances there can be no sympathy between the police and the people. Owing to this want of confidence in the police, the people seek to suppress the faults of each other even when they come to know them.

2. Sahachar, 27 March 1876 in Ibid.
3. Hindu Ranjika, 15 March 1876 in Ibid.
4. There may be some significance in this that to the Bengali the oppressive policeman was primarily the rough Hindusthani from Behar or U.P. Traditionally such men had taken service with the East India Company as sepoys and no doubt most of them drifted into Bengal in search of employment, and were readily absorbed into the poorly-paid police services.
5. Som Prokash, 20 March 1876.
Referring again to the unwanted Hindusthanis the Som Prokash wrote:

There are, in some places, in the Mofussil bands of Hindusthanis who follow but nominally the business of coolies, but in reality are the secret spies of the police... Their intimacy with the police makes them terrible in the eyes of the poor villagers. No one has the courage to speak a single word against them ... The stream of crime and wickedness thus flows strongly in the villages, but the police is not able to stem it.

And its conclusion was that 'the present condition of the police is so unsatisfactory that the people would be better and safer without them.'

However all feelings of exasperation with the police came to a head in Calcutta where a serious incident took place in which the well-known Ghoshal family of the city became involved in a clash with the police. The story given by the newspapers in Bengal, who were mostly unanimous on the issue, was somewhat like this. The Ghoshals, who had a large mansion in College Square, had allowed an old woman, also an inhabitant of the Square, to sit in the compound of their house and sell vegetables. A police chowkidar, who evidently thought she was obstructing the pedestrian pathway, asked her for a bribe in kind or in cash. On her refusing this she was arrested. Hearing of this one of the Ghoshals challenged the policeman and ultimately came to blows with him. A batch of constables was then sent for who, according to the Bengalee, 'beat
everybody they found almost right and left, seriously assaulting almost all the male members of the family."¹

The story as it was presented before the magistrate's court was a little different. Six witnesses testified that the police chowkidar was badly beaten by two members of the Ghoshal family who had come out in support of the woman. They were fined 50 rupees each. In an affidavit submitted by Ram Chundar Ghoshal, the head of the family, he had stated that one of his family had been knocked down by the policeman 'by a blow with his baton'. However no such allegation was reported to have been made either before the investigating officer or the deputy commissioner of Police.² Despite much public agitation the lieutenant governor of Bengal accepted the magistrate's decision, but strongly censured the conduct of the police for having arrested an old woman, 'who was well known in the neighbourhood, and was sitting partly in a private gateway ... and ... that the obstruction, if any, was so trivial as not to call for any interference by the police.'³

That, however, was not enough to satisfy an infuriated press. 'The metropolis of British India' the Bengalee wrote

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1. Bengalee, 4 March 1876.
is no longer fit to be the residence of honest men, when police chowkidars have the real government of the city in their own hands ... The higher police officers support their underlings, and when the case finally comes for hearing before the Magistrate, a number of witnesses easily depose to extraordinary occurrences. The Magistrate's verdict generally is in accord with the facts deposed to.¹

Feelings rose high and the government's rebuke of police conduct in the Ghoshal case gave little relief. 'The constables, sub-inspectors, and inspectors are dreaded more than the higher functionaries of the department,' asserted the Som Prokash 'for it is on their pleasure or displeasure that our weal and woe strongly depend ... The case of the Ghoshal family of College Square is a striking illustration of this fact.' The paper acknowledged the lieutenant governor's disapproval of 'the shortcomings and oppressions of the Police' but was disappointed that nothing had been 'prescribed to prevent the recurrence of similar cases'.² The Sahachar put it aside as only 'a gentle reproof'.³ The Amrita Bazar Patrika in its turn warned the government that the lieutenant governor's resolution on the Ghoshal family case would increase the unpopularity of the police. 'Sir Richard Temple has ... confessed that the police officers do commit injustice and oppression ... the people will, no

¹ Bengalee, 4 March 1876.
² Som Prokash, 12 June 1876.
³ Sahachar, 12 June 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
doubt, take advantage of it, and will no longer submit to be arrested by a policeman, unless he can produce a warrant authorizing such arrest.'

If such was their relations with the police, life with the magistrates in the districts proved many times more difficult for the Bengalis. The new code of criminal procedure had come to be felt, according to the Amrita Bazar Patrika, as a 'code of slavery'. 'By that Code' wrote the Sadharani

the Magistrates were created despots and placed in charge of every district or the sub-divisions of every district ... The trial by jury was abolished; the Magistrates were entrusted with powers of punishing any man and under any circumstances; the appellate courts were empowered to enhance the sentence of the lower court - a novelty in the annals of criminal administration!

Bengali reactions to the 1872 criminal bill were hostile from the beginning, though the seriousness of the dislike was not fully brought out till about the mid-seventies. They were unhappy about the privileges given to the Europeans, but what concerned them more was their own plight before the magistrates. Quite a few of the Bengali journals no doubt agitated over the privileges given to Europeans before the courts of law. But it is important to note that reactions

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15 June 1876.
2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29 June 1876.
3. Sadharani, 1 March 1876.
4. Bengalee, 4 January 1873; Hindoo Patriot, 6 January 1873; Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 March 1873.
in Bengal on this score remained comparatively subdued. Criticism against the new law of appeals was perhaps stronger in the Bengali press. Section 272 of the new code of criminal procedure allowed the government the right of appeal against a verdict of acquittal by the Court of First Instance. What was objected to by the Bengali press was that all such cases of appeal preferred by the local government in the course of the years 1872 to 1876, turned upon pure questions of fact and credibility of witnesses, and there was no suggestion whatever of the court having gone wrong on a point of law. This meant harassment to the witnesses, in the first place, several journals complained, and in the second the arrest of the accused on suspicion of having committed the very offence for which he had already been tried and acquitted.¹

Reaction to the introduction of summary trials was the strongest as it had given more power to the magistrates. Many of the district newspapers spoke of 'the fear' this 'new power' had aroused in the mofussil. The Barisal Bartabaha, a paper published from the district of Barisal in Eastern Bengal, described it as 'the power of avenging themselves [the magistrates] on their enemies.'²

¹ Hindoo Patriot, 25 December 1876; Som Prokash, 3 January 1877; Sadharani, 1 August 1875; also Hindu Hitoishini, 8 March 1873 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1873.

for vengeance should not characterize legal enactments' was a verdict from the Dacca Prakash.¹ And as early as February 1873 the Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote that many magistrates were 'filling the jails.'²

These early paranoid reactions gained some justification later on in the decade when, in certain cases, some of the magistrates were shown up for having taken their legal powers a bit too seriously and not always with justice. One of the first incidents, involving a municipal commissioner and a magistrate, happened at Chittagong in Eastern Bengal where Lal Chand Chowdhuri, municipal commissioner and wealthy zamindar, was arrested by Kirkwood, the local magistrate. Lal Chand was evidently opposed to the levy of a tax on public lavatories. At a municipal meeting, held on 24 April 1876, he opposed its introduction and advised the people who had come to the meeting to petition the lieutenant governor on the subject. At the next meeting of the municipal committee, which took place within a week, Lal Chand was turned out of the room by Kirkwood and was asked to guard two public lavatories. On the 3 May he was arrested.³

When news got round of the municipal commissioner's arrest the people of Chittagong town organized a 'violent

². Amrita Bazar Patrika, 27 February 1873.
³. Municipal Proceedings, Bengal, September 1876, Part A, nos.16-17, vol.923, also Bengalee, 13 May and 3 June 1876.
demonstration', according to the commissioner of the division, in protest.\(^1\)

A more tricky incident occurred when the Mahesh Rath / festival, one of Bengal's important religious ceremonies, was brought to a halt in the year 1876 by the then magistrate of Hooghly. This festival included the dragging of the Mahesh chariot from Serampore, near Calcutta, through a long and specified route. Thousands of pilgrims followed the chariot on foot. With the advancement of municipal administration in the Indian districts certain rules began to be laid down on 'the proper steps to be taken to prevent accidents' on this long dragging journey. On 23 June 1876, the eve of the festival, Biswambar Bose, proprietor of the Mahesh car, was told that he had not taken these steps and therefore the procession could not be permitted. The magistrate's suggestion had been to place 'a beam as a cross-bar at a certain distance from the car whilst in motion'. In addition 'a fly-board was to be put', also according to the magistrate's instructions, 'to the first platform in front of the car down to the level of the car' to prevent any person who accidentally fell down from getting under the wheels. The proprietor was, however, doubtful about the advisability of these arrangements and made this known.

\(^1\) Divisional and District Annual Reports, Chittagong Division, 1875-76, by E.E. Lowis, Commissioner, para.64, p. 13.
officially. He did however ultimately comply. Nevertheless the procession was not allowed.¹

The lieutenant governor of Bengal, to whom the case was ultimately sent, took strong exception to the order of the magistrate, prohibiting the dragging of the Mahesh car. Sir Richard Temple obviously saw its dangers and wrote that although the manager (or proprietor of the car) seems to have shown a spirit of opposition, and had consequently delayed in complying with the magistrate's directions, this did not justify the issue of the irregular order which appears to have afforded the manager just occasion for some at least of the complaints and appeals which were subsequently preferred by him.²

An altogether different matter troubled the magistrate of Malda, Herbert Kosley, who arrested two men who were seen digging near a newly-built embankment in the town of Malda, in western Bengal. These two men were evidently repairing the fence of a mango garden owned by the Maharaja of Burdwan. The garden surrounded the said embankment. The two men were summarily tried by Kosley and sentenced to two years hard labour on the charge of 'causing damage to the bund [embankment]'.

Press agitation in Bengal over the incident drew the lieutenant governor's attention³ and he, without censuring

² Letter from R.I. Wangles, Secretary to Govt. of Bengal, Judicial department, 28 August 1876 in Ibid., September, 1876, Part A, no.22, vol.921.
³ Ibid., also see Bengalee, 16 September 1876, Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1 October 1876, Sadharani, 28 August 1876, Sulav Samachar, 9 July 1877, Indian Mirror, 1 January 1877.
the conduct of the magistrate, concluded that the sentence was 'too severe': 'a fine in this case,' according to the lieutenant governor, 'and the issue of an intimation to all concerned, with a view to prevent the recurrence of such offences in future would have sufficed.'

The magistrate and collector of Rajshahi, Thomas D'Oyly, also sentenced a man to rigorous imprisonment in a case which involved the death of one of D'Oyly's five dogs. All five of these dogs had been taken out for exercise by his servant, one afternoon, when they met a goat. The dogs rushed at the goat, the servant being unable to keep them away, and the smallest one of the lot managed to get hold of the goat by the throat. At that moment a passer-by, a school lad of about 17, got hold of a stick and hit the little dog on its head hoping to release the goat. The little dog died and a case was instituted by the police against the lad at the magistrate's request. The boy was accused of having hit the dog with the intention of killing it, and was therefore sent to prison for three weeks hard labour.

Once again the lieutenant governor, Sir Richard Temple, was made to take it up, and this time he was more severe with

the magistrate than before. A resolution of the government of Bengal on the issue said that the defendant could not have had any evil motive ... he ought to have been allowed at least the benefit of a doubt. All this ought to have been weighed by Mr. D'Oyly before he sent the matter to the police. By so sending it [the resolution continued] he became indirectly answerable for the prosecution which followed, and for the public mischief which has resulted in bringing the administration of justice under grave discussion.¹

The lieutenant governor also made it clear that there was 'great objection' to the head of the district appearing, even indirectly, as a prosecutor before one of the courts of his own district.

The conduct of another district magistrate came in for even greater censure in what was perhaps the most violent incident of the decade. Robert Augustus Fuller, an English pleader at Agra, was getting ready to go to church on a Sunday when he noticed that his syce was not there to open the door of his coach for him. Katwaroo, the syce, arrived as soon as he was sent for. But by then Fuller had lost his temper. Katwaroo, who was assaulted, fell down but rose immediately afterwards and ran away to the adjoining compound where he fell again, this time to die. Unaware of what had happened, the Fullers proceeded to church.

Katwaroo's death took Robert Fuller to Henry Leeds who was then the joint magistrate at Agra, and a justice of the

peace. Fuller reported that he had struck Katwaroo on his head and face but nowhere else. On post mortem it was found that the man had died from 'a rupture of the spleen' which had been in a 'highly inflamed' state for some time. Four witnesses came, and three of them stated that Katwaroo had been kicked on the stomach. The only other witness, who was Fuller's coach driver, remained silent on that point. Leeds, however, ruled that it was 'prima facie improbable that a European would kick his servant in the stomach. On these grounds I decline', he wrote,

to accept a statement which, if true, would greatly aggravate the character of the offence, and render a committal necessary ... I have accordingly framed a charge under section 323, to which the accused pleads guilty ... Taking all the circumstances fully and fairly into consideration I am of opinion that the accused was guilty of voluntarily causing what distinctly amounts to hurt ... thus the illegality of his conduct must be marked by a fine which shall be something more than nominal. Fuller's punishment was not more than a fine of 30 rupees.

The matter however did not rest there. The local government of the North Western Provinces, obviously unhappy with the results, asked for the High Court's opinion on the adequacy of punishment. According to the High Court a 'higher fine' would have been a better punishment, but no


more. Ultimately 'certain notices in the vernacular press' drew the attention of the Government of India to the Fuller case. Papers were called for from the government of the North Western Provinces. A memorandum was drawn up by the viceroy and his council strongly criticizing the conduct of Henry Leeds, and the High Court's opinion. 'We believe', the memorandum said,

in the first place that Mr. Leeds had shown a grave want of discretion in dealing with the case himself, and that he might and ought to have remitted to a superior the questions both of the legal degree of guilt attaching to the acts of the accused, and of the proper degree of punishment applicable thereto. We considered, in the second place, that even supposing Mr. Leeds had acted rightly in dealing with the case himself, the penalty which he inflicted on the accused was scandalously inadequate, and in fact, purely nominal."

The High Court in their turn resented an executive censure. Robert Fuller's misdeeds were then taken up at the India Council in London with Lord Salisbury presiding. All the council members except Sir Erskine Perry voted to support Lytton's move. Referring to 'a conflict in evidence' - the three witnesses claiming that the deceased was hit on the stomach, and the fourth 'remaining silent on that point' - Lord Salisbury wrote that, under the circumstances, it was

1. Despatch No. 37 of 1876, Home, Govt. of India, Judicial, 12 October 1876 in Parl. Papers, 1877, vol. LXIII, pp. 343-47.
2. Minute by Chief Justice Sir Robert Stuart, K.W.P., respecting the resolution of the Govt. of India on the Fuller case in ibid., pp. 359 ff.
the magistrate's duty

to remit the matter to a higher Court for trial, both because such a Court would have been more competent to sift the evidence on which the character of the offence depended, and also because, even if no graver offence had been brought home to Mr. Fuller than that of which he was actually convicted, the higher Court would have possessed a far larger latitude of punishment.¹

Victorious in London, Lord Lytton's efforts also brought him gratitude in India. It was expressed by the vernacular press in different parts of the country 'on behalf of the people', as the Bharat Mihir in Bengal put it.

Such cases of Europeans murdering natives [the journal continued] have been, indeed, numerous, but no Viceroy, before Lord Lytton, has taken any special notice of them. Fortunately for the poor millions ... the matter has called forth some severe remarks from him.²

Even the pugnacious Amrita Bazar Patrika calmed down for a moment, and wrote: 'Lord Lytton has surprised the Indian world by his generosity ... he has condemned the action of a Magistrate who let off a homicide with a nominal fine.'³

The Indu Prakash in Bombay described Lytton's move as 'A praiseworthy attempt of Lord Lytton to preserve the good name of British justice.'⁴ A Gujarati paper, Swadesh Mitra, called it 'A Voice from the Heavens'.⁵

2. Bharat Mihir, 10 August 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
5. Swadesh Mitra, 22 July 1876 in ibid.
26 July 1876 observed that it was 'seldom' that a viceroy could come forward 'and advocate equal justice between the Europeans and the Natives'.

The only thing that annoyed the vernacular Indian press during these shortlived celebrations was the reaction of the Anglo-Indian press to Lytton's stand on the Fuller case. The Anglo-Indian journals supported the High Court version in the debate, and were opposed to any undermining of what they considered was legal authority. The Bombay Gazette rebuked the viceroy for his 'injudicious scolding' and went on to say that

it is easy for any Viceroy to earn a cheap reputation from a certain section of the inhabitants of India by the publication of attacks of this description upon High Courts, Magistrates and Europeans generally; but we say that the process of doing so is so dangerous that it would be wiser eventually for a statesman to employ all his brain upon forms of Court millinery than to waste even a fraction of them upon efforts to bring our judicial tribunals into discredit and to stir up bad feelings between the dominant race and the natives of India.

And the Bombay Gazette was not alone in reacting against, what the Englishman chose to call, 'Lord Lytton's lecture to the High Court'. 'The Judges of the High Court', the Englishman wrote


2. The Bombay Gazette, 19 October 1876.
as individuals, are responsible for their conduct to the Crown alone, in exactly the same measure as the Viceroy himself. The High Courts as judicial tribunals are paramount within the scope of their judicial duties, to the Governor-General, so that this attack is not only indecorous but it is puerile; and yet for all one knows it might be fraught with incalculable mischief.¹

The Pioneer was only worried that so much fuss over Robert Fuller would lead to 'gross misconceptions' in England with regard to the behaviour of Englishmen in India.²

Certainly such opinions did not go down well with the vernacular press in the country. To the Native Opinion the Anglo-Indian papers were like 'a nest of hornets'. 'It is however very edifying to see,' wrote the Native Opinion, 'how the slightest castigation applied to one or more Europeans, sets a portion of the Anglo-Indian press on fire.'³ The Amrita Bazar Patrika was, on the other hand, more exasperated than edified as it wrote:

The only strong point that they urge against the strong measure of Lord Lytton is that it will render European life in India unsafe. Or, in other words, if the Europeans are not allowed to knock down natives now and then, the natives may in their turn knock them down. But give them one chance. You never gave them that.⁴

The good results of the Fuller episode however did not enough go far/to restore faith in Bengal. The Mahesh Car case,

1. The Englishman, 25 July 1876.
2. The Pioneer, 14 November 1876.
Lal Chand Chowdhuri's arrest, Mosley's overbearing magistracy, the fate of the boy in the D'Oyly dog case were so many irritants to the agitated sections of the community. Though far away from the scenes of these incidents the Bombay press did not fail to take notice of some. Kirkwood's treatment of Lal Chand Chowdhuri was dealt with in detail by the Native Opinion in an article entitled 'Justice dearly bought'. Referring to Lal Chand's ultimate triumph over the magistrate the Native Opinion pointed out that the proceedings of the case had cost him 'upwards of Rs 5000/-, whereas all it cost Kirkwood was a transfer to a better district'. ¹ A similar opinion on the case was expressed by the Yajdan Parast.² Commenting on Herbert Mosley's 'unjust conduct' and Thomas D'Oyly's 'cruelty' the Mumbai Samachar wrote an article on the 'sad plight ... of the Bengali peoples ... under the New Criminal Procedure Code.'³

The press in the North Western Provinces wrote many distressed articles. 'The English blow and the native spleen': this was the Punjabi Akhbar's way of describing Katwaroo's death. 'Now it has been pretty well established by experience [the Punjabi Akhbar continued] that most of

1. Native Opinion, 18 June 1876.
the natives have diseased spleens. It would, therefore, be a matter of great convenience to Europeans, who are well trained in the art of striking blows, were a general rate of compensation fixed for the loss of life of a native.'

The Mutla-i-Nur of 17 April 1877 counted the number of Indians killed. 'In almost all instances the murderers escaped scot-free on the plea of a rupture of the spleen', the Mutla-i-Nur wrote. A demand was put forward for Indian judges since, as the Oudh Akhbar put it, the law favours Europeans against natives. Other local journals, the Safir-i-Hindusthan and the Lama-i-Nur for example, echoed the demand.

The Bengali press, being closer to most of the unhappy scenes, had much more to say. The Hindu Hitoishini perhaps summed up the general discontent when it wrote that it was 'owing to the indifference which the Lieutenant Governor has ... shown, in awarding condign punishment to Mr. Kirkwood and others, the oppressions of the Magistrates in the mofussil are daily increasing with greater virulence'. The Saptahik Samachar concentrated on the Mosley incident, and wrote

2. Mutla-i-Nur, 17 April 1877 in ibid., p. 274.
3. Oudh Akhbar, 16 May 1877 in ibid., p. 341.
4. Safir-i-Hindusthan, 12 May and Lama-i-Nur, 29 April 1877 in ibid., pp. 343, 344 respectively.
5. Hindu Hitoishini, 23 September 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
Mosley, seeing no other way of effectively discharging his duties, arranged to send two inoffensive fellows to prison. The power of the Magistrates has all along been great; but Mr. Stephen's Criminal Procedure Code has made it greater. From it there is no escape for anyone, be he a zamindar or a tenant, rich or poor. The Magistrate may send one to jail when it pleases him; and there is no appeal from his decision. The summary process has been productive of extremely injurious consequences.¹

Of D'Oyly it was written by the Murshidabad Patrika, 'Such officers as these have indeed brought disgrace upon the British Government'.² Other local newspapers in Rajshahi appealed to the government to save D'Oyly's victim, a student of the local Rajshahi school.³ Obviously disappointed with Richard Temple's Minute on the Mahesh Car festival, the Bengalee wrote:

Like all Sir Richard's Minutes it throws oil over troubled waters by means of popular platitudes regarding religious neutrality and the necessity of protecting human life. A blind uncle is better than no uncle at all, says the Bengalee proverb.⁴

Much of the grievance focussed on the summary procedure. Referring to a comment made by the lieutenant governor of Bengal that 'summary procedure' had overcome 'the disfavour and apprehension with which the measure was at one time regarded by some important classes of the community', the

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¹ Saptahik Samachar, 20 June 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
² Murshidabad Patrika, 4 August 1876 in ibid.
³ Pratikar, 4 August 1876 in ibid.
⁴ Bengalee, 16 September 1876.
Amrita Bazar Patrika promptly wrote, 16 November 1876:

To prove that the summary procedure is unpopular, His Honor must seek the opinions of the people, and not the officials ... In India the exponent of public opinion is admittedly the native newspapers. But we should like to know if there is a single newspaper which has ever advocated the cause of summary trials.¹

'The summary powers have proved an engine of oppression' stressed the Bengalee

in the hands of tyrannical, ignorant or unscrupulous officers. The people of the country are not advanced enough to bring every case of oppression to light. But through the instruments of the Press, and decisions of High Courts, some disclosures are made.²

The Som Prakash thought that a possible solution to these difficulties could be found in appointing Indians as district magistrates. 'A native Magistrate', the Som Prakash explained

will understand the feelings of natives as no European could ever do. A European Collector, for instance, stops the celebration of ceremonies prescribed by the ancestors of a minor, entirely ignorant of the extent to which the feelings of the family are thus wounded. A native Collector would never do this. He would never send a respectable Hindoo to guard a public latrine ... The ends of justice will be promoted, and the country immensely benefited, by the appointment of natives to District Magistrates.³

Other newspapers joined the Som Prakash in its demand for an Indian judiciary. Among them the Sahachar put in a

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 November 1876.
2. Bengalee, 5 August 1876.
3. Som Prakash, 14 August 1876.
word in its moderate way: 'We do not ask the Government to confer all the District Magistracies on our countrymen. We simply say' the Sahachar wrote 'that it should now and then promote them to the higher judicial offices... If this proposal were carried into effect, we should rejoice.' The Bharat Mihir, writing from the district town of Myemensingh in Eastern Bengal, claimed to know 'the people's views' on the subject.

They all [wrote the Bharat Mihir] with one voice, give preference to native officers. Ask any litigant or witness, who has at any time stood before an English official, whether he prefers an English to a native Judge. He will at once answer that he can speak out his sentiments with greater freedom before the latter than before the former; he prefers his own countrymen to foreigners. Besides, native Judges understand the language, the manners, and customs of the natives far better than the Europeans. 2

The Biswa Suhrid also spoke of the confidence of the 'common people' in the Indians whom they knew as moonsifs and subordinate judges. The same paper asserted that even the 'Native Newspapers' were 'unanimous on this point', and were not the newspapers 'supposed to represent the feelings of the native public?'3 The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote that Indians who wanted to be magistrates and judges were quite prepared to go through the 'ordeal' of an examination for

1. Sahachar, 18 September 1876 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1876.
2. Bharat Mihir, 27 October 1876 in ibid.
3. Biswa Suhrid, 1 November 1876 in ibid.
the purpose. Thus the question which really worried these Bengalis was not whether the law should stay or go — but in whose hands the law should stay.

The introduction of the criminal procedure code and its administration thus showed up a singular side to the British Raj in India. On the one hand there were men who were preparing laws to make justice speedier and more effective. On the other hand there were the men to whom the Law appeared in the shape of a village policeman, strange Hindusthani 'toughs' and oppressive magistrates. It was, as it were, the wrong side of the law. And viewed from this side the pious intentions of the law-givers did not carry conviction. The public mind in India thus became aware of its government once again through a sense of indignity and insecurity. The government would have been vastly surprised had it known of this process.

1. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 October 1876.
CHAPTER VII. THE SHACKLING OF THE VERNACULAR PRESS

The seventies closed on a somewhat turbulent, yet decisive, note. The government had at last reached a unanimous decision on controlling the vernacular press in India. Act IX of 1878, an act for 'the better control of publications in Oriental languages' was passed on March 14th of that year. It was to control 'seditious writing' in the vernacular newspapers everywhere in the country, except the south. It was to check the practice of blackmail alleged against some of the vernacular editors. Too much was being written in these newspapers of the 'injustice and tyranny' of the British government, 'its utter want of consideration towards its Native subjects, and the insolence and pride of Englishmen in India, both official and non-official'. The English race was being 'habitually aspersed and held up to contempt and hatred of the people of India'. ¹ A hundred and fifty nine extracts from vernacular newspapers of the North Western Provinces, Punjab, Bengal and Bombay were produced before the Supreme Council as evidence of existing sedition.²

². For the extracts of the vernacular papers submitted to the Supreme Council see Home (Judicial) Proceedings, April 1878, Part B, No.23, Appendix; also J. Dacosta, 'Remarks on the Vernacular Press Laws of India', pp. 6-16, in Political Tracts relating to India and China (London, 1878). This article however does not contain all the extracts, but only a selection from them.
The vernacular press had been free since 1835, except for a short break during the Mutiny years. In 1867 a Press and Registration of Books Act had come into existence, not to interfere with, but only to keep track of the many aspiring journalists all over the country. At the same time, to keep track of what they were writing about, the Government of India directed that certain extracts of political importance from the vernacular journals should be translated and sent to the viceroy's office. From material thus accumulated an annual report on the native press was to be drawn up. Government translators were appointed for each of the presidencies. Soon afterwards, in 1870, the Indian penal code was amended to make seditious writing punishable under the law. The maximum penalty could be transportation for life. However, no such thing happened and, on the whole, years went by without incident till 1878 when the vernacular press was brought to heel. It was fairly evident that the government was becoming more interested in the writings of the vernacular press as a guide to the effects of their policies in India. From 1874 the files containing these

2. V. Iyer, 'The Indian Press' (Bombay, 1945), p. 6, India Office Tracts P/T 3433.
3. C.E. Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors (Calcutta, 1901), vol.1, p. 293.
translated vernacular extracts came to be marked 'confidential'. It was Lord Northbrook's wish, in consultation with his secretary of state, that none below the rank of a secretary to the government would have access to those files. Why then was the vernacular press deprived of its freedom in 1878? This was the question in debate at the closing of the decade. Vernacular newspapers all over the country, affected by the act of 1878, filled their columns offering various answers. Was it a sign of failing nerves on the part of the government?

There is evidence that press opinions, both in India and England, were beginning to bother the Government of India earlier in the decade. Many private letters were exchanged between the secretary of state and the viceroy and the viceroy and governors of presidencies on the need for imposing a check on the vernacular press in India. But in the early years there was no unanimity, in fact much doubt, as to the advantage of such a measure. Thus we find Richard Temple writing to Lord Salisbury, in July 1875, to assure him of Bengali loyalty: 'if there be such a thing as traditional loyalty towards the British Government in India it exists perhaps more in Bengal than in any part of India that I know'.

governor of Bombay, wrote to the viceroy: 'Various people have of late spoken to me about the very evil effects likely to be produced throughout India by the seditious and mischievous articles ... in the Native press, - and many are of opinion that the Government ought to take active measures for putting a stop to these publications ... For my own part I consider nothing can be more impolitic than to display hostility to these productions."

It was Lord Northbrook's sensitivity to 'Native public opinion' and, to an extent, susceptibility to the writings in the Anglo-Indian press and the press in England that gave weight to the problem. The income tax issue of the years 1872-73 was an early example. The controversy over the tariff act of 1875 and the future of the Gaekwar of Baroda upset the viceroy no less.

The manner in which the Native newspapers have written upon this case [he wrote, referring to Baroda affairs] has certainly done harm in India, but the greater culprit have been the English Papers at home. In this Baroda case ... they have evidently looked upon the Government of India as a foreign and hostile Government ... and a fair game for any attack.

Lord Northbrook was convinced that the English newspapers exercised a 'very large influence' on Indian opinion. 'Imagine' he wrote to Lord Salisbury in London 'an article in favour of the Guikwar written in the Civil and Military Gazette in England being translated into Gujerattee and

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2. See above pp. 135-38.
3. Northbrook to Salisbury, 14 June 1875 in Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
published in a country paper at Surat! On another occasion, when advocating the necessity for 'secrecy', the viceroy wrote 'I think I have mentioned before how careful we ought to be in publishing letters or minutes that may do harm. Everything mischievous is at once translated and goes all over India and further.' Public criticism on the tariff issue had a worse effect. 'We are largely accused of favouring Manchester by putting a 5½ duty on American cotton goods ... Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with,' wrote the viceroy sadly, 'and just now I have the honour of being the dog.' This, particularly, was a sore point for his policy on tariffs had not been accepted by the India Office either.

Lord Northbrook, however, was not too keen to curb the liberty of the press. Characteristically he wrote: 'The problem of how to work a free Press with an absolute Government is doubtless a difficult one: but we have got the two

1. Northbrook to Salisbury, 4 March 1875 in Salisbury Papers, Box 1.
2. Northbrook to Salisbury, 21 July 1874 in ibid., Box 1. It is difficult to substantiate the existence of 'a very large influence' of the English press on Indian opinion. But it is true that the Times, the Pall Mall Gazette and the Spectator were referred to, not infrequently, by quite a few of the metropolitan vernacular newspapers, and any encouragement from these newspapers in the way of criticizing the government was somewhat welcome. Some of the interior newspapers, especially in Bengal, also republished extracts from English newspapers but it is most probable that they got them second-hand from their contemporaries in the towns.
3. Northbrook to Salisbury, 16 August 1875 in Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
4. See above pp. 243-47.
together and must make the best use of it.'

Yet the lieutenant governor of Bengal, George Campbell, never stopped pressing the viceroy to take action against the licence of the vernacular press. 'I think' he wrote 'that we want something like the French law forbidding the "exciting of hatred and contempt against the Government".'

On these grounds Campbell had pressed for the prosecution of the Halishahar Patrika, which had in its editorial of 4 July 1873 'slanderously denounced' the lieutenant governor's brand new educational policy for Bengal. George Campbell had emphasized the need for primary education there at the cost of higher education. The Bengalis, then in a college-going mood, found this hard to swallow and thus most of the vernacular journals criticised the new policy destructively.

The matter with regard to the Halishahar Patrika was taken up in right earnest by the government of Bengal. But the case was soon dropped when it was discovered that the said Patrika's editor was a youth about twenty years old, a student of Hindu College in Calcutta, and its printer-publisher was even younger, in fact eighteen years of age, and also a student.

The 'insignificance of the culprit' dissuaded the advocate general from taking any serious step.

1. Northbrook to Salisbury, 1 April 1875 in Northbrook Papers, vol.12.
under the penal code. Only a letter of warning was therefore sent.¹

Hardly two years had gone by before the Amrita Bazar Patrika also caused concern with its writings on the Baroda issue. 'To emasculate a nation so that the government may rule without trouble', the Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote on 23 January 1875, '... surely to poison an obscure Colonel is by far a lighter crime than these.' This time the secretary of state for India took it up arguing that 'such language was meant to palliate ... the assassination, under certain circumstances, of British officers'.² Northbrook, strongly backed by his law member Arthur Hobhouse, still refrained from prosecution on grounds that 'the law was vague'. The penal code was only applicable to cases in which there was an obvious intention on the part of the writer to counsel resistance to the lawful authority of the government. Hobhouse was doubtful whether that could be proved against the Amrita Bazar Patrika. Both the viceroy and the law member were worried about the 'scandal and fury' such prosecutions would provoke. Privately Northbrook wrote to Salisbury about this time, prophesying discontent.³

¹. Home (Judicial) Proceedings, April 1878, Part B, no.27.
². Ibid., April 1878, Part B, nos. 203-06.
If the next viceroy, Lord Lytton, shared his predecessor's doubts with regard to the law of prosecution on individual sedition, he certainly did not sympathize with Lord Northbrook's fear of discontent. His attitude to a hostile press, whether in India or in England, is best summed up in his words written in that context. 'The best way of removing enmities is to destroy one's enemies', Lytton wrote to Salisbury. 'Narvaez, on his deathbed said he had no enemies to forgive, because he had taken pains to shoot them all.'\(^1\) If his enemies were, in order of merit, the English press followed by the Anglo-Indian press and then the vernacular press, his dealings with them were carefully graded. He shot down the vernacular press all right; with the Anglo-Indian press he 'made arrangements to improve relations'. For the press in England he had similar plans, but except for a few letters exchanged with John Delane, then editor of the Times, nothing much came of them. Lytton was of opinion that Anglo-Indian sedition against the government was due to the absence of 'an impartial supply of accurate information on all matters secret.'\(^2\) Between Owen Burne, the viceroy's secretary, and the viceroy himself, they worked out an establishment for

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1. Lytton to Salisbury, 4 June 1877 in Lytton Papers, vol.3/2. Narvaez was the Spanish prime minister from 1847-51, stormy petrel of Spanish politics of his times.
2. Lytton to Dr. Birdwood, 1 March 1878 in Lytton Papers, vol.3/3.
giving 'trustworthy information to all editors who will take the trouble to seek it.'\(^1\) The viceroy was indeed proud of the idea, and prouder still to point out that, unlike his predecessor, he was not in personal communication with the press. 'The connection which in Lord Northbrook's time', wrote Lord Lytton,

existed between the Pioneer and the viceroy, I have completely extinguished. I am convinced that the maintenance of a semi-official organ was a great mistake; which tended to compromise the Government, and to irritate, and throw into opposition, all the less favoured journals. The object I have aimed at, in our relations with the Press, is not the support of Government measures, but the timely prevention, or correction of false news about Government action.\(^2\)

In Owen Burne, Lord Lytton found an enthusiastic worker.

'I have sent our letter to the Editors—Burne wrote to the viceroy 'may it prosper.'\(^3\)

It was Lytton's desire to have similar arrangements for the press in England. There was obvious concern for the way Indian policies were represented in the mother-country.

In its report on the Robert Fuller case the Times had attributed the whole decision with regard to it, to the viceroy 'without the concurrence' of his council, and 'in disregard of their advice'.\(^4\) On this Lytton not only wrote to

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1. *India Public Proceedings*, January 1879, Part A, no.97. vol.1334. The privilege of receiving 'trustworthy information' from the government was extended only to the Anglo-Indian press.


4. *The Times*, 2 and 31 October 1876.
Delane explaining the **background** to the Fuller episode but also sent him, 'confidentially', a copy of the Government of India's despatch to the secretary of state on the matter.¹ He was therefore eager for the establishment of a confidential agency in London 'for preventing ... the serious mischief frequently occasioned by hasty utterances on the part of the influential journals, which can only be attributed to the grossest ignorance or the most wilful misrepresentation, of facts.'² But Lytton had soon to give up the idea as, he himself admitted, they had not the means to do so. The maintenance of such an agency would have involved expenditure on telegraphic correspondence which obviously the India Office was not then prepared to shoulder.

With regard to the vernacular press it was a different story. There was however little of a story as Lytton did not wait very long before he passed Act IX of 1878. Soon after he joined office in 1876 he had a historical note prepared on the subject, the writer of which had pointed to the Irish Press bill as a possible guide.³ Moreover, urgent appeals began to pour in from the presidency governments, with the only exception of Madras, to prosecute the 'extra-

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¹ Lytton to Delane, 24 September and 12 October 1876 in Lytton Papers, vol.3/1.
² Lytton to Dr. Birdwood, 1 March 1878 in ibid., vol.3/3.
seditious' vernacular journals. Sir Ashley Eden in Bengal, Sir Philip Wodehouse in Bombay and Sir George Couper in the North Western Provinces were all agreed that criticism of government measures, and comments on the conduct of officials, had greatly increased in late years. Sir George sent a note of warning to the effect that the Oudh Punch was read out 'in the bazaars to large and attentive audiences with comments'. The sole dissenting opinion came from the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. Buckingham - the only man in India, as Gladstone pointed out later, who had ever been a member of the British Cabinet - in his minute, pointed out that the Irish Press bill took care at least to allow a judicial investigation of their cases in open court.

Lytton was convinced that the right moment for a comprehensive bill on the vernacular press had come - something that 'would, if passed, enable us' he wrote 'to behead the hydra at one sudden stroke, instead of hacking at each of its heads in succession'. Dismissing Madras as the silent presidency, where the press was 'harmless and insignificant', Lord Lytton went ahead.

It was not that this viceroy was not aware of the clamour that would inevitably follow, but he had little doubt

2. Couper to Lytton, 17 February 1878 in Lytton Papers, vol.7
5. Lytton to Northbrook, 25 April 1878 in ibid.
of ultimate success. 'There would doubtless be a short sharp shriek at the first blow, but I think there could be no recurrent howling' wrote Lytton confidently. The only group of people he wanted to be sure of were the Indian princes. A policy of deliberate conciliation, in effect fooling them with Privy Councillorships and durbars, was pursued with the blessing of Lord Salisbury. The durbar which proclaimed Victoria the Empress of India also aimed at making the Indian princes aware of their 'importance' in the eyes of the government. Everything was discussed between viceroy and secretary of state: fireworks, gold medals and silken banners. These were the symbols which were thought to appeal to the princes. For the rest Lytton cared little. Thus after having passed the bill against the vernacular press he wrote to the Queen, assuring her of the loyalty of the 'higher classes' of her Indian subjects. The only bit of 'disloyalty' came from the vernacular journals which appealed to 'the helpless and profoundly ignorant masses of the native population ... I have therefore' the viceroy concluded 'framed and passed a Bill which ... will effectually enable the Government of India to put a stop to these seditious utterances'. Lytton was spared an explanation

2. Lytton to Salisbury, 28 September 1876 in Salisbury Papers, Box 2.
3. Lytton to the Queen, 21 March 1878 in Lytton Papers, vol. 518/3.
to the secretary of state whose support for the measure was beyond question. Even years earlier Salisbury had written that 'the Native Papers must learn "La dynastie ne se laisse pas discuter": if they will leave the English Raj alone, no one will wish to interfere with their freedom'.

It was against this background of stern decisions that the vernacular press act was passed. The council proceedings were without a dissent. All the non-official members, including the one Indian among them, spoke of their conviction as to the necessity of the measure. 'Debate, however, it can scarcely be called' was the viceroy's smug comment at the end of it all. The speeches, he thought, were more intelligent than those on the Irish Press bill in the English parliament. The one point on which every council member had harped was that 'the mischief done by the vernacular press lay among 'the ignorant and the unenlightened'. They were all impressed by the fact that those vernacular newspapers 'were read out in the bazaars'. The class to whom they were read out were variously described as 'the toiling masses', 'the lower orders of the people', 'our ignorant and very impressionable populations' and, of course, 'the poor and ignorant millions'. The editors or writers of the vernacular

3. Lytton to Salisbury, 15 March 1878 in Lytton Papers, vol.3/2
journals were branded as 'for the most part disappointed ex-employees of the government, broken-down vakils, disappointed candidates for government service or ex-élèves of Government institutions'. Their offence was put down to libelling government officers, subverting the administration of justice by pointing to its 'alleged impurity and worthlessness', libelling the character of Europeans by attributing to them 'cruelty and heartlessness', and preaching 'false ideas of freedom and independence'.

Another practice which the authorities wished to control was that of alleged extortion and blackmail on the part of the vernacular papers. It was common belief among some government officials that threats of newspaper attacks were often resorted to by unscrupulous editors as 'means of extorting money from Native Chiefs and other Natives of rank, and from high Native officials'. It is known how widespread support for the Gaekwar of Baroda in the vernacular journals

1. Ibid., p. 165.
2. Ibid., p. 161.
3. Ibid., p. 154. It appears that government's suspicion of extortionist practices on the part of the vernacular press had originated in Northern India, and was based on such evidence as the following: Akbar Khan, Populzai [representative] of Kabul, had sent a petition to the government of India complaining that the vernacular press habitually slandered 'the character of the innocent people' who could not afford 'to satisfy their cupidity'. They forced people to subscribe to their papers, and wrote against those who refused to comply with their request.' He went on to say: 'Rajahs and Chiefs dread them, under the impression that they would write against them as they did against their compeers. They, therefore, subscribe to their newspapers and assign annual sums of money to them.' See Viceroy's Minute on the Vernacular press, 22 October 1877 in Home (Judicial) Proceedings, April 1878, Part B, no.23.
had led the government to speculate on the Gaekwar's personal activities in this direction. It was also believed in official circles that the Maharaja of Burdwan had attempted to buy the Pioneer.¹

In his last speech before the council Lord Lytton put together all such arguments and added his own. He made it clear that in legislating against the vernacular press he was not distinguishing between Englishmen and Indians, nor between the English press and the Indian. He pointed out that there were many Indian newspapers which were published in English, and in 'very good' English too. 'Being written in English' the viceroy explained 'they are ex vi termini addressed to a more or less educated audience and a class that has at least the power, even if it has not always the will, to choose between the false and the true, between the evil and the good'. But the vernacular papers catered to an 'excitable and helpless' class of people. It was their disaffection which had to be watched.²

The viceroy's reactions in the matter were expressed more frankly in letters to Lord Northbrook, still a keen observer of Indian affairs, and to the Queen. 'But what determined my decision finally in favour of prompt, and

¹ See above p. 294; also Owen Burne to Lytton, 24 April 1877 in Lytton Papers, vol.519/3.
stringent legislation,' Lytton wrote to his predecessor, after having passed the bill

was the altogether abnormal, and daily increasing, excitement of the native communities throughout India, in reference to passing events in Turkey ... At this moment, there is a most absurd, but very prevalent, impression amongst the native communities that the result of the Russo-Turkish war will be an alliance between Russia and Turkey having for its object the expulsion of the British power from India.†

In his letter to the Queen, written on 21 March 1878, a week after the passing of the act, he elaborated on the theme, writing

these journals represent India as a lion ruled over by a hare; Russia as a huntsman riding over all the fences of a domain, labelled "British Empire"; John Bull as an old miser hugging his money-bags, or a drunken giant pinioned in his sleep by figures.²

There is some reason to doubt whether Indian reactions towards the Russo-Turkish war deserved such serious attention. Sir Richard Temple, entrusted with the task of gauging Indian feeling on this point, took a moderate and balanced position. He was then governor of Bombay, but had travelled to the North Western Provinces and to Bengal for the purpose. He had found that one of the questions which preoccupied Indians


2. Lytton to the Queen, 21 March 1878 in Lytton Papers, vol. 518/3. Lytton was referring to a cartoon published in the Oudh Punch of 28 February 1878. See Memorandum on the Vernacular Press of Upper India, p. 4, in Home (Public) Proceedings, August 1879, Part B, no. 88.
at the time was why the British, who had undertaken the Crimean War, were not going to war with Russia in 1877. Only some stray doubts were expressed about British strength, but 'natives still believe England to be more mighty than even Russia', Sir Richard wrote to Lytton. It was the muslim community in India who sympathised most with Turkey, being tied by religion to her peoples. Those of the Hindus who felt sorry did it out of 'sympathy with the Asiatic bel­ligerent as against the European'. On the whole, according to Temple, there were 'numbers of good and true Natives who appreciate British rule, who believe themselves to be bound with us politically, and who pray that whatever betides Turkey, England must prosper.'

It seems reasonable therefore to suppose that Lord Lytton was reading some of his own preoccupations with Russia in the Indian reactions he saw on this score. From the kind of reactions we have already examined in the matter of income tax, municipal self-government and other related problems, it would indeed seem that reactions to the Russo-Turkish war were altogether modest and of little significance. The real reasons behind the vernacular press act therefore must have been better represented by the reactions of the members of the viceroy's council towards Indian criticisms in other:

connections, particularly in the matter of the administration of justice.

What the vernacular press act meant in practical terms was that magistrates of districts and commissioners of police in presidency towns were authorized, with the previous sanction of the local governments, to demand bail-bonds from the printers and publishers and either deposit of a certain sum or the submission of proofs for inspection.¹ In his enthusiasm Sir Ashley Eden put this into immediate effect in Bengal. Bail-bonds were issued to the publishers of Sahachar, the Sadharani and Sulav Samachar of Calcutta, the Bharat Mihir of Mymensingh, the Dacca Prakash published from Dacca, and of course the Som Prokash which had been blacklisted ever since George Campbell's days as lieutenant-governor. While all these newspapers were asked to pay five hundred rupees each, the Som Prokash was asked for double the sum. These bail-bonds were however shortlived as the viceroy, having passed the act with 'unusual haste', was unhappy about putting it into practice in a hurry.² But Eden's vigorous activities were not without results, although they were allowed not more than a month's duration. The Som Prokash went out of publication, although for only a short while, and so did the

¹. Section 3 of Act IX of 1878. See Governor General's Legislative Acts and Bills, vol.19 (1878).
Bharat Mihir and Sabachar.

The Som Prokash departed from the scene with much ceremony on its part, and some mourning on the part of its contemporaries. In a 'Farewell Address' to its readers, the Som Prokash took its stand on a point of honour. 'In all our writings', wrote its editor, 'we have been actuated by a sincere desire to do good both to the Rulers and the subjects. Seditious sentiments never found place in our mind. But since Government has, by passing a law, sought to establish the charge of sedition against us, we should be but admitting it, were we now to execute a bond ... The honor of a man, and not his wealth, is the superior consideration ... We cannot stoop to this degradation on the ground that by the discontinuance of this paper there may be a loss of income ... If ... we were to execute a bond and continue to publish the paper, it would not only be an insult to ourselves but to the people, whom we represent ... With our salutations to God, the subscribers and contributors, we now take leave.'

Its contemporaries, some of whom had been served bonds themselves, chose to agitate for the Som Prokash 'without fear' as they said. The Dacca Prakash, which had accepted the bond, warned its fellow journals that 'the death' of the Som-Prokash was 'the lead' to the extinction of all other papers, which do not choose to follow the views of government.'

The Sulav Samachar, another victim of the bond, wrote that the Som Prokash had ceased to exist only because it fell

1. Som Prokash, 22 April 1878.
2. Dacca Prakash, 6 April 1879 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1879.
'under the displeasure of Government'. 'The Bengali character must be given up [continued the Sulav Samachar] 'for it is difficult to be independent and yet keep the Press Act in constant view ... He will only be safe on whom the Government smiles.' The Bharat Mihir, which had followed the example of the Som Prokash in refusing to accept the bond, asked its contemporaries 'not to give way to despondency, but to take heart from the noble example of the Som Prokash, which has died in the loyal service of the country.' Explaining the withdrawal of his own paper, the editor wrote:

Like the Som Prokash, we too have never wished any evil to the British Government which has fostered us from our childhood, and by means of Western learning and science infused a new life into this country ... We pray for the long continuance of the British rule in India ... But while doing all this, we cannot forget the high task we have imposed upon ourselves ... in seeking to speak the truth in clear language, a thunderbolt fell on our heads also, just as it has descended on the head of the Som Prokash ... such death is not ignoble.

While the Som Prokash thus became a martyr, the action of the Amrita Bazar Patrika caused some annoyance. To escape the jurisdiction of the press act, this journal turned itself from a bilingual into a wholly English paper within a week of the passing of the act. Evidently it was a strong belief with Motilal Ghosh, then editor of the Patrika, that the press act had been brought in primarily

1. Sulav Samachar, 5 April 1878 in ibid., 1878.
2. Bharat Mihir, 22 April 1878 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1878.
to suppress his journal. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* argued that 'an absolutely independent paper, conducted in the English language is now an absolute necessity'. To the rest of the vernacular press this was obviously an action of weakness. The *Sadharani* condemned it as a 'worthless' gesture. Many of them foisted the whole blame for the act on the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* itself. Other newspapers like the *Bharat Mihir* and the *Murshidabad Patrika* pleaded with their contemporaries to continue writing in the vernacular. Any other way, the *Bharat Mihir* argued, would impede the progress of the Bengali language.

Although the Bengali press wrote pages in criticism of the act, there was something more in its attitude to it than mere criticism. It was as if the act had called for a re-appraisal; the Bengali press, as it were, had been asked to stand back and take a good look at its own working. One result was an overwhelming profession of loyalty on the part of almost every Bengali newspaper on the scene. 'It is desirable that Government should know that, on the whole, the

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6. *Bharat Mihir*, 30 March 1878 in *ibid*.
native writers, even those who are the loudest in vitupera-
tion, are loyal to it', was a typical statement of that
kind.¹ 'With whatever eyes Government may look upon us,
whatever fears it may, in its dreams, conjure up regarding
our character', the Pratikar asserted, 'whatever abuse it may
shower down on us - in spite of all these, we are its well
wishers: a thousand times over.' As proof of their un-
flinching loyalty the same newspaper recalled how in 1857,
while 'the fanatic sepoys kindled the flame of war in the
North-Western Provinces', Maharaja Scindia, the Nizam, the
Sikhs 'and other ornaments of India' had fought for the
Government.² The Hindu Hitoishini, in its inimitable way,
 wrote an editorial on the 'irreproachable loyalty' of the
Bengalis 'even under the oppressive Muslim Rulers'.³ 'It
was said' wrote the Bharat Mihir

that the passing of such an Act was necessary for
the safety of the Empire. Now, in the name of
Justice, we ask what evil actually resulted, or
what was apprehended of the Indian Empire, from
the newspapers? None of them has ever consciously,
even for a day, written anything with a view to the
subversion of British rule or the exciting of a
general disaffection towards it in the minds of the
people.⁴

The Sambad Prabhakar thought that 'the natives' were a people
'famous for their loyalty'.⁵ So did the Pratikar.⁶

2. Pratikar, 12 April 1879 in ibid.
3. Hindu Hitoishini, 27 April 1878 in ibid.
5. Sambad Prabhakar, 18 and 22 March 1878 in ibid.
6. Pratikar, 22 March 1878 in ibid.
Not only did these Bengali journals profess their loyalty, they also asked themselves why it was that they felt so loyal to the government. And in answer they wrote that they had much to be 'grateful' for. They were grateful for the peace which prevailed, for the law, for their education, for the railways. The days of the 'Bargis and Pindaries' were over.¹ 'Even in the jungles and in the villages' the Sadharani wrote 'the saying "this is English rule, no force or oppression will do", is often used in disputes and quarrels.'² The Sadharani even went to the extent of writing that Englishmen were regarded by the Indians 'in the light of gods'. 'It is their Wilberforces, Hampdens, Mills, Brights, Metcalfes, Macaulays, and hundreds of other great men, whose liberal principles have quite captivated us'.³ In its farewell address to its readers the Som Prokash had made a point of saying 'Instead of being ungrateful, our hearts are full of gratitude'.⁴ What the Som Prokash was most grateful for was British education. Without the benefits of that education their press, 'fostered with great care', could not have progressed thus far. And this was where their

₁. Sahachar, 18 March and 12 August 1878, and Bharat Mihir, 21 March 1878 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1878; also Som Prokash, 22 April 1878.
₂. Sadharani, 4 August 1878.
₃. Sadharani, 24 March 1878.
₄. Som Prokash, 22 April 1878.
apology lay. The Bengali press was loyal, it was grateful. But, as the Sadharani wrote, it was also aware of its 'high duties'.

Some among these journals asked themselves to forget about political discussions and to turn to topics like 'sociology', 'morals', 'religion', 'agriculture', 'industries' and 'education'. Listing these subjects for future discussion, the Bharat Sangskarak concluded that 'the present Act has been to us a blessing in disguise'. Others drew attention to the need for improving the Bengali language. The improvement of their language and literature was no less important a task, held the Rangpore Dik Prokash. The Bharat Mihir spoke of the great progress of the Bengali language already made through the writings of the vernacular press. A call was given to the rest of the vernacular newspapers to concentrate on the improvement of the Bengali language, and thus of the society itself, even if they could not dwell on the good or bad effects of Government policy.

Loyal and grateful, the vernacular press was aware that it was 'yet in its infancy'. The fact that it should have

1. Sadharani, 7 April 1878.
2. Bharat Sangskarak, 18 March 1878 in R.N.P., Bengal, 1878. Other newspapers wrote in the same vein. They were the Sadharani of 7 April 1878 and Sulav Samachar of 8 April 1878 among others.
4. Biswa Dut, 3 April 1878 and Bharat Mihir, 21 March 1878 in ibid.
5. Som Prokash, 29 April 1878.
aroused so much official concern was surprising. According to the Sadharani they were only 'tiny creatures'. 'Does Government really believe' the same journal asked that, by our writings in the vernacular, we are causing a diminution or preventing an increase of loyalty in the minds of the people? Can any amount of writing in the newspapers ever affect the loyalty, which should spontaneously and always reign in the hearts of the people, if Government really sought their welfare?'

In a separate column the same newspaper described the vernacular press act as an 'array of artillery to kill a mosquito'. Other papers like the Biswa Dut, were of the same opinion.

Reactions to the act in northern India were of a rather mixed character. While on the one hand vernacular newspapers there blamed themselves for what had happened, most of these newspapers passed all blame for their predicament on to the Anglo-Indian press. English newspapers in India, according to this section of the vernacular press in the Punjab and North Western Provinces, were given to maligning their vernacular contemporaries. It was their 'evil advice' which had induced the government to introduce the restrictions. According to the Rahbar-i-Hind the English press was 'a model' to the vernacular press in northern India.

1. Sadharani, 24 March 1878.
2. Sadharani, 7 April 1878.
newspapers had been spared by the act. Was this feasible, they asked. 'It is not the Englishman but the interested Anglo-Indian who cries down the Native Press', wrote the Rahbar-i-Hind.

If the hot climate of India does not suit some Anglo-Indians and affects their brains, we exhort the Government to send them back to the congenial climate of Europe, so that the Government and the natives may not be unnecessarily harassed by their false clamour against the Native Press.¹

The Pioneer was one of the chief targets of attack.² Men running these English journals were branded as 'prejudiced Europeans' who looked 'with jealousy at our rapid progress'.³ The vernacular press 'never spread false news as their Anglo-Indian contemporaries did' wrote the Hindi Pradip.⁴ 'All those articles which we publish regarding the Government have for their basis the articles which appear in the newspapers published in British territories' wrote the Malwa Akhbar. 'Thus when the tone of the latter improves [continued the same journal] that of our paper will improve of itself.'⁵

1. Rabhar-i-Hind, 17 November 1877 in S.V.P., 1877, pp. 816-17.
2. Qaisar-ul-Akhbar, 24 March 1878 in ibid., 1878, pp. 250-51. It is true that the Pioneer had taken to warning the government of the 'seditious tone' of the vernacular press; see The Pioneer, 23 February 1874, 24 August 1877 and 8 March 1878. So had the Times of India and the Englishman although to a lesser extent. See e.g. The Times of India, 15 January 1876 and The Englishman, 16 February 1877.
3. Aftab-i-Punjab, 28 March 1878 in S.V.P., 1878, p. 250.
4. Hindi Pradip, 1 April 1878 in ibid., pp. 270-71.
The Mashir-i-Qaisar even went to the extent of congratulating the Anglo-Indian press on its success and so did the Sir Punch Hind. 'Now that they have succeeded in convincing the Government that the vernacular newspapers are not trustworthy,' the Mashir-i-Qaisar wrote 'their correspondents will disgorge more poison about the great ruling chiefs, viz., the Maharaja of Gwalior, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, the Maharaja of Jaipur etc.'

While these journals happily blamed and criticized their Anglo-Indian contemporaries, others continued to condemn themselves in earnest. 'We ourselves are to blame for the loss of our liberty' was a fairly representative sentiment. 'The strictures passed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and the Members of the Legislative Council on the vernacular press are perfectly true' wrote the Safir-i-Hind of Amritsar. Some journals went even further to prove how patient the government had been with the press in India. Thus the Oudh Akhbar wrote:

The Government overlooked the objectionable tone of the Vernacular press with great patience and forbearance for a long time. But when it was convinced that the tone of the press instead of improving became worse, it enacted an Act, on the 14th March last, for the better control of publications in oriental languages.

1. Sir Punch Hind, 28 March and Mashir-i-Qaisar, 7 April 1878, in S.V.P., 1878, pp. 275, 303-05.
2. Berar Samachar, 31 March 1878 in ibid., pp. 271-73.
3. Safir-i-Hind, 13 April 1878 in ibid., p. 327.
4. Oudh Akhbar, 22 March 1878 in ibid., pl 229.
Similar convictions were expressed by the Allygurh Institute Gazette as it wrote 'There is no man but will say that the Government should have done long ago what it has done now.'\textsuperscript{1} According to this journal there was not a single editor in the whole of Upper India who either understood the real meaning of the liberty of the press or possessed the ability to criticize the acts of the government.\textsuperscript{2} It is important to remember that both those journals, the Oudh Akhbar and Allygurh Institute Gazette were substantially aided by the government.\textsuperscript{3} However several other journals of the region, Bharat Bandhu and the Berar Samachar among others, took up an identical position without being in the pay of the government.\textsuperscript{4}

Referring to the extracts from vernacular newspapers presented to the council, the Bharat Bandhu wrote that 'these extracts were really a cause of shame to the press of this country. It is surprising' continued the paper 'that the government tolerated so long the liberty of such seditious newspapers. They should have been long deprived of their liberty.'\textsuperscript{5} There was sympathy, even sorrow, at the government's disappointment at the way the vernacular press had evolved.

\textsuperscript{1} Allygurh Institute Gazette, 23 March 1878.
\textsuperscript{2} Allygurh Institute Gazette, 19 March 1878.
\textsuperscript{3} See above pp. 38-39.
\textsuperscript{5} Bharat Bandhu, 22 March 1878 in \textit{ibid.}, pp. 246-47.
According to the Berar Samachar the authorities would 'never' have withdrawn that liberty, which it had conferred of its own accord, 'without good reason'.

Would it not be sorry' asked the Bharat Bandhu
to uproot a tree which it has planted and watered with its own hands? From the experience which the government has had of the liberty of the Press in England, the Government thought it would prove a noble tree, and therefore planted it in India, under the firm conviction that it would bear nectareous fruits. Unfortunately the atmosphere of our country, being tainted by ignorance [the Bharat Bandhu concluded], has turned it into a poisonous tree.

'The present unsatisfactory state of the native press' wrote the Rahbar-i-Hind patronizingly 'should excite our pity and not our anger.'

Despite all self-criticism the vernacular press of the north, like its contemporaries in Bengal, did not refrain from emphasizing their basic 'loyalty' to the government. 'We look upon the government as our father' wrote one of the journals characteristically. 'Our complaints [added the Urdu Akhbar] do not arise from a desire to endanger our paternal Government.' The Shola-i-Tur argued that if any man ever wrote an article to excite sedition, he did it 'out

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1. Berar Samachar, 31 March 1878 in ibid., pp. 271-73, also see similar sentiments in Patiala Akhbar, 25 March, Nur Afshan, 28 March and Mashir-i-Qaisar, 24 March 1878 in ibid., p. 251.
3. Rahbar-i-Hind, 8 September 1877 in ibid., 1877, p. 638.
of stupidity rather than disloyalty'. It regretted the fact that the penal code was not used to crush the 'few outcasts among them.'\(^1\) 'There was no need for separate legislation' echoed the *Nur-ul-Absar*. 'If any newspaper published any false complaint, it could be dealt with under the existing law, and if the existing law was inadequate, it might have been amended.'\(^2\) According to the *Mashir-i-Qaisar* even that would not have been necessary. Such was their loyalty that a simple resolution from the government, pointing out the faults of the vernacular press, would have sufficed.\(^3\)

The reaction to the act in Bombay presidency was one of anger, and sometimes even of violence. There was little lamentation and no self-condemnation. To the vernacular press in Bombay the act had been intended for the 'massacre' of their indigenous press, for its 'ruin', as the *Indu Prakash* put it.\(^4\) There was 'no valid cause', the journal continued 'for curbing the liberty of the Vernacular Press.' Only a very small section of the press was guilty of sedition, the *Indu Prakash* admitted, but that was out of 'sheer folly'. All charges of disloyalty were 'unjust' wrote the *Dnyan Prakash* 'and proceeded simply from the selfish motives of the accusers'.

The chief accusers, according to that paper, were the Anglo-

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Indian journals who 'viewed with jealousy and disfavour ... the increasing importance of the Native Press.' ¹ The other accusers, the Indu Prakash wrote, were 'the officers of the Government' who had taken 'a hostile attitude towards the Native Press'.² Those who read 'the Native Papers constantly' the Dnyan Prakash added 'cannot but be convinced of the fact that the writers of these papers are not only not disloyal, but it is difficult to discover men more loyal than they are'.³ The Gujarat Samachar joined in to say that Indians in fact considered it 'their duty, their pride, and their real interest to be loyal to Her Gracious Majesty, the Empress of India, and to her servants.'⁴ It was no fault of theirs, according to the Indu Prakash, that 'many of her officers' in India thought it 'right to suspect their loyalty and to accuse them of hostility to the English rule.'⁵

Not only was there no deference shown to the press act in Bombay presidency, there was in fact widespread protest against the measure in Bombay city and elsewhere. The Town Hall meeting in Calcutta against the act was cheered and praised by the Maharashtra Mitra, the Native Opinion and a

¹. Dnyan Prakash, 25 June 1877 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.–June 1877
². Indu Prakash, 7 February 1876 in ibid., Jan.–June 1876.
⁴. Gujarat Samacher, 19 March 1878 in ibid., Jan.–June 1878.
few other such newspapers. A correspondent of a Poona journal, the Poona Observer, regretted that there were not more of such meetings held in Bombay and in Poona. 'Look at Bengal [the correspondent wrote]; how active they have been'.

But what happened in Surat was more than just a protest meeting. Agitated with the recent introduction of a licence tax and then the vernacular press act, a large section of the population of Surat broke out into riots. The military had to be called in to disperse the mob. In the prosecutions which followed five Indian editors were found guilty of instigating disorder.

This provoked newspapers in the presidency to a fresh wave of protests. Thus the Native Opinion wrote:

The prosecution of the five accused and the mode in which it was conducted has grieved and astonished the public in the extreme ... Is Richard Temple unaware of the circumstances or does he think that what has happened at Surat will increase the reputation of the rule which is celebrated for its justice and fair play.

Other newspapers joined in, noted among them being the Rast Goftar and the Arunodaya. But the press in Bombay escaped with such impertinence as Sir Richard Temple, then governor

1. Maharashtra Mitra and Native Opinion, 30 March 1878; also Khandesh Waibhaw, 2 April 1878 in R.N.P., Bombay, Jan.-June 1878.
4. Native Opinion, 4 August 1878.
of Bombay, was never too keen on this press law.  

The vernacular presses of Bombay and elsewhere were all aware, as the Khandesh Waibhaw put it, of the 'real duties' of the press. 'It is not maligning government' continued the same journal 'to bring to its notice the instances of injustice or tyranny which occur, and to ask for the redress of the grievances.' The Native Opinion wrote of how 'extremely important' it was for India to have a 'critical' press of its own. 'There is no representative government in India in the strict sense of the term', the Native Opinion explained, 'the position of the press is naturally therefore that of Her Majesty's Opposition'. The Yajdan Parast was of opinion that a vernacular press should exist if only to bring to light episodes like the Fuller case and such other cruelties.' In the North Western Provinces too an overwhelming reaction was that criticism of government measures was among the 'main duties' of the Indian press. 'The editors of native newspapers ... act as interpreters between the Government and the people [wrote the Oudh Akhbar], and thus prevent popular misapprehension of any public measure of the Government'.


4. Yajdan Parast, 1 April 1878 in ibid., Jan.-June 1878.

5. Oudh Akhbar, 18 December 1877 in S.V.P., 1877, p. 876.
had taken it upon themselves 'to correct those false notions which spread among the people'. The Urdu Akhbar asserted that the press 'exercised a wholesome check over self-willed officers.'

In writing of their 'high duties' the Bengali papers stated and re-stated that they worked with a sense of purpose. 'They were aiming at nothing but the good', was a typical comment from the Som Prokash. The Bharat Mihir explained their position thus:

... in the administration by a foreign race of a state like India, the Native Press constitutes a very important element. Very few people understand the English newspapers, and very few people take them in. Although, since the passing of Act IX, the native papers have been crippled and lost much of their freedom, native society still clings to them.

And the Sadharani wrote 'We should be wanting in our duty as journalists if we do not express in our paper the feelings of the people.' Even in Madras, where the press had escaped the act, several newspapers stressed that the vernacular press wrote only for the good of the government. The Jarida-i-Rozgar of Madras wrote that the press spoke 'the truth, and

1. Safir-i-Budhana, 17 April 1878 in S.V.P., 1878, p. 359.
3. Sadharani, 7 April 1878.
4. Som Prokash, 22 April 1878.
7. Shams-ul-Akhbar, 18 March and Suthesabhimani, 1 April 1878 in R.N.P., Madras, 1878.
nothing but the truth'. The *Pashchima Taraka Kerala Pataka* asked its contemporaries in Bombay and in Bengal to continue working for their foremost duty - 'representing the people'.

Beyond the vernacular press itself the law against its liberty became a subject of protest for citizens and associations in town and mofussil almost all over the country. Surat, as we saw, broke out into riots while Calcutta witnessed impressive meetings. On 17 April 1878 a meeting, organized by the Indian Association, was held in Calcutta's Town Hall, attended by about 4,000 Bengalis and a few Europeans. The speeches lasted four hours. It was agreed that the act was calculated to close down the 'natural outlet of opinion'. A committee was formed to frame a memorial to be sent to Mr. Gladstone, whose denunciation of the act in Parliament had come as great encouragement.

The Calcutta meeting, which began on a hesitant note, turned out to be a success. The Sheriff of Calcutta, who had been asked to convene the meeting, had refused to attend. According to Bepin Chandra Pal, who was later to become a radical leader, the Sheriff's decision had caused some people

4. *Hansard*, vol.ccxxxviii, col.1601; and *ibid.*, vol.ccxlir, (1878), cols.48-65.
to stay away out of fear.¹ There was even talk of cancelling the meeting among the Association members. Surendra Nath Banerjea writes that the entire Bar Library in Calcutta had tried to dissuade Ananda Mohan Bose, then secretary to the Indian Association, from holding the meeting.² However, all went well and the Reverend Krishna Mohun Bannerji, the Association's President and a widely respected member of the community, not only took the chair but spoke 'fearlessly' against the act, and against the sheriff's conduct.³ Messages of support and congratulation for the efforts of the Indian Association poured in from the rest of India: from the Bombay Association, the Kanpur Association, and the Allahabad Indian Association. The Beetalvadi Native Club, in Nagpur, had organized a similar meeting in the town and, in their enthusiasm for the Calcutta meeting, the Club had even sent a copy of the resolution they had drawn up at the meeting.⁴ Similar meetings, although on a smaller scale, were held in the town of Dacca. Students of Dacca University burnt several effigies of Jotindro Mohun Tagore — the Indian who was among those who had passed the bill against the vernacular press.⁵ Commissioners of the Bengal districts reported a growing...

¹ Pal, Memoirs, p. 289.
² Banerjea, op. cit., p. 57.
³ Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2 April 1878 [a report on the proceedings of the Calcutta Town Hall meeting on the vernacular press act].
⁵ Divisional and District Annual Reports, Dacca Division, 1877-78, para 19, pp. 16-17.
discontent on account of the press act. The Commissioner of Burdwan wrote that the 'feeling on the Press Act' was 'most intense', although confined to 'the classes who read the papers.'

In the discussions on the issue, in drawing up memorials, the few political associations in India were at their liveliest. Even the British Indian Association, despite their secretary Jotindro Mohun Tagore, sent a memorial on the subject to the House of Commons. However, the British Indian Association had taken their time before committing themselves on the issue. Their memorial was the last to arrive, and that only after Mr. Gladstone's views on the subject had been made public.

In contrast other associations, in Poona, in Bombay and in Calcutta sent at least two memorials each. The first petitions hoped, and asked for the repeal of the act. But those that came later, in August and September 1878, restricted themselves only to proposing a few amendments to the act, such as the right of judicial trial, rather than executive interference, for the offending editors in the future. The East India Association at Bombay also sent a petition with

1. Divisional and District Annual Reports, Burdwan Division, 1877-78, para 14, p. 3.
similar propositions to the House of Commons. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, being essentially a moderate organization, asked for but a little more: exclusion from the purview of the law of all publications which were not 'political newspapers', but literature for 'the propagation of social and religious reforms'. In Bengal a committee was set up under the auspices of the Indian Association, which called itself the 'Vernacular Press Act committee'. Along with the Bombay Association they too demanded the editor's right to be tried in open court if accused of mischief. The verdict of magistrates and policemen was not enough, in fact 'humiliating'. The Bombay Association was, however, the only one among its contemporaries which never gave up its demand for a total repeal of the act to the very end.

The Anglo-Indian newspapers received the act against the vernacular press with mixed feelings. On the whole there was no disagreement over the principle of the act. While some of them, like the Statesman, patronizingly wrote that the act was 'a necessity', or, like the Madras Times, that it was 'long believed to be imminent', others denounced the haste

1. Minute Book of the East India Association, no.2, pp. 289-90, 301-03.
with which the act was passed and the absence of opportunity for a judicial trial of the accused. A few among them wrote bullying articles on the 'weakness' of the government. Almost all of them ridiculed the government's notion that the vernacular press did not represent 'the feelings of their countrymen'. That was obviously a gibe at Lord Lytton. Even the Statesman, which unlike its contemporaries did not 'quarrel with the manner' in which the act was enacted, cautioned the government not to discard the writers of the vernacular journals as merely 'disappointed office-seekers'. Referring to the government's categories of the educated Indians on the one hand and the ignorant masses on the other, the Statesman added to it a third and 'more important' group. This was a large class of persons, scattered throughout the country both in towns and the mofussil, who had 'education enough' to take 'a growing interest' in public affairs and 'a very great interest' in local politics. Vernacular papers, according to the Statesman, were the 'tolerably accurate interpreters of the feelings of this class'. It was also the journal's contention that the vernacular papers carried with them the basic support of the 'most enlightened and loyal class of natives'. Thus the only way out for the government was to treat the problem at its root, in short to remove the 'grievances' which,

2. Ibid., 22 March 1878.
the *Statesman* added, 'were not purely imaginary.' The *Englishman* was less patient with the government on this score, and wrote

> it is to be feared that our rulers are still far from having completely emerged from the fool's paradise in whose grateful shade they have so long been content to wonder ... no one can mix much with native society without being convinced that there is a class of the population, comparatively no doubt small, but absolutely very large in number, who are animated by a more or less intense hatred both of the Englishman and of his role in India, and to whom the seditious utterances of native editors are as balm and honey.¹

The *Times of India* was of opinion that the readers of the vernacular papers could have read little in those columns which they did not hear repeated in conversation every day of their lives.² The *Bombay Gazette* asserted that educated Indians entertained an 'intense malignity against the English'.³

In a different vein, the Anglo-Indian journals poked fun at government's weakness. 'Mosquitoes usually find it a hard matter to penetrate the skin of an elephant', wrote the *Madras Mail*, 'but the elephant, as represented by the present Government of India seems to have been stung to madness by the indigenous mosquitoes of the Press'.⁴ The *Times of India* condemned the act as 'a confession of fear'.⁵ The *Bombay Gazette* took on the government at its weakest point, and pointed

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2. *The Times of India*, 16 March 1878.
5. *The Times of India*, 16 March 1878.
Russian 'glee' at this failure of the English government in India. This was an act, wrote the *Bombay Gazette*, which would tend 'to diminish the prestige of England in the negotiations still going on with Russia by showing the want of confidence of the Viceroy of India in the loyalty of the natives.' The *Pioneer* however was the most steadfast of all its contemporaries in supporting the act. It had no criticism to offer. On the contrary, the *Pioneer* claimed that the act allowed more freedom to the general mass of the vernacular papers than was expected, presumably by the journal itself. The *Pioneer* in fact cheerfully reported that in San Francisco too a similar law had been 'found needful'.

In England the press was not against the vernacular press act in India although the *Spectator* was too liberal to support the act without qualification. The *Spectator* agreed that the attacks of the vernacular press were 'terrible', as the 150 extracts proved, and it believed that 'officers [were] often paralysed by fear of them.' But the *Spectator* put this down more to a cultural difference than deliberate sedition.

We have an impression [the paper wrote] that much of the annoyance felt with the native Press arises from a difference of civilization; that abuse, however foul, stirs up less hatred in India than it would in Europe, and that seditious language acts as a consolation.

However what this paper really objected to about the act was the absence of the right to be tried before a court of law if, and when, accused of sedition.

They have introduced a law under which any district magistrate or local commissioner of police may ... require any publisher to enter into a bond not to continue publishing objectionable matter, - which bond, of course, if he failed to keep his promise, would be at once extreated ...

the Spectator added. The Pall Mall Gazette accepted the act without qualification, and condemned 'the ferocious disloyalty ... of the vernacular Indian journals'. But according to the Gazette it was English education alone which was to blame for such a state of affairs. Young Indians had indulged themselves in reading an excess of English classical literature - a literature which, as the Pall Mall Gazette explained,

was produced just during the time when one set of political principles was being substituted for another chiefly through the agency of strong denunciatory language ... The fact is that the best political writing in this country down to the scare caused by the French Revolution was deeply tinged with Whiggism. But the country is only half-Whig; every now and then it gives evidence that it is for the time more than half-Tory ...This is just the fact about England which the young native Indian nourished on Addison, Junius and the Burke of the Warren Hastings impeachment, must always fail to bring home to himself.2

The Times correspondent in India wrote justifying the act without reservation.

1. The Spectator, 16 March 1878.
2. The Pall Mall Gazette, 18 March 1878. This trend of putting much of the blame on English education in India was common to official circles as well. See, e.g., Alfred Lyall's Introduction in Valentine Chirol, Indian Unrest (London, 1910), pp. xiii-xvi.
The object of the Government [he wrote] in allowing full liberty to the Press - namely, to promote the education of the people - has been perverted into an organ for the dissemination of sedition and exciting general discontent among the ignorant and unreasoning masses, and so endeavouring to goad them into rebellion against British rule.  

The crucial demand for a judicial trial in case of an accusation of sedition against an editor was never conceded by the government, although in October 1878 the act was modified in minor respects.  

Attacked by the government, condemned by the Anglo-Indian and the English press and surprised at its own importance, the vernacular press staggered into the eighties of the nineteenth century. The earlier concern for social reform and cultural enquiry had by now diminished. Politics was to engage attention more and more in the coming years. The government from an almost complete unawareness of the vernacular press had come to be pre-occupied with it. Public opinion and government policy were both moving more consciously towards the tensions of a nationalist movement.

1. The Times, 18 March 1878.

2. By this amendment the submission of proofs before publication was no longer insisted upon although the bail-bond remained. Despatch of Lord Cranbrook, Secretary of State for India, London, 31 May 1878 in Parl. Papers, 1878, vol.LVII, pp. 516-19; also Cranbrook to Lytton, 30 May and 4 June 1878, Lytton Papers, vol.516/3; Home (Legislative) Proceedings, October 1878, Part B, no.167.
In this study we have often used the term 'public opinion', sometimes we have spoken of the public mind, and occasionally of nationalism. In conclusion it would be useful for us to try and look a little closely at these expressions in the context of our study.

If we begin with the public mind as the broadest of the three and take it at its most generalized sense, then anything that occupies the mind of any member of the public in question, provided it is capable of being raised from an individual to a public issue, can be said to belong to that public mind. It goes without saying that in this sense the Indian public mind is vast, unfathomed and very largely beyond investigation. Broad issues of a kind which have been no concern of this study must have occupied the minds of most of the Indians for much of the time. An attempt at a complete analysis of the public mind would involve, for instance, a discussion of matters of religion and caste. In rare moments we have had glimpses of this. Thus the preoccupation with religion does come through. We have seen that in discussing municipal government, men in northern India felt serious anger at any attempt to organize their religious festivities.¹ In discussing the criminal law, we saw how a

¹. See above, pp. 181-82.
magistrate came to grief in trying to discipline a religious procession in Bengal.¹ Again, newspapers in southern India were far more concerned with religious issues and temple organization than with politics. It is possible that publications of caste institutions were as avidly read as the newspapers we have studied. It should thus be clear that the public mind in this sense is a much broader phenomenon than the limited theme we have tried to explore.

Nationalism on the other hand, with all its imprecision is a far more specific concept when compared to the impenetrable reaches of the public mind. For nationalism we must somehow have a people who in some way consider themselves to be a nation and at the same time believe that they have a struggle to wage against either occupying foreigners or possible enemies. Needless to say that the nationalist movement in India does not come to a focus before the emergence of the Indian National Congress with its annual peripatetic conferences and its incessant review of grievances. It is of course possible to argue about the exact nature of this nationalism as it developed in India, and to see how the different regional societies came to participate in it. What cannot be denied is that whatever the exact features of the Indian nationalist movement, it was something better formulated, more clearly

¹ See above, pp. 388-89.
articulated and more consciously organized than the spontaneous phenomena we have studied.

Thus we have on the one hand the public mind which is vaster than our theme, while on the other there is the development of nationalism which is more specific. What we have seen is how the formulation of particular policies by the government evoked a series of responses from the Indian public. In other words we have studied the articulation of the public mind only in relation to official policy.

In looking at this theme of flowing legislation on the one hand and irate responses on the other we have noticed one remarkable phenomenon. We have seen how policy as it was made in the viceregal lodge in Calcutta and policy as it appeared in the Indian towns and villages were almost two different things. It is useful to notice that each administrative act which followed from the formulation of a policy, appeared to have disturbed to a certain extent the structure of power within the Indian societies, even in remote villages. Thus the municipalities with their power of local taxation meant a new weapon in the hands of certain groups wherever the municipalities were set up.¹ Similarly the introduction of the income tax gave powers of extortion to some Indians against others.² The attempt to make the police more

¹. See above, pp. 160–61.
². See above, pp. 113–16.
efficient was seen by the Bengalis as strengthening the hands of their antagonists, the Hindusthani toughs.¹ The official policies therefore produced reactions which must to some extent have been incomprehensible to the makers of policies.

When all this has been said, it remains that we have come across enough criticism of the government and the 'white' race to justify our calling the study an examination of the expression of nationalist feeling before the Congress. We must however be on our guard against this. Annoyance at 'white supremacy' was certainly widespread among the middle-class, but we do not know how the peasants, used to all other kinds of supremacies, felt about it. The middle-class demand moreover was only for restraining the 'whites', and nothing more sanguine. The criticisms of the government in a political vein were always to be found in the presidency towns. It is important to notice that the editor of the Grambarta Prakashika launched his paper in order to expose the nature of oppressions in his own village, which he knew so well.² The press in Calcutta/peculiarly apt in turning any dispute into a political one. Even there however the depth of loyalty to the Raj was found to be truly astonishing when its erstwhile critics hastened to make their peace with the government after the vernacular press act. In northern India,

¹. See above, pp. 381-82.
². See above, p. 55.
in much of the discussion, there was little hostility to the government. The south was seldom restless.

More important than this consideration, as to whether all this was nationalist feeling, or not, is the appreciation of the fact that throughout the 1870's an important process was at work in India. There were no exciting events in this decade, no wars of conquest, no revolts for liberty. There was an ever widening administration sinking its roots into India. There was as it were a churning up of the Indian societies, a certain quickening in the tempo of living. It is perfectly feasible to argue that this was an essential precondition for the emergence of nationalism. Some features of the nationalist movement may be traced to the process we have studied. For ourselves we must recognize it for what it was - the growth of new preoccupations in the Indian public mind, a new awareness of the government which was still not a relation of hostility, the birth of a public opinion.
ADDITIONAL NOTES

Legislative acts, 1870-80:

1870  Income Tax, XVI
      European British Subjects, XXII
      Customs Duties, XVII
      Relief of Oudh Talukdars, XXIV
      Prisons, XXVI
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1872  Criminal Procedure, X
      Postponing Commencement of Code of Criminal Procedure, XVII
      Laws, Punjab, IV

1873  Municipalities, Punjab, IV
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1874  Amending Code of Criminal Procedure, XI
      Salt, X

1875  Criminal Procedure, High Courts, X
      Punjab Judicial Administration, XIV
      Amending Punjab Laws Act, XV
      Tariff, XVI
      Laws, Central Provinces, XX
      Calcutta University Honorary Degrees, XXI

1876  Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction, X
      Dramatic Performances, XIX
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1877  Presidency Magistrates, IV  
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Amending Native Press (Act IX of 1878), XVI  
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1879  Dekkan Agriculturists' Relief Act, XVII  
Legal Practitioners' Act, XVIII  

1880  Licence Acts Amendment, VI  
Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction, XV  
Religious Societies, I.  

# A List of Newspapers Published in India, 1870-1880

## I. In the Madras Presidency

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<th>Place of Publication</th>
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## II. In the Bombay Presidency

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Bombay Presidency continued

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85. Broach Wartaman " Broach
86. Niti Prakash " Kaira
87. Satya Mitra " Bombay
88. Nyaya Prakash " Surat
89. Swadesh Mangal " Broach
90. Surya Prakash Anglo-Gujarati Surat
91. Hitechchhu " Ahmedabad
92. Kushful Akhbar Hindusthani Bombay
93. Akhtar-e-Hind "
94. Mofurrahul Kolub Persian Kurrachee

III. Rajputana

95. Jaipur Akhbar Urdu Jaipur
96. Marwar Gazette Hindi-Urdu Jodhpur

IV. Punjab

97. Anjuman-i-Punjab Urdu Lahore
98. Aftab-i-Punjab " "
99. Koh-i-Nur " "
100. Akhbar-i-Am " "
101. Punjab-i-Akhbar " "
102. Mitra Vilas " "
103. Punjab Punch " "
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105. Vakil-i-Hindusthan " Amritsar
106. Safir-i-Hind " "
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108. Rafah-i-Am " Sialkot
109. Patiala Akhbar " Patiala
110. Sadikhul-Akhbar " "
111. Lytton Gazette " Delhi
112. Khair-Khwa-h-i- Alam " "
113. Ashraf-ul-Akhbar " "
114. Nur Afshan " Ludhiana
115. Mihir-i-Daraksham " "
## V. North Western Provinces

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## VI. Oudh

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VII. Hyderabad and Berar

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Basantak on the Controversy about Cotton:

Cartoon 1. The caption reads: A new Manchester Roller to flatten India.
Cartoon 1
Basantak, 1876

Developing the Resources of the Country

. ভারতবর্ষে সম্যক করিবার জন্য
মূন্ডা মেঘের "মোলর।"
Basantak on Municipal Taxation: Cartoon 2.

A magician obtains Rs. 600,000/- from his audience, makes it vanish and produces a tiny market. He assures his audience that given another 300,000/- he would make both the money and the market disappear.
৩০০-০০ মিলিনিশে� লোকেরি।

বাঁচকেন্দ্র: "এই দেশ টাকা উড়ে দিয়ে একটি বাঙালি কঠোর হয়েছে।
াবার সেই আটি চাকরি দিব টাকা (টাকা তো উড়ে যেতে ইনেশনল লোকের)
আর সর্বনিম্ন বাণিজ্যও উড়ে যাবে।"

সত্যুঃ—টাকা আছে না?

বাঁচকেন্দ্র: টাকা আছে তো কি তামাসাৰ? কেন ৩০০০০ টাকা দেও
কেন একটি বাঙালি আছে।
Basantak on the Baroda Affair: Cartoons 3 and 4.

These two cartoons depict Phayre drumming up support for himself and conspiring with the domestics against the Gaekwar.
কেরালায় কেরি সাহেবের বাস্তব হাতে ঘুরে আসায় করিয়া।

গাণ্ডি বিলেন

"বে হাজার বিপক্ষে বলিয়া
যে আমার প্রাণ হইয়ে
কার সাধ্য কে ফি মনে,
শিকার করুকের ফতে
আসিয়া দেশকে।"

এই সত্তে এখান ২০ জন সাধ্য একত্র করিয়া। এখন কবিনামে কাজী সতে
করিলেন।

হরিবে বিবাহ ! অসাধারণ আসিয়া
সংবাদ বিখ্যাত যে তাহার বিপক্ষে এক
"পরিভাষা।" সাহেবের বিকেল পাঠান
হইয়াছে।
ফেরি সাহেব আরামে অঁকে পেশেলারে 
সর্বে খাইনে (পাকাগোলা না পাইল 
কীদির পাকাইনে) বাধু দেহ করিয়া।
বঁাদ পেশাদারে হাত পিছিয়ে দেখিয়া 
অথবা তেজ তাই পায়নে (এ বলি 
ভিন্ন করিয়া পায়নে না) কেন বলিদিও 
- "তোহত বিদ্যে আছি, জীসহর ওঁড়া, 
দেখে আর তাতায়।" সাকেল প্রফুল্ল হইয় 
পড়িল।

জকার সাহেব করেন সাহেবের খাইন 
ঠাই আর দেখি বিদ্যে সংরক্ষিত পায় 
সাহিব মেষিনে বে-এক "কুকুর! 
হঁপুল, পুলোল!" !! কেন সাহেব 
রহিল না।

সেই সাহেব রায়টর পোসর বহ 
ও পেশেল। সর্বজন পেশাদারের 
অবফ হইয়া পড়িলেন, বলে বিদ্য 
রহিল না।
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