Anticolonial Homelands across the Indian Ocean: The Politics of the Indian Diaspora in Kenya, ca. 1930–1950

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On the very first page of the very first "nationalist" history of Kenya, published in 1966, Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham proclaimed that the "largely middle class oriented and religiously fragmented Indian population played only a marginal role in the expanding conflict between the white power elite and dominated African population."[1] While this book opened up new and exciting avenues of research into the history of nationalism in colonial Kenya, it closed off the same spirit of inquiry for the study of the politics of Indian immigrants, who appeared irrelevant and marginal to the story of anticolonialism in the country. Furthermore, it anticipated two interrelated arguments made by scholars three decades later. First, diasporas are *a priori* assumed to be politically insular, leading to a focus on their internal social and economic organization. Second, territorially and racially bound nationalist narratives of anticolonialism are privileged over diasporic articulations of the same, thus reinforcing the myth of their political obscurity.

A closer analysis of the politics of diasporic Indians in Kenya calls these conclusions into question. While the 1940s did witness a political fragmentation among Indians along seemingly religious lines, as highlighted by Rosberg and Nottingham, those cleavages did not signify Indians' marginality within the anticolonial conflict between European settlers and Africans. Rather, the debates that took place underscored the deep political engagement of a diasporic Indian community with anticolonial nationalist movements in *both* Kenya and India. In moving the study of diasporas beyond social identity to explore anticolonial nationalism across territorial boundaries, and in taking seriously the political ideas that emerge in diasporic contexts, we can create a new paradigm for analyzing diasporic politics that is located squarely and simultaneously within both the homeland that migrants leave and the hostland where they arrive. In this conceptualization, diasporas emerge as the embodiment of transnational history, in whose political articulations the extraterritorial resonance of anticolonial nationalist discourses can be identified.

Scholars have situated contemporary South Asian diasporic identity in between

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[1] See Carl G. Rosberg, Jr., and John Nottingham, *The Myth of "Mau Mau": Nationalism in Kenya* (New York, 1966), v.

constructions of the homeland and hostland. They argue that idealization of the homeland left behind by immigrants leads to the reproduction of religious, regional, and cultural identifiers in the new hostland. Consequently, studies of diasporic subjectivity have been overwhelmingly concerned with the transplanting of Indian culture across time and space.[2] The homeland, India, is presented as a static cultural signifier of diasporic social networks and religious identity, while hostlands are most often constructed within an impenetrable, essentializing nationalist framework. This dichotomy flattens the political imaginary of the diaspora, which is seen as having escaped the hegemony of power embodied in nations, celebrated in postcolonial theory for its inherent inability to belong fully to either.[3] Moreover, diaspora studies is preoccupied with such a high level of theoretical discourse on hybridity and ambivalence that these narratives lack historical specificity. For historians studying diasporas, Frederick Cooper's call to do "history historically" highlights the need to analyze diasporic subjectivity by moving away from the dehistoricized theoretical predilections of "diaspora studies" to focus instead on the specific historical contexts that created diasporas.[4]

Drawing on Jewish and African historiography, approaches to the study of migrants have considered the themes of traumatic, involuntary exile, dispersal, and a desire but inability to return to the homeland as preconditions that characterize these communities as diasporas.[5] Between 1830 and 1930, approximately 29 million Indians dispersed across the empire on which the sun never set. Over a million of them arrived in British colonies, including Fiji, Mauritius, Natal, and settlements in the Caribbean, as indentured laborers to work on sugar plantations after the abolition of slavery. Uncovering the workers' traumatic experiences on ships and plantations, scholars have characterized indentured labor in the late nineteenth century as a "new system of slavery." Since nearly 24 million of those migrants returned to India, historians refrain from referring to indentured laborers as diasporas, despite their fulfillment of several preconditions highlighted by theorists, including traumatic, involuntary dispersal and an inability to return until the completion of their contracts. However, the existence of a large number of "voluntary" migrants, who chose to remain in colonies such as Kenya after the end of their indenture, calls for

[2] See, for instance, Vijay Mishra, "The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diaspora," *Textual Practice* 10, no. 3 (1996): 421–447; Amitav Ghosh, "The Diaspora in Indian Culture," *Public Culture* 2, no. 1 (1989): 73–78; Sandhya Shukla, "Locations for South Asian Diasporas," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 551–572; Roger Ballard, ed., *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (London, 1994); Peter van der Veer, ed., *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora* (Philadelphia, 1995); Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, and Steven Vertovec, eds., *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity* (Cambridge, 1990); Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2006).

[3] Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990), 291–320; Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World: On the Meaning and Usefulness of Diaspora as a Concept," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 8, no. 3 (1999): 225–254; Partha Chatterjee, "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?" *Social Text* 16, no. 56 (Autumn 1998): 57–69.

[4] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, Calif., 2005), 109.

[5] See, for instance, Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in Braziel and Mannur, eds., *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Oxford, 2003), 1; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (New York, 1997); Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 189–219; Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World"; James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 302–338.

a new framework for analyzing diasporas that is not determined entirely by involuntary exile and the inability to return to the homeland. Scholars have begun to use the term "diaspora" for Indians who remained in the Caribbean after indenture, but they caution against conceptualizing a "singular" diaspora, highlighting instead the diversity within the community, which generated different social and religious rearticulations of the homeland to which they never returned, and indeed which many had never seen.[6]

Interrogations of such constructions of homeland and hostland and the diaspora's mediation between the two have been an important starting point in moving away from Jewish and African models in diaspora studies.[7] This intervention has been especially useful with regard to the Indian diaspora in Kenya, for whom there was no clear distinction between the homeland and the hostland, since returning to India was a tangible reality. For Indians who migrated to Kenya in the era before the logic of passports, territorial borders, and national citizenship created obstacles to the movement of people across the Indian Ocean, the physical separation between India and Kenya was never complete. The proximity of East Africa to South Asia created circulatory patterns of migration, which meant that the diaspora was never cut off from its homeland even as the political and economic reality of Kenya framed the immediate context of its political imaginary. This made its diasporic experience markedly different from that of Indians in the Caribbean and other British colonies where "return" to India was not really a historical possibility. Therefore, diasporic consciousness needs to be analyzed as emerging from the diaspora's political interactions with both its point of departure, India, and its point of arrival, Kenya, neither of which was unchanging. A history of the political ideas of Indians in Kenya thus requires an exploration of the "spatial imagination of political activists" whose boundaries were "neither global nor local" but were "built out of specific lines of connections and posited regional, continental and transcontinental affinities."[8]

The search for such transnational connections has resulted in two distinct approaches as scholars have begun to interrogate the voluntary mediations and articulations of diasporas. First, they have studied alternative public spheres where a "global diasporic perspective" emerged. The majority of these works focus on Asian migrations to argue that the globalist ethos and mobility that characterized these public spheres came to an end in the 1920s with the rise of anticolonial nationalism. Second, a systematic study of the Indian Ocean realm has led to an exploration of colonial India as "the nodal point from which people, ideas and goods and institutions radiated outwards." These studies show that the Indian Ocean not only

[6] See, for instance, Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830–1920* (London, 1974); Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers: Indians in Mauritius, 1834–1874* (Delhi, 1995); Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Slavery and Indian Indentured Labor in the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 1998); John D. Kelly, *A Politics of Virtue: Hinduism, Sexuality, and Countercolonial Discourse in Fiji* (Chicago, 1991); Prabhu P. Mohapatra, " 'Following Custom'? Representations of Community among Indian Immigrant Labour in the West Indies,1880–1920," *International Review of Social History* 51, suppl. S14 (2006): 173–202.

[7] An important conceptual innovation toward this end has been introduced by Avtar Brah, who has analyzed the mythology of the homeland to distinguish between the existence of a desired homeland and the actual desire to return to it. For her it is the former—what she terms the "homing desire" of an imagined, idealized homeland—that characterizes diasporas. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London, 2001), 197–204.

[8] Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 109.

brought an Indian sub-imperialist agenda to the shores of East Africa—through colonial administrators and intermediary capitalists—but also carried with it waves of "expatriate patriots" as the universalizing aspirations of anticolonialism allowed political thinkers to cross territorial boundaries.[9] The centrality of the status of Indians overseas to the anticolonial nationalist movement in India is exemplified by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who left for South Africa as an obscure lawyer in 1893 and returned to India as a mahatma in 1915. Significantly, Gandhi's nationalist critique emerged in the diasporic context in which he fought for the rights of Indian traders and laborers in South Africa. The condition of indentured laborers, who could not break their contracts or find alternative employment until the end of their tenure, caught the attention of nationalists in India, who took up their cause, aligning national honor with the status of Indian men and women overseas, resulting in the end of the indenture system at the start of the First World War.[10] In a seminal essay on the analytical usefulness of diasporas that became the theoretical paradigm for diaspora studies, James Clifford asserts that the nation-state is subverted by its citizens' diasporic attachments to their place of origin.[11] Such theories sit uncomfortably with the historical reality of the making of nationalists such as Gandhi in a diasporic context, precisely because of their attachment to their place of origin in an attempt to secure their political rights in the place of their arrival. Historians therefore need to explore the relationship between diasporas and nationalism through an interrogation of the political ideas and solidarities that emerge within both the "homeland" and the "hostland."

Tumultuous changes took place in the 1930s and 1940s across the Indian Ocean, which had a significant impact on Indian diasporic consciousness, forming the contours of the political imaginaries within which several debates took place: antico-

[9] See, for instance, T. N. Harper, "Empire, Diaspora, and the Languages of Globalism, 1850–1914," in A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History* (New York, 2002), 141–166; Harper, "Globalism and the Pursuit of Authenticity: The Making of a Diasporic Public Sphere in Singapore," *Sojourn* 12, no. 2 (1997): 261–292; Adam McKeown, "Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842 to 1949," *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 2 (1999): 306–337. Rajat Kanta Ray studies and contrasts Indian and Chinese capital in the age of European expansion, while David Northrup compares the experiences of Chinese and Indian indentured laborers across the British Empire; Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Domination: The Rise of the Bazaar, 1800–1914," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 3 (1995): 449–554; Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge, 1995). Sunil Amrith argues that it was immobility resulting from the rise of nationalism (which he dates to the 1930s) that created an inward-looking diasporic consciousness among Tamils in Southeast Asia; Amrith, "Tamil Diasporas across the Bay of Bengal," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (June 2009): 547–572. Robert J. Blyth urges historians to consider the Western Indian Ocean an Indian sphere of influence; Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858–1947* (New York, 2003), chap. 1. Recent works on Indian Ocean history include Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley, Calif., 2007); and Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006). I have borrowed the term "expatriate patriots" from Bose, ibid., chap. 5. Bose and Susan Bayly both study Indian sojourners; see Bayly, "Imagining 'Greater India': French and Indian Visions of Colonialism in the Indic Mode," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (2004): 703–744. For a review of Indian Ocean historiography and the usefulness of this paradigm of analysis, see Isabel Hofmeyr, "The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South—Literary and Cultural Perspectives," *Social Dynamics* 33, no. 2 (2007): 3–32.

[10] For details, see Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg, 1985); Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915–1922* (Cambridge, 1972), chap. 1; Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*; Kelly, *A Politics of Virtue*; Kale, *Fragments of Empire*.

[11] Clifford, "Diasporas."

lonial critiques emerged among Africans and Indians in Kenya in the form of institutionalized politics and labor trade union strikes; India gained independence from British rule in 1947, an event celebrated in Kenya by Indians and Africans alike; and a new nation-state for Indian Muslims—Pakistan—was born, which found support among Punjabi Muslims in Kenya, especially those who demurred at the anticolonialism of their compatriots. The politics of Indians in Kenya at this time centered around four interrelated concerns: an engagement with anticolonial nationalism in India; trade unionism among Indian and African workers; interracial anticolonial nationalism in Kenya; and loyalism—toward the colonial administration—in Kenya. The fissures that appeared within Indian politics reflected the different political concerns, solidarities, and diasporic musings of a community negotiating its understanding of and its relationship to a changing homeland and hostland. This history has been obscured by the exclusive focus in diaspora studies on Indians' cultural links with South Asia, their social and economic rather than political networks in Kenya, and the construction of racially and territorially defined nationalism in political histories of India and Kenya.[12] As a corrective, an analysis of the political imaginary of Indian leadership in Kenya can provide a lens through which to view the diasporic consciousness of a community whose divergent religious, racial, regional, national, and class-based identities found resonance in the articulations of those who represented them in the public political sphere. It can also highlight a trajectory of anticolonial discourse in Kenya in the 1940s that has been marginalized in historiography and popular memory, which imagined a racially diverse political nation that accommodated the Indian diaspora before the slogan "Africa for Africans" struck a chord in the country as independence appeared imminent in the early 1960s.

Precolonial trade networks across the Indian Ocean had connected the littoral realms and merchant communities of Gujarat in western India and eastern Africa since the seventeenth century. Not only did the advent of colonial rule in the mid-nineteenth century create a new context and expanding business opportunities for these traders, but it also brought Indians from other parts of the subcontinent to East Africa in a variety of roles. For example, Gujarati Indian intermediary capital financed early imperial explorations, Indian soldiers serving in the British army participated in military campaigns that consolidated colonial rule, and 40,000 Indians from Punjab provided labor for the construction of the Uganda railways.[13] About one-fifth of the Punjabi workers remained in Kenya at the termination of their contracts, becoming masons, mechanics, and carpenters. At the same time, opportunities within the colonial civil services and small-scale internal trade attracted new migrants, leading to a fifteen-fold increase in the Indian population in Kenya, from 11,787 in 1911 to 176,613 in 1963. Although Muslim immigrants outnumbered Hin-

[12] Histories of Indian nationalism have been confined to the exploration of anticolonial movements and ideas within the territorial boundaries of South Asia, while narratives of Kenyan nationalism have focused on political articulations and protests of African nationalists.

[13] The role of Indians in the colonial conquest of East Africa was recognized by several British officials, including Winston Churchill. See Churchill, *My African Journey* (London, 1908), 33–34.

dus until the 1920s, they became an approximately 30 percent minority by the 1940s. The majority were Hindus and Sikhs from Gujarat and Punjab, who emerged as the petty bourgeoisie in Kenya, setting up *dukkas* (small shops) across the colony and providing a variety of semi-skilled services to Indians, Europeans, and Africans.[14] The changing regional, religious, and occupational composition of Indian migrants was reflected in a number of newly established political and social associations. These, in turn, resulted in shifting political articulations that underscored deeply complex, and at times contradictory, manifestations of diasporic consciousness. Yet existing histories of Indians in East Africa have focused almost exclusively on the social networks and economic success of shopkeepers, with little attention paid either to their diasporic character or to Indians engaged in other professions.[15]

Colonial administration in India and Kenya was based on the political categorization and separation of imperial citizens into distinct racial, religious, and ethnic groups. The colonial government of India allocated political privileges to separate religiously defined subjects. In Kenya, the governor legitimized racial identity as a means of categorizing colonial subjects—Indian, European, and African—by demarcating separate legislative "communal rolls" for each and reserving specific agricultural areas for the different races. Europeans gained exclusive access to the fertile highlands, which the Kikuyu believed were their ancestral lands, and Africans were separated along ethnic lines and pushed into tribally defined reserves. Indians were kept out of both, permitted only to open small shops near European farms and African reserves. This political and residential segregation of a multiracial society was aimed at creating a hierarchical structure with Europeans at the top, Indians in the middle, and Africans at the bottom. As a corollary, the political and economic concerns of Europeans, Africans, and Indians were voiced within racially exclusive associations.[16]

Critical of the preferential treatment given to European farmers, who wanted to make Kenya a "white man's colony" by restricting the immigration of Indians and

[14] Colonial Office [hereafter CO], 822/143/7, The National Archives, Kew, UK [hereafter TNA]. The 1948 Kenya census records 45,238 Hindus, 27,583 Muslims, and 10,621 Sikhs living in the colony. A third of the Muslims were estimated to have been from Punjab. Of a total population of 90,528, 34 percent of Indians were engaged in commercial activity, including retail and wholesale trade, and at least an equal proportion were skilled and semi-skilled workers employed by the railways, in textile manufacture, in metal- and woodworking, and as clerks. For details, see Report on the Census of the Non-Native Population of Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1948 (Nairobi, 1953). See also India Office: Public and Judicial Department Records, 1795–1950 [hereafter L/P&J/], 8/248, 108/19C/1, India Office Records, British Library [hereafter IOR], Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, December 1945; Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An Economic and Social History, 1890–1980* (Boulder, Colo., 1993).

[15] See, for example, Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa: A History of Race Relations within the British Empire, 1890–1939* (Oxford, 1971), 204–206; Savita Nair, "Shops and Stations: Rethinking Power and Privilege in British/Indian East Africa," in John C. Hawley, ed., *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms* (Bloomington, Ind., 2008); Michael Cowen and Scott MacWilliam, *Indigenous Capital in Kenya: The "Indian" Dimension of Debate* (Helsinki, 1996), chap. 4; Gijsbert Oonk, "'After Shaking His Hand, Start Counting Your Fingers': Trust and Images in Indian Business Networks, East Africa, 1900–2000," *Itinerario* 28, no. 3 (2004): 70–83; Donald S. Rothchild, *Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya: A Study of Minorities and Decolonization* (London, 1973).

[16] CO, 533/270, TNA, Miscellaneous Offices, Despatches, 1921, vol. 16, note titled "Reservation to Europeans of Land in the Highlands." In both India and Kenya, such divisions were justified on the grounds of "administrative convenience." In 1909, the colonial government granted separate political electorates to Muslims in India. For details, see Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Delhi, 1997), chap. 16.

limiting their economic activities in the early 1900s, Indian merchants, who had helped to bring imperial trade and commerce to East Africa, sought to protect their political and economic rights by positioning themselves as sub-imperialists, advancing their claims "as *first makers* of the land" that they had adopted, colonized, and made their home.[17] Prominent Indian merchants including A. M. Jeevanjee, a Muslim Bohra entrepreneur from Karachi, were quick to highlight the commercial contributions made by Indians, who by 1910 had come to control nearly 85 percent of the colony's trade. In order to protect their businesses against the Europeans' attempt to break their monopoly, Indian traders formed a political organization in March 1914 called the East African Indian National Congress (EAINC), the first meeting of which was held in Mombasa under the presidency of Jeevanjee.[18] The primary objective of the EAINC was to defend the rights and interests of all Indians in British East Africa. Despite this stated ambition, however, the congress during this time represented elite Indian merchants, whose large-scale business interests were being thwarted by the growing importance of European settlers within Kenyan politics. Therefore, the EAINC launched a powerful, though ultimately unsuccessful, campaign aimed at gaining parity with the Europeans by demanding access to the highlands and the introduction of political representation based on a common electoral roll rather than the existing racially defined communal one.

While Indians in Kenya never produced their own Gandhi, the traders' political quest for parity with European settlers in the first two decades of the twentieth century caught the attention of nationalists in India, the India Office in London (with the viceroy and secretary of state for India supporting the EAINC), and Africans in Kenya.[19] Despite this involvement, in 1923 the Colonial Office announced that no change would be made in the political and economic administration; however, Indians were conceded representative seats in the Legislative Council.[20]

[17] India Office: Economic Department Records, c1876–1950 [hereafter L/E/], 7/1623, Industries and Overseas [hereafter I&O], 814/1922, IOR, *An Appeal on Behalf of Indians in East Africa*, pamphlet by A. M. Jeevanjee (Bombay, 1912), Foreword, emphasis added; "Indians in East Africa: Amazing Action of the Colonial Office, Suicide Policy," *Daily Chronicle*, September 1, 1910. European settlers formed a Colonist Association to petition the government to make Kenya a white man's colony. Colonist Association to Secretary of State for Colonies, November 13, 1905, in G. H. Mungeam, ed., *Kenya: Selected Historical Documents, 1884–1923* (Nairobi, 1978), 470–476.

[18] Secretary of State for India: Private Office Papers, 1858–1948 [hereafter L/PO],1/1 (A), IOR, Presidential Address by A. M. Jeevanjee, British East African Indian Congress (EAINC), Mombasa, March 7, 1914. The EAINC was modeled on the All-India National Congress, the main nationalist political party in India, founded in 1885. It corresponded with its Indian counterpart and sent several delegates to meetings of the All-India National Congress from the 1920s onward. However, the congress in Kenya remained institutionally and organizationally separate from the All-India Congress. Asian Records, Microfilm 1, Kenya National Archives [hereafter KNA], Instructions to Shams-ud-Deen, January 29, 1919. While the earliest political Indian association in Kenya had been established in Mombasa in 1900, followed by one in Nairobi in 1906, both had focused on local issues. For details, see Robert G. Gregory, *Quest for Equality: Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900–1967* (Delhi, 1993), 32–34.

[19] Significantly, unlike Gandhi's *satyagraha* in South Africa, which had been restricted to the participation of Indians, the first generation of Indian and African political activists found common ground in their protests against the privileges accorded to European settlers in Kenya. In 1921–1922, an alliance was formed between Harry Thuku, a Kikuyu, and M. A. Desai, a Gujarati. For details, see Sana Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians in Colonial Kenya's Contested Public Political Sphere, 1919–1923," *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 81, no. 1 (2011): 132–154. For a discussion of Gandhi's relationship with Africans in South Africa, see Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (New York, 2011), chap. 3.

[20] L/E/7/1264, I&O, 867/1922, IOR, parliamentary paper draft by Duke of Devonshire, July 20, 1923.

Though unsuccessful, it is a testament to the political significance of intermediary capitalists in places such as Kenya that their agitation attracted the attention of Indian nationalists in the subcontinent.[21] The transnational dimension of this first organized political agitation underscores the importance not only of the diaspora's attachment to India in its political fight in Kenya but also of the extraterritorial imaginary of nationalists who took up the concerns of diasporic Indians in their emerging discourse about nationhood. Yet historiographical approaches to Kenyan nationalism have been overwhelmingly concerned with the nature of African demands, European obduracy, and colonial mediation between the two. In particular, scholars date the rise of anticolonial movements to the period after the Second World War, inextricably linking all scholarship on Kenyan nationalism with the Mau Mau Rebellion of the 1950s.[22] Meanwhile, historians of Indian nationalism focus on the emergence and contestation of the imagined political nation within the territorial boundaries of South Asia after Gandhi's return during the First World War, despite the growing presence of Indians throughout the British Empire.

Indians continued to transcend territorial and political borders across the Indian Ocean through the 1930s and 1940s. During this time, debates over nationhood and statehood emerged in both India and Kenya. The Indian diaspora did not subvert these discourses, but revealed the extraterritorial and interracial resonance of the anticolonial critiques that created these nation-states. Rather than negate the nation-state paradigm of analysis, as James Clifford argues, Frederick Cooper suggests that "state and nation need to be examined in relation to diasporic communities, to the structures and rules . . . that also cross borders and to the cleavages that exist within borders and at times both destroy and remake the nation-state."[23] Territorial and racial boundaries did not limit the political imaginations of those who traversed the Indian Ocean, as the anticolonial politics of the 1940s facilitated the formation of extraterritorial affiliations. Moreover, the diaspora's political orientation was not simply derivative of Indian nationalism emanating from the subcontinent. Rather, Indian politics mediated between anticolonial nationalist discourses in two milieus—Kenya and India—that were never rigidly separated as "homeland" and "hostland" in diasporic consciousness.

THE 1923 DECISION OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE marked a decisive break from the subimperialist leanings of the first generation of Indian political leaders, who had emerged from the predominantly Muslim merchant community. Disappointed with

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For a detailed discussion of the 1923 Devonshire Declaration, see Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians"; Gregory, *Quest for Equality*; Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, chap. 6; Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj*, chap. 5.

[21] Gandhi sent his close friend C. F. Andrews, who had been a witness to Gandhi's *satyagraha* in South Africa, to Kenya to join the merchants in their protest.

[22] See, for example, John Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya," *Journal of African History* 31, no. 3 (1990): 393–421; E. S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale, eds., *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003); Marshall S. Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs: History, Memory and Politics* (Boulder, Colo., 1998).

[23] Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1516–1545, here 1542.

the continuation of the racial principle in political representation and the reservation of the highlands for Europeans only, the EAINC moved away from the economic concerns of Indian traders to broader political concerns for all Indians in Kenya. It thus emerged as the main voice for Indian politics at a colony-wide level, putting up candidates for elections and making representations on behalf of Indians in Kenya to nationalists in India, the Kenyan governor, and His Majesty's Government. Open sessions of the congress were held annually, at which officers were elected, presidential addresses were delivered, and resolutions were passed. By 1932, the EAINC had moved so far away from its beginnings as a political organization for merchants that a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Africa was set up to represent the narrow economic interests of Indian small-scale shopkeepers living outside Nairobi in towns near the African reserves and European farms.[24]

In contrast to the earlier emphasis on the Indian role in the colonization of East Africa that had accompanied the merchants' demand to be made equal partners in the imperial project, a new generation of political leaders emerged who were influenced by the growing postwar anticolonial nationalist discourse in India, which they had so recently witnessed. This critique transcended territorial boundaries, complicating notions of homeland and hostland, which are often treated as monolithic binaries in diasporic studies. In a pamphlet published in the 1930s, U. K. Oza, the Gujarati principal of a college in Bombay who had moved to Kenya in 1926, wrote of his voyage, "On entering the Kilindini harbor [in East Africa] . . . a familiar sight met my view. The green tall waving palms, the splendid mango trees, the bright shining sun and the clear blue sky of the . . . South western coast of the historic peninsula of Kathiawar [in Gujarat, India] were all reproduced there as in a dream." Furthermore, he claimed, "I could not resist contemplating that the east coast of Africa was as much Indian as the coast of Kathiawar."[25]

The seamless crossing and adoption of homeland and hostland across the Indian Ocean was reinforced by the experience of being colonized subjects in both India and Kenya. For Oza, the turning point came at the end of the First World War, which brought "dark disillusionment" for many Indians who had remained loyal to the British during the war, hoping that they would be rewarded with self-government.[26]

[24] CO, 533/425/14, and 438/10, TNA, Memorandum, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Africa, September 27, 1933, and Presidential Address by J. B. Pandya, First Session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Africa, Kisumu, July 9, 1932. It is worth noting that the federation held its very first session in Kisumu, on the shores of Lake Victoria in Nyanza, where Indian shopkeepers had first settled, thereby symbolically distancing itself from urban politics as represented by the congress in Nairobi, where Indians formed 35 percent of the population. According to the 1931 Kenya census, of a total population of 43,623 Indians, 15,032 were traders (35 percent). At this time, 26 percent of the population lived in smaller towns, and the rest in Nairobi and Mombasa. See Report on the Non-Native Census Enumeration Made in the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1931 (Nairobi, 1932).

[25] U. K. Oza, *The Rift in the Empire's Lute: Being a History of the Indian Struggle in Kenya from 1900 to 1930*, published pamphlet, n.d. (probably 1930), IOR.

[26] Here Oza was referring to the first mass-based nationalist movement launched under Gandhi's leadership, the Non-Cooperation/Khilafat movement of 1919–1922. The disillusionment following the First World War had led to the rise of mass-based anticolonial nationalism in India as well. See, for example, Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*. The transnational impact and network of Indian nationalism before the First World War has emerged as an important field of research. See, for instance, Harald Fischer-Tine, "Indian Nationalism and the 'World Forces': Transnational and Diasporic Dimensions of

While political events in India served as the catalyst for the rise of anticolonial consciousness, the diasporic experience was central to this transition. Oza had been a loyal imperial citizen, but the "last chords [*sic*] of attachment were snapped" when he arrived in Kenya. Alluding to the Gandhian trope of a significant moment of diasporic anticolonial sensibility, Oza recounted his attempt at walking through Mombasa and being told that some "celestially charming avenues" were maintained exclusively for Europeans. "All the pleasure of being in familiar surroundings naturally vanished," he wrote. "Up to the present moment I had not realized that the disabilities of Indians in Kenya could be so galling." Just as Gandhi's *satyagraha* began on the night in 1893 when he was thrown out of the first-class compartment reserved for Europeans at Pietermaritzburg in South Africa, the racial hierarchical underpinnings of colonial rule in Kenya severed the last remaining strand of loyalty to the British crown for many diasporic Indians, who had in fact themselves been implicated in the colonial project in East Africa. The combined effect of the extraterritorial anticolonial critique resulting from subjugation under colonial rule in India and the diasporic experience of Indians across British colonies led Oza to conclude that the plight of his countrymen would improve only if they developed a "Kenyan spirit" by looking upon themselves as "Kenyan first," and taking into consideration the "birthright of the Africans." In return, Africans were asked to regard Indians as friends who after a generation "would be as African as they were."[27]

In his critique, Oza did not spare the leadership of the EAINC, whom he likened to weak exploiters for having failed to include African grievances in their agitations. As the congress began to shake off the sub-imperialist trappings of its founders, men such as Oza—who was elected its honorary general secretary in the early 1930s—became politically active, decisively changing its character and replacing the leadership of big merchants. While Oza had been the first Indian within the EAINC to publicly acknowledge the centrality of Africans to the future of Kenya, he was not the only one. In the late 1920s, the congress began to take up political and economic issues beyond the racially exclusive concerns of Indian legislative representation and commercial enterprise.[28] It addressed specific African grievances that had little impact on the everyday lives of Indians on the grounds that the interests of Africans and Indians were "indissolubly bound together." Africans were prevented from farming in the highlands and forced to cultivate land in overcrowded reserves. Land hunger and high rates of taxation forced African laborers out of these reserves and onto European farms, where they received very low wages.[29] At its public annual meetings and through its members who were elected as Indian representatives to the

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the Indian Freedom Movement on the Eve of the First World War," *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 3 (2007): 325–344.

[27] Oza, *The Rift in the Empire's Lute*. For a firsthand account of the importance of this event in Gandhi's life, see M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Ahmadabad, 1950).

[28] Oza found employment as an insurance agent in Kenya and subsequently became the editor of English-language Indian newspapers published in East Africa. He was one of six Indians selected to give evidence to the Colonial Office as part of an examination of the land question in Kenya in 1932–1933, during which he condemned the existing policy of alienating the highlands to Europeans and restricting Africans to reserves. For details, see Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa*, 101, 434–435.

[29] For a detailed analysis of the labor and land structure set up by the colonial administration, see Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991).

Legislative Council, the EAINC began to routinely demand the abolition of the ban that prohibited Africans from growing cash crops such as tea and coffee; the restrictions on their possession of livestock; the *kipande* law, which required all Africans leaving reserves to carry identification papers; ordinances that made the breach of labor contracts a criminal offense; and the unduly heavy poll and hut tax levied on Africans.[30] None of these restrictions limited Indian political or economic aspirations. However, they reflected the racial principle of colonial governance that the EAINC opposed, thus enabling it to expand its anticolonial critique beyond the particular, racially confined concerns of the Indian community. In this vein, acutely aware of the Indians' diasporic status, the EAINC rejected an administrative proposal to create a million-acre-large agricultural reserve for Indians, arguing that reserving land in Kenya for any immigrant community was immoral because Africans were "the rightful owners of the soil."[31]

A YEAR AFTER OZA'S ARRIVAL in Kenya, a fourteen-year-old Sikh boy from Punjab, Makhan Singh, migrated with his family to Nairobi, where his father found employment with the railways and subsequently opened a printing press. Singh would later serve the longest political detention—eleven and a half years—of any Kenyan nationalist at the height of the independence movement in the colony.[32] The place of his departure and the year of his arrival were important details that shaped his political ideas. While before the war Indian merchants such as Jeevanjee represented intermediary capitalists with a sub-imperialist orientation, a more radical element had existed outside the arena of organized institutional politics among Punjabi labor. Punjab, and particularly the Sikh diaspora that originated from there, had been a hotbed of revolutionary activity in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Punjabi Sikhs who had migrated to California at the turn of the century founded a transnational anticolonial revolutionary association—the Ghadr Party—which had branches across the British Empire. A number of Punjabi Sikhs in Kenya had links with the Ghadr movement, and many were detained, deported, and executed in East Africa during the war. Even before Oza, these Punjabis had talked about the need for Indians to create a united front with Africans in order to "crush the vermin" who

[30] L/E/7/1329, Economic and Overseas [hereafter E&O], 466/24, and 1497, E&O, 1453 1(a)/1927, IOR, Presidential Address by Tyeb Ali at the EAINC annual meeting, Nairobi, December 25, 1927, and resolutions passed by the congress, June 1930. See also Makhan Singh Papers, University of Nairobi [hereafter MAK], A/3, Correspondence, fols. 161–315, 1938, Legislative Council election results reported in *Kenya Daily Mail*, March 29, 1938; and Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Governor's Office [hereafter GH], 7/4, KNA, Indian Association and Indian Political Movements, Indian Community, Generally, 1928–1942: Confidential Report of the Commissioner of Police on Indian Meeting at Alexandria Cinema, Nairobi, February 5, 1928.

[31] L/E/7/1328, E&O, 336/1924, IOR, Memorandum on Proposed Formation of an Indian Reserve in Lowlands in Kenya, prepared by Indian Overseas Committee of the National Liberation Federation, April 27, 1925; C. F. Andrews, "A Memo on the Kenya Lowlands Proposal," Imperial Citizenship Association, Bombay, May 21, 1925; and Governor Coryndon to Secretary of State for Colonies, March 29, 1924.

[32] Makhan Singh was arrested and detained on the grounds of being an "undesirable person" in May 1950 and was released from detention in October 1961. MAK, B/2/6, Correspondence, unfinished manuscript dated October 2, 1963; and interview with Hindpal Singh, son of Makhan Singh, Nairobi, July 2007.

had "deprived us [Indians and Africans] of all our freedom and hopes for Swaraj [self-rule]."[33]

Furthermore, Punjab itself had come to hold special significance for Indian nationalists in the aftermath of the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919, when General Reginald Dyer had opened fire on an unarmed, peaceful crowd. This event became iconic of the dark side of colonial rule and was memorialized in the anticolonial narrative not only in India but also in Kenya. In 1927, the year that Singh reached Kenya, Indians within the EAINC were publicly distancing themselves from the imperial project, arguing that "the war [in which Indian troops fought] was a European one and had nothing to do with Indians. What did Indians get in return? The massacre of Jallianwallah Bagh."[34] As in the case of Oza, the anticolonial critique from India crossed the Indian Ocean and found expression among politically vocal Indians in East Africa. The extraterritorial resonance of such articulations was, however, mediated through the interplay of local concerns.

The economic depression of the 1930s brought with it rising unemployment, falling wages, and long working hours, resulting in a series of parallel attempts by African and Indian workers to unionize and protest against unfair labor policies.[35] Punjabi Sikhs were employed by the railways as mechanics, masons, and engineers, and also worked in construction.[36] Neither of the two main colony-wide organizations—the EAINC, with its elite political concerns, or the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Eastern Africa, with its single aim of protecting traders, who formed about 35 percent of the Indian population—represented the interests of these working-class Indians. It was this labor force that had supported the Ghadr movement and had been the first to unionize within the railways in the 1920s.[37] In February 1935, Makhan Singh, who had begun to work at his father's

[33] CO, 537/773, TNA, Sedition among Indians in British East Africa, note by J. W. Nelson, Personal Assistant to the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Simla, May 4, 1916, and Devi Dial to Hira Lal Dey, Nairobi, May 24, 1915. In her biography of Makhan Singh, Zarina Patel argues that after the First World War, the Ghadr Party "moved from nationalism to communism," and several members of the Ghadr movement settled in East Africa and established close relations with Singh. While Patel herself notes that there is no existing record of any formal establishment or alliance with members of the Ghadr Party, Singh was certainly aware of the local history of suspected Ghadrites and gathered information about those who had been tried for treason and sedition in 1916. In his own published history of the trade union movement in Kenya, Singh makes no mention of the Ghadr movement. See Patel, *Unquiet: The Life and Times of Makhan Singh* (Nairobi, 2006); MAK, B/2/6, Makhan Singh, handwritten list of names, n.d.; and Makhan Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952* (Nairobi, 1969), chaps. 1–3. For a short history of the Ghadr movement, see Jane Singh, "The Gadar Party: Political Expression in an Immigrant Community," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 2, no. 1 (1982): 29–38; and Maia Ramnath, "Two Revolutions: The Ghadar Movement and Indian's Radical Diaspora, 1913–1918," *Radical History Review* 92 (2005): 7–30. Ramnath argues that radicalism emerged among Punjabi Sikhs in North America precisely because of their diasporic context.

[34] GH, 7/4, KNA, Indian Association and Indian Political Movements, Indian Community, Generally, 1928–1942, Isher Dass speech at Indian meeting in Nairobi, December 18, 1927.

[35] For details, see Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, chap. 6; and Anthony Clayton and Donald C. Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895–1963* (New York, 1974), chaps. 5 and 6.

[36] L/E/7/1328, E&O, 336/1924, IOR, India Office report on Indian trade and the economic development of East Africa, February 6, 1925. The Kenya census of 1921 indicated that there were 3,942 Indians working in the commercial sector, while 3,024 were employed in industry. Those numbers went up to 15,032 and 4,776, respectively, in 1931. See Report on the Non-Native Census Enumeration Made in the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1931.

[37] Singh's father, Sudh Singh, had been involved in setting up an early railway workers' union in 1922.

printing press after completing his education, was elected honorary secretary of the Labour Trade Union of Kenya. He opened membership, which had earlier been restricted to Indians, at the rate of 50 cents per month to all workers irrespective of "caste and creed or colour," who in turn were expected to "come into class consciousness." Under Singh's guidance, workers organized protests by printing handbills containing details of daily meetings, resolutions threatening strikes, and other announcements. The intensity of this campaign reached a crescendo when more than forty employers in Nairobi acquiesced to their workers' demands. Over the next few years, through a series of strikes, Singh succeeded in ensuring a 15 to 22 percent wage increase for Indian workers, whose earnings had previously ranged from 30 shillings to 250 shillings, along with an eight-hour working day. Membership in the union increased from a mere 480 in 1935 to 2,500 by 1937. Like Oza, who had criticized the EAINC for limiting itself to the concerns of Indians and not including African grievances within the scope of its activities, Singh accused the organization of ignoring the interests of workers. Singh's politics resonated with the EAINC leadership. In May 1937, Oza called a meeting of 1,500 Indians in Nairobi to express solidarity with African and Indian workers, and in 1938 Singh attended the annual meeting of the congress as a special delegate, where several resolutions were passed supporting his union.[38]

While the union had secured these important early victories, it had been unable to attract African workers. For his part, influenced by the international labor movement of the interwar period, Singh firmly believed that the ultimate success of the workers' movement in Kenya would depend upon the creation of a non-racial trade union to "harness and mobilize the energies and fighting spirit of the African and Indian workers."[39] On the African side, sporadic strikes had taken place among dockworkers and fishermen. However, Africans remained absent from the union's meetings despite invitations sent personally by Singh to their main political associations.[40] There were two reasons for the lack of African participation at this stage. First, having been steeped in the revolutionary tradition of Punjab, the Sikh community had taken the lead in organizing these strikes, giving a communitarian color to the trade union movement that made it appear to be racially exclusive. The existence of this strong diasporic communitarian identity was an asset for Singh, as all the employers who had acquiesced were Indian, most of them Punjabis. Unintentionally,

[38] MAK, A/2, Correspondence, fols. 130–261, B/1/2, fols. 1–271, and B/1/1, fols. 148–290, Labour Trade Union memorandums and handbills, 1935–1938; CO, 533/490/4, TNA, resolutions passed at the 14th Annual Session of the EAINC, 1938; Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, 55, 66, 61.

[39] Colonial officials in the Native Affairs Department did, however, fear that Africans were taking a great interest in the Indians' strikes and predicted that they would unionize along similar lines. See Native Affairs Department, Annual Report of 1937, quoted in Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, 64–65, 48.

[40] Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven, Conn., 1987), chap. 3; and Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, chaps. 6 and 7. In April 1938, the trade union organized a conference to discuss workmen's compensation. Representatives from several political associations, including the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kikuyu Land Board Association, were invited. However, no African showed up. Zarina Patel argues that the members of the KCA were suspicious of the motives of the Indian workers, who were comparatively better paid than the Africans; *Unquiet*, 81.

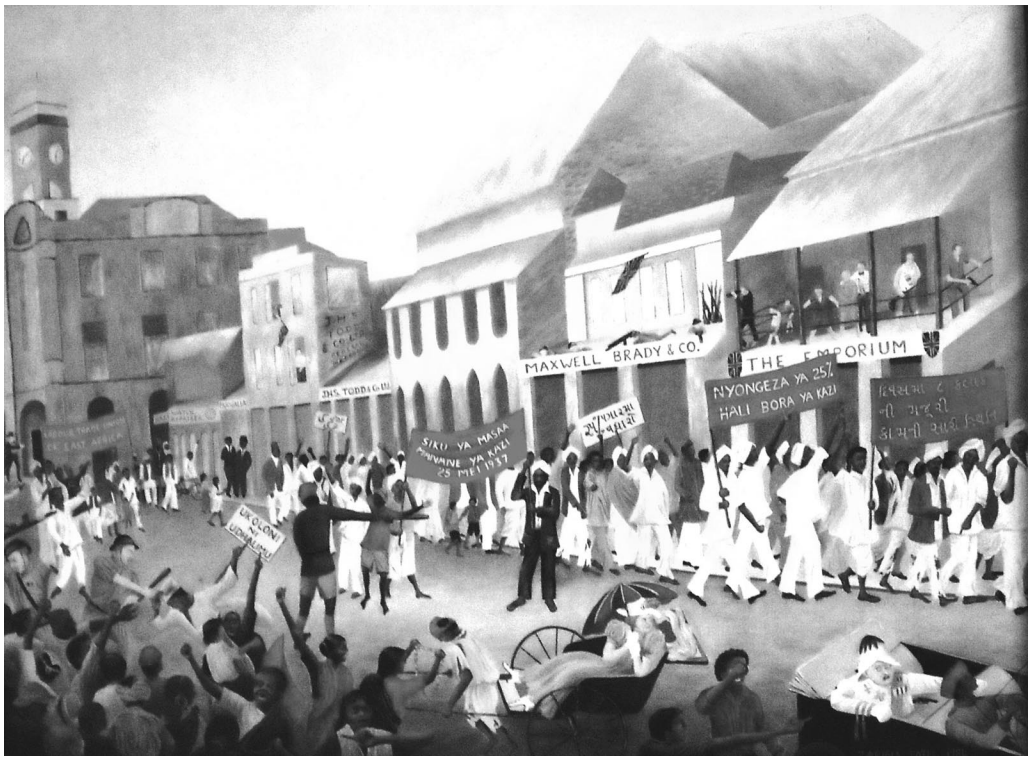

FIGURE 1: Oil painting by Zarina Patel depicting a workers' demonstration led by Makhan Singh, based on a photograph taken on May 25, 1937. The slogans, written in Kiswahili and Punjabi, denounce colonial rule and demand higher wages.

the combination of class, religion, and religion-based solidarity among Indian workers was key to the union's success.

Second, African political activists appeared to have more pressing concerns than urban workers' rights. The campaigns of the main African political body in the 1920s and 1930s, the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), were centered on two issues: protest against perceived attacks on the Kikuyu's culture, and the alienation of their ancestral land to Europeans. In particular, a missionary-led campaign to introduce legislation to ban female circumcision among the Kikuyu became the catalyst for the KCA to gather support in the rural reserves and create an anti-missionary discourse around the preservation of Kikuyu customs and rights. Rising taxes put pressure on overcrowded reserves, and the Kikuyu's demand for the return of their land became the focus of their political activity. Marking an aborted beginning to the institutional organization of nationalist politics that subsequently emerged after the Second World War, Jomo Kenyatta, general secretary of the KCA, went to London in 1929 and presented the Colonial Office with a memorandum outlining African land grievances.[41]

[41] For details on the circumcision controversy, see Jocelyn Murray, "The Church Missionary Society and the 'Female Circumcision' Issue in Kenya, 1929–1932," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 8, no. 2 (1976): 92–104; and Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (New York, 1965). Kenyatta stayed in England for sixteen years. While a number of African organizations emerged in the 1930s, including the Kikuyu Land Board Association, the North Kavirondo Central Association, Taita

Significantly, in 1910, Indian merchants in the EAINC had been the first group in Kenya to publicly criticize the government's highlands policy, albeit with the aim of gaining parity with the Europeans—though by 1929 the EAINC abandoned its sub-imperialist motivation, talking instead of Africans' ancestral right to the highlands. However, the Colonial Office refused to de-racialize the highlands, and in 1938 the Native Lands Trust and Crown Lands (Amendment) Ordinance decisively reserved the land for Europeans only. This impasse and labor concerns in urban areas, where about 75 percent of all Indians lived, became the focus of Indian political activity.[42] With the Kikuyu's demand for land in the 1930s appearing to be a racially and ethnically bound movement, it seemed that the issue of land rather than labor was central to the nascent articulations of anticolonial nationalism among the Kikuyu. Yet Africans themselves were not a homogeneous group with a linear set of political and economic grievances. The land question was central to the Kikuyu, who were living in overcrowded rural reserves, but a growing population of African laborers in towns such as Nairobi had been watching the Indian strikers with interest, especially their techniques of protest. On May 1, 1939, the Labour Trade Union celebrated May Day with a large meeting in Nairobi, in which three leaders of the KCA—Jesse Kariuki, Joseph Kangethe, and George K. Ndegwa—participated.[43] Almost simultaneously, in August 1939 more than 6,000 Africans went on strike in Mombasa, demanding higher wages, free housing, and paid leave. In response, the government arrested 150 Africans.[44]

Ironically, despite the racially exclusive spheres of Indian and African union activity, the colonial administration accused Singh of organizing the Mombasa strike. The union had certainly supported the strike, but there was no evidence to suggest that it had instigated it.[45] The accusation did, however, give Singh the opportunity

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Hills, and the Ukamba Members Association, they were sporadic and limited in their membership and demands. Political, economic, and social changes after the Second World War became the catalyst for organized nationalist politics. For details, see J. M. Lonsdale, "Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa," *Journal of African History* 9, no. 1 (1968): 119–146.

[42] L/E/7/1623, I&O, 814/1922, IOR, letter from the London All-India Moslem League to Under-Secretary for Colonies, October 13, 1910; CO, 822/1222, TNA, Inquiry into Mau Mau. Isher Dass, a member of the congress and an elected Indian representative on the Legislative Council, accompanied Kenyatta to London to deliver the memorandum. See also CO, 533/502/4, TNA, Land Commission Report, 1939, and Confidential Despatch from Governor of Kenya to Secretary of State for Colonies, April 6, 1939. In 1948, of the 90,528 Indians in Kenya, 37,935 lived in Nairobi, and 23,847 in Mombasa. For details see Report on the Census of the Non-Native Population of Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1948.

[43] Indians attempted unionization before Africans did. Although labor organization took place in racially exclusive workers' associations during this time, Africans were well aware of the success of the Indian workers in Nairobi and Mombasa. The African population in Nairobi, for example, had grown from 25,000 in 1930 to 40,000 in 1938. For details, see Clayton and Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya*, especially chap. 6. After the May 1, 1939, meeting, Kariuki was elected vice-president of the union, and Ndegwa was made a member of its Central Committee. Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, 78; Clayton and Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya*, 213.

[44] CO, 533/507/2, TNA, letter regarding Mombasa strike from the Labour Department to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, August 9, 1939. The strike started among employees of the Public Works Department and spread to the Mombasa Conservancy Department, municipal street sweepers, the Electric and Power Company, the Aluminum Works, the Bata Shoe Company, and the Posts and Telegraphs Department, as well as the Mombasa Indian and Somali milk suppliers. For a detailed history of the outbreak of the Mombasa strike of 1939, see Clayton and Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya*, chap. 6; and Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, 45–50.

[45] Even in his biography, written in the 1960s with the aim of inserting the trade union movement

to publicly support African workers and emphasize the non-racial, class-based solidarity of the labor movement. He identified low wages, long working hours, and inadequate housing as the main grievances of Indian and African workers alike, and demanded an increase in the minimum wage for Africans from 13 to 50 shillings per month.[46] Singh's publicity won him an audience with African political leaders, and he formed a short-lived institutional alliance with Kenyatta, who agreed to represent the union at international conferences as he still lived in England. However, when the Second World War broke out, wartime censorship brought the correspondence between the two leaders to an end.[47]

In late 1939, Singh traveled to India, where he immediately involved himself in the nationalist movement, which had strengthened during the war. The colonial government in India responded to the resurgence of anticolonial protest by imprisoning radical leaders. On May 8, 1940, Singh was arrested. He was detained without trial for two years, restricted to his village in Punjab upon his release, and put under surveillance for another two years. Simultaneously, within Kenya, twenty-three African leaders were arrested, including Kariuki and Ndegwa, and the KCA was banned.[48]

THE STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT STANCE OF Singh's workers' movement had provided a glimpse of the potent possibilities offered by a combined anticolonial front of Africans and Indians. It also gave credibility to the emerging political imaginary of the EAINC, which since the 1930s had carefully constructed an interracial, non-European discourse "against the offensive" of imperialism. Not all Indians, however, supported either the anticolonial tenor of the congress or the workers' movement.[49] In particular, returning to the political posture of the first generation of Indian intermediary capitalists were a group of Indian Muslims who distanced themselves from the anticolonial critique in both India and Kenya by claiming to be loyal "imperial citizens," embracing colonial subjecthood at a time when "national" citizenship was being aligned with independent nationhood. The EAINC's anticolonial pol-

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into a nationalist Kenyan narrative, Makhan Singh was careful to note that the influence of his union on the 1939 Mombasa strike was limited to demonstrating the success of a unified workers' movement. Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*, 82.

[46] MAK, B/1/3, fols. 1–172, and A/6, 1939–1945, fols. 1–132, handbills printed by Khalsa Press and the *East African Standard*, October 9, 1939. Immediately after the arrests, Singh's union held a mass meeting to express solidarity with the strikers, at which several leaders gave speeches in Hindustani, English, and Kiswahili. Singh gave evidence to a commission of inquiry set up by the Kenyan government on October 4, 1939. He calculated the minimum wage based on living expenses for rent (10 Sh), food (25 Sh), children's education (2 Sh), clothing (5 Sh), taxes (1 Sh), and goods such as fuel, oil, and water (7 Sh); *East African Standard*, October 9, 1939.

[47] MAK, A/3, Correspondence, fols. 161–315, Makhan Singh to Jomo Kenyatta, August 19, 1939, and Kenyatta's reply to Makhan Singh, August 26, 1939.

[48] Clayton and Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya*, 235. The colonial administration in Kenya banned the KCA after the outbreak of the Second World War, claiming that it had been receiving funding and support from the Italian Council.

[49] CO, 533/502/4, and 537/5920, TNA, Land Commission Report, 1939, and Kenya Africa Command Fortnightly Newsletter, May 1, 1950. In Nairobi, for example, A. B. Patel, the Gujarati Hindu Indian member of the Legislative Council, had publicly opposed Makhan Singh, and in Mombasa, Dr. M. A. Rana, a Punjabi Muslim member of the congress, also distanced himself from the workers' movement.

itics was criticized by Gujarati and Punjabi Ismaili and Ahmadiya Muslims, who had thus far remained politically inactive, limiting their public activities to communitarian associations, as their sectarian leaders, including the Aga Khan, had urged their followers to remain loyal to the colonial government in both Kenya and India.[50] Meanwhile, within India, in a bid to safeguard the interests of Muslims, M. A. Jinnah had led a campaign since 1940 for the creation of separate, autonomous states with Muslim majorities. This demand culminated in the birth of a new nation-state in 1947. Pakistan's emergence was accompanied by a level of communal violence that was unprecedented in South Asia.[51] Jinnah gathered much of his support in Punjab, the resonance of which was felt in Kenya among Muslims who hailed from there and who asked for separate electoral representation on the basis of their religious identity.

It was assumed by the colonial government at the time and in subsequent historiography that the demand for separate Muslim representation emerged as a direct consequence of the partition of the subcontinent. This fragmentation, however, reflected Indian diasporic consciousness, which was informed by subcontinental politics but was mediated through the local political landscape in Kenya. Rather than being derivative of the divisive politics that had overrun India in the 1940s, political debates among Indians in Kenya reflected articulations of diasporic nationalism and diasporic communalism, neither of which can be entirely located in, or entirely dislocated from, their territorial forms.[52]

While the EAINC had been established by Muslim merchants, whose sub-imperialist politics was displaced by a new generation of leadership, politically active Muslims remained prominent members. Several became congress president over the years, and many Muslims were elected to legislative and municipal councils right through the 1930s and 1940s.[53] In 1931, an organization called the Muslim Asso-

[50] An Ahmadiya *amir* was brought to Nairobi with the main objective of counteracting the "subversive communist propaganda sponsored by the East African Indian National Congress and its henchmen." Mss Afr s. 596, European Elected Members Association Papers, Box 46, File 1, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, University of Oxford [hereafter Rhodes House Library], Alla Ditta Qureshi to Major Ward, July 28, 1951. For further details on the Aga Khan and his political message to Ismailis in East Africa, see Gregory, *Quest for Equality*, chap. 1: "Introduction."

[51] For details on the rise of Jinnah and the emergence of Pakistan, see Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985). For a history of the violence accompanying the partition of the Indian subcontinent, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, 2001). Communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India had existed and been exploited by the British through almost two centuries of colonial rule. Separate religious electorates had been introduced as early as 1909, but it was only in the 1930s that the problem of "communalism" became central to the public political sphere of colonial India.

[52] See, for example, J. S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, c.1886 to 1945* (Oxford, 1969); Dana April Seidenberg, *Uhuru and the Kenya Indians: The Role of a Minority Community in Kenya Politics, 1939–1963* (Delhi, 1983); Gregory, *Quest for Equality*. The term "communalism" has been used in South Asian history and historiography to characterize the rise of Muslim separatism in India as the dichotomous, binary "other" of secular nationalism, a duality that has been rejected in recent historiography. Ironically, within Kenya, diasporic Muslim separatists consciously positioned themselves as the binary "other" of diasporic anticolonial nationalism represented by the EAINC, while paradoxically embracing and supporting the nationalism of Pakistan. For an overview and critique of the use of the term "communalism," see Ayesha Jalal, "Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia," in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, eds., *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India* (Delhi, 1998).

[53] Between 1930 and 1945, the congress presidency was held by several Muslims, including Tyeb Ali,

ciation (Anjuman-i-Islamia) sent a memorandum to the Kenyan governor in an unsuccessful attempt to disassociate Muslims from the EAINC. Although the Muslim Association had been in existence for more than thirty years, this was its first political assertion. It had previously looked after communitarian concerns outside the political realm, focusing on fundraising and building mosques, especially in Nairobi. Its president, Alla Bakash, was a Muslim from Gujranwalla, coincidentally sharing the same birthplace in Punjab as Makhan Singh. He had risen to prominence in the late 1920s, becoming a chief railway clerk, and was the chairman of the Nairobi Mosque Fundraising Committee. In that 1931 memo, Bakash claimed that the EAINC did not represent Indian Muslims, who made up 43 percent of the Indian population in Kenya at the time. Therefore, he asked for separate electorates for Muslims to elect their Legislative Council representative.[54]

As had been the case in India, the Muslim separatists' concerns were less about their religion as it was practiced as a faith, and more about religion as a signifier of political identity. Far from being a singular category, Indian Muslims in Kenya were divided by class, region, and sectarian beliefs; they included Shia Ismaili Khojas and Bohras from Gujarat and Punjab, and Punjabi Sunni Ahmadiyas. However, Bakash presented Indian Muslims to the governor as a unified community with the same political orientation. In 1931, the Muslim Association had little popular support for its political claim. Bakash himself admitted as much when he refused to hold a mass meeting to take a referendum on disassociating from the EAINC, stating that it would create "unnecessary and untimely publicity."[55] He soon retired from public life, but within a decade, changed political circumstances in India and Kenya presented the Muslim Association with an ideal opportunity to leverage its position.

By 1945, the Indian independence movement had crossed the Indian Ocean and voiced itself on the streets of Nairobi and Mombasa. Inspired by the anticolonial nationalist momentum building up in the Indian subcontinent, the EAINC observed "independence day" in solidarity with the events taking place there. Support among expatriate patriots for Gandhi's anticolonial nationalism in India was accompanied by public criticism of Jinnah and his movement for Pakistan.[56] This was seen as a "vilifying campaign" by Muslims, who perceived Jinnah to be the sole spokesman of

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Shams-ud-Deen, and S. G. Amin. They also represented Indians on the Legislative and Municipal councils, joined by other Muslims, including Abdul Wahid and A. H. Khaderbhouy. EAINC Papers, Asian Records (various), KNA.

[54] CO, 533/417/12, TNA, Alla Bakash, President Muslim Association, to Governor Byrne, October 31, 1931, and Governor Byrne to Secretary of State for Colonies, February 5, 1932. Gujranwalla, where Bakash hailed from, ended up on the Pakistan side of Punjab and witnessed violence on a very large scale during partition. He succeeded in collecting about 500,000 shillings from Punjabi Muslims to build the Nairobi mosque. For details, see Cynthia Salvadori, *Settling in a Strange Land: Stories of Punjabi Muslim Pioneers in Kenya* (Nairobi, 2011), 93–97.

[55] CO, 533/417/12, TNA, Bakash to Governor Byrne, October 31, 1931.

[56] L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summaries, October, November, and December 1945. Patriotic slogans of the Indian national movement in the subcontinent such as "Long Live Gandhi," "Jai Hind" [Victory India], and "Freedom Is Our Birthright" were shouted at meetings of the congress in Kenya. At the same time, G. L. Vidyarthi, the Hindu editor of the *Colonial Times*, an Indian nationalist newspaper published in Kenya, who was also a member of the congress, published an editorial titled "On the Verge of Freedom" that was critical of the policies of the All-India Muslim League and made disparaging references to Jinnah. Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Secretariat [hereafter CS], 2/8/62, KNA, Nazir Ahmed, Honorary Secretary Muslim Association, Majengo, to Chief Secretary, Secretariat, Nairobi, March 31, 1946.

Muslim nationalism, in much the same way that Hindus had appropriated Gandhi as their "leader." For Punjabi Muslims especially, who constituted about a third of the Indian Muslim population in Kenya and whose families now lived in Pakistan, the explicit condemnation of Jinnah led to their alienation from the EAINC. Muslim diasporic communitarian identity found expression in support for the new Muslim homeland, Pakistan. Consequently, celebrations of Indian independence were boycotted by Muslims, who instead held a day of grief "to be passed in silence."[57] The leadership of the Muslim Indian community in Kenya had itself previously been contested. Prominent Muslims had simultaneously participated in the activities of the EAINC and communitarian associations of Muslims outside the realm of politics, while Ismailis under the Aga Khan's direction had stayed away from political debates. However, support for Pakistan unified Muslims across Kenya. In an attempt to allay Muslims' fears of Hindu domination within the EAINC, S. G. Amin, a Gujarati Muslim member of the Legislative Council, was appointed as the congress's president in 1946. Despite this move, the continued veneration of Indian nationalists such as Gandhi and Nehru created deep cleavages between Hindus and Muslims, and in late 1946, several hundred Muslims resigned from the congress. This gave the Muslim Association—restructured into the Central Muslim Association of Kenya (CMA) in 1943 by a retired government schoolteacher, Alla Ditta Qureshi—the perfect opportunity to present itself as a legitimate political alternative to the EAINC, which could no longer claim to represent Muslims. Qureshi was a Punjabi Ahmadiya who became an alderman in Nairobi in 1946 and used his new position to demand a separate Muslim seat in the Legislative Council.[58]

Support for Pakistan had heightened diasporic communitarian identity among Muslims in Kenya, but the CMA's politics was not entirely derivative of Jinnah's movement. While expressions of "Indian nationalism" among Hindus in Kenya alienated Muslims, whose new "homeland," Pakistan, appeared to be the antithesis of Indian nationalist sentiment, the CMA's opposition to "Hindu domination" was less about what was going on across the ocean in the subcontinent, and more about local Kenyan politics. The movement for Pakistan in undivided India was an anticolonial nationalist one. However, Muslims within the CMA underscored their different religious identity to separate themselves from anticolonial politics in Kenya. Their demand for separate electorates was accompanied by a strong vote of confidence in the government and a rejection of the EAINC's "Hindu nationalism."[59] In a paradoxical attempt to sever its relationship with India, its changing "homeland"—which

[57] L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, October 22, 1945; GH, 7/4, KNA, report on meeting of Indian Muslims in Mombasa organized by the Muslim Institute, September 7, 1946, and Indian Association and Indian Political Movements, Indian Community, Generally, 1942–1950.

[58] Several Punjabi Muslims within the EAINC were offered its presidency, but they declined. EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilm 10, KNA, F. K. Sethi to Indian Association, Nairobi, November 13, 1946; A. H. Ismail to S. G. Amin, November 7, 1946; and Minutes of Congress Executive Committee Meeting in Nairobi, November 9, 1946. Some Muslims remained within the congress, including Amin and Abul Rehman Cockar, a Punjabi member of the Nairobi City Council. See also Salvadori, *Settling in a Strange Land*, 166–167.

[59] CO, 533/417/12, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summary, December 1945; L/P&J/8/311, 108/35/A, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, April 1946, and Governor Mitchell to Lord Wavell, September 24, 1946; and GH, 7/4, KNA, Indian Association and Indian Political Movements, Indian Community, Generally, 1942–1950.

emerged as the epitome of anticolonial aspirations—while emphasizing its attachment to a new "homeland," Pakistan, the CMA accused the EAINC of importing subcontinental politics into Kenya and criticized Hindus for unnecessarily referring to politics in India. Emphasizing Muslim loyalty, it announced that Hindus were prone to "revolutionary," "subversive" protest and indulged in "the very objectionable method of non co-operation with the Government."[60] M. A. Rana, the first Punjabi Muslim to resign from the EAINC, was a city councilor from Mombasa, while Bakash and Qureshi had risen to prominence under colonial state patronage as a chief railway clerk and a government schoolteacher, respectively, with no real fight with the administration. From the mid-1940s, the CMA thus created a platform for the voices of loyalist Muslim Punjabis and also a few Ismailis who joined public politics.[61] Leaders within the association tried self-consciously but unsuccessfully to reject their "diasporic" identity by urging "Indians" who considered themselves "loyal and patriotic nationals of India" to go back to their country and "leave us [Muslims] alone here in peace and harmony with the European community." Such professions of loyalty made the CMA a "very valuable element" for the Kenyan governor, who feared the radicalism of EAINC politics.[62]

Interestingly, despite the CMA's accusations that "Hindus" were importing subcontinental politics across the Indian Ocean, the association was in fact doing exactly the same. The rise of religiously defined political identity was a quintessentially Indian phenomenon, as the colonial government had been more concerned with racial difference in Kenya. In colonial India, the racially homogeneous subject population was politically divided into religiously defined electoral communities. As the EAINC embraced anticolonial politics, it was no surprise that the governor attempted to weaken extraterritorial diasporic Indian nationalism by legitimizing the demands of those who distanced themselves from anticolonial politics. The violence that accompanied the partition of the subcontinent helped further the CMA's claim that Muslims and Hindus were distinct political communities, and the governor reinforced this myth by referring to electoral organization in British India. Despite the inclusion

[60] CO, 533/417/12, TNA, Bakash to Governor Byrne, October 31, 1931.

[61] L/P&J/12/663, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, March 1947. Out of 27,583 Indian Muslims, 9,172 were Ismaili. See Report on the Census of the Non-Native Population of Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1948. Ibrahim Nathoo, for example, was an Ismaili who became a Muslim member of the Legislative Council with support for the CMA in 1947. In 1953, yet another Muslim association, the Kenya Muslim League, was formed by Yacoob-ud-Deen, a Punjabi Muslim who distanced himself from the loyalism of the CMA and attempted to ally with African Muslims and African nationalists. Yacoob narrowly escaped detention for his support of Mau Mau rebels during the Kenyan emergency; having heard that an arrest warrant had been issued for him, he fled from Kenya, only to return after independence. Interview with Mahmudah Basheer-ud-Deen, July 2006, Nairobi. For details, see Zafr-ud-Deen, Private Papers, Asian Records, Microfilms 6 and 7, KNA, Yacoob-ud-Deen letter, April 26, 1954; Kenya Muslim League Constitution, 1953; and Zafr-ud-Deen correspondence, 1954–1958. A letter from the Kenya Muslim League, Nyeri, to Zafr-ud-Deen confirms his disappearance from Karatina around June 1955.

[62] Ministry of External Affairs, Africa Department [hereafter Afr II], 2-27/50, National Archives of India [hereafter NAI], *East African Star*, reported in a note by M. D. Shahane, Information Officer, Indian High Commission, Nairobi, January 17, 1951; and CO, 537/4718, TNA, East Africa Political Intelligence Report no. 4, February 1949. At public meetings, the CMA supported the long-held demand of the European settlers to restrict the immigration of Indians into the colony in order to avoid "Hindu penetration." See L/P&J/8/246, and 248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, December 1945, and Governor Mitchell to Creech Jones, Secretary of State for Colonies, December 22, 1947.

of several Indian Muslims in the Legislative Council, the governor announced in 1948 that communal riots would break out in Nairobi unless the CMA's demands were met. Shortly thereafter, he introduced a bill establishing religiously defined separate electorates for Indians in Kenya.[63]

The EAINC's opposition to this move arose from a dual opposition—to the principle of communal politics and, significantly, to the realization that the communal problem in India was quite different from the local concerns of Kenya. Given the congress's attempts to put up a united front with Africans, it argued that separate electorates would add to the "bane of division along lines of religious politics," which would lead to further divisions—both among Africans "along tribal lines" and between Africans and Indians along racial lines. Moreover, while they had celebrated Indian independence, the specifically Kenyan context of the dilemmas of Indians in Kenya was emphasized by the leaders of the EAINC. "It does not matter a tuppence," announced R. C. Gautama, the organization's general secretary in 1949, "whether my sympathies are pro-India or pro-Pakistan when it comes to our political and economic rights in this land of our adoption." Indians across the political spectrum had been influenced by events taking place in the subcontinent, but their own political shifts were concerned with local issues. Be it the CMA, which demanded separate electorates to emphasize Muslim loyalty in Kenya, or the EAINC, which rejected religiously and racially defined electorates in its attempt to cross racial boundaries, the fundamental point emphasized by the Indian political leadership was: "This is not India . . . *This is Africa*."[64]

The recognition that Kenya was different from India, despite the tangible political and ideological connections that remained between them, revealed a changing discourse within the EAINC as the nationalist movement in India culminated in independence in 1947, at the very same time that various anticolonial critiques in Kenya were consolidating into a nationalist movement. While the CMA had distanced itself from what it perceived to be the "Indian nationalism" of the EAINC, extraterritorial expressions of expatriate patriotism in fact opened up a space for diasporic Indians to engage with anticolonial politics in Kenya—a realm they shared with Africans. However, this involvement did not go unquestioned, either by Muslim loyalists or by African nationalists. Africans were not in themselves a politically undivided racial group. On his return from England in 1946, Kenyatta assumed the "leadership" of African politics. Although he had supported Singh's labor movement before the war, Kenyatta feared the militancy that had erupted among urban African

[63] Indeed, Governor Mitchell claimed that "well-to-do middle class merchants and professional men were far too intelligent to be stampeded by the wild men waving Congress flags." CO, 533/541/2, TNA, Mitchell-Cohen correspondence, April 19, 1948. See also L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summaries, July, September, and October 1947 and February 1948, and Governor Mitchell to Creech Jones, December 22, 1947; EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilm 11, KNA, Governor Mitchell to A. B. Patel, January 19, 1948, and Petition of the EAINC to the King to Disallow Separate Electorates, February 1952; Afr II, 2-27/50, NAI, Apa Pant correspondence with Nanda, July–September 1951.

[64] Mss Afr s. 365, Fabian Colonial Bureau Papers, Box 115, Rhodes House Library, EAINC to Fabian Society, December 30, 1947; MAK, A/11, fols. 1–122, R. C. Gautama, General Secretary EAINC, Introduction in Congress Bulletin, March 1, 1949, emphasis added.

workers, and thus he distanced himself from them, representing instead rural Kikuyu's aspirations for the return of their ancestral lands through peaceful constitutional protest.[65] Despite the EAINC's overtures, James Gichuru, president of the Kenya African Union (KAU), the most visible postwar political organization of Africans, cautiously welcomed the congress for opening the way for "mutual cooperation and understanding," noting that while the two races had many problems in common, there were some problems that were exclusive to Africans. According to him, "colour prejudice" and "selfishness in trade" had caused antagonism between Africans and Indians.[66]

The exploitation of Africans by the more experienced Indian traders was a recurrent theme that KAU leaders brought up as the main obstacle to political collaboration with the Indians. Through the 1930s, Indian shops in rural areas were boycotted by the Kikuyu and Luo on the grounds that Indian traders were making unfair profits at the expense of Africans. It was economic structural rivalry rather than diverging political orientations that caused some Africans to view Indians with ambivalence, but the impact of the racially defined colonial economy in Kenya was felt in the political realm as Indian and African leaders transcended racial boundaries but were unable to efface them. Since the 1930s, the colonial government had encouraged the entry of the Luo and Kikuyu into small-scale trade and commerce—the sector over which Indians had formerly had a complete monopoly. Competition between the burgeoning class of African traders and the entrenched Indian shopkeepers was inevitable, and the latter became the most visible and immediate obstacle to African aspirations for economic advance.[67] Rather than ignore this very real concern, the EAINC criticized the Indian trader for having "failed to integrate

[65] CO, 537/5935, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summary, June 1950. For details on the rise of the KAU and competition over African leadership after the Second World War, see John Lonsdale, "KAU's Cultures: Imaginations of Community and Constructions of Leadership in Kenya after the Second World War," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2000): 107–124.

[66] EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilm 10, KNA, James Gichuru's speech at 17th Session of EAINC in Mombasa, October 6–8, 1945.

[67] L/P&J/8/250, 108/19C/3, IOR, James Bettuah's speech at EAINC meeting on September 29, 1948, reported in Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, September 1948; CO, 537/7223, and 3646, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summaries, December 6, 1948, September 29, 1949, and June 1951. The entrenched position of Indian shopkeepers who had been operating for generations near African reserves created a monopoly over trade in the entire area. They set and controlled not only buying prices—at very low rates—of African produce, but also selling prices—at very high rates—of everyday goods such as oil and cloth to Africans. This was a double blow for Africans, who were also feeling the pressure of land scarcity and high taxes, leading to an enduring popular discourse about the profiteering Indian trader who exploited Africans. The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o's influential novel about the Mau Mau Rebellion, *Weep Not, Child* (Oxford, 1964), perpetuates this description of Indians and their relationship with Africans. Tellingly, in his most recent published work, *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir* (New York, 2010), written about his childhood during the Mau Mau Rebellion, Ngugi's descriptions of social interactions between Indian shopkeepers and Africans are more nuanced than those in his fiction, and he acknowledges the political alliances made between Indians and Africans from the 1920s onward. Through the 1930s, however, Indian shops were boycotted in African reserves. For details, see Frank Furedi, "The Development of Anti-Asian Opinion among Africans in Nakuru District, Kenya," *African Affairs* 73, no. 292 (1974): 347–358; and I. R. G. Spencer, "The First Assault on Indian Ascendency: Indian Traders in the Kenya Reserves, 1895–1929," *African Affairs* 80, no. 320 (1980): 327–343. Both conclude that the tension and rivalry between Indians and Africans in the economic sphere was repeated in the political sphere.

himself into the heart of the African" and called for "a new spirit" to be injected into Indians' "efforts to create a better relationship with the African."[68]

The need for "a new spirit" led to further attempts to ensure closer cooperation between Indians and Africans. An Indian weekly paper, the *Africa Express*, printed in Gujarati, Kiswahili, and English, supported the EAINC's embrace of African nationalists. Indian organizations financed African vernacular newspapers in which anti-government articles were published. Furthermore, the EAINC contributed £750 to African delegates visiting Britain to push forward "an alliance of all coloured people to fight for their rights." For their part, Africans were inspired by Indian independence.[69] While the rivalry between the entrenched Indian shopkeeper and emerging African traders created resentment between the two communities in rural reserves, which was ultimately never resolved, Nairobi was fast becoming the center of anticolonial activity for a variety of urban Africans who joined the KAU and African labor unions. The anticolonialism of the EAINC attracted such Africans to its meetings in Nairobi. Within a year, the caution expressed by Gichuru was replaced by an emphatic acknowledgment of the help that had been given to Africans by Indians.[70]

The emerging interracial alliance of African and Indian nationalists in Kenya was reinforced when Makhan Singh came back from India in 1947.[71] Singh signaled his return to Kenyan politics in a significant and symbolic way. Having seen the destruction caused by partition in Punjab, his "homeland," he protested against religiously defined separate electorates; and using the Gandhian trope of individual *satyagraha*, he went on a ten-day fast to promote the "unity and solidarity of the Indian people." In one fell swoop, he was able to establish his credentials as an Indian nationalist and showcase his authenticity as a "freedom fighter." Singh swiftly resumed his trade union activity, picking up where he had left off in 1939. An important change had come about in the intervening years: Singh was considered a leader not

[68] MAK, A/11, C. Madan to EAINC, January 18, 1949.

[69] L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summaries, November 1945 and April 1946, and Governor of Kenya to Secretary of State for Colonies, February 28, 1946. Two guerrilla leaders of the Mau Mau Rebellion indicate this in their memoirs. For Dedan Kimathi, "The fight we have here is similar to the one that happened in India during their independence struggle." See H. K. Wachanga, *The Swords of Kirinyaga: The Fight for Land and Freedom*, ed. Robert Whittier (Nairobi, 1975), Appendix 1B: Dedan Kimathi, "A Speech." "General China" (Waruhiu Itote) was a soldier in the British Army who fought in Burma during the Second World War. Conversations he had in Calcutta with Indians on the eve of independence were formative to the development of his political imaginary as an anticolonial Kenyan nationalist; Waruhiu Itote, "Prologue," in Itote, *"Mau Mau" General* (Nairobi, 1967), 9–15.

[70] EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilm 10, KNA, Indian Association meeting, Nairobi, July 4, 1946. Approximately 6,000 people attended this meeting, as also reported in L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, October 1946. Peter Koinange, the son of the Kikuyu chief Koinange, was present at the meeting. He went a step further than Gichuru in his acknowledgment of the "help" given to Africans by Indians. Koinange proclaimed that everything that his community had achieved economically was due to the training given to them by Indians in the skills of shoemaking, carpentry, and electrical and mechanical work. For details, see MAK, A/7, fols. 1–154, transcript of Peter Koinange speech "Indians Have Lifted Africans Economically and Politically," *Kenya Daily Mail*, September 20, 1946.

[71] The colonial administration was so afraid that Singh's return would further radicalize the anticolonial critique in Kenya that it tried, unsuccessfully, to declare him an "Undesirable Immigrant." Significantly, the congress took up his case against the government. MAK, A/7, fols. 1–154, deportation orders and correspondence regarding denial of entry, September 1947, and K. V. Adalja, Honorary General Secretary EAINC, to Government of India, September 13, 1947.

only by Sikhs but also by African workers, who consulted with him. He now helped organize a series of strikes in which African and Indian workers participated, and he asked for immediate self-government at workers' meetings. In the 1930s, Singh had demanded different minimum wages for African and Indian workers. His call in 1948 for "equal pay for equal work" finally equated workers of both races. When some African workers objected to the participation of Indians in their unions, they found themselves in the minority.[72]

The efforts made by the EAINC and Singh to win the trust of African nationalists in Nairobi, and the latter's willingness to ally with them, reveal the existence of a shared anticolonial political imaginary and an interracial nationalist space. Indian politicians placed themselves squarely within the anticolonial nationalist discourse in Kenya. At the annual meeting of the EAINC, held in Mombasa in 1948 and attended by KAU representatives, the congress's president, D. D. Puri, referred to Kenya, not India, as his "homeland," and stated that the "real role of the Indian community was to assist the African" in gaining self-governance.[73] A strong critique of colonial policies came from the Indian press in Kenya—the *Colonial Times* and the *Daily Chronicle*—which published articles, translated and reprinted in Kikuyu and Kiswahili papers, directly concerning African land and labor grievances.[74] The KAU celebrated Indian independence alongside the EAINC, where Kenyatta announced that Africans would follow India but needed Indians' help to gain independence. Reciprocally, Indian representatives from the congress attended African meetings at the Kenya Teachers College, Githunguri, a school started by Kenyatta to break the monopoly of missionaries over African education, which by the late 1940s had become a hotbed of anticolonial nationalist activity. Indicative of the extent to which the EAINC's overtures had ameliorated the skepticism that many Africans shared, its president and other officeholders were invited to an important meeting of more than 20,000 Africans organized by the KAU in 1951, where the demand for freedom, land, and equality was made. In Nairobi, a joint statement was

[72] MAK, A/10, fols. 1–171, Makhan Singh, Letter to the Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, June 8, 1948; CO, 537/3646, 4715, and 5920, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summaries, September and October 1948 and September and October 1949; L/P&J/8/250, 108/19C/3, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, September 29, 1948, and meeting of representatives of African Stone Workers Union, August 5, 1948. In the 1930s, Singh had calculated the monthly expenditures of African workers at 50 shillings, while the needs of Indian workers amounted to 200 shillings. For details, see L/P&J/8/250, 108/19C/3, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summaries, October 1948 and September 29, 1948. Singh helped unionize the Transport and Allied Workers, the Asian and African Sweetmeat Workers, the Tailors and Garment Workers, the Shoe-workers, and the Kenya Domestic Servants Association. Former leaders of the Nairobi branch of the African Workers Federation as well as M. Ndisi, general secretary of a transport union, resigned from their posts in protest against Singh's growing influence. However, at meetings organized by Singh, in addition to Indian workers' unions, delegates were in attendance from several African unions, including the Railway African Staff Union, the Kenya Houseboys Association, the African Painters Association, the Kenya African Shop Messengers Association, and the United African Press.

[73] L/P&J/8/250, 108/19C/3, IOR, Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, September 29, 1948.

[74] CO, 537/3589, TNA, Memorandum on Indian Seditious Publications, prepared by Governor Mitchell for Secretary of State for Colonies, May 3, 1948. Between July 1947 and April 1948, Govind Rawal, editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, wrote several articles criticizing the "oppressive imperialist administration" for turning African soil into "arid deserts" and setting low wages that "hamper the amelioration of their [Africans'] standards [*sic*] of life." Interestingly, Rawal signed his articles "A Kenyan," thus underscoring his own identification with the Kenyan nation.

issued by the KAU and the EAINC at a meeting attended by 4,000 Africans and Indians demanding complete independence and sovereignty. A resolution was also passed supporting the EAINC's opposition to separate electorates, thus underscoring the mutual decision by African and Indian leaders to take on the concerns of the other community—despite their being quite different—and thereby acknowledge that the anticolonial public sphere was indeed a shared interracial one.[75] For a brief moment in 1950–1951, it appeared that with the KAU's willingness to align with Indian institutional politics, the discourse of the EAINC had transitioned from reflecting Indian diasporic concerns to revealing a nationalist Kenyan consciousness. In his presidential address at the annual congress meeting in 1950, J. M. Nazareth positioned himself as "a son of Kenya." Alluding to the common racial experience of Indians and Africans in Kenya, he stated: "I come from that lovely land of Kenya, but in that homeland of mine, I may not enter European hotels solely because of the colour of my skin." It was this particularly Kenyan experience that created the opportunity for Africans and Indians to join together against "deep, common hatred of race discrimination which is practiced against them in their own home."[76]

The potency of such an interracial anticolonial nationalist movement caused the colonial administration so much anxiety that it clamped down on the public sphere. Indian editors were detained for "disturbing public peace" and charged with sedition, while permissions were denied for joint KAU-EAINC meetings.[77] On January 15, 1950, Singh referred to the government's labor policy concerning unemployed Africans as a slave law. This final declaration led to his arrest. After a short trial, he was deported to the remote town of Lokitaung in northwest Kenya for eleven and a half years on the grounds that he was an "undesirable person . . . who had been conducting himself so as to be dangerous to peace" and attempting "to raise discontent and disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects."[78]

The arrest of Singh and several African trade union leaders in May 1950 was followed by a general strike by about 7,000 Indian and African workers in Nairobi

[75] L/P&J/8/248, 108/19C/1, IOR, Jomo Kenyatta's speech at Indian Independence Day celebrations, reported in Kenya Colony Intelligence and Security Summary, September 10, 1947. See also EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilms 10 and 11, KNA, correspondence between EAINC and the KAU, August 1948, joint resolutions of the EAINC and the KAU, April 23 1950, and December 16, 1950, and notice announcing joint meeting of the EAINC and the KAU, December 10, 1950; CO, 537/4718, and 7223, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summaries, February 1949 and May 1951; Afr II, 2-27/50, NAI, Rameshwar Rao to Nanda, May 3, 1951.

[76] CO, 822/143/3, TNA, J. M. Nazareth, Presidential Address at the 20th Session of the EAINC, Eldoret, August 5–7, 1950.

[77] Indeed, the colonial administration feared that Indians were "exerting power out of all proportion to their numbers" over Africans. See CO, 537/3589, and 4715, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summaries, July to September 1947. Singh also published articles supporting the radical African associations Dini ya Mishambwa and Dini ya Jesu Kristo, which had been banned by the government, arguing that the anticolonial upsurge of the 1940s among Africans was due to land hunger. Singh, "Repression in Kenya Is Mounting," *Daily Chronicle*, March 12, 1950. For details, see MAK, A/13–15, fols. 201–326 and 1–100, Ransley Thacker, Judge of Supreme Court of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, to Acting Governor of Kenya, May 27, 1950, and Memorandum of Appeal Submitted to Privy Council by D. N. Pritt, ca. 1950 (n.d.). See also EAINC Papers, Asian Records, Microfilm 11, KNA, correspondence between Governor Mitchell and Secretary of State for Colonies, May–June 1948. Haroon Ahmed and Natwarlal Amlani, editor and publisher of the *Colonial Times*, were both sentenced to six months' imprisonment. See CO, 537/3589, TNA, Memorandum on Seditious Publications by Foster Sutton, member for Law and Order, April 22, 1948.

[78] MAK, A/13–15, fols. 201–326, *Daily Chronicle* March 21, 1950.

who were calling for "freedom for the workers and freedom for Africans throughout East Africa."[79] Simultaneously, the eviction of Kikuyu squatters from European farms, where they had been cultivating small plots of lands for decades, led to the adoption of radical militant politics among Africans in Nairobi that spread to rural reserves. By 1952, the predominantly African, mass-based anticolonial movement in Kenya was ushered into its final phase with the outbreak of the Mau Mau Rebellion, successfully combining the rural and urban issues of land and labor.[80] The EAINC's now-decades-long support of Kikuyu land grievances and Singh's success in forging an interracial workers' movement had laid the ideological foundation and institutional framework for the congress to acknowledge the legitimate political and economic grievances of the Mau Mau rebels and the leaders of the KAU—who they believed were freedom fighters—and provide them with legal and material aid.

THE WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL EXPRESSIONS among the Indian leadership in Kenya that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s reflected its changing understanding of and relationship with both India and Kenya, which need to be studied through the lens of the diaspora's political imaginary—a much-neglected aspect of diasporic and national history. The multilayered identities of diasporic Indians, resulting in different regional, religious, occupational, and political affiliations, made them vulnerable to the accusation by contemporary critics and later-day historians that Indians in East Africa were too fragmented and too busy fighting among themselves to align with either the colonial government or anticolonial nationalists. It is in fact only through a close and careful analysis of the changing and contradictory articulations of political leaders that reflected the concerns of the larger Indian diasporic community, and whose politics resonated within it, that historians can recover the dynamism of anticolonial nationalism embraced by some Indians but criticized by others. Furthermore, although the aspirations of anticolonial and faith-based universalisms created the space for a dialogue across the Indian Ocean—a historical and historiographically significant realm of political interaction—the anticolonial and communitarian political moorings of Indians in Kenya were diasporic adaptations rather than derivative adoptions from their homeland.

Because of their focus on conditions of exile and the inability to return, existing approaches to the study of diasporas have resulted in an analytical bind, which creates a binary that freezes the diaspora's relationship with its homeland as a cultural and static interaction and renders it politically marginal in its hostland. As is evident in the case of the Indian diaspora in Kenya, "homeland" and "hostland" were never really distinct, and the political context of the diaspora's engagement with both was continuously changing. Indeed, diasporas emerge as conduits in transnational history, connecting rather than separating homelands and hostlands. This is particularly important to consider in the study of anticolonial history, which has tended to privilege the territorial and racially limited discourse of nationalism in newly indepen-

[79] CO, 537/5935, TNA, Kenya Colony Political Intelligence Summary, June 1950.

[80] For details, see Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London, 1992); Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind"; and Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2005), especially chaps. 1 and 2.

dent nation-states. Although diasporas did not subvert the nation-state, they challenged the singularity of political ideas that such nationalist narratives focus on. A history of diasporic politics that is attentive to the generational shifts within diasporas highlights the circulation and connection of people and ideas across territorial and racial boundaries. It also uncovers alternative, forgotten nationalist imaginaries that emerged therein but did not find favor in the immediate aftermath of decolonization. The ambiguities and tensions over citizenship and race that appear in these postcolonial states thus need to be studied from a historical perspective, as diasporas transitioned into being minorities once the global legacy of colonialism began to unfold. The contemporary significance of the South Asian diaspora is evident in their continued existence in former colonies and the metropole well after the sun finally set on the British Empire. This diaspora is mostly examined under the presentist rubric of multiculturalism, especially in Britain, which seeks to preserve its cultural identity, or of racially motivated expulsion for having failed to identify with the postcolonial nation, for example in East Africa. These approaches result in an overwhelming focus on the re-articulation of cultural norms of the homeland and a teleological assumption about the political marginality and insularity of diasporas in the hostland. A careful explication of the specific historical and political context of diasporas, and their mediation of racial and national identity, liberates diaspora studies from the aforementioned analytical bind, opening up a way to recover the political history of diasporas. Historicizing diasporas without artificially separating their homeland and hostland consequently allows for a more nuanced understanding of the political postures of such minorities within nations and in turn brings into relief the interconnected, transnational histories of their place of departure and point of arrival.

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