

Why the Political Sources from Late Colonial India in the Aqeel Collection should be examined through a ‘History of Emotions’ Approach

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Abstract

This article deals with the necessity to approach the Aqeel collection held by ASAFAS through politics. It will defend one particular prism for such an endeavour, that of the history of political emotions present in the books written by major politicians and intellectuals in late colonial India. Such means of access, we think, should explore both Urdu and English emotional components of the Aqeel Collection writings by using the latest research in the domain called ‘history of emotions.’ The article will provide some modest ideas on why and how the emotional intends to open up new ways of understanding the way politicians at that time approached and debated the future of British India into two independent nations, India and Pakistan. The article partly shows why emotional life shaped political action at the time, and how political emotions were, in turn, able to guide and strengthen the construction of post-imperialist, nationalist or supremacist ideologies that still persist today.

Keywords: Aqeel Collection, anticolonialism, nationalism, empire, India, emotions, history, politics, propaganda

Foreword

Modern research on emotions briefly started in the 1940s with Lucien Febvre (1878–1956), the founding father of the French ‘Annales’ school of history but the ‘emotional turn’ proper within the social sciences occurred in the 1980s. Studying emotions in history meant putting the emphasis on texts first and then on public performances. In the 1990s and 2000s, the theory of ‘emotional regimes’ considered emotions as a key to power and later ‘emotional communities’ looked at social groups sharing similar norms and behaviours. Today, the common theme is the body [Rosenwein and Cristiani 2018]. Whether the approach is through texts, performances, regimes, communities or bodies, studying emotions in history offers a great deal of possibilities today.

India’s history can be analysed or taught through such approaches. A history of emotions in colonial India enriches methodologies like identity, race, class, caste, gender, or global

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history. It improves our understanding of all other innovative approaches, too. Emotions are a recent trend in appraising colonial India [Ansari 2017; Blom and Lama-Rewal 2020; Pernau 2013; 2015; 2017a; 2017b; 2019; Rajamani et al. 2017], and the study of emotions is even newer as a phenomenon concerning political history. Until recently, research on colonial India had neglected the political dimension of emotion and historical work tracking colonial Indian sensibilities and subjectivities have always put the emphasis on culture rather than politics [Raychaudhuri 1999; Das 2018].

Introduction

Another aspect of the quasi non-study of emotions in Indian history is that emotions have always been considered by hard-core Imperial historians as the causes of irrational behaviours on the part of the colonized population. Dixon [2015: 166] has argued that the notion of over-emotionalism of the natives was one of the justifications underpinning the colonial expansionist ideology. Rational behaviour and 'stiff upper lip' was said to be the private domain of the imperial civilizing order and *Pax Britannica*. In any case, political emotions in general, be it in India or in the West, have always been seen as belonging to the realm of subjectivity, not objective scientific research, and thus historical sciences had neglected them for quite a long time.

Emotions have always been part of the Indian political landscape. Were they spontaneous and irrational in colonial times? Did they reside at the centre of political relations that cut across both colonial and nationalist ideologies? Did each political force, British or Indian, threaten to use emotion when lacking cohesion from within? Or did emotions focus the attention of both leaders and populations on dissenters able to disrupt the nationalist camp or the imperial law and order situation? Were the catastrophic collective events like the Indian Mutiny (1857), the Amritsar massacre (1919), the Great Calcutta Killings (1946) or the Great Partition (1947), for instance, proof of how emotions exacerbated relations between the colonizer and the colonized, particularly in times of increased rebellion?

By linking emotions to the idea of Pakistan debated by prominent interwar intellectuals in the Aqeel Collection, the following essay will try to briefly examine the relevance of this topic in Indian history and politics. The objective is to grasp the importance of emotions made use of not only by the government of India, but also by its anticolonial adversaries, including the role played by all the political infrastructures set up by each opposing side. The study of emotions is one of the keys to the study of power at the end of the colonial period. It defines the collective experience of South Asia and the shaping of new standards and values in the post-imperial world-to-come. Above all, this article will be a modest endeavour at finding a few relevant examples of emotional use in interwar Indian political writings that the Aqeel Collection can offer. The case put forward here is mainly that 'emotional political

communities' were shaped, given existence and visibility through pre-independent Indian political writings. Emotional politics powerfully shaped the collective consciousness of the masses and gave them cohesion and structure. Emotions first mobilized Indian public opinion in favour of either the nationalist struggle or the imperial status quo. Emotions then existed as performances of the body of leaders in order to shape their own emotional political communities. Finally the colonial regime, and other Indian leaders passed on these emotions to their supporters. Both shaped public opinion, not only through reasoning and rational ideas but through the emotional. Western-educated intellectuals like Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–1966) or Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), for instance, became the new hegemonic emotional voices in the strategy used by Indian nationalists in the face of British imperialism. Last but not least, it must be added that only sources written in English from the Aqeel Collection were used in this essay, but one must bear in mind that mobilizing emotions was not only implemented through the colonial master's language, but also through the vernacular languages of India, especially Urdu which is given much space in the Collection.

Britannia ruled the Waves of Emotion

Emotions had been paramount in the art of governing for the British. This dimension of the imperial government must not be underestimated, as it is the major cause of the division — the 1947 'Great Partition of India' — of British India into two independent nations, India and Pakistan. The colonial regime constantly violated its own laws and principles in the name of *raison d'État*, through an accentuated use of emotions justifying delays for granting India sovereignty. Legal constitutional order had been established under the supervision of the British monarchy in 1877, twenty years after the Indian Mutiny and British imperial authority in India formally relied on an executive, judiciary and representative power.

Avant-garde experimental 'developmental' successes like famine-management were said to have worked rather well for nearly half a century (1900–1943). Probably in connection with this 'progressive' aspect of the colonial administration, there was widespread advantage the British were seen to enjoy in India, and they knew it. It was the fact that the imperial order was regarded as natural by many in a way, despite the nationalist claim to the opposite. The colonial order was a fact, robust if not stable until World War Two. Even if British rule and political domination was questioned by nationalists of all kinds, how the Britishers maintained their rule remained an enigma, a puzzle and a mystery. Colonial rule was then akin to a kind of voluntary bondage for many ordinary Muslims, Hindus and other Indians. And Indian subjects were regarded by their rulers as willing to be driven into humiliation and unable to throw off the colonial yoke.

There were numerous such examples of a sustained effort to mobilize positive emotions

in British India. One of them, surprisingly, was the affirmation of unconditional loyalty to the British Crown by some members of the nationalist opposition. Indian nationalist leaders, like Surendranath Banerjea (1848–1925), the founder of India's first political party, twice elected president to a pan-Indian political movement founded in 1889, the *Indian National Congress*, was not immune to such open display of emotions. Banerjea even went as far as welcoming the controversial 1919 reform and strongly supported the incomplete representative system and extremely slow gradualist policies implemented by the British:

India in the enjoyment of the blessings of self-government, India prosperous, contented and happy, will be the most valuable asset of the Empire, the strongest bulwark of Imperial unity [Banerjea 1925: 266].

Loyalist-cum-nationalist Banerjea's eloquence spoke volumes. Indians both admired and feared British rule, the only regime they knew that had represented law and order so far. For the regime, its own institutions had to make use of that advantage more skilfully. And in order to govern, the British not only needed to continue to be aggressive — and arouse harsh criticism of course. Indeed, after World War One, the regime could hardly dream that loyalist emotions like the anachronistic emotions displayed by Banerjea be revived. By damaging the younger opponents' influence, delaying reforms and promising a remote independence, the British *Raj* (Empire) merely spread frustration, anger and fear. One such example is the 1919 Amritsar massacre orchestrated by Reginald Dyer (1864–1927), the so-called 'Butcher of Amritsar.' Before ordering fire, Dyer publically threatened the rebellious crowd:

You people know well that I am a soldier and a military man, you want war or peace? And if you wish for war, the government is prepared for war. And if you want peace, then obey my orders and open all your shops, else I will shoot. For me the battlefield of France or Amritsar is the same [Collett 2005: 270].

In London, British Prime Ministers, Whitehall and the Government of India were used to manipulating hatred, disgust and apprehension for the purpose of injuring Gandhi's reputation, for instance. Hadn't Winston Churchill (1874–1965) once declared in a 1931 speech, that it was:

... alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the vice-regal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor [Iggulden 2002].

The British also needed to use appeasement, reduce the pain and anger of a harsh domination for the urban middle classes for instance. Consequently, their 'good' government had to bring the appeasing gift of renewed British generosity to urban Indians, but it had to make constant discredit of the nationalists' cause and use 'discord' to weaken the

opposition. Widening *Muslim League* (an aristocratic Muslim lobby created in 1906) and *Congress* divisions, conflicts, dividing the nationalist camp by attacking active militants was commonplace — the 1900s ‘Gentlemanly’ anarchists, the 1910s diasporic ‘Ghadarites,’ the 1920s Communist ‘Meerut Conspirators,’ the 1930s Bose brothers’ pro-Axis conspiracies or simply the *Congress* abandoning non-violence in 1942. After arousing the enemy within, the British could point to an enemy without by successively inventing a Russian *Great Game* in Central Asia (ending in 1907), a *Hindu-German conspiracy* in Afghanistan (1914), and a Japanese invasion in Bengal (1943). Often, it conveniently mixed enemies within and enemies without and spread discord everywhere.

Sowing divisions was innate to British rule in India till the very end of World War Two. Even the most discrete and well-meaning academics became key players in that British propaganda game. To give an example: a prominent Oxford historian, Reginald Coupland (1884–1952), who had been involved in the 1921 partition of Ireland project, and later again in the 1936 *Peel Commission* on the future of Palestine, was required to work on India as a member of the 1942 *Cripps’ Mission*, concluded in a three-part report in 1942–1943 that the best solution for India, that he saw as a ‘problem,’ was clearly ‘partition,’ which meant ‘un-mixing’ populations. For this end, he advised seeking support from *Congress* conservatives like Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1878–1972) who ‘*carried two resolutions for submission to the All India Congress Committee, the first recommending the acceptance of Pakistan in principle as the basis of a settlement between the Congress and the League, the second proposing the restoration of responsible government in Madras*’ [Coupland 1943: 288].

Gandhi or the Integration of Emotions in Anticolonial Tactics

At the end of World War One, the Indian imperial subjects having unfailingly supported the British against Germany had obtained a semi-independent nation status for their country in the League of Nations. However, their country did not gain the same status as Ireland or the ‘White’ Dominions within the Empire. As a result, many Indians felt immensely discouraged during the interminably critical years between the two world wars.

Indeed, London constantly undermined and delayed the growing influence of nationalists in every possible way by playing on intra-Indian divisions through the implementation of three communally-oriented constitutional reforms (1909, 1919, and 1932–1935) — ‘communalism’ is an Indian English term meaning loyalty to a social or political group based on religion, caste, language, ethnicity, race or culture, an ideology sometimes leading to extreme violence.

This colonial communalist system aroused many frustrations and proved to be encouraging passions and violence dramatically. Socio-economic frustrations also stirred up hatred and fear within the colony. Ambitious politicians of all stripes made quick gains by organizing large-scale communal violence. At the same time, the political differences

between the various nationalist currents became tenser and this Indian form of ethnic-religious supremacism often collided with the unitary and integrationist political project of the *Indian National Congress*.

Contrary to the *Congress*, these violent communalists also used emotions by excluding whole (emotional) communities from any national project. This was essential for them, in particular for the radical Hindu Fascist organizations lead by intellectuals like Savarkar who had previously fully acknowledged the important contribution made by Muslims in the 1857 'first war of independence,' but who, in this case, took to new anti-Muslim rhetoric unforeseen before even in his own communal writings:

Look at the Mohammedans. Mecca to them is a sterner reality than Delhi or Agra. Some of them do not make any secret of being bound to sacrifice all India if that be to the glory of Islam or could save the city of their prophet [Savarkar 1922: 53].

However, at the beginning of the 1920s, one of the most atypical revolutionary leader of the 20th century, the new *Congress* leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) proved to be a most resourceful and formidable enemy for both imperialists or communal supremacists. Gandhi managed to gain an extremely strong influence on the Indian nationalist strategy during these years of extended struggle through the use of non-violence and civil disobedience (*satyagraha*). At first considered a utopian playing with fire by spreading anarchy and chaos within the *Raj*, Gandhi soon proved he was far from being an amateur politician and the regime remained puzzled by Gandhi's tactics, and his strategic use of emotional mobilization in politics.

Indeed, Gandhi enacted India's suffering through the physical pain of hunger strikes, an empathetic attitude that could clearly appeal to the starving and deprived rural Indian masses and the struggling urban middle-classes. The nationalists had long been able to use the intense pain and agony suffered by the population to claim that Indians required their own government to eradicate, not just deal with, British-made famines once and for all. Nationalists' use of emotions had undoubtedly contributed to the ability of the *Congress* to solicit and obtain a form of submission to their own authority and expertise. A full generation before *satyagraha*, in 1901, Romesh Chunder Dutt (1845–1909) was one of the first to:

... deplore the succession of severe famines which have caused the deaths of millions of people in India in recent years [Dutt 1901: 2–3].

Gandhi's main concern was not at all based on pure lofty gentle protest, as the mere goal of the freedom struggle. If we consider Gandhi as a performer, we can see that he attracted attention to the nationalist cause within and without India. Gandhi featured three times on *Time Magazine's* cover. In 1931, after the Salt March, the *Time* issue cover sketch clearly showed an emaciated, suffering Gandhi who, due to passive resistance tools, such as arrests, hunger strikes, imprisonment was labelled as 'Saint Gandhi.' Each Gandhian campaign made Gandhi

reach a quasi-sacred aura in Indian opinion or *mahatma* status. That way, Gandhi thoroughly and efficiently shaped Indian public emotions in favour of freedom.

During his previous South African experience, *satyagraha* mobilization techniques sustained that:

It will not, therefore, do to be hasty, impatient or angry..., we calmly think out and carry out in time measures of resistance, presenting a united front and bearing the hardship, which such resistance brings in its train [Gandhi 1968: 99].

Resisting imperial domination for Gandhi meant working through the slow building up of new social foundations for a future independent state. It also meant creating alternative institutions and alternative intellectual (and emotional) resources within colonial Indian society and culture – rather than the violent overwhelming of the coercive apparatus of the colonial regime doomed to fail, as the 1857 repression showed. This is similar to what the Italian political thinker, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) described famously as a ‘war of position.’ This aspect of Gandhi’s fight appears more clearly in the following extract:

Throughout my wanderings in India, I have had the privilege of mixing with men of all creeds, of mixing with thousands of women, hundreds upon hundreds of students. I have discussed with them national problems with a passion which I am unable to describe... I hope therefore that millions throughout India will open the Satyagraha week with sincere fasting and prayer [Gandhi 1965: 191–192].

Gandhi’s ‘passionate’ discussion of politics through *satyagraha* started in 1920 and lasted two years. Importantly, it was strongly and efficiently supported by the young radicals of the *Muslim League* like the Ali Brothers or Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958) who opposed the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Allies, not just Hindus. Shaukat Ali (1873–1938) and Mohammad Ali Jauhar (1878–1931) were pure products of the Aligarh College modernization movement which was the principal national centre of Indian Islam until the founding of the Muslim League in 1906. Abul Kalam Azad who was not trained at either Aligarh nor ever joined the Muslim League always advocated for a *Congress*-style united India while strongly opposing Hindu-Muslim enmity.

However, *satyagraha* in India, unlike in that other part of the British Empire where Gandhi had matured his non-violent strategy successfully, could not be totally kept under control. Communally-oriented leaders promoting the interests of caste, religion or community rather than national interests derailed Gandhi’s action for the rest of the 1920s.

Divided Nationalists, ‘Atrocious’ Congress Rule

As a result, many Muslims had remained outside the *Congress* fold which they deemed utterly pro-Hindu, especially in the early 1930s when the party struck a deal with the spokesman of another consistent minority political community, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956),

the leader of the Untouchable community. London's award, later included into the 1935 Constitution, enlarged the separate-electorate formula reserved for Muslims to other minorities and special interest groups. Unhappy at the British offer of separate-electorate seats for the Untouchables, the *Congress* entered negotiations with Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), the leader of the Untouchables, and agreed to give more representation within the *Congress* through the Poona Pact. The offer of separate-electorate seats by London for the Untouchables was therefore withdrawn. Ambedkar's Untouchable community politically integrating the *Congress* through the *Poona Pact*. From then on, the leader decided to support the idea that a deal would also be made with the Muslims. In his famous book on the idea of Pakistan, he unsuccessfully called upon the *Congress* to work for the achievement of such a compromise:

What is the Muslim alternative to Pakistan? ... It is therefore necessary for the Hindus to have some idea of the possible Muslim alternative to enable them to meet the shock of it; for the alternative cannot be better than the Communal Award and is sure to be many degrees worse [Ambedkar 1940: 187].

Within the *Congress*, one of the young rising stars, Nehru, was seen as Gandhi's successor. Nehru was a democrat and a supporter of a united independent India. He rejected any deal with Indian Muslim leaders which he viewed as communalists. His view on communal hatred was that it was all due to the colonial situation and the 'divide and rule' Machiavellian machinations of the British ever since 1857. Unlike other Indian Leftists or Communists inspired by the Soviet ethnic-religious reorganization of administrative borders, Nehru stubbornly refused to make any concessions to Muslim opinion like the changing of provincial border limits and the creating of Indian-Muslim majority states or districts. The following example dating from 1934, demonstrates his repugnance at negotiating with the *Muslim League* which result he would consider 'disastrous':

Communalism is essentially a hunt for favours for a third party — the ruling power. The communalist can only think in terms of a continuation of foreign domination and he tries to make the best of it for his own particular group ... For both, this ostrich-like policy of ignoring real issues is bound to end in disaster. Facts and economic forces are more powerful than governments and empires and can only be ignored at peril [Nehru 1934: 73–74].

Muslims, who made up a quarter of the Indian population, were thus becoming ever more suspicious of *Congress*, which gave them little room for manoeuvre within the national movement. In 1932, the 'Communal Award' was obtained by them and it was in this context that a dejected member of *Congress*, Jinnah took a leading role in Indian-Muslim politics.

Jinnah who had trained as a lawyer in England had earlier on assisted the presidency of the *Indian National Congress* simultaneously joining the *Muslim League* in order to organise a rapprochement with that aristocratic political pressure group. He had played a key role in the Lucknow Pact (1916) between the *Indian National Congress* and the *Muslim League*, which

demanding political autonomy as a reward for services rendered by India during the war. In 1919, unlike *Congress* star Banerjea, he had even resigned from elected office to show his opposition to the British constitutional reform. Yet, he also left the *Indian National Congress* because of his disagreement with Gandhi's strategy.

Jinnah remained in the *Muslim League* throughout the 1920s to lead negotiations between Hindu and Muslim leaders on the constitutional reform promised by London after 1927. In 1930, he participated in the Round Table Conferences on the future of India speaking out against *Congress* for their sidelining of the Muslim community. He advocated the creation of separate electoral colleges, guarantees for political autonomy and the right of veto for his own community that he regarded as special: weren't Indian Muslims the only true inheritors and custodians of the legitimate Moghul Emperor illegally deposed by the British in 1857? Memories of past glory could not pass away so easily for many Muslim aristocrats, such as the great Urdu poet of the Punjab, Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), who were even more radical and openly began to speak about the creation of an Indo-Muslim state within the British Empire in India. Indeed, in 1933, a group of passionate idealist young students led by Choudhary Rahmat Ali (1897–1951), inspired by their Irish experience and by the British institutional project for Burma, even proposed a name for the future Indian-Muslim state, 'Pakistan.'

The *Indian National Congress* and the *Muslim League* both came out victorious in the 1936 elections. And while Nehru rejected every possibility of *League-Congress* coalition ministries, Jinnah constantly attacked these manifestations of sectarianism of the *Congress* as deeply-entrenched anti-Muslim prejudice — emanating from the Hindu supremacists and their caste racism, as 'Congress atrocities.' Indeed, Jinnah declared in a Presidential Address delivered at the Lucknow Session of the All-India *Muslim League*, as soon as October 1937:

No individual or people can achieve anything without industry, suffering and sacrifice. There are forces which may bully you, tyrannise over you and intimidate you, and you may even have to suffer... Eighty millions of Musalmans in India have nothing to fear [Jinnah and Ahmad 1946: 35].

The League's radical break with the *Congress* loomed ahead. When Nazi Germany declared war, Nehru and the *Indian National Congress* High Command provided conditional support to the British in return for India's immediate independence. All provincial *Congress* ministries resigned in protest against Britain, which had ignored their claim for independence. In sharp contrast to the *Congress*, Jinnah assured London that the *Muslim League* would support the war effort. In March 1940, it even made a decision, known as the *Lahore Resolution* rejecting a federal and centralized solution of an independent India, for Muslim-majority areas of India to federate into a state of their own, on the 1938 Burmese Buddhist communalist model. The *Lahore Resolution* is a good example of how important emotions were at the time and how skilfully they could be used: through the demand for Pakistan,

the *Muslim League* was able to measure the reactions to a potential vivisection of India. By publicizing the creation of a future Muslim state, it was able to record comments and anticipate reactions, in some kind of experimental emotional play. Here is one such 'test' concerning exchanges of population, a similar idea to that of Coupland's 'un-mixing,' which today is better known today as 'ethnic-cleansing':

Replying to the critics of the League's resolution, Mr. Jinnah said: In the first place a wrong idea and false propaganda appear to be set in motion in order to frighten the Muslim minorities that they would have to migrate en bloc and wholesale. I wish to assure my Muslim brethren that there is no justification for this insidious misrepresentation. Exchange of population, however, on the physical division of India as far as practicable will have to be considered [Jinnah and Ahmad 1946: 158].

In March 1942, the British sent a War Cabinet Minister, Stafford Cripps (1889–1952), to India to promise 'dominion status' in exchange for *Congress* wartime support. Gandhi and Nehru rejected Cripps' offer as it raised the possibility of an Indian-Muslim secession.

Traumatized Britain

After a final 'Quit India' violent revolt in August 1942, the colonial regime imprisoned or killed tens of thousands of members of the *Congress* who had systematically tried to disrupt the war effort. The British War Cabinet had always feared the young leaders of the *Indian National Congress*. Some like Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945) had anticipated such a staunch repression and had even fled to the enemy. Bose was, like Jinnah in a way, a splitter in the national movement. However, he had not joined the war effort contrary to the Muslim Leaguers and he had long called for the abandonment of the nonviolent struggle taking up arms against British domination. As a young man, Subhas Bose had become involved in politics while studying philosophy in Calcutta, then went to Cambridge to prepare for the ICS competitive examination in London. Bose was one of the rare Indians along with Banerjea or R.C. Dutt to manage to break into the ICS glass ceiling and later deserted his post, joined the *Indian National Congress* but was imprisoned numerous times as a result of his activities. After becoming president of the *Indian National Congress* in 1938 and 1939 against Gandhi's candidate, Nehru, Bose found he had to resign in the face of opposition from other party leaders who rejected his call to direct action. Bose's views on communal relations were not as rigid as Nehru's as he aimed at reassuring the 'minorities' rather than reject them as mere 'communalists':

There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, namely religion and that aspect of culture which is based on religion. ... The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom, on the contrary they have everything to gain [Bose 1962: 78].

The ejection by *Congress* made it for Bose to eventually leave India in 1941 and look for a desperate and tragic collaboration with Nazi and Japanese military forces who provided aid for his *Indian National Army* (INA) and his Singapore-based provisional government in exile.

Towards the end of the war, in 1945, following the failure of the Shimla political conference organised by Viceroy Wavell (1943–1947), the new Labour Prime Minister, Clement Attlee (1883–1967), drove London through the most profound change ever concerning its Empire and galvanised into action Britain's final acceptance of India's independence. Pethick-Lawrence (1871–1961), the new Minister for India, organized elections in India with the aim of transferring British power to a single Indian administration. Helped by Cripps, the minister proposed a loose form of central government supervising three autonomous provinces: one province with a Hindu majority (which formed India a year later), one province with a Muslim majority (which became Pakistan), and a north-eastern province (which was divided into territories later belonging to either Pakistan or India). The provinces had the possibility of withdrawing from the federation if a majority of their population decided it.

Britain had finally stopped playing 'divide and rule.' At last, London agreed unreservedly with the idea of one united independent India, the idea of one Indian national culture. For some nationalists, feelings of 'happiness' resurfaced and *Congress* leader Rajendra Prasad (1884–1963) emotionally declared:

Summarizing the effort of intercourse between Hindus and Muslims, Mr S. M. Jaffar writes in his book Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India: '... The culture that was thus evolved was neither purely Muslim nor exclusively Hindu but a happy union of both' [Prasad 1946: 64–65].

It was too late and too little for some! Even as Jinnah accepted London envoy's proposal in the early summer of 1946, Nehru, always a consistent democrat, announced that only an all-India constituent assembly could determine the future of the former colony. Refusing any attempt to divide India into a loosely federated nation, he wrote:

Any proposal to cut up India into parts was a painful one to contemplate; it went against all those deeply-felt sentiments and convictions that move people so powerfully [Nehru 1946: 455].

Unsurprisingly, Jinnah now called on the 'Muslim nation' to oppose Nehru's decision in mid-August 1946, resulting in Hindu supremacist militia massacring Muslims who, in turn, sent their own vigilantes into a full — albeit low-intensity — civil war.

London thereafter appointed a new Viceroy, Mountbatten, to organize the evacuation of British troops. The British Parliament adopted the *Independence Act of India and Pakistan* in July 1947. The British Empire in India had collapsed like a house of cards. Britain offered full independence to its most important and crucial colony in the world. The decolonized British Empire in India was divided between a Hindu-majority India and a quasi-exclusively Muslim

India (called Pakistan). A tragic religious and ethnic-cleansing partition occurred, causing major mass migration and immense suffering. Communalist passions had won the day, not rational views. Manipulating emotions had been part and parcel of British political authority in colonial India for too long and it had atrociously backfired in the end.

Emotions however were not simply used by the powerful few, whatever the party or ideology. There were also concrete technologies used for the administrative management of emotion. If emotions were useful for imperial control, then they logically belonged to the general infrastructure of power. Emotions were maintained on all sides by newly-created institutions, a range of devices likely to introduce and maintain a state of alert and emergency.

Propaganda was a contemporary creation of the process of rationalizing India, as emotions had a role to play. On the British side, emotions encouraged uncertainty about the future independence even among the well-informed part of society. Colonial power in India partly depended on uncertainty. Indeed, its concern lay in uncertainty. The politics of risk, whether it was post-independence collapsing health standards, economic downturn or even tyranny and communal terrorism, was based on the awareness that one could not know about the future of the new nation(s) created.

Awareness of risks associated with freedom reduced uncertainty, it required administrative work that produced expertise that in turn kept people more aware of the real situation. The conduct of World War One had not been dependent solely on the military, it had relied on the ability of the whole population to prepare and support confrontation. Hence, in the inter-war period, the structuring of a surveillance system controlling Indian society and the creation of a structured secret police acting within the colonial regime denied the very foundations of a nascent liberal and representative system allowing deliberation, transparency and publicity [Thomas 2008].

Nehru or the Fear of a Divided India ruled by Supremacist Passions

Emotions were omnipresent in colonial India despite constitutional reforms and the rule of law. Emotions can be associated with the British autocratic colonial regime in India, even a benevolent one as the *raj*'s. Therefore, no one can claim that *Pax Britannica* was immune to emotions while rebel India was mainly emotional in its will to gain uncontrolled freedom.

We hinted before that political philosophy has tended to take emotions out of politics by associating it instead with the uneducated, uprooted Indian masses, deprived of family and solid religious and political organizations. However, we could look at the use of emotion in politics favouring obedience to the worst forms of tyranny. In other words, emotions could be used not only by the colonial regime but also by anti-democratic forces on the Indian side too. Communalists or Indian Princes for instance could feed on emotions in politics in the interwar period.

Political emotions were also solidly anchored even among the most celebrated nationalist militants who abhorred all forms of tyranny like Nehru or Gandhi. Nehru, for instance, played with the idea that British imperialism was no better than Nazi rule in Europe:

Fascism and Nazism were anathema to us and the horrors of Central Europe produced a powerful reaction on India. Yet we remembered — how can we ever forget? — the horrors we had witnessed in India. Yet we saw and felt, to the innermost core of our being, the day-to-day humiliation and exploitation of our own people [Nehru 1941: 574].

The similarity between colonial and Indian despotism was a danger lurking in the background for Nehru. The Indian democrat did not fear so much the issue of who would embody political authority after independence. The British were represented by a temporary Viceroy and Nehru had nothing against a temporary president or prime minister. What scared him and the *Congress* more was not so much a powerless democratic leader but one or two despotic leaders for a divided India and the *Congress* government-in-waiting was able to strike an emotional chord by mentioning the potential break-up of India. Nehru clearly pointed to the real culprits who had rejected the *Congress* umbrella. He blamed an impending imperialist plot against the integrity of India. Potentially, the future of an independent divided India was to remain under British rule for much longer, and become the victim of a new and dangerous neo-imperialist conquest which made them dread the future even more and a weakening by Communalist forces:

Those who have feudal privileges and vested interests fear change and become the camp followers of British imperialism. The British Government, on the other hand delight in using the Communal argument to deny freedom, democracy, or any major change, and to hold on to power and privilege in India. That is the raison d'être and the justification of Communalism in India [Nehru 1941: 381].

Then didn't Nehru resort to the usual age-old scare tactics especially when Indians proved reluctant to believe in their own leaders, or if the leaders' discourse lacked clarity as in the case of Nehru's comparison between Nazism and imperialism? Wasn't painting a vision of a grim future the only way for nationalist leaders to tell Indians what they wanted them to do? This was a technique even democracy-loving nationalist leaders tampered with.

If adhering to the idea of democracy, nationalist leaders faced many opponents, so stereotyping these opponents as enemies in order to coalesce factions and groups was necessary. Suggesting the imminence of a consolidated danger united and strengthened either *Congress* or League. On the *Congress* side, Nehru's writings gave a clear account of an unpredictable struggle and much awaited outcome which in a way anticipated the uncertainty that characterized the future of the project of an independent Indian Republic:

I am afraid I cannot get excited over this Communal issue, important as it is temporarily. It is, after all, a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the larger

scheme of things. Those who think of it as the major issue think in terms of British imperialism continuing permanently in this country. Without that basis of thought, they would not attach so much importance to one of its inevitable offshoots. I have no such fear, and so my vision of a future India contains neither imperialism nor Communalism [Nehru 1941: 407].

But the ruse of Nehru was above all to exploit the divisions between Hindu supremacists, Muslim Leaguers and Princely India seen by him as the dissidents from within:

It may be said that the Indian States as a whole, while anxious to maintain their internal autonomy, are equally desirous of having a strong federal India of which they are members with equal rights. The proposal to divide India has been vigorously opposed by some of the leading ministers and statesmen of the states, and they have made it clear that, if such a division takes place, the states might well prefer to keep to themselves and not tie up with either part of divided India [Nehru 1946: 527–528].

Nehru's trick was to use the threat of the outside enemies as a pretext to suppress the enemies of the interior, but it could have been something else: if the future government targeted an external threat, it was also perhaps in order to create a new narrative for the future India. The nationalists were future-oriented, engaging in a vision of future threats too. The Congress sought to frighten and appease at the same time, just like the British had tried, constantly testifying to its desire to master time and, in a way, history. Let us not forget that Nehru had authored of some of the most accomplished texts on the nationalist struggle and history of India — *An Autobiography* in 1936 and *The Discovery of India* in 1946. Nehru made his writings political media work by imposing a vision of reality in particular, and what was his vision of good governance.

An open question, however, remained: did Nehru's books and work actually help to impose a more balanced information order? As academic research has not yet been able to answer that question, we should be more attentive to Nehru's or others' intentions actually and how political books were produced in the context of the war:

During four years of that time the Congress has been an illegal movement. We always hover on the edge of illegality; we do not know when we might be termed illegal, our funds confiscated, our property confiscated, and our offices confiscated. That makes it a little difficult to develop a foreign agency in the ordinary way... [Nehru 1936: 247].

Obviously, the works by Nehru and others proved cohesive, as intellectuals were deemed to prove able to control and master all kinds of situations and any form of fear. It is impossible then to refer to emotion in politics without mentioning the role of political, ideological and cultural institutions and their capacity to structure emotions among Indians about the division of India.

Conclusion: Historians and the Necessity to convey a Sense of the Interwar Indian Political Feelings

The present essay was a modest and incomplete attempt to read some of India's history through the approach of the history of emotions. A history of emotions for colonial India is a complement and improvement, we hope, especially for the study of political history which should not be neglected any longer, especially on the debate leading to independence and partition.

Emotions in politics were by no means spontaneous or irrational, but deliberately coherent tactics playing a major role in either undermining or reinforcing the British imperial set up. Historical research can show how emotions were central in the Indian political landscape, cutting across both colonial and nationalist ideologies, especially after the end of World War One. Both British and Indian politicians and administrators used threat, fear, terror etc.

This essay has tried to bring to light some of these emotions. The objective has been to show that every side used emotions to a certain extent in a most professional manner as emotions in Indian politics were the key to power at the end of the *Raj*. These emotions could strongly define the future collective experience of South Asia by shaping new norms and values like Non-Alignment for instance rejecting any future resurgence of foreign domination. This essay pointed out some of its manifestations: the *Raj*'s or Gandhi's performances, the *Raj*'s divide and rule policy, communalist terror, and the use of Gandhi's body for instance as a tool for freedom. Indeed these are a few examples of how emotions were used in interwar Indian political actions and writings.

The other cases put forward were that 'emotional political communities' strongly existed through political writings that passed on these emotions to their readers. Hegemonic voices among Indian nationalists clashed with British imperialists' and powerfully shaped the collective consciousness of South Asians and served a real purpose in being one powerful way of mobilizing Indian public opinion in favour of the nationalist struggle. Our study only analysed books written in English, but the vernaculars were probably strong vectors of emotional mobilization, too.

Emotions can make it possible to understand better, in a more complex way, the authoritarian, ambiguous nature of colonial power, especially among those who participated in the division of India and the creation of Pakistan. Emotions testified to the extremely tenuous nature of the border between authoritarianism and the limited representative system, between full tyranny and an embryo of representative democracy. It was thus understood that emotions were a good illustration of the colonizer-colonized relationship in modern India. Emotions illuminated in a relatively unprecedented way the very essence of the regime and its structures of power, in a nascent free South Asia.

Emotions in interwar India had deadly consequences, and the dilemma experienced at the time, like the one presented here, the debate on the future of British India among English-speaking intellectuals, are nonetheless our own. People today might have a sense of their feelings, and through the emotion-in-politics approach can have a sense of feelings experienced by Indians back then, even if these feelings are hard to understand fully. Historians using both English and Urdu in order to decipher important elements from the Aqeel Collection have some solutions to offer, and this essay was a humble attempt at understanding how emotions were used in India, mainly in the inter-war period.

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