

# **Violence, Autonomy and European Ideological Influences: An Examination of Modern Indian Political Thought in Early Twentieth Century Bengal.**

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## Introduction

This thesis aims to understand both The Swadeshi movement and the meaning of violence within political Hindu thought, as well as the role of such violence in re-imagining social relations and the modern state via Bengali political thought. Moreover, this research seeks to delve into the ways Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Benoy Kumar Sarkar fused violence and Hindu history into their ideologies. The main research questions this thesis addresses are why are the concepts of violence and non-violence so central to modern Indian political thought? Why was the Bengali context so productive of violent political thought? What is the object-orientation of violent Hindu political thought? Which is to say, what did it hope to achieve with regard to the state, social relations, sovereignty, and the modern Indian self? In what ways does Indian political thought appropriate and reinterpret European political thought? In what ways did the thinkers mentioned above innovate new ideas drawn from their Indian context and hybridise these with Western thought?

In the build up to both the Swadeshi movement and the partition of Bengal in 1905, there was rising discontent and 'dissatisfaction' starting from the late 1880s.<sup>1</sup> This was a result of factors such as tiredness with British rule and rising conflict due to colonial strains on the economy in Bengal, including a dip in employment as well as rising tariffs and increasing economic uncertainty as a result of this. On top of Lord Curzon's decision to partition Bengal in 1905, which would in short destroy communities and create civil unrest, the issues from the previous century were still prevalent in society. However, in the eyes of the British, partitioning Bengal was seen as a way to break up this "revolutionary nationalism" that had been simmering since the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, the partition had the opposite effect on what can be considered Bengali nationalism, causing reactionary 'terrorism' and the creation of the Swadeshi movement in a bid for autonomy. These 'terrorist' actions or outburst of 'violent' protests became a "violent acceptance" of Bengal's

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<sup>1</sup> Sen, A. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p396

<sup>2</sup> Bakhle, J. (2010). Savarkar (1883-1966), Sedition and Surveillance: the rule of law in a colonial situation. *Social history (London)*, 35(1), 51-75. doi:10.1080/03071020903542286 p52

partition.<sup>3</sup> The first chapter of this thesis will examine The Swadeshi movement and Bengal's partition in more depth as well as analyse pre-Swadeshi influences on Bengal in both the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Two of the individuals that will be discussed had affiliations with the Swadeshi movement, these were Aurobindo Ghose who will be discussed in more depth in the second chapter, and Bipin Chandra Pal whose ideas shall be explored in the third chapter. Pal served as a member of the movement and Ghose also served founder of the movement.<sup>4</sup> Ghose's involvement within the movement expanded to speeches and writings in an attempt to counteract the governments' repression.<sup>5</sup> This highlights Ghose's direct involvement within the movement, suggesting that his views were oriented around the ideals of the Swadeshi movement. In addition to this, Ghose and Pal were in "agreement about the goals and philosophy of the movement", however their opinions differed in other aspects such as the methods of spreading their ideologies.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Pal played a similar role within the Swadeshi movement to Ghose and carried a similar weight in terms of his ideological force on the movement. However, Pal is considered as different to other members of the movement on account of him being a "constructive Swadeshi".<sup>7</sup> This is because in comparison to other 'well-known' members of the Swadeshi movement such as Ghose, Pal and his ideological approach became clear due to a stressed importance placed on ideas such as self-development.

Another individual who was important to the rise of Hindu nationalism as well as the narrative surrounding violence and non-violence in Indian history, is Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who will be discussed at greater length in the chapter four. Even though Savarkar was not Bengali, he still became heavily involved within both Bengali politics and Swadeshi nationalism, as well as the ideologies of Ghose and

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<sup>3</sup> Kapila, S. (2010). A History of Violence. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 437-457. doi:10.1017/S1479244310000156 p444

<sup>4</sup> Heehs, P. (1993). Terrorism in India During the Freedom Struggle. *The Historian*, 55(3), 469

<sup>5</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253 p533

<sup>6</sup> Swarup, D. (2001). Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh: A Unique Relationship. *Indian Historical Review*, 28(1-2), 111-127. doi:10.1177/037698360102800207 p113

<sup>7</sup> Sultan, S., Nazmul. (2019). Self-Rule and the Problem of Peoplehood in Colonial India *American Political Science Review*, 114, 81-94. doi:10.1017/S0003055419000601 p86

Pal. During the period over when the Swadeshi movement operated Savarkar was attending university in Britain, however, he was still involved with a “hotbed” of radicals, and sought to compare Italian nationalism with Indian nationalism, emphasising that he was still involved with Swadeshi politics.<sup>8</sup> Savarkar was later arrested in 1910 and not released until 1937. Even though he continued to write during his time in prison he had no freedom within this period to physically present his beliefs.<sup>9</sup> This shows that although Savarkar is responsible for works in both Indian and Hindu nationalism, related to ideas seen in the Swadeshi movement, Savarkar differs in background from Ghose and Pal.

Similarly, Benoy Kumar Sarkar was also not directly involved with Swadeshi, however, he was still perceived as a nationalist who was “active” during those years.<sup>10</sup> Sarkar’s background differs from the others as he was a sociologist at University and studied texts such as the Sukraniti, which is an old Sanskrit text which outlines morals and governance.<sup>11</sup> His writings and beliefs are explored in greater depth in the chapter five, as well as how his ideals interact with European philosophy.

The following thesis will argue that between the themes of liberalism, idealism and the self; nationalism and its exclusionary aspects; and violence and non-violence, that strands of violent streams of political thought occurred as a consequence of nationalism and that liberalism, idealism and the self could feed into both violent and non-violent philosophies. Later chapters will explore the relationship between Hindu nationalism and ideas perpetuated by Indian thinkers about the possibility of a Hindu state, and the backlash it created for Muslim communities. However, ideas surrounding liberalism and the self feed into non violence as post Swadeshi thinkers such as Ghose fall into spirituality and start to question issues with the self rather

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<sup>8</sup> Chatterjee, C. (2015). Imperial Incarcerations: Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Vinayak Savarkar, and the Original Sins of Modernity. *Slavic Review*, 74(4), 850-872. doi:10.5612/slavicreview.74.4.850 p860

<sup>9</sup> Chaturvedi, V. (2013). A Revolutionary's Biography: The Case of V. D. Savarkar. *Postcolonial studies*, 16(2), 124-139. doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.823257 p164

<sup>10</sup> Tankha, B. (2011). Benoy Kumar Sarkar: The Asia of the Folk, 1916. In S. Saaler & C. W. A. Szpilman (Eds.), *Pan-Asianism: a Documentary History, 1850-1920*. (Vol. 1). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. p1

<sup>11</sup> Satadru, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p11

than nationalism and what it may or may not mean. This will be explored further in the second chapter.

# Historiography

## An Overview of the period

Historians such as Sartori contend that the historiography of South Asia has “failed” to cultivate a way to grasp the ideology and philosophy that developed as a consequence of colonialism.<sup>12</sup> This indicated that, according to Sartori, there is or was (as this was written almost twenty years ago) a lack of understanding around colonialism’s ideological impact on South Asia, as well as hinting at a lack of connections made between European and South Asian political ideas. Additionally, in later work Sartori states that he sought to explain Hindu nationalism in Bengal during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and link this with the political climate in Bengal during that period.<sup>13</sup> This highlights the link between political events in Bengal and rising nationalism, as well as anti-colonial thought. This work seeks to build upon Sartori’s ideas and use them with a broader scope focusing on Bengali nationalism, anti-colonialism and ties with relevant branches of European philosophy. Sartori also appears to cling onto a Marxist view of this period of Indian history and this work hopes to counter that view.

Sartori’s Marxist view stems from his class orientated view of Indian historiography, and that the mobilising classes were the middle classes.<sup>14</sup> Whilst the arguments in this thesis do not debate this view, they put forward themes where class is not at the forefront of Hindu nationalism. Similarly, Chakrabarty also draws on different perspectives set out by historians, and these histories being set out as a ‘rejection of enlightenment rationalism’.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the arguments presented in this work align themselves more closely with Chakrabarty’s ideas as they mirror a similar approach

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<sup>12</sup> Sartori, A. (2003). The Categorical Logic of a Colonial Nationalism. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23(1&2), 271-285. p271

<sup>13</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p137

<sup>14</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p137

<sup>15</sup> Chakrabarty, D. (1995). Radical Histories and Question of Enlightenment Rationalism: Some Recent Critiques of “Subaltern Studies.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30(14), 751–759. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4402598>. p751



to philosophy that is driven by attention towards understanding ideas about the self that were not driven by class or German philosophy.

On the topic of European influences on India in largely the twentieth but also the nineteenth century Zachariah insinuates that the link between European and South Asian schools of thought draw parallels. As Zachariah states that some scholars of South Asian history or intellectual history question European “influences” on Indian thinking, starting with questioning nationalism.<sup>16</sup> This exemplifies that European links in regard to South Asian intellectual history are picked up on by other historians, on topics such as nationalism. Thus, this research will build upon the links noted by Zachariah and other historians in order to create a larger picture of the similarities and hybrids between Indian and European political ideas as well as showing the extent of Hindu nationalism, and linking this with histories of violence. Similarly, Sen asserts that Indian nationalism had intertwined itself with romantic nationalism due to criteria such as territorial claims.<sup>17</sup> This highlights that nationalism is covered at length in the historiography of nineteenth and twentieth century India, however, later chapters will aim to outline the aims of violent Hindu political thought and question why twentieth century Bengal was so intertwined with violent Hindu nationalism.

Similarly, in terms of Hindu nationalism, Wolfers draws attention to the dismissal of Hindu thought in India being previously misinterpreted by secularist historians, despite its importance in the narrative of the Swadeshi movement.<sup>18</sup> This commentary on the movement is important because it shows attention being drawn to a lack of interest in Hindu nationalism until recent years. Because Hindu nationalism is so integral to the movement and its ideologies, it further reflects on subsequent beliefs during the period. In recent years the historiography on this topic appears to have become of more interest. Heredia notes that Hindu nationalism served to politicise ethnic groups and suppress minorities in order to create

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<sup>16</sup> Zachariah, B. (2015). At the Fuzzy Edges of Fascism: Framing the Volk in India. *South Asia*, 38(4), 639-655. doi:10.1080/00856401.2015.1078948 p641

<sup>17</sup> Sen, S. (2015). Fascism Without Fascists? A Comparative Look at Hindutva and Zionism. *South Asia*, 38(4), 690-711. doi:10.1080/00856401.2015.1077924 p696

<sup>18</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253 p545

majorities.<sup>19</sup> This emphasises the importance of Hindu nationalism within the broader narrative of the Swadeshi movement as well as twentieth century Bengal, and that it arguably should form a key part of the region's historiography.

This change in Indian political thought is noted by Kapila, who contends that nationalism was at the forefront of Indian ideology in the early twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> This exemplifies that pre Swadeshi Congress liberals critiqued the Empire but 'extremist' nationalists were the ones who perpetuated Hindu nationalist beliefs, though Kapila keeps nationalism as a broad term in this article. As a result of this, this thesis aims to break down nationalism into both Hindu and Bengali nationalism and their potential differences. Moreover, Kapila argues that India's nationalism has been depicted as a victory of a history of non-violence and adds that Gandhi had become a key figure in this history of non-violence.<sup>21</sup> Kapila's debates about violence and non-violence in Indian history will be heavily discussed in this thesis, the emphasis Kapila places on Gandhian ideals are not as prevalent with the individuals explored in later chapters, meaning that some of the arguments that will be presented will show evidence pointing towards a history of violence. However, the stress Kapila places on violence and non-violence is interesting because of the newness of this topic, as well as the connections to religion and alienation of Indians through Caste and its hierarchy.<sup>22</sup> By showing violence in India's history by means of sacrifice and as a way of Caste life, in stark comparison to non-violence being viewed as a purely ethical branch of religion.

### **Indian Political Thought and The Swadeshi Movement**

Prior to the Swadeshi movement and splits between 'extremist' and 'moderate' ideals amongst Indian thinkers, there were developing strands of liberal ideology in the nineteenth century. Liberal thought was the dominant form of Congress political

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<sup>19</sup> Heredia, R. C. (2009). Gandhi's Hinduism and Savarkar's Hindutva. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(29), 62-67. p67

<sup>20</sup> Kapila, S. (2014). Global Intellectual History and the Indian political. In M. McMahon & S. Moyn (Eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (pp. 253-274). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p261

<sup>21</sup> Kapila, S. (2014). Global Intellectual History and the Indian political. In M. McMahon & S. Moyn (Eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (pp. 253-274). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p437

<sup>22</sup> Kapila, S. (2010). A History of Violence. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 437-457. doi:10.1017/S1479244310000156. p443

thought pre-Gandhi. This was because liberal ideals were formed in an attempt to understand the societal conflicts “from below” as well as other ideas and conflicts from the colonial world and “outside” of their own ideas.<sup>23</sup> Here, Bayly can be seen arguing that liberal strands of Indian political thought originated out of a desire to somewhat understand the world around them as well as rationalise the conflicts within India during this time such as the economic drain and other strains placed on India during British rule. This foundation surrounding pre-Swadeshi Indian thought is important in understanding the development of Indian political thought post-Swadeshi as well as understanding its relationship with European strands of political thought. Moreover, Sen contends that sovereignty over the Self became an “ethical” necessity, further adding that the Self had become a reflection of Indian liberalism, showing that this interest in ‘the-self’ had become an idea that linked spirituality and self-empowerment.<sup>24</sup> This emphasises that liberalism had become a ‘standard’ for Indian political thought by the start of the twentieth century, as well as serving as a potential standard for philosophy and ethics moving into the twentieth century. Further adding to the development of Indian political thought which will be explored throughout this thesis.

The wider historiography of the Swadeshi movement reiterates this discontent with colonialism, and places the movement within political extremism according to Sarkar.<sup>25</sup> This arguably vague description of the Swadeshi movement helps to explain why the movement is important in understanding this research, for example histories of violence and non-violence because of their extremist reputation and also showing the ideological changes in India during the early twentieth century. Sarkar, does build on this view of the movement, claiming that during that period many thought the movement was born purely out of “indigenous and popular nationalism” that could be linked with Hinduism.<sup>26</sup> Thus, through linking Swadeshi ideology with forms of Hindu nationalism, and pinpointing these ‘similarities’ within the

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<sup>23</sup> Bayly, C. A. (2012). *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in The Age of Liberalism and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p6

<sup>24</sup> Amiya, S. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p13

<sup>25</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p61

<sup>26</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p495

historiography of Bengal are important as they symbolise other undertones of the Swadeshi movement. The Indian thinkers that are explored in this research are in essence anti-colonial thinkers, but they also forged their own ideals which links with the theme of hybridising European political ideas.

Kapila's arguments are also centred around emerging ideas about Indian intellectual history around the Swadeshi period, for example by listing the new aims of Indian intellectual history as reconstructing ideas surrounding politics in twentieth-century India and critical changes such as freedom from violence and colonisation.<sup>27</sup> This shift in Indian intellectual history shows that emphasis is now being placed on the repercussions of key historical events like the partition of Bengal in 1905. This thesis will build on Kapila's debates around this change in historiography focusing in particular around commentaries surrounding violence and pre, during and post-Swadeshi ideology. In addition to this, Kapila also notes that this 'new' historiography of India highlights an "exchange of ideas" on a global scale and claims its "absence" in previous historiographies on similar topics.<sup>28</sup> This reiterates the previous point about building on Kapila's ideas in order to combat this lack of focus on global (and sometimes local) links in intellectual histories, as is shown through the research questions noted in the previous section.

This thesis hopes to build on the work of Zachariah due to the links the work shares with European philosophy as well as notions of romanticism with nationalism, which will be seen in more depth in chapters four and five. Another historian who is important to note in this thesis is Wolfers as he highlights the importance of the Swadeshi movement within the wider narrative of Indian history, as the arguments in this thesis revolve around the importance of Swadeshi in this period of Indian history. Likewise, this work is also massively built upon Kapila's work, as this thesis mainly revolves around the same topics as they both discuss histories of violence and non-violence as well as intellectual histories. Thus, the historiography discussed here has had a great impact on the arguments presented in this work as it has brought

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<sup>27</sup> Kapila, S. (2014). Global Intellectual History and the Indian political. In M. McMahon & S. Moyn (Eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (pp. 253-274). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p262

<sup>28</sup> Kapila, S. (2014). Global Intellectual History and the Indian political. In M. McMahon & S. Moyn (Eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (pp. 253-274). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p256

together violence, nationalism and philosophy as well as non-violence, spirituality and the self.

## Methodology

The sources used in this thesis consist of letters, books and speeches of all four individuals. The following academics are discussed because as an Historian examining political thought the source needs to be examined differently. This is because these Historians specifically look at the social, political and linguistic contexts of these ideas in order to understand what those ideas meant during that time specifically. However, with modern Indian history, there are additional contexts to consider such as regional (i.e. Bengal in this case) as well as language barriers and differing audiences (i.e. Indian thinkers talking to the Indian public, Indian thinkers talking to British officials). This shows how all these different factors need to be taken into account in order to understand these ideas and what they meant to Indian thinkers during the time that these sources were being written, spoken or published.

The difficulties of intellectual history are examined by Skinner as he explains that the history of political thought is not a timeless concept but rather a string of various ideas that have travelled through multiple societies.<sup>29</sup> This indicates that pieces of intellectual history cannot be neatly placed together side by side, and that from his perspective these fragments of history do not necessarily fit or belong together. Additionally, Skinner also writes that histories of ideas should not concentrate or “morph” the works of “any given writer”.<sup>30</sup> This places further emphasis on Skinner’s boundaries of intellectual histories, and critiques of how primary texts should be handled or reinterpreted by historians in future years. Nevertheless, Skinner does also offer an alternative for the way history was being written by suggesting that a “complete account” of that history is given and that simplification is perhaps needed when it comes to intellectual history.<sup>31</sup> Skinner’s reflection of intellectual history as being conducted to a poor standard is ultimately a critique of the history of political thought pre the late nineteen sixties. Also the meaning these histories extrapolate

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<sup>29</sup> Skinner, Q. (1969). Meaning and Understanding the History of Ideas. *History and Theory*, 8(1), 3-53. doi:10.2307/2504188 p53

<sup>30</sup> Skinner, Q. (1969). Meaning and Understanding the History of Ideas. *History and Theory*, 8(1), 3-53. doi:10.2307/2504188 pp48-49

<sup>31</sup> Skinner, Q. (1969). Meaning and Understanding the History of Ideas. *History and Theory*, 8(1), 3-53. doi:10.2307/2504188 pp13-15

from these texts are supposed to carry significance despite the fact that there may be very little to say about them, or nothing significant at all.

In more recent years, Bayly links the understanding of intellectual histories with a greater understanding of key debates during a period of time.<sup>32</sup> This perception of intellectual history shows that it is constructed around understanding politics and philosophy focused around a particular period of time. To summarise, this 'definition' of intellectual histories is much easier to comprehend than Skinner's analysis of the same topic. Moreover, Giri acknowledges that history as a form of knowledge is not always rational, and that it is helpful for history to contain different perspectives.<sup>33</sup> This highlights, how intellectual history relies heavily on interpretation and that a balance of opinions is useful in any historiography of political thought in order to understand the past to the best of our abilities.

Kapila also recognises changing perspectives over time, like Skinner, Bayly and Giri. As Kapila pinpoints that particularly for a historian of India, the prospective for changing ideologies is important, however this does not automatically mean that these ideas were indigenous or native.<sup>34</sup> Thus, indicating that intellectual histories are important, but they should not generalise and accept the fluidity of ideas, especially during times of change, which is very relatable to early twentieth-century Bengal.

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<sup>32</sup> Bayly, C. A. (2012). *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in The Age of Liberalism and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p1

<sup>33</sup> Giri, A. K. (2013). *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realizations*. London: Anthem Press p136

<sup>34</sup> Kapila, S. (2014). Global Intellectual History and the Indian political. In M. McMahon & S. Moyn (Eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (pp. 253-274). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p254

## Chapter One

This chapter will outline the social and political context of late-colonial Bengal, and more specifically the issues surrounding the Indian opposition to its proposed partition. In turn, this will help contextualise the political thought that emerged in order to better understand and overcome colonial domination. The happenings prior to the partition, as well as understanding the religious and cultural influences on the individuals that will be discussed in later chapters, is necessary for understanding the local influences on their political ideas.

### **An overview of Caste, class and religion in Bengal during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.**

Caste is described by Dirks as a religious system which held consequences for everyday life as it placed emphasis on social boundaries as well as educational and occupational divides between communities.<sup>35</sup> Caste was important within Indian society during this period as it created divisions that had an effect on the everyday lives of individuals. Moreover, Dirks contends that by the early twentieth-century Caste had become the “colonial form of civil society” in part through the deprivation of political rights to Indian communities.<sup>36</sup> This indicates that the British colonists engaged with the Caste system and aided to confine communities within the strict social hierarchies of Caste life. The influence of Caste, and its strict social structure is evident in the thinking of the individuals discussed in the following chapters, as Caste will become a recurring theme.

Likewise, Southard found that English literacy in upper Caste males fluctuated between “15 and 30 percent whereas in the general population English literacy was

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<sup>35</sup> Omvedt, G. (1989). Class, Caste and Land in India. In H. Alavi & J. Harriss (Eds.), *Sociology of "Developing Societies" South Asia* (pp. 134-147). London: Macmillan. p136

<sup>36</sup> Fuller, C. (1989). British India or Traditional India? Land, Caste and Power. In H. Alavi & J. Harriss (Eds.), *Sociology of "Developing Societies" South Asia* (pp. 28-39). London: Macmillan. p35



approximately one per cent".<sup>37</sup> This difference in literacy, indicates that upper Castes were far more educated than lower Castes. Furthermore, Southard also linked the works of English-educated men (politicians and journalists) with being a part of "upper Caste or 'bhadralok' society", referring to themselves as the 'middle class or 'educated middle class', connecting the educated upper Castes within places of 'power' and influence.<sup>38</sup> This could also perpetuate a narrative which shows men like the ones aforementioned as being considered as upper and middle class.

The establishment of an educated middle class served as a foundation and audience for the later Swadeshi movement in combination with the partition of Bengal as the middle classes shared the similar experiences due to the boundaries placed by Caste.

Tensions between different classes and religions can be seen coming to a climax by the latter half of the nineteenth century. During the 1890s there was an influx of immigrant mill workers, with the tension between the bhadralok and working men being described by Chakrabarty as "only being able to grow wider".<sup>39</sup> This shows that there was a growing class consciousness between the mill workers during this period whilst still keeping their Caste identity, due to their shared experiences at the hands of upper Caste Hindus. Chandavarkar also states that during this period the Indian working classes were "highly fragmented", which ties into the argument above that religious divides between Muslims and Hindus played on class divisions.<sup>40</sup> Religious conflict would have been exacerbated by the social boundaries enforced by Caste life, as well as other debates between Hindu and Muslim communities which will be discussed later on in this segment. Within the labour market Caste dominated these communities, as Caste and social status became key

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<sup>37</sup> Southard, B. (1980). The Political Strategy of Aurobindo Ghosh: The Utilization of Hindu Religious Symbolism and The Problem of Political Mobilization in Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 14(3), 353-376. doi:10.1017/S0026749X00006867. p354

<sup>38</sup> Southard, B. (1980). The Political Strategy of Aurobindo Ghosh: The Utilization of Hindu Religious Symbolism and The Problem of Political Mobilization in Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 14(3), 353-376. doi:10.1017/S0026749X00006867. p355

<sup>39</sup> Chakrabarty, D. (1989). Communal Riots and Labour: Bengal's Jute-mill-hands in the 1890's. In H. Alavi & J. Harriss (Eds.), *Sociology of "Developing Societies" South Asia* (pp. 186-195). London: Macmillan. p194

<sup>40</sup> Pandit, M. (2018). Nation in Ephemeral Literature: Dynamics of Demonstrative Resistance and Swadeshi Nationhood (1905–11). *Studies in History*, 34(1), 77-97. doi:10.1177/0257643017738604. p85

factors in the recruitment of labour.<sup>41</sup> Further suggesting that social hierarchies were intertwined with employment as Muslims and Hindus became divided in the workplace with Hindus becoming upper Caste factory owners, and Muslims lower Caste labourers. In addition to this these fragmented industrial communities they began to draw “upon references against the other”.<sup>42</sup> This implies that the hierarchy created by Caste in the workplace meant that Muslims and Hindus saw themselves as completely different from the other.

Caste was also utilised by ‘extremists’ during Swadeshi for propaganda purposes, depicting “scenes of degradation” with pictures of “cow bones and blood in foreign sugar simultaneously used motifs of Caste”.<sup>43</sup> This indicates that the ‘extremists’ wanted to portray Bengal as being an epicentre for humiliation, as well as using cow bones as a symbol of sacred Hindu values being destroyed by colonists. In addition to this, ‘extremist’ propaganda like this links with the Swadeshi movement and its responsibility for the politicisation of the middle classes in Bengal. Their propaganda also sought to manipulate religious icons and mobilise the masses, highlighting that Swadeshi propaganda used figments of India’s past such as the previous Caste system and deeply religious images. Pandit also states that, in order to mobilise a whole segment of Bengali society, Swadeshi needed to sympathise with the movement.<sup>44</sup> The impact of the movement also expanded to agrarian communities, as the extension of the movement helped to expand Swadeshi ideology into more agrarian questions.<sup>45</sup> Thus, demonstrating that Swadeshi ideals did penetrate past the *bhadralok* and into lower Castes, such as lower Caste Muslims, showing Swadeshi’s demand for autonomy was utilised by different Castes during this period. Furthermore, Chatterji describes the *bhadralok* as

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<sup>41</sup> Pandit, M. (2018). Nation in Ephemeral Literature: Dynamics of Demonstrative Resistance and Swadeshi Nationhood (1905–11). *Studies in History*, 34(1), 77-97. doi:10.1177/0257643017738604. p95

<sup>42</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p152

<sup>43</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p335

<sup>44</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p52

<sup>45</sup> Chakrabarty, D. (1989). Communal Riots and Labour: Bengal's Jute-mill-hands in the 1890's. In H. Alavi & J. Harriss (Eds.), *Sociology of "Developing Societies" South Asia* (pp. 186-195). London: Macmillan. p186

being “heirs to the traditions of Bengali resistance”, which indicates that conventionally that Caste was at the forefront of Bengali resistance such as Swadeshi.<sup>46</sup> Though, the *bhadralok* were negatively impacted by the economy in the twentieth century as well as the agrarian sector and rentier incomes, which meant that Muslim tenants “prospered” as a result of this.<sup>47</sup> This shows the use of Swadeshi and its goals as a hypernym for multiple Castes, as the retraction of the *bhadralok* as “leaders of Indian nationalism” confirms that Swadeshi was used by multiple Castes as a means of mobilising even though demands for autonomy may not be at the forefront of each argument.<sup>48</sup>

However, the Swadeshi movement may have also been exclusionary because of Caste as it drew upon High-Caste ideals as well as English-educated upper and middle class ideals. As higher Castes within the movement would have meant that even lower Caste Hindus could have been excluded in addition to the religious divisions led by both Swadeshi and Caste. Goswami suggests that upper class Hindus were economically tied to strands of Liberalism and that this was the driving force of Swadeshi.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Goswami also links upper-Caste Hindus with wanting to homogenise India, and that this became part of their nationalist rhetoric.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the link between Upper-Castes and exclusion meant that there was more to Hindu nationalism than excluding Muslims from their vision of India, and that this included the exclusion of lower Castes.

Nonetheless, the deep rooted divides between religious communities were not aided by events such as the 1896 Bakr-Id riots which was a conflict over the sacrifice

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<sup>46</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p207

<sup>47</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p200

<sup>48</sup> Stein, B. (1998). Towards Freedom. In *A History of India* (pp. 284-318). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. p285

<sup>49</sup> Goswami, M. (1998). From Swadeshi to Swaraj: Nation, Economy, Territory in Colonial South Asia, 1870 to 1907. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(4), 609–636. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179304>. p626

<sup>50</sup> Goswami, M. (1998). From Swadeshi to Swaraj: Nation, Economy, Territory in Colonial South Asia, 1870 to 1907. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(4), 609–636. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179304>. p626

of cows by Muslims.<sup>51</sup> This highlights that events like these added to tensions between these communities, and how these events strained the relationship between them. The escalating tensions between Muslim and Hindu communities could have also accelerated due to the rising Muslim population in Bengal, which increased from 1.5 per cent in 1872 to 99.1 per cent by 1891.<sup>52</sup> This indicates that tensions between both religions could have become exacerbated by the increase of Muslims in the area, with demand for jobs and housing increasing following the influx of migrants. Competition between these different groups in society is further highlighted by that through the partition of Bengal more opportunities for Muslims such as employment were meant to be created in an attempt to combat the competition from the “high Caste Hindus”.<sup>53</sup> This exemplifies that rivalry between both religions economically was so ‘severe’ that alternative ways of employing either religion had to be utilised due to the surplus of labour. Even in the lower Castes the divide between Hindus and Muslims was apparent through conflict over their own economic interests.<sup>54</sup> Further demonstrating that rivalry between these religious groups, regardless of Caste, had come to a climax by the beginning of the twentieth century purely over economic factors such as declining employment rates, which later became something Swadeshi could exploit.

The creation of the Muslim League preceded the establishment of any organisation promoting exclusively Hindu interests.<sup>55</sup> The presence of the Muslim League in this instance suggests that there was a collective consciousness of Muslims who could share their thoughts within the same religious bubble. As the Muslim League was created in 1905 with the objective of only representing Indian Muslim interests, who felt “threatened” by the prospect of a Hindu majority in any future

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<sup>51</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p220

<sup>52</sup> Misra, A. (1999). Savarkar and The Discourse on Islam in Pre-Independent India. *Journal of Asian history.*, 33(2), 142-184. p161

<sup>53</sup> Davis, R. H. (2015). The Bhagavad Gita in the Time of Its Composition. In *The "Bhagavad Gita"* (pp. 10-42): Princeton University Press. p10

<sup>54</sup> Davis, R. H. (2015). The Bhagavad Gita in the Time of Its Composition. In *The "Bhagavad Gita"* (pp. 10-42): Princeton University Press. p23

<sup>55</sup> Kapila, S., & Devji, F. (2013). *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*: Cambridge University Press. p116

government.<sup>56</sup> Both the entirely Muslim and Hindu political parties present in India during this period, emphasise that the relationship between Caste, class and religion kept Indian society secular for hundreds of years, ensuring Indian society was fragmented well before British rule.

### **Pre-Swadeshi ideology in India**

Pre-Swadeshi influences on nineteenth-century figures included Vivekananda and Tilak, the philosophy of earlier Indian thinkers gave these post-Swadeshi thinkers ideas to debate and build upon. The pre-existing debates around philosophy between Indian thinkers mean that these twentieth-century Indian philosophers could critique their own indigenous forms of philosophy as well as European or Oriental philosophies. Ancient texts can also help to identify the course of Indian philosophy pre-Swadeshi, as texts such as The Bhagavad Gita were used to question their own ethics and morality. The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient text which tells the story of two rival clans seeking control over a kingdom in northern India.<sup>57</sup> This text was subsequently used in later centuries as a means of advocating ethical violence, and is referenced to by an array of Indian thinkers, such as the ones discussed in this thesis. This reflection of the teachings of The Bhagavad Gita meant that these thinkers were questioning issues surrounding national identity, the boundaries of ethical violence and questions surrounding their own morality. In addition to this Kapila states that The Bhagavad Gita implies that ethics were not meant to be spiritualised or encompassed in the state.<sup>58</sup> The stress placed by Kapila on ethics and the state suggests that the teachings of The Bhagavad Gita were not meant to be examined at length and reworked in order to serve a nationalist cause centuries later. Likewise, Kapila's acknowledgement of The Gita emphasises that its principles were theoretical and did not necessarily outline an order of governance.

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<sup>56</sup> Garfield, J. L., & Bhushan, N. (2015). Swaraj and Swadeshi. In: University of Hawaii Press. p81

<sup>57</sup> Davis, R. H. (2015). The Bhagavad Gita in the Time of Its Composition. In *The "Bhagavad Gita"* (pp. 10-42): Princeton University Press. p10

<sup>58</sup> Kapila, S., & Devji, F. (2013). *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*: Cambridge University Press. p116

In years previous to the Swadeshi movement the same discontent with the status quo meant that political thought and potential radicalism already existed in India. The connections between the bhadralok in Bengal, the rising 'radicalism' and division between differing sections of society were noticed by the likes of Vivekananda. He was seen to show the limits of bhadralok radicalism, and was also seen distinguishing moderate and extremist actions as well as being considered both reformist and revivalist.<sup>59</sup> This explains how Vivekananda was seen as a pre-existing force in terms of reform and radicalism, and that he can be considered as a figure that the Swadeshi movement could have looked to because of the similarities in rising bhadralok radicalism. Similarly, Vivekananda was also critical of British rule due to the lack of funding placed back into India in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> These concerns surrounding the economic uncertainty of India's future due to strains placed on the country due to its rule become another issue which sparks analyses of colonial governance. Another similarity which will be seen in the Swadeshi and post-Swadeshi philosophers is the source of spiritual and moral compasses that guide them as well as their devotion to Hinduism. This is because Vivekananda saw the "moral and spiritual ferment" and its relation to the "rejuvenation" of Hinduism.<sup>61</sup> This implies that without Hinduism, India would lose its spirituality and mass consciousness without the presence of religion binding the population together.

Another pre-existing Indian philosopher during this time, Tilak, criticised German and British political thought as they were seen as being unable to explain the nature of happiness or questions surrounding ethics.<sup>62</sup> This highlights that Tilak critiqued utilitarian ideas as well as labelling this branch of ideology as purely British and German. Moreover, this also relates back to Indian ideology being grounded on a more spiritual level, and that European philosophy does not account for this. Here,

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<sup>59</sup> Sen, A. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p336

<sup>60</sup> Sen, A. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p333

<sup>61</sup> Sen, A. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p286-313

<sup>62</sup> Kapila, S. (2007). Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism 1890–1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 4(1), 109-127. doi:10.1017/S1479244306001077 p118

Tilak could be alluding to Indian society connecting itself through spirituality and religion, and that this system accounts for happiness without the framework of a 'Westernised' society. Subsequent chapters will go on to discuss how Swadeshi ideology intertwines itself with German philosophy, showing how these ideas change based on the events that happened around them. Despite this, the grounds for Swadeshi, which arguably is the demand for absolute autonomy, is foreshadowed in Tilak's desires surrounding ethics and happiness. Tilak also extends these beliefs to sovereignty as an ethical requirement, as well as ideas surrounding collective consciousness and the collective unconscious.<sup>63</sup> Indicating that Tilak held sovereignty in high regard in terms of fundamental rights and the importance of people having a free consciousness. Thus, the demand for autonomy in India had been a longwinded effort and that Swadeshi was ultimately a cataclysmic ultimatum forced into being by the events of the partition of Bengal. Rising discontent within Bengal had arguably been building up since the 1880s due to "general dissatisfaction" with the state of politics and criticism of the congress within the Bengali press.<sup>64</sup> Further emphasising that the events that took place after the partition of Bengal were an acceleration of a deterioration of a series of issues within Indian politics and society that came to a head before the turn of the twentieth century.

The work of Tagore could also be considered influential to early twentieth-century Indian philosophers as Sartori describes Tagore as one of the "most trenchant critics of nationalism".<sup>65</sup> This shows that Tagore differed from his peers because of his examination of nationalism and what it could have led to. In addition to this, Tagore is also noted as being much more cosmopolitan and having had differing perspectives on ideological outlooks.<sup>66</sup> Looking at philosophical questions with global perspectives would have meant that unlike Vivekananda and Tilak, Tagore would

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<sup>63</sup> Kapila, S. (2007). Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism 1890–1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 4(1), 109-127. doi:10.1017/S1479244306001077 p126

<sup>64</sup> Sen, A. P. (1993). *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal, 1872–1905: Some Essays in Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p396

<sup>65</sup> Sartori, A. (2014). Hegel, Marx, and World History. In P. Duara, V. Murthy, & A. Sartori (Eds.), *A Comparison to Global Historical Thought*. Somerset, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. p302

<sup>66</sup> Garfield, J. L., & Bhushan, N. (2015). *Swaraj and Swadeshi*. In: University of Hawaii Press. p261

have seen past the importance of spirituality and religion that was central to Indian philosophy during this time.

Within the larger context of the 'global turn' and engaging with the enlightenment on a global scale, pre and post Swadeshi philosophy follows its own trajectory and should stand on its own merit. Conrad frames this as the progression of reason beyond Europe and that global Enlightenment continued into the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> This way of looking at global history as well as global philosophy is important to frame our arguments on a global scale as it can be easy to focus on philosophy from a European perspective and undermine Asian philosophies which are just as important. In addition to this Conrad also reinforces that Enlightenment is not bound by European power, neither is it limited to it.<sup>68</sup>

### **The Swadeshi movement and the partition of Bengal**

The Swadeshi movement itself started in reaction to the partition of Bengal in 1905, which stemmed from the colonial governments' (headed by Lord Curzon) plan to split Bengal into two sectors for administrative purposes. Lord Curzon's plan to part Bengal in 1905 caused mass protest through "economic boycott and the mobilisation of cultural and religious symbols".<sup>69</sup> This, highlights that the decision to partition Bengal was met with mass conflict, and that these events were partly responsible for the creation of the Swadeshi movement. Simmering discontent in Bengal had bubbled over the decision to partition Bengal for some time as Lord Curzon's administrative policies had been in place from 1899 to 1905.<sup>70</sup> This shows the length of his hold on Bengal during the early twentieth century, as well as the length of hovering uncertainty surrounding this partition. In reaction to the partition, violent

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<sup>67</sup> Conrad, S. (2012). Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique. *The American Historical Review*, 117(4), 999-1027. doi:10.1093/ahr/117.4.999. p1001

<sup>68</sup> Conrad, S. (2012). Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique. *The American Historical Review*, 117(4), 999-1027. doi:10.1093/ahr/117.4.999. p1022

<sup>69</sup> Visana, V. (2020). Savarkar before Hindutva: Sovereignty, Republicanism, and Populism in India, c1900-1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 1-24. doi:10.1017/S1479244320000384 p2

<sup>70</sup> Southard, B. (1980). The Political Strategy of Aurobindo Ghosh: The Utilization of Hindu Religious Symbolism and The Problem of Political Mobilization in Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 14(3), 353-376. doi:10.1017/S0026749X00006867 p358



outbursts and boycotts occurred in an attempt to challenge colonial authority.<sup>71</sup> Again, indicating that disruption to both the communities in Bengal as well as their day to day lives meant that 'extremists' now had a greater reason to express their discontent at what the colonists stood for. This is because the movement is noted by some as being "more than" a political weapon, which deems the movement as being necessary to Bengal as a means to an end. This could be because the movement served to bring autonomy above all else to Bengal, and that it sought to culminate the revolutionary activity that had been bubbling over since the previous century.<sup>72</sup>

Consequently, the goals of the Swadeshi movement can be identified as surrounding absolute autonomy over other forms of freedom, and that reinforcing that autonomy over their own lives and own country became a larger goal than plain freedom.<sup>73</sup> The Swadeshi movement moved onto using tactics such as boycotting foreign goods, as a way to have their demands heard by the colonial government.<sup>74</sup> These acts meant that before being branded as any form of 'terrorist' they sought other means of achieving their goals and growing their likeminded community. On the other hand, the goals of the movement could be interpreted in other ways such as focusing on not solely political issues but also social and economic. As from an 'extremist' perspective the "national political economy was being invoked as a logical extension of a culturalist imagination", indicating that that factors other than political ones such as the economic drain on India were also contributing to the mass dissatisfaction with British rule.<sup>75</sup> In addition to this, these boycotts occurred in reaction to the partition of Bengal as well as growing poverty and the drain of wealth.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, exemplifying that the boycotts were utilised as a tactic for negatively impacting India's economy in an attempt to combat and seek autonomy

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<sup>71</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p178

<sup>72</sup> Bhushan, N., & Garfield, J. L. (2015). *Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p120

<sup>73</sup> Sartori, A. (2003). The Categorical Logic of a Colonial Nationalism. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23(1&2), 271-285. p275

<sup>74</sup> Giri, A. K. (2013). *Knowledge and Human Liberation : Towards Planetary Realizations*. London: Anthem Press p215

<sup>75</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p165

<sup>76</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p269

over India's economic drain, even though the larger scale of events during India at this time was over broader issues as noted previously.

### **Freedom, sovereignty and Autonomy**

These terms will be used often throughout this thesis, within this context freedom is defined as something that resonates with independence from outside forces.<sup>77</sup> Due to the nature of this topic, freedom can also be defined by the Bengali variant *atamashakti* which advocates self-help, self-reliance and inner strength.<sup>78</sup> This also aligns itself within Swadeshi ideals, which will be explored in the next section, the connection to one's spiritual self as well as its impact on one's autonomy is one way that Indian philosophers seek to define freedom in different ways. Self-help and self-reliance also shows how freedom could also be interpreted as one's capacity for self-determination, meaning that individuals may not always be aware of their freedom.<sup>79</sup> This type of freedom will be outlined in later chapters. In colonial terms, freedom can be limited for example the freedom to sell your labour at a cost, however this may not entitle the individual to freedom from the community or others.<sup>80</sup> These limited freedoms mean that in India's context freedom could be split into different types depending on what 'freedom' allowed them under colonial rule. Branching out of freedom and into autonomy, some such as Sartori state that India's spirituality was tied to their capacity for autonomy, meaning that Swadeshi's demand for autonomy was moulded around this system.<sup>81</sup> The forms of sovereignty that will be used when referencing sovereignty are popular, political and imperial. Popular sovereignty meaning that individuals make their own choices about their freedom, political sovereignty meaning that absolute authority can be given to the sovereign power.

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<sup>77</sup> Gupta, S. (2013). The Idea of Freedom in Bengali Nationalist Discourse. *Studies in History*, 29(1), 21-40. doi:10.1177/0257643013496685. p22

<sup>78</sup> Gupta, S. (2013). The Idea of Freedom in Bengali Nationalist Discourse. *Studies in History*, 29(1), 21-40. doi:10.1177/0257643013496685. p28

<sup>79</sup> Stone, A. (2020). Hegel and Colonialism. *Hegel Bulletin*, 41(2), 247-270. doi:<http://doi.org/10.1017/hgl.2017.17>. p4

<sup>80</sup> Chakrabarti, A., & Cullenberg, S. (2003). *Class and the Question of Transition: Redrawing the Contour of Marxism in India*. London: Routledge. p276

<sup>81</sup> Sartori, A. (2008). *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in The Age of Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p192

Imperial sovereignty has the most resonance with India in this context, as it means that there is a supreme power exercising authority over a foreign territory.

Nationalism and its exclusionary aspects are at the forefront of this chapter because of the heavy ties with Caste, for example because Caste kept society segregated and help to keep sections of society from one another. Also this chapter shows how the middle and upper Castes were involved within Swadeshi nationalism and, therefore, Hindu nationalism to a wider extent. The ideals that have been touched upon both during and after the Swadeshi movement will be further explained in the following chapters which will focus on the work and beliefs of Ghose, Pal, Savarkar and Sarkar. The foundation of knowledge this chapter provides on religion, Caste and class will also help to explain the reasons behind the beliefs these men upheld.

## Chapter Two- Aurobindo Ghose

This chapter will explore the ideas of Aurobindo Ghose and the impact he had on Swadeshi ideology as well as the influence Ghose had on Indian political thought more broadly. This will be shown in terms of where his ideas hybridised with European philosophies, and if these ideas fell within the bounds of violent or non-violent Hindu political thought. By examining these themes and overarching questions this chapter seeks to explore the importance of his work to Bengali's such as himself during the early twentieth century. This will be through the discussion of topics such as the Swadeshi movement, Hindu nationalism, spiritualism, religion, his philosophies and his relation with European political thought. The following chapter will analyse Ghose's speeches, letters and writings in order to see the development of his beliefs of the topics noted above over time.

### **Ghose, the Swadeshi movement and the quest for autonomy**

The Swadeshi movement, of which Ghose was one of its founders, is described by Heehs as India's fundamental need and that the movement would then mean complete independence from colonial power and national unity.<sup>82</sup> This outlines that the goal of the Swadeshi movement aligned with Ghose's ambitions to create an India which had its own autonomy away from Britain, Heehs' description also indicates that India required the movement meaning that freedom was more than a desire for Ghose. The desire for autonomy over freedom, will be discussed in this section, as it indicates that autonomy is linked to a collective consciousness, where Indians could be free to achieve self-help and self-determination.

Therefore, a key element of Ghose's ideological and philosophical beliefs was his participation within the Swadeshi movement. During Swadeshi, Ghose contended that non-cooperation and boycotts were the best methods for "breaking the seductive

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<sup>82</sup> Heehs, P. (1993). Terrorism in India During The Freedom Struggle. *The Historian*, 55(3). p472

charms of British materialism and commercialism”.<sup>83</sup> This exemplifies that Ghose was interested in destructive methods of protest in order to bring as much disruption to the empire as possible, this also demonstrates Ghose’s dislike of capitalism. Through attempting to negatively impact Britain’s economy by sabotaging streams of income that were generated via colonialism Ghose could utilise this as a form of protest against British rule. Moreover, Wolfers’ moves onto argue that Ghose’s writings during this period gave activists a productive way of moving against subsequent government repression.<sup>84</sup> In turn, suggesting that from this perspective Ghose’s methods of protesting were an effective counter to colonial oppression, however this narrative will later find that the methods of protest used by Swadeshi activists like Ghose were not entirely effective.

Similarly, in a speech in 1908, Ghose gives a vague description of passive resistance stating that “in certain matters we shall not cooperate with the government of this country until it gives us what we consider our rights” and that if they are persecuted for this “we shall meet it not by violence, but by suffering, by passive resistance, by lawful means”.<sup>85</sup> This firstly indicates that Ghose’s plans of resistance, however passive, will continue until Swadeshi’s goal of complete autonomy over their own lives is achieved, showing the persistence of these boycotts during this period. Additionally, Ghose claims that these protests will not end in violent means, but this is mentioned after he takes into consideration that they may be persecuted for their actions. The stress placed on suffering and sacrifice in this snippet demonstrates what Wolfers’ refers to as the “collective good” and that Ghose infantilised followers with this as a means of doing their duty no matter the legal, mental or physical cost.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, here we can see a range of political tools used by Ghose in order to both push forward the values of Swadeshi as well as his own

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<sup>83</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253. p528

<sup>84</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253. p533

<sup>85</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House. P196

<sup>86</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253. p529

sentiments around sacrifice. However, Ghose was most likely diluting his ideas around violence during this 1908 speech he was most likely aware that the promotion of violence by the movement may be noted by the British, resulting in censorship and imprisonment, which could have potentially hindered the movement. Ghose and his dealings within the Swadeshi movement and its tactics were therefore an example of the dialogue of violence and non-violence in modern Indian political thought, as both Wolfers' article and Ghose's 1908 speech show an inclination towards acts of violence, they also present a fear of government repression resulting in acts of passive resistance.<sup>8788</sup>

Likewise, Kapila also states that when reflecting on the mission for 'freedom and selfhood' the likes of Ghose would have always drifted towards "revolutionary terrorism", which is closer to seeing these events as a history of violence.<sup>89</sup> Despite, the discussion of passive resistance in the previous paragraph, as the aims of The Swadeshi movement are mostly identical to the ideals of freedom and selfhood as discussed by Kapila. The growth of Bengali nationalism is also documented by Ghose as in a speech in January 1908 he declares that "Bengal has become the example of Nationalism, Bengal which was the least respected, and the most looked down of all the Indian races for its weakness has within these three years changed so much".<sup>90</sup> This snippet of text links with Kapila's argument as here Ghose also exemplifies that Bengal in particular has become a hotspot for nationalism in the twentieth century, moreover Ghose claims that Bengal had previously been looked down upon in comparison to other parts of India. Due to the surge in Swadeshi activism, in combination with embracing freedoms (spirituality and selfhood) revolutionary means become justified, as philosophers like Ghose were more concerned with how they could expand their freedoms through spirituality, which arguably made violence a consequence of this rather than making violence the key

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<sup>87</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253.

<sup>88</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House.

<sup>89</sup> Kapila, S. (2010). A History of Violence. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 437-457. doi:10.1017/S1479244310000156 p443

<sup>90</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House. P46

to their freedom. However, spirituality and its relation to violence will be explored again in a later section.

### **Hindu Nationalism and its relationship to violence**

A common theme throughout the discussion of all the Indian and more specifically Hindu men in this work is their adherence within Hindu nationalism, and beliefs within this topic. In an open letter written in 1909, Ghose writes that “our ideal is absolute autonomy free from foreign control” and that he rejects that a “civilisation inferior to our own or to keep us out of our inheritance on the untenable ground of a superior fitness”.<sup>91</sup> Here Ghose clearly states that his goal as well as the wider goal of the Swadeshi movement itself is complete autonomy away from the influence of the British government, his comment on the superiority of the Indian race over the British race also appears to be another reason why Indian thinkers such as Ghose saw British rule as inadequate, viewing themselves as far superior to their British counterparts, moving towards debates surrounding Hindu nationalism. This also links to another debate surrounding the failure of Swadeshi and that its demise marked a recognition of the colonial state as being oppressive.<sup>92</sup> Despite the movement, Swadeshi did fail to get autonomy for Bengal, and the partition went ahead, but this placed emphasis on the powers of the colonial government and its attempt to silence their opposition. Through embedding the ‘superiority’ of the Indian race by leaning on the assumption that Indians were spiritually above the British and that they were able to get to parts of the self that others could not. Moreover, Ghose’s belief in Hinduism and study of Hindu ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita as mentioned in the previous chapter meant that Ghose could reinterpret ancient epics and turn them into solutions for ‘modern’ day problems.

During the Swadeshi period Ghose exhibits beliefs that are similar to those of Hindu nationalism as in a speech given in January 1908 he states that “nationalism is a religion that has come from God” and that they are “instruments of God”.<sup>93</sup> This insinuates that nationalists should act in interest of their religion, in this instance Hinduism, and act accordingly or by any means necessary. The attempt to mobilise

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<sup>91</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House. p229

<sup>92</sup> Kapila, S. (2010). A History of Violence. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 437-457.  
doi:10.1017/S1479244310000156. P444

<sup>93</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House. p10

Swadeshi on the basis of religion and nationalism highlights that Ghose saw an opportunity within religion to give their actions a greater purpose within the middle of this movement. Davies also argues that Hindu philosophies acted in some ways as a precursor to Hindu majoritarian politics, he also alludes to Ghose following a similar path to Vivekananda at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>94</sup> This view of Ghose would place him as an accessory to both Hindu nationalism and Hindu majoritarianism due to his involvement with Swadeshi as well as his externalised spirituality. It could also be argued that it was his intense beliefs within spiritualism and Hinduism that perpetuated his nationalist rhetoric, as Hindu texts would have become the brunt of his readings. Ghose is seen to have become “a product of his time and the utopian circles he moved in”, which proves that the links he makes between religion and nationalism reflect what information he was digesting during this period and the ideas that were floating around in Bengal during the Swadeshi years.<sup>95</sup>

During the Swadeshi period in 1908 Ghose proclaimed that “if a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal” and that “an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and limited purpose”.<sup>96</sup> Thus, suggesting that a religion needs to be available and accessible to all in order to prevail, it also indicates that perhaps Ghose views Hinduism as meeting these criteria. Additionally, this also suggests that Ghose upholds religion above many other factors, making it important within his philosophy, as well as the philosophy of the Swadeshi movement as this speech is from the peak of the movement. Furthermore, Ghose was well versed in Indian literature, as he wrote English translations of Bengali and Sanskrit classics.<sup>97</sup> This also shows Ghose’s connection with religion and how engulfed by ancient texts he was pre-Swadeshi, meaning it is not surprising that his beliefs became intertwined with religion. Further emphasising that Ghose built on the philosophical and spiritual ideals within these ancient texts and sought to use them as solutions to problems

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<sup>94</sup> Davies, A. (2019). *Geographies of Anticolonialism : Political Networks Across and Beyond South India, C. 1900-1930*. Newark: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. p129

<sup>95</sup> Davies, A. (2019). *Geographies of Anticolonialism : Political Networks Across and Beyond South India, C. 1900-1930*. Newark: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. p113

<sup>96</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1922). *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* Calcutta: Prabartak Publishing House. p106

<sup>97</sup> Southard, B. (1980). The Political Strategy of Aurobindo Ghosh: The Utilization of Hindu Religious Symbolism and The Problem of Political Mobilization in Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies*, 14(3), 353-376. doi:10.1017/S0026749X00006867. p361



Swadeshi nationalists like him were facing, and that Ghose's reputation as a Hindu nationalist rests on his deep-rooted religious beliefs that develop after his imprisonment.

### **Spiritualism, the self and Ghose's later years**

Another key factor of Ghose's changing ideology is his relation to spiritualism and works on consciousness that he appears to develop post-Swadeshi. However, the development of these beliefs over time can be seen through analysing excerpts from Ghose's *Essays on Ideals and Progress* (1900), *The Renaissance in India* (1920) and another of his books on *War and Self-Determination* (1921). Pre and during the Swadeshi period Ghose's beliefs around spirituality and consciousness were used when connoting power. In an essay on ideals published in 1900 Ghose writes that "the idea is the realisation of a truth in consciousness as the fact is in its realisation in power".<sup>98</sup> This belief can be seen as a product of that period in Indian history, as even though it is pre-Swadeshi, the dialogue focuses on a desire for autonomy over their own lives and the desire for an end to British rule. Through the discussion of philosophical ideas such as consciousness and power, this early text is an example of Ghose's rationale surrounding colonialism, and perhaps that as conscious beings they should recognise the power and control that comes alongside it. This reasoning behind consciousness and power could relate to later events within the bounds of The Swadeshi movement, as through the boycott of British goods and the establishment of a so-called nationalist education, Ghose moves onto vocalising these "truths".<sup>99</sup> Thus, indicating that Ghose brought these beliefs surrounding consciousness and power into the movement, but also as a means of educating his peers about his philosophy surrounding consciousness and that these people could still have some kind of autonomy over their beliefs. Therefore, identifying that one of the objectives of violent Hindu political thought was to educate likeminded Bengali's about their rights as a conscious being, and that within the context of The Swadeshi movement this would result in acts of violence or other terrorist means in order to convey their own beliefs.

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<sup>98</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1900). *Essays Ideal and Progress* (Vol. One). Calcutta: Arya Publishing House. p5

<sup>99</sup> Giri, A. K. (2013). *Knowledge and Human Liberation : Towards Planetary Realizations*. London: Anthem Press p207

On the other hand, post-Swadeshi we see a development of Ghose's beliefs, which are comparable to histories of non-violence. In *The Renaissance in India* published in 1920, Ghose comments on the state of Indian society noting that it is still in a more "chaotic stage" and that the spirit and the "old forms are crumbling away under the pressure of the environment".<sup>100</sup> This implies that Ghose views Indian society as incomplete and that it has not met his standards, however it is unknown whether this is through comparison to the West or his own ideals about society. Moreover, Ghose's comments on the spirit of older forms of Indian society falling apart could be a result of the collapse of Swadeshi prior to this or as a result of this "chaotic stage" of India. This excerpt helps to identify a change in Ghose's attitude towards violence as from this period Ghose's comments on society become less connected with violence. In *War and Self-Determination* published in 1921 Ghose idealises self-fulfilment and its potential when utilised in society as he argues that "the soul, the inner being, and to make our ways of living a freer opportunity for the growing height and breadth of its need of self-fulfilment".<sup>101</sup> This, exemplifies a development of Ghose's beliefs surrounding spirituality, as the soul and self-fulfilment can be seen as an extension of these ideas. Ghose's focus on the self and soul indicate that his ideas have become less violent over time, and his ideas on spirituality developed into a reflection on the self rather than the self and the impact on society. Ideas about self-fulfilment and selfhood also reflect Ghose's desire for freedom and autonomy, as mentioned in the first chapter freedom is looked at in a colonial manner as self-development rather than being 'freed'. As the ability to help yourself and create an organic consciousness as a society were factors that were important as it meant they could combat British imperialism through their own freedom of thought, as they could not own their own labour.

Similarly, Ghose is noted as someone who not only focuses on a rational society but also a spiritual one, further emphasising the importance placed by Ghose on spirituality aside from religion.<sup>102</sup> In 1921 Ghose also wrote that "the ego is not a true circle of the self" and that "there is a secret unity between our self and the self of

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<sup>100</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1920). *The Renaissance in India*. New Delhi: Prabhat Publishing House. p66

<sup>101</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1921). *War and Self-Determination*. Calcutta: Sarojini Ghose. p39

<sup>102</sup> Giri, A. K. (2013). *Knowledge and Human Liberation : Towards Planetary Realizations*. London: Anthem Press p36

others”.<sup>103</sup> This helps to identify that Ghose placed spiritualism and the self over disagreements and troubles within society, placing unity within human nature showing a development of his ideas from linking spirituality with violent ends to placing it firmly with non-violence and human nature. Further linking with Giri’s statement that Ghose was one of a few Indian thinkers who did not reject reason and places it within human evolution.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, showing Ghose’s development over time from violence to non-violence over reason and spirituality, as well as that Ghose can be seen interacting with Western thought through his dialogue around reason.

### **Ghose’s engagement with European philosophy**

The connection with the writings of European philosophers is also seen within Ghose’s work, he comments on European influence in *The Renaissance in India* published in 1920. He states that “clumsy followers are always stumbling in the wave of European evolution and always fifty years behind it”.<sup>105</sup> This post-Swadeshi snippet indicates that Ghose was unimpressed with those who followed European trends and philosophies as they would end up “behind”, indicating that he followed different ideals and forged new philosophies. Moreover, it is also acknowledged that he critiqued the Hegelian concept of the absolute and dialectical reason, which further highlights how Ghose perceived European ideologies and philosophies.<sup>106</sup> This critique would then indicate that Ghose’s thoughts on reason expand beyond manifesting ideals, however, when considering Ghose’s stance on spiritualism it could seem strange to him to manifest through reason and not through spiritualism. Nevertheless, in Ghose’s *Essays on Ideals and Progress* published in 1900 he writes that “the human mind is strong and swift in analysis; it synthesises with labour and imperfectly and does not feel at home in its synthesis”.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, demonstrating that he does share philosophical beliefs with Hegel as even though their dialectical logic may differ, they both explore these ideals in a similar capacity to

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<sup>103</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1921). *War and Self-Determination*. Calcutta: Sarojini Ghose. p51

<sup>104</sup> Giri, A. K. (2013). *Knowledge and Human Liberation : Towards Planetary Realizations*. London: Anthem Press. p36

<sup>105</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1920). *The Renaissance in India*. New Delhi: Prabhat Publishing House. p40

<sup>106</sup> Odin, S. (1981). Sri Aurobindo and Hegel on the Involution-Evolution of Absolute Spirit. *Philosophy East and West*, 31(2), 179-191. doi:10.2307/1399139 p179

<sup>107</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1900). *Essays Ideal and Progress* (Vol. One). Calcutta: Arya Publishing House. p42

each other, showing how modern Indian thinkers modified European political thought.

In addition to this, Ghose also directly comments on German political thought in *Essays on Ideals and Progress* writing that “in its slow initial stage is the quiet entry of Eastern and chiefly of Indian thought into Europe first through the veil of German metaphysics”.<sup>108</sup> This signifies the penetration of German philosophy into Indian society, as a result of metaphysical questioning and reasoning within modern Indian political thought. The change of ideas surrounding following European ideals from his work in 1900 to 1920 could also signify what changed within Ghose pre and post-Swadeshi, most likely due to his time imprisoned because of his actions during the movement, as throughout this time he became hugely spiritual and religious which can be seen as one reason as to why his opinions changed. Additionally, Ghose’s adaption of metaphysics enabled him to fully explore consciousness as well as surrounding ideals about morality, some of which have been explored at the start of this section. Moreover, Ghose’s stance on metaphysics is defined by Wolfers as enabling him to differentiate between legal and illegal political actions.<sup>109</sup> This highlights that Ghose’s version of metaphysics was arguably a by-product of the colonial system he was trying to get away from, especially when placed in conjunction with his ideals surrounding consciousness. Ghose can also be seen linking consciousness to reason and also categorising being and consciousness with supreme bliss.<sup>110</sup> Further showing that Ghose’s ideas became a twist on European ideals and fused with solutions to Indian problems, as Wolfers also claims that thinkers like Ghose rehashed Hindu metaphysics during Swadeshi from persecution, showing why thinkers like Ghose reimagined philosophy to fit their circumstances.<sup>111</sup>

This chapter emphasises Ghose’s role within the Swadeshi movement as well as the impact it had on his philosophy pre, during and post-Swadeshi. As during the

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<sup>108</sup> Ghose, S. A. (1900). *Essays Ideal and Progress* (Vol. One). Calcutta: Arya Publishing House. p81

<sup>109</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253 p529

<sup>110</sup> Odin, S. (1981). Sri Aurobindo and Hegel on the Involution-Evolution of Absolute Spirit. *Philosophy East and West*, 31(2), 179-191. doi:10.2307/1399139. p180

<sup>111</sup> Wolfers, A. (2016). Born like Krishna in the Prison-House: Revolutionary Asceticism in the Political Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 39(3), 525-545. doi:10.1080/00856401.2016.1199253 p526

movement Ghose's rhetoric had a greater stress on violence and acts of violence, through the speeches he made during this time, as well as through his promotion of boycotts and non-cooperation. The theme of violence was also continued through underlying themes in Bengali nationalism, such as Hindu nationalism, and specifically stresses placed by Ghose on power and religion during the peak of the movement. However, non-violence is indicated by Ghose in his 1908 speech which stresses passive resistance and somewhat prohibits the use of violence as a means of protest, but this is most likely because he does not want to appear to be condoning violence when he could have been overheard by people that could imprison him for it. Although, over time and after his time in prison Ghose develops an attitude towards non-violence as in later years he turns to spirituality and religion in order to seek similar ends through philosophical means. Moreover, the rise of violence in Bengal during this period can therefore be seen as a product of the rise of Bengali and Hindu nationalism as a result of Bengal's partition and the events that followed it in order to seek autonomy.

This chapter highlights how violence in Indian political thought can turn into non-violence, as Ghose's early work surrounded the Swadeshi movement and questioning Caste and defining what 'Indian' meant. Which again shows how nationalism and exclusion can perpetuate violence, however, when Ghose studied the self and idealism in his later years he aligns himself more with philosophies of non-violence.

## Chapter Three- Bipin Chandra Pal

This chapter will discuss Bipin Chandra Pal within the Swadeshi movement, as well as his beliefs on consciousness, organic society, his links with German idealism, religion and self-sacrifice. These topics will be used in order to analyse Pal in relation to his ideologies and compare these to philosophies of violence and non-violence, as well as his aversion or agreement with European political thought. Moreover, this chapter also aims to look at where Pal's beliefs intersect with ideas surrounding Hindu violence.

### **His Philosophy and links with German idealism as well as other classically European ideologies**

Within Pal's work, there is a seeming influence of works of German philosophy, indicating a link between the work of Indian thinkers during this time and German idealism (in particular). Pal often compares European and Indian concepts, in a letter published in *The Soul of India* (1911) he claims that the European mind is "more prone to define and differentiate than to combine and integrate...is more formal than transcendental, more scientific, than metaphysical".<sup>112</sup> This could imply that Pal is envious of the European mind, so perhaps holds it as a benchmark for his own ideals, and that he plans on hybridising European and Indian thought. In contrast, given that this letter is part of his published works, he may have been appealing to the British by complementing their 'advanced' skills and ways of thinking as a means of staying out of prison and making sure his work was not banned or censored for offending them in any way. This could also relate back to how freedom can be viewed as Europeans would see their freedom as owning their own labour, choosing their own government and having autonomy over their lives whereas Indian philosophers may see their freedom as spiritual and that freedom can be achieved through spiritual and religious practice. Additionally, in another letter in the collection *The Soul of India* (1911) he states that "imperialism offers, similarly, a higher synthesis than nationalism. The empire idea is essentially larger and broader than

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<sup>112</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p31

the nation-idea.”<sup>113</sup> Here, Pal describes imperialism as an extension of nationalism, indicating that imperialism works on a much bigger scale, which could be interpreted as another way of him complementing the colonial government, but this could also be seen as Pal comparing the British empire to forms of Indian (Bengali and Swadeshi) nationalism. Perhaps if Swadeshi had worked on a bigger scale their radical ideas may have spread more widely and had a similar affect to that of imperialism.

Furthermore, Gupta acknowledges Pal’s commentary of metaphysics and theories about synthesis versus antithesis, showing that Pal engages with these German ideas, more specifically Hegelian ideals.<sup>114</sup> These references to German ideas can be seen in *An Introduction to The Study of Hinduism, General Observations* (1908) in which Pal states that “philosophy and metaphysics cannot, consequently, be at all ignored in the investigation of these experiences, and any attempt to reduce them to systematised knowledge, must first of all discover their philosophical or metaphysical foundations.”<sup>115</sup> This presents the ideal that everything comes back to its metaphysical origin, and that in philosophy there is an importance to these steps. In the same publication *An Introduction to The Study of Hinduism, General Observations* (1908) he later adds that “reason is from thesis to antithesis and from antithesis to synthesis in which it finally fulfils and realises itself, as all evolution, in the words of Herbert Spencer, is from homogeneity to differentiation and from differentiation to integration, so also tlic course of religious evolution whether in the individual or in the race, must be from unity or homogeneity or thesis”.<sup>116</sup> Through drawing upon the works of both Spencer and German idealists Pal shows that he was actively engaging with major works in European philosophy and developed his own rhetoric around reason, evolution and race.

## **Organic society**

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<sup>113</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p66

<sup>114</sup> Gupta, S. (2013). The Idea of Freedom in Bengali Nationalist Discourse. *Studies in History*, 29(1), 21-40. doi:10.1177/0257643013496685 p29

<sup>115</sup> Pal, B. C. (1908). *An Introduction To The Study Of Hinduism*. Calcutta: S. C. Gupta. p27

<sup>116</sup> Pal, B. C. (1908). *An Introduction To The Study Of Hinduism*. Calcutta: S. C. Gupta. p30

This section will contend that Pal's beliefs surrounding an organic society was a pillar of his ideology, was arguably drawn from western philosophies. Sartori views Pal's idea of organic society as a nation where they see themselves as part of a civil society but individuals can also become independent of this when moved by a "common impulse".<sup>117</sup> This exemplifies that Pal engages with European philosophy within his work, as by exploring these ideas about how societies function he is examining a key factor within conservatism. These beliefs are epitomised in a letter from *The Soul of India (1911)* where Pal stipulates that "it is the idealisation and spiritualisation of the collective life and functions of our society... it is the apotheosis of our race-spirit and national organism".<sup>118</sup> Through referring to society as a 'national organism' it implies that in order to be successful, society somehow needs to work as a homogeneous whole, rather than individuals motivated purely by self-interest. This links back to Sartori's argument about how Pal views India within the restraints of an organic society as the common impulse in this circumstance can be seen as revolting against the British in order to gain autonomy. In contrast to the previous section Pal's ideals divulge here from Spencer's as Pal stresses that collectivism is a key part of society rather than the individualism stressed by Spencer.<sup>119</sup>

However, Pal also uses these ideas in order to contort religious beliefs, as in another letter in *The Soul of India (1911)* he writes that "to work out a great socio-political synthesis in India, upon the basis of Dharma, and thus to combine the numerous races and divergent cultures of the continent, into one organic whole."<sup>120</sup> Here Pal could be suggesting that to create an organic society, religions may need to be synthesised. This sparks questions surrounding his motivations in relation to his Hindu beliefs, and whether this was an attempt at suggesting India should be a Hindu nation. However, this could also be linked to violence and non-violence in India during this time as this indicates that India must somehow become a Hindu

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<sup>117</sup> Sartori, A. (2003). The Categorical Logic of a Colonial Nationalism. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23(1&2), 271-285. p276

<sup>118</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p193

<sup>119</sup> Kapila, S. (2007). Self, Spencer and Swaraj: Nationalist Thought and Critiques of Liberalism 1890–1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 4(1), 109-127. doi:10.1017/S1479244306001077. p114

<sup>120</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p124



nation, raising questions around how violently this would be achieved. The Dharma is a concept within Hinduism that expands to moral and religious law, for example the practices of an ethical state.<sup>121</sup> For this to be the founding basis of Pal's argument here, it means that an organic society is possible in India because there is a pre-existing basis that expects morality, so Pal relies on this for greater social cohesion. Whereas, European liberalism would not rely on religious beliefs in order to create an organic society they would create a choice where greater freedoms would be achieved within a society.

In addition to this, Gupta views Pal's ideas on this topic as combining social freedom with personal freedom and that this was indicative of how the individual was associated with the collective.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, demonstrating that under Pal's construction of society, individual freedoms are not sacrificed even though the organic whole is traditionally held above the needs of the individual in an organic society. This could also potentially highlight the differences between Pal's reinvention of the topic in comparison to the European ideals. In *The soul of India (1911)* Pal also comments on "the almost absolute autonomy enjoyed by the different Castes in regard to all matters concerning their Caste-life, and the sense of mutual interdependence cultivated in all the Castes".<sup>123</sup> 'Mutual interdependence' indicates that different Castes acknowledged the need of one another, as well as that the hierarchy it created was necessary in society in order for the balance of society to work out. Pal's justification of the Caste system shows that as an idealist he views Castes as helping society as they push groups of society together and this would potentially inhibit individualism. This relates back to ideas concerning an organic society as it suggests individuals should work together in order for a society to progress. This progression would have been important to Pal as it would mean that India could be recognised for this, and strive for autonomy.

### **Consciousness and autonomy**

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<sup>121</sup> Kapila, S. (2010). A History of Violence. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 437-457.

doi:10.1017/S1479244310000156. p447

<sup>122</sup> Gupta, S. (2013). The Idea of Freedom in Bengali Nationalist Discourse. *Studies in History*, 29(1), 21-40. doi:10.1177/0257643013496685 p34

<sup>123</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p75

Pal is seen as a “constructive Swadeshi” by Sarkar because Pal placed emphasis on being conscious of one's circumstances, this is due to the importance he placed on self-development as opposed to ‘British help’.<sup>124</sup> This highlights that Pal’s place within the Swadeshi movement enabled him to ‘free’ the consciousness of like-minded Bengalis and enlighten them with the beliefs of the Swadeshi movement. Furthermore, Pal’s emphasis on ‘self-help’ coincides with the ideals of classical liberalism, as this ideology runs on the basis that there should be minimal government interference, meaning that people have greater autonomy over their own lives in order to be able to make their own social and economic decisions without interference from other parties. From this perspective, Pal reimagines classical liberalism in terms of Indians having autonomy over their own decisions free of British rule, who in this case are the ‘government interference in this situation, however through the emphasis he places on self-development German idealism becomes the ideology he aligns himself with. This also helps to identify that Pal was engaging with European political thought and reinterpreting those ideas to fit Indian problems. Pal also explains in a speech in 1917 that freedom is “not want of restraint but self-restraint; freedom is not want of regulation but self-regulation” and that “it only consists, as members of a free state, as free”.<sup>125</sup> Here, freedom is described as a form of consciousness and self-awareness post-Swadeshi, as well as that Pal recognised that freedom is the ability to self-regulate and self-restrain without the boundaries of colonial control over their freedoms making their decisions for them and ultimately removing their need for consciousness. By bringing back this need for consciousness Pal imagines a free state where autonomy over themselves is no longer an issue.

In the previous year Pal writes in *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems* that “autonomy is a positive, while independence is a negative, concept Independence means isolation, autonomy implies no necessary severance of outside connections or associations of Nationalism.”<sup>126</sup> This indicates that Pal views autonomy as a goal and not just as a means of independence, as

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<sup>124</sup> Sultan, S., Nazmul. (2019). Self-Rule and the Problem of Peoplehood in Colonial India American Political Science Review, 114, 81-94. doi:10.1017/S0003055419000601 p86

<sup>125</sup> Pal, B. C. (1907). Speeches of Bipin Chandra Pal, delivered at Madras. Madras: Ganesh & Co. p23

<sup>126</sup> Pal, B. C. (1916). *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems*. Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co. p87

autonomy would have meant that even if India was not independent of Britain at least India would have some control over their own laws and beliefs. More importantly for Pal, autonomy would mean India would develop a consciousness and start to take action around their own beliefs when they had the freedom to, which is another reason why Pal may prioritise autonomy over independence. Pal also clearly outlines what he views as an absolute government, as in a speech in 1916 he states that it is “that which refuses to be amenable to public opinion, an absolute government is a new euphemism for despotic government, an absolute government is a despotic government.”<sup>127</sup> This indicates that Pal views this form of government as seeking absolute power, which links in with his previous thoughts following autonomy and freedom, as if he believed in the presence of an absolute government, gaining autonomy would be seen as a step towards freedom. Thus, showing that Pal’s view on this form of government sees his philosophy as a means of trying to dissolve the power that the British had, however within his work there is no clear indication of whether this is violent or not.

The importance of consciousness in Pal’s work is also noted by Sarkar, as he comments on Pal’s work on consciousness in relation to nationalism, religion and culture.<sup>128</sup> Thus, suggesting that self-awareness was a ‘key’ focus of Pal’s ideology and that this fed into other beliefs, as this perception of the self fed into reflecting upon the problems Bengalis were facing. In a letter in *The Soul of India* published in 1911 Pal compares India and Europe whilst discussing social issues including the Caste system noting that “India therefore is fundamentally inferior to Europe in the matter of social progress”.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, Pal could have viewed European philosophies as something for Indian thinkers to achieve, perhaps for them to be deemed as a ‘respectable society’ or in order for India to be seen as truly conscious of their own society. This again shows Pal’s engagement with European philosophies and how he compares how they are used in the Western world to how they could be used when placed in an Indian context.

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<sup>127</sup> Pal, B. C. (1916). *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems*. Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co. p14

<sup>128</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p75

<sup>129</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p73

## Religion

Pal's stance on religion according to Sarkar was that he rejected the idea of an irreligious life that would lead to immorality and atheism, which again touches on Pal's idealist stance.<sup>130</sup> This does not show whether Pal was deeply rooted within Hindu religion, however it does clearly indicate that his view of morality was closely linked to that of religion. In *The Soul of India* (1911) Pal links religious interests with territorial boundaries "the emphasis on territorial unity in national differentiations, when it is associated with a general community of religious ideals and social economies between different neighbouring nations".<sup>131</sup> This implies that in order to achieve unity there must be some agreement over religion, and that perhaps the divide over religion in India is preventing them from forming connections with other nations. Therefore, meaning one of the main goals of Hindu political thought during the early twentieth century was to close the divide between religions, whether this be through violent or non-violent means.

In *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems* (1916) Pal writes that "Islam is I believe the only religion that has never advocated monastic ideals or monkish disciplines but that has yet always striven to reach the very lofty attitude of mental and spiritual disattachment towards the things in this world."<sup>132</sup> This snippet of text highlights Pal's dislike of Islam, like many of the men examined in other chapters, here he is claiming that Islam cannot reach the spiritual heights because it preaches detachment and that they are too grounded to understand those concepts. This could be an attempt to simply undermine Muslims or it could be Pal's way of showing that Hinduism was 'better' because of the freedom of consciousness and spirit he had. Although, Pal's focus was on a detachment from materiality and that this would then shape his beliefs about autonomy, freedom and morality. However his views on Islam clash with his idealist views, and that his attacks on Islam are a consequence of his spiritual attachment rather than a critique of Islamic tendencies. Again in *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current*

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<sup>130</sup> Sarkar, S. (1973). *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903- 1908*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House. p423

<sup>131</sup> Pal, B. C. (1911). *The Soul of India, A Constructive Study of Indian Thoughts and Ideals*. Calcutta: Choudhury & Choudhury p134

<sup>132</sup> Pal, B. C. (1916). *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems*. Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co. p380

*Indian Problems* (1916) Pal asserts that “this allegiance to the non Moslem State of which he may be a subject or a citizen, must give way to his allegiance to the Moslem peoples and princes of the world when these two come into conflict with each other”.<sup>133</sup> Here Pal proposes that Muslims are somehow untrustworthy, as he seems to believe that they will always be loyal to their religion instead of their country or nationality. This shows other ways in which Hindu thought at this time sought to untangle Islam from India’s national identity and replace this with Hinduism.

In conclusion, this chapter highlights Pal’s reinterpretation of various aspects of European political thought and place this within the Indian context. For example, his beliefs around organic society became a large part of his work, however they were drawn from his understanding of European ideas, moreover, his belief in organic society then moves into his ideals about religion and converge on the goals of Hindu political thought. Through both the hybridised European beliefs and the Indian philosophy behind sovereignty and Hindu nationalism, Pal is an example of how these philosophies intertwine. However, where Pal’s work is less clear is his beliefs surrounding violence and non-violence as his writings, speeches and letters appear to tip toe around how his beliefs will come to fruition, this is most likely because this chapter examines his published work, and he most likely did not want his work to get censored or banned. Therefore, Pal is the best example of the theme of liberalism, idealism and the self, as he embraces these philosophies and moves away from the violent narrative of Swadeshi. Due to his questioning of what these philosophies really mean and what they can mean to an Indian audience given their own ‘Enlightenment’ and history.

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<sup>133</sup> Pal, B. C. (1916). *Nationality and Empire, A Running Study of Some Current Indian Problems*. Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co p390

## Chapter Four- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

This chapter will look at Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and his beliefs in relation to violence and non-violence, also where his ideology fits with that of Hindu political thought and where these beliefs draw upon European philosophies. This will be looked at through using topics such as his views on nationalism and sovereignty, his stance on ethics and religion and where his ideas draw parallels with European ideas.

### Savarkar and his perception of nationalism

Savarkar “claims” that without “intervention” from nationalists “like himself” histories and accounts of Indian events would be wiped from their history.<sup>134</sup> This highlights that Savarkar perceives himself as a nationalist, for protecting his own view of history from those, like the British, who may want to change aspects of the past. Moreover, in *The Indian War of Independence* 1909 Savarkar stated that “even in their own Hindusthan, the people have been reduced to be slaves and have foreign masters: the Swaraj is no more, they have lost their natural rights of liberty!”.<sup>135</sup> This presents the idea that Swadeshi was one of the only forces in India that was pushing against the British Empire, and that with its demise they have become ‘slaves’ to the empire. Furthermore, this would solidify Savarkar’s nationalist view of himself, as the empire having more control over India and its writings and publications would make it harder for ‘revolutionaries’ like him to spread his beliefs as outlined in the breakdown of the Swadeshi movement in the first chapter.

### Majoritarianism and common blood

Due to Savarkar’s ties with nationalist groups, his nationalist ideals can be perceived as spreading Hindu majoritarianism in years following the Swadeshi movement.<sup>136</sup> This majoritarian rhetoric is seen in his *Hindutva* (1923), as he states, “Let the minorities remember they would be cutting the very branch on which they stand,

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<sup>134</sup> Chaturvedi, V. (2013). A Revolutionary's Biography: The Case of V. D. Savarkar. *Postcolonial Studies*, 16(2), 124-139. doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.823257.p168

<sup>135</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1909). *The Indian War Of Independence 1857*. Bombay: Phonix Publications. Part 1, Chapter 7, p74

<sup>136</sup> Visana, V. (2020). Savarkar before Hindutva: Sovereignty, Republicanism, and Populism in India, c1900-1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 1-24. doi:10.1017/S1479244320000384. p23

strengthen every tie that binds you to the main organism, whether of blood or language or common Motherland.”<sup>137</sup> Here Savarkar plants the belief that minorities deviate from the coherent organism that is society, and that they should aim to become part of this organism so they can integrate (be accepted) within society. Moreover, this statement also suggests that nationality can be bound by common blood or ancestors as well as language, which would see the nation as a collective self-conscious.<sup>138</sup> These ideas about nationality and common blood and languages link Savarkar's views on nationalism with Hindu nationalism more specifically, as it implies that Savarkar's nationalist views extend to an attempt to make Muslims choose between their (loyalty to) religion and their country, however this will be discussed in more depth later on.

In addition to this, Misra argues that Savarkar's view of nationalism was “aimed at achieving territorial and cultural integrity” and that this required allegiance.<sup>139</sup> This idea would back the theory that Savarkar's view on nationalism was built around homogenising religion, and that it would reflect on society in the form of an organic society that sees itself as within the same religion and motherland. Misra also comments on the topic of common blood, adding that it was also seen by Savarkar as being a key factor in the creation of Hindu order, further binding the theme of common blood with Hindu nationalism as this point indicates how important common blood is within Hinduism.<sup>140</sup> The link with Hindu nationalism demonstrates how national identity is tied into religion for figures like Savarkar, Misra also moves on to summarise the “essentials of Hindutva” which include common blood, common civilisation, common culture and common laws and rites.<sup>141</sup> This summary indicates that Savarkar's work, rests on a national identity bound by Hinduism, and that through this work India cannot be seen as a whole when its population are divided over religion. As in *Hindutva* Savarkar claims that “the second essential of Hindutva puts the estimate of our latent powers of national cohesion and greatness yet

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<sup>137</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p139

<sup>138</sup> Grosby, S. (2005). Nationalism, A Very Short Introduction. p10

<sup>139</sup> Misra, A. (1999). Savarkar and The Discourse on Islam in Pre-Independent India. *Journal of Asian History*., 33(2), 142-184. p144

<sup>140</sup> Misra, A. (1999). Savarkar and The Discourse on Islam in Pre-Independent India. *Journal of Asian History*., 33(2), 142-184. p154

<sup>141</sup> Misra, A. (1999). Savarkar and The Discourse on Islam in Pre-Independent India. *Journal of Asian History*., 33(2), 142-184. p153

higher”.<sup>142</sup> Here he again suggests that India’s unity would become greater if these actions were to take place, this also exemplifies how he views Hinduism as innately superior and that these actions would enable India to move on from British rule. This fatigue with British rule that is present in chapters two and three, can be seen in Savarkar in his attempt to unify a Hindu nation, attacking the Muslim minority and “calling for unity against British rule”.<sup>143</sup> Demonstrating how by encouraging Hindu nationalism (Hindu majoritarianism) Savarkar appeared to aim to revive the goal of the Swadeshi movement by making India strong enough to oust British rule.

In conjunction with Misra’s theories about the foundations of Savarkar's nationalist ideals, Hanneman argues that there are ‘three pillars’ of national identity, these being geographical unity, common culture and racial features.<sup>144</sup> These attributes outline how in terms of national identity the ideals listed above are put before religion, as these factors still rest on an Indian still being part of a specific culture and geographical location. The absence of religion could also go onto show the evolution of Savarkar’s ideas as with time he moves from claiming that Muslims should be outcast from ‘his version of India’ because they put their faith over their country into, they cannot become Hindus.

### **Hinduness and Hindu nationalism**

Hinduness and Hindu nationalism is a phrase and a topic that appear numerous times in *Hindutva* (1923) and *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (1971), but first let's establish Savarkar’s definition of Hinduness. In *Hindutva* he uses this term (Hinduness or Hindutva) to describe the inheritance of Hindu blood.<sup>145</sup> This already indicates that from this standpoint even if a Muslim were to convert their faith they would still lack ‘Hinduness’ because of their lineage, therefore further separating Hindu and Muslim communities on the circumstance of their birth. The unattainable position that Hinduism is placed in by Savarkar means that throughout his work he can hold it in firm stead, in comparison to his depiction of Islam and those that follow

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<sup>142</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p134

<sup>143</sup> Hanneman, M. L. (2009). “Mission in Asia”: Kita Ikki, V.D. Savarkar and Radical Nationalism in Early 20th Century Japan and India. *Asia Network Exchange*, 17(1), 67-78. doi:10.16995/ane.215. p70

<sup>144</sup> Hanneman, M. L. (2009). “Mission in Asia”: Kita Ikki, V.D. Savarkar and Radical Nationalism in Early 20th Century Japan and India. *Asia Network Exchange*, 17(1), 67-78. doi:10.16995/ane.215 . p66

<sup>145</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p90



that faith. Similarly, Misra identifies that Savarkar attacks Islamic faith, and contends that they were to blame for the decline of the Indian nation and loss of Hindu identity as a result of the Mughal empire.<sup>146</sup> The centuries of Islamic rule are explored in *Six Glorious Epochs*, Savarkar states that “the Muslims went on slaughtering wholesale the Hindu population, similarly, whenever the Hindus gained an upper hand, they could have retaliated by massacring Muslim population and making the region Muslim-less!”<sup>147</sup> Thus, showing that Savarkar’s attacks on Islamic faith were perpetuated by Islamic rule and its effects on the Hindu population, as seen in the previous excerpt Savarkar also claims that Hindus could have “retaliated” but did not. This also coincides with the violent strands of Hindu nationalism, as although in this snippet the violence is not explicit it is suggested as a means of justification towards retaliation, as well as a defence for Islamophobia.

Additionally, in *Six Glorious Epochs* he wrote that “it must be remembered here that even while the Muslims launched repeated attacks on the Hindu states, the Hindus as a rule never invaded them nor ever pursued the fleeing Muslim army.”<sup>148</sup> This furthers Savarkar’s debate that in India’s past Hindus have refrained from violence against Muslims despite the violence that he describes by Muslims against Hindus. Religious conflict like this exemplifies how violence and non-violence are embedded around Hindu philosophy, and highly depend on the interpretation of ancient texts as explained in the contextual chapter at the beginning of this thesis. Chaturvedi summarises Savarkar’s perspective on violence by stating that Hindus maintained an ‘ethical code,’ and that this was outlined by Hindu texts.<sup>149</sup> The reading of Hindu texts as histories shows how individuals like Savarkar, came to have such a devotedness over his version of India’s history as well as his criteria for Hinduness. Sen also comments that Savarkar notably reads *The Bhagavad Gita* as a history and that he insisted on calling the 1857 revolt, *The Indian War of Independence*, demonstrating how his nationalist ideas and agenda became mixed with his own

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<sup>146</sup> Misra, A. (1999). Savarkar and The Discourse on Islam in Pre-Independent India. *Journal of Asian History.*, 33(2), 142-184. p150

<sup>147</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1971). *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (S. T. Godbole, Trans.). Bombay: Savarkar Sadan. p185

<sup>148</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1971). *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (S. T. Godbole, Trans.). Bombay: Savarkar Sadan. P277

<sup>149</sup> Chaturvedi, V. (2013). A Revolutionary’s Biography: The Case of V. D. Savarkar. *Postcolonial Studies*, 16(2), 124-139. doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.823257. p173

reinterpretation of India's past, but more importantly his writings were more so an account of India's Hindu past.<sup>150</sup> In *Six Glorious Epochs* Savarkar describes his work as discussing "the thousand-year-old unprecedented and bitter Hindu-Muslim war since the invasion of Sindh by the Muslims and the suicidal consequences of the various harmful and anti-national bans self-imposed by the Hindus".<sup>151</sup> Therefore, in this text Savarkar presents the idea that Hindus withheld racist beliefs and or action against Muslims, meaning that in this text Hindus appear to be the repressed group within India in the centuries previous to the twentieth.

In this text we also see a development of Savarkar's ideas, as *Six Glorious Epochs* (1971) was published far later than *Hindutva* (1923), as in *Hindutva* Savarkar establishes the meaning of what it is to be a Hindu as well as a description of Hinduness, however, he also uses this as a means of out casting Muslims by suggesting that they cannot change faith because of their blood. His theories about common blood and its relationship with the Caste system is also examined in this text, as he explains that "all the Caste system has done is regulate its noble blood," this could mean that Caste systems have worked in their favour as the religious and cultural divides created by the Caste system have helped to separate the blood lines of each religion.<sup>152</sup> *Hindutva* also outlines Savarkar's beliefs about Hindu nationalism, as he establishes the 'superiority' of the Hindu, writing that even the "Mohammedans think and say that the accursed Hindus have established their supremacy".<sup>153</sup> This suggests that Savarkar thinks that Muslims now see Hindus as the superior race, and that perhaps this is already established in India's hierarchy. However, the view of nationalism in this text differs from *Six Glorious Epochs* as *Hindutva* appears to be a text purely concerned with exploring Hinduism, whereas *Six Glorious Epochs* goes into explain why Hindus were repressed, and attack the actions of Muslims.

### **European philosophical influences and similarities within Savarkar's work**

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<sup>150</sup> Sen, S. (2015). Fascism Without Fascists? A Comparative Look at Hindutva and Zionism. *South Asia*, 38(4), 690-711. doi:10.1080/00856401.2015.1077924. p124

<sup>151</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1971). *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (S. T. Godbole, Trans.). Bombay: Savarkar Sadan. p218

<sup>152</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p86

<sup>153</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p70

Firstly, a notable influence on his writings is Guiseppe Mazzini, as this Italian philosopher was popular amongst Indian nationalists. Chatterjee contends that Savarkar supplemented his knowledge with writing a biography of Mazzini “a hero among Indian nationalists”.<sup>154</sup> This highlights that Savarkar understood Mazzini’s philosophy as he would have been interested in his work and what he achieved for Italian nationalists. Bayly suggests that this is because of parts of India’s social hierarchy mirrored Indias, and that there was also an element of shared violence in their country’s histories.<sup>155</sup> Thus, showing how due to similarities between the countries, Mazzini’s view of nationalism could have been adapted by Savarkar to achieve similar outcomes. Bayly further comments that Hindu unitarians found Mazzini’s work as triumphing divinity, rationalism, and secular progress, these topics would mean that Hindu nationalism, and the ideals associated with this (as discussed in the previous section) would be ‘justified’ by similar views on nationalism such as Mazzini’s.<sup>156</sup> Hindu nationalism, and Savarkar’s insistence on a superior race and religion is evident in *Hindutva* as he insists on common worship and a common church, and that even these would not achieve non-violence as he explains that it would be due to the “power of the underlying resistance in India”.<sup>157</sup> Leading back to the previous discussion of Savarkar’s writings about a Hindu nation and that religion is tied to blood and community. However, it is also said that during the Swadeshi movement Gandhi and Savarkar clashed over if Mazzini supported terrorism, highlighting that even being a part of a revolutionary movement does not necessarily make you a ‘terrorist.’<sup>158</sup> This dispute over terrorism could also be linked back to violence and non-violence, and imply whether Mazzini supported violence in his philosophy.

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<sup>154</sup> Chatterjee, C. (2015). Imperial Incarcerations: Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Vinayak Savarkar, and the Original Sins of Modernity. *Slavic Review*, 74(4), 850-872. doi:10.5612/slavicreview.74.4.850. p860

<sup>155</sup> Bayly, C. A. (2008). Liberalism at Large: Mazzini and Nineteenth-century Indian Thought. In C. A. Bayly & E. F. Biagini (Eds.), *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p360

<sup>156</sup> Bayly, C. A. (2008). Liberalism at Large: Mazzini and Nineteenth-century Indian Thought. In C. A. Bayly & E. F. Biagini (Eds.), *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p362

<sup>157</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p24

<sup>158</sup> Bayly, C. A. (2008). Liberalism at Large: Mazzini and Nineteenth-century Indian Thought. In C. A. Bayly & E. F. Biagini (Eds.), *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p358

A common theme between Indian nationalists is the influence of German idealism creating a romantic outlook of those ideals, for Savarkar this embodied itself through his attempts at unifying India, as in *Hindutva* he acknowledges India as one organism, referencing “the conscious the national mind had grown.”<sup>159</sup> Through using “the national mind,” Savarkar shows how ‘his’ India is a united front within the bounds of Hindu nationalism. The organic way that Savarkar sees society links back to Bipin Chandra Pal and how he also describes India as one organism or sharing the same consciousness. Moreover, in *Hindutva* Savarkar again refers to “when the nation grew intensely self-conscious as an organism” and that people were “not only a racial and national, but even a geographical and political unit.”<sup>160</sup> Here he shows how the nation and its self is possibly struggling under India’s own struggle to gain its identity over the clash between Muslims and Hindus. Likewise, it could also imply that India is failing to cope with the strain placed by British rule in the aftermath of the failure of the Swadeshi movement. In *The Indian War of Independence* published much earlier in 1909 Savarkar claims that “English power was more harmful than even the former kind of Swaraj ever could be”, evidencing that Savarkar's motivations could be down to India struggling to cope under British rule.<sup>161</sup>

Chaturvedi also comments that elements of Savarkar’s prison writings were informed by German ethnic nationalism, which is highlighted in both *Hindutva* (1923) and *Six Glorious Epochs* (1971) due to the ways he refers to Muslims and their part in India’s past.<sup>162</sup> This is more truthful of *Hindutva* as when it was published in 1923 Savarkar was still imprisoned as he was there from 1910 to 1937, however for *Six Glorious Epochs* he may have started writing that whilst imprisoned however the work was not published until much later in 1971.<sup>163</sup> Deravre writes that these ‘vilifications of Muslims’ were ‘barbaric’ and ‘fanatical’, tying together Savarkar’s use of ethnic nationalism, which in this case was formed into Hindu nationalism over his own belief

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<sup>159</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p67

<sup>160</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Hindutva*. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. p28

<sup>161</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1909). *The Indian War Of Independence 1857*. Bombay: Phonix Publications. Part 4, Chapter 3. p543

<sup>162</sup> Chaturvedi, V. (2013). A Revolutionary’s Biography: The Case of V.D. Savarkar. *Postcolonial Studies*, 16(2), 124-139. Doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.823257. p162

<sup>163</sup> Chaturvedi, V. (2013). A Revolutionary's Biography: The Case of V. D. Savarkar. *Postcolonial Studies*, 16(2), 124-139. doi:10.1080/13688790.2013.823257. p164

that Hindus were the superior race.<sup>164</sup> However, German ethnic nationalism found roots in Social Darwinism, as Visana also writes that past perspectives placed these as the motivations behind Savarkar's writings.<sup>165</sup> However, Social Darwinism is only connected to Savarkar because of his beliefs about the blood of Hindus, and the religious and ethnic background needed in order to identify as an Indian.

In conclusion, Savarkar is one of the most forthright individuals used in this thesis in terms of his openness with his beliefs about Hindu supremacy. Savarkar was ultimately driven by his belief in Hindu nationalism and his demand for sovereignty against the British. Violence becomes entangled in this because of his connections with the Swadeshi movement and his insistence of the past betrayal of Hindus by Muslims, as religious texts and India's past history mean that he could 'validate' his arguments. Moreover, through romanticising German philosophy, and viewing society as organic, it worked to complement the arguments that he was pushing. Therefore, he reinforces the main argument in this thesis that Hindu nationalism perpetuated violent philosophies due to 'ethical codes' and the power of a hypothetical Hindu state.

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<sup>164</sup> Devare, A. (2011). *History and The making of a Modern Hindu Self*. New Delhi: Routledge. p159

<sup>165</sup> Visana, V. (2020). Savarkar before Hindutva: Sovereignty, Republicanism, and Populism in India, c1900-1920. *Modern Intellectual History*, 1-24. doi:10.1017/S1479244320000384. p6

## Chapter Five- Benoy Kumar Sarkar

This chapter will explore the ideas of Benoy Kumar Sarkar in relation to Hindu nationalism in India in the twentieth century as well as similarities between his work and strands of European political philosophy. The topics used to discuss Sarkar in relation to the research questions outlined in this thesis are nationalism and Hindu nationalism, Social Darwinism, German idealism and romanticism, Hegelian and Marxist parallels, and finally links with Nietzsche and Machiavelli. Unlike the other Hindu men discussed in this thesis, also united by nationalism and European influences, Sarkar writes up to much later periods and does not actively participate in the Swadeshi movement. However, his work is often compared to Savarkar's, and within his writings he does acknowledge the Swadeshi movement and its achievements.

### **Nationalism: Hindu nationalism and nationhood**

Firstly, Tankha describes Sarkar as 'a nationalist committed to social service' and that despite his lack of Swadeshi activism was active in the self-rule movement.<sup>166</sup> This shows that Sarkar was active in the community and wanted to make changes within India. This also presents Sarkar as highly disliking British rule, as British rule meant that India's popular sovereignty was impaired. In *Democratic Ideals and Republican Institutions in India* (1918) he contends that "the sovereignty of the people maintained itself not only in the theoretical right of election, but also practically in the elaborate ceremonies."<sup>167</sup> Here, Sarkar demonstrates how important sovereignty is within society and that by taking this away, it causes chaos by fragmenting the nation as without their sovereignty they lose control of their rights. On the topic of British-rule and nationalism, in *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939) he writes "on the one side, the swaraj (self-rule) movement is anti-alien i.e., anti-British. But on the other side, this ideal of liberty, freedom or

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<sup>166</sup> Tankha, B. (2011). Benoy Kumar Sarkar: The Asia of the Folk, 1916. In S. Saaler & C. W. A. Szpilman (Eds.), *Pan-Asianism: a Documentary History, 1850-1920*. (Vol. 1). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. p1

<sup>167</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1918). Democratic Ideals and Republican Institutions in India. *The American Political Science Review*, 12(4), 581-606. doi:10.2307/1945832 . p595

self-direction has an "internal use", i.e., a home aspect, as well", which tells us that the movement is multidimensional and possess a number of uses.<sup>168</sup> For example, he explains that the movement is not just about self-rule, but that liberty and freedom are ideals that are applicable to other problems that India could have faced. On one hand these 'internal uses' could mean that they will be used to bolster Hindu nationalist ideals in conjunction with the self-rule movement, or they could also be used for India to forge their own autonomy to combat India's problems. Sarkar's thoughts on sovereignty are seen by Sen as being essential to individuality and that the sovereignty of the national man would be "engaged in realpolitik" and belief in the powerful nation state.<sup>169</sup> Further demonstrating how Sarkar views sovereignty and nationhood as one, and that it is essential for these theories to be founded on practicality rather than principle. This also links to what will be discussed in later sections, as his engagement with realpolitik evidences his romanticism of German philosophy, showing how Indian nationalism and European philosophy are connected through his work. In addition to this, Sarkar is also noted to have been 'a nationalist with an international outlook', which highlights how much he drew upon other countries philosophies to inform his own work on similar topics.<sup>170</sup>

In terms of Hinduism and Hindu nationalism, Sarkar is often seen as more "flexible" in his views on what could have been deemed 'Hindu' and/or 'Indian' in comparison to Savarkar, as race could merge through common purpose.<sup>171</sup> Thus, demonstrating that despite Sarkar being branded as a nationalist, his belief in the Self-rule movement (as a common purpose, for example) may have outweighed any desire for a Hindu nation, unlike Hindu nationalists such as Savarkar. Despite this, in 1921 Sarkar published a book entitled *The Hindu Theory of State*, which does explore in depth the possibility of Hindu state and what it could achieve, similarly, he also published *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* in 1937, which serves as a culmination of Hindu culture and history. Going back to *The Hindu Theory of State* (1921) he argues that in Hindu political thought "Dharma is a two-handed sword and

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<sup>168</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 5. p353

<sup>169</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p144

<sup>170</sup> Saha, S. (2013) Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949): A Tryst With Destiny. *Sociological Bulletin*, 62(1), 4-22. p21

<sup>171</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p82

cuts both ways...it is a terror to the people and is a corrective of social abuses...it is a moralizer, purifier and civilizing agent.”<sup>172</sup> This introduces Sarkar’s view of Hinduism as weapon in order to create order and social cohesion, whether this is intended to create a Hindu nation like we see with Savarkar or if this ‘sword’ is being used to create a nation free of immoral and uncivilised Brits is debatable. However, given his participation in the self-rule movement, and Sen’s comment about Sarkar’s flexibility in terms of religious differences one may assume that Sarkar’s philosophy on a Hindu nation may be aimed at one free of British rule, the Dharma and its meaning has also been explained in chapter three. Sarkar shows that the purpose or outcome of Hindu nationalism may not always be down to religion, but that this ideology was also used in order to back the self-rule movement.

### **Sarkar’s disagreements with European political thought: Social Darwinism**

Unlike other Hindu nationalists who divided India purely by religion or race, Sarkar was critical of a ‘superior race’ and contended that it was foreign control that prevented progress.<sup>173</sup> The most likely explanation for this is his involvement with the self-rule movement and dislike of British rule as mentioned in the previous section. Saha emphasises that to Sarkar humanity was the same everywhere and was not dependent on race, region, climate or religion.<sup>174</sup> This unwillingness to conform to a ‘superior race’ is arguably because Sarkar views this as a white man and will not back down to imperial power, however the likes of Savarkar would have seen Hindus as the ‘superior race’ and outline this within his philosophy. Therefore, showing how Indian thinkers could interpret European philosophy differently in order to suit their own ideological preferences. In *Social Metabolism in its Bearings on Progress* (1937) Sarkar states “the social metabolism, which acts as a force in Hinduization hides the facts of, or prepares the way for, race fusion and race assimilation.”<sup>175</sup> In this snippet Sarkar indicates that there is a misunderstanding

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<sup>172</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1921). *The Hindu Theory of the State*. Political Science Quarterly, 36(1), 79-90. doi:10.2307/2142662. p88

<sup>173</sup> Tankha, B. (2011). Benoy Kumar Sarkar: The Asia of the Folk, 1916. In S. Saaler & C. W. A. Szpilman (Eds.), *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History, 1850-1920*. (Vol. 1). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. p1

<sup>174</sup> Saha, S. (2013). Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887—1949): A Tryst with Destiny. *Sociological Bulletin*, 62(1), 4-22. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/23621023> . p10

<sup>175</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1937). *Social Metabolism in Its Bearings on Progress*. Social Forces, 16(2), 169-177. doi:10.2307/2570520. p171



around 'the social metabolism' as he views Hinduisation as a force that displaces "depressed classes" instead of merging these communities together. Moreover, his work on 'the social metabolism' could be comparable to Social Darwinism or ethnic nationalism, as he questions the ability of Hinduism within this metabolism to unite India. Later on, in *Social Metabolism and its Bearings on Progress* (1937) Sarkar writes that his "position in connection with the indifference of social metabolism to race, region, religion, etc., can be well illustrated", demonstrating his dislike of discrimination on the basis of race or religion, as he sees this as impairing society and causing further displacement.<sup>176</sup> Sarkar's dislike of Social Darwinism and Eugenics separates him from the other Indian thinkers discussed in this thesis, as he is clear in what aspects of European philosophy he disagrees with, when for Ghose, Pal and Savarkar especially race and religion are seen as being a big part of Hindu (Indian to them) national identity.

### **Romanticism: Sarkar and German Idealism an overview**

What is most noticeable with Sarkar is his knowledge of European philosophy and the impact that this had on his work. Sen argues that he made an 'intellectual investment' in German history, which shows how much Sarkar drew from Germany in order to inform his own work.<sup>177</sup> Additionally, Sen asserts that romanticism and 'romantic culture' served as a form of propaganda due to the impact it could have on nationhood.<sup>178</sup> A fascination with Germany and its ties to ethnic nationalism could have been romanticised by the likes of Sarkar and Savarkar, and Sen really highlights this within his discussion of Sarkar and his beliefs. The German *volk* and the 'Aryan' past in India are also affiliated to Sarkar, as Zachariah describes a Sarkarian *Volk* sharing the same 'building blocks' of nationalism to its German counterpart.<sup>179</sup> This explains how nationalism in India, is comparable to Germany because of the ties to ethnicity, religion and blood, as well as the fractured nature of nationhood in both countries as a result of war and segregation that occurred due to geographical divisions that split communities. The fascination between the

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<sup>176</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1937). *Social Metabolism in Its Bearings on Progress*. *Social Forces*, 16(2), 169-177. doi:10.2307/2570520. p177

<sup>177</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p159

<sup>178</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p159

<sup>179</sup> Zachariah, B. (2015). At the Fuzzy Edges of Fascism: Framing the *Volk* in India. *South Asia*, 38(4), 639-655. doi:10.1080/00856401.2015.1078948. p640

philosophical ideas in India and Germany worked both ways as Hegel is described to have been a critic of Hinduism and German romanticism in general, however ancient Indian philosophy, religion literature and art attracted German intellectuals.<sup>180</sup> Thus, indicating that both countries shared philosophical ideas, and that there was an attraction between the intellectual histories of each country.

In *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939) Sarkar himself calls Indian's romanticists simply for how they view their own past, "Indians are "romanticists" in so far as they have been cultivating a recreation for the past glory, proclaiming the visions of a mighty future, and instituting the Nature-cult of freedom and simplicity."<sup>181</sup> Thus, Sarkar's view of 'modern' India was that they romanticised their own historical triumphs in hope of manifesting a better future, which shows that Indian nationalism during this period drew from its own past as well as developments in different countries.

### **An Indian perspective on Hegel and Marx**

Contrasting with the ideas of other Hindu thinkers like Ghose, Pal and Savarkar, Sarkar rejected the Marxist revolutionary transformations of society, as "it is a ceaseless process of thesis-antithesis conflict."<sup>182</sup> This suggests that Sarkar supported a more Hegelian approach to this and that over time society would progress at its own rate without the need for revolutionary social change. Hegel was concerned with freedom and wanted individuals to possess autonomy and make decisions without being coerced.<sup>183</sup> This could align with Sarkar's view of freedom because of his involvement in the self-rule movement, as Hegel's approach would appeal to him as British rule meant that they were being coerced and had no true sense of freedom. Therefore, it is understandable why Sarkar would take aspects of Hegelian philosophy and reinterpret them to fit India's problems.

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<sup>180</sup> Stewart, J. (2016). Hegel's Criticism of Hinduism. *Hegel Bulletin*, 32(2), 281-304.  
doi:10.1017/hgl.2016.19. p282

<sup>181</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 2. p168

<sup>182</sup> Saha, S. (2013). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887—1949): A Tryst with Destiny*. *Sociological Bulletin*, 62(1), 4-22. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/23621023> . p14

<sup>183</sup> Singer, P. (1983). *Hegel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p39

Although Sarkar does attack European philosophers like Marx and Hegel as in *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939) Sarkar writes that European scholars needed overhauling for “the manifestations of the human spirit that should be attacked historically and statistically without any preconceived subjective or metaphysical notions as to ethnic stocks.”<sup>184</sup> Here, he implies that he is unhappy with the European view of spirituality and metaphysics, and that perhaps this is something he wants to ‘gatekeep’ on the basis of race, which would then indicate that Sarkar disagrees with Hegel’s thoughts on rationality and logic as these are part of his work on dialectics and metaphysics. In the same chapter in *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939) Sarkar mentions “the morals on the facade” and “the ritualistic basis of its internal arrangements, and the metaphysics of its mystical theology any Asian can satisfy himself as to the existence in Western civilisation of everything which he considers to be essential to “spirituality”.”<sup>185</sup> This suggests that Sarkar sees ‘Western civilisation’ as inferior to India’s on the basis that their philosophies around metaphysics and spirituality are perhaps less advanced than their own. Sarkar’s argument also relates back to British rule, and that Indians like Sarkar did not see how they were in any way less intelligent than the colonisers and viewed themselves on a much higher level intellectually. This view of the British and Europeans (Western civilisation), and their contributions towards political thought, demonstrates how nonviolence was also central to modern Indian thought as through disproving and unraveling the philosophies of well-known Europeans they were proving themselves to be a civilised society capable of their own autonomous thoughts. Sen also debates that scholars like Sarkar needed European references in order to be credible.<sup>186</sup>

### **More German philosophy: Nietzsche**

Nietzsche is one of the key influences that can be drawn from Sarkar’s writings, Sen notes that Nietzsche’s ideas around energism, militarism and resentment became

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<sup>184</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckervetty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 2. p107

<sup>185</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckervetty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 2. p123

<sup>186</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p17

something for Sarkar to “cultivate”.<sup>187</sup> By utilising Nietzsche’s work Sarkar takes on a pessimistic world view, and belief in a strong state, however he reinvents Nietzsche’s philosophy and combines it with his own ideas. He also hybridises Nietzsche’s theory about the sadism of slaves, turning it into a theory consisting of nature and wholeness.<sup>188</sup> Although in *The Hindu Theory of State* (1921) Sarkar disagrees with Rousseau’s faith in “man’s natural impulses” and suggests that “everything degenerated in the hands of man”.<sup>189</sup> Comments such as this are similar to Nietzsche’s skepticism, as like Sarkar he despised Western metaphysics and felt the need to debunk these philosophies.<sup>190</sup> Thus, the hybridisation of Nietzsche’s philosophy is apparent in Sarkar’s writings as even though there are some aspects he alters, he still shares a somewhat pessimistic world view that human nature is innately selfish, however, this could just be a product of treatment under British rule.

### **Power of the state: Machiavelli**

The most notable influence of Machiavelli on Sarkar is a Machiavellian style state, which is fully explained in *The Hindu Theory of State* (1921). Like previous comparisons to Nietzsche, Sarkar was also seen as a balance between a Machiavellian tendency to see politics as amoral and resentment towards wronging a community.<sup>191</sup> This further highlights how Sarkar combined his own ideals with European ones, his pessimism when it came to the rigidness of the state was most likely down to the fragility of the Indian state as a result of British rule. In *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939), Sarkar makes it clear that only “Hindu politics was, as a rule, thoroughly secular i.e. Lutheran or Machiavellian”, here he demonstrates how Hindu politics appears to be the most rigid system, describing this as ‘secular’ would differentiate this from Hindu nationalism which as seen previously was heavily influenced by religion.<sup>192</sup> Later on, in *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (1939) Sarkar moves on

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<sup>187</sup> Sen, S. (2013). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar and Japan*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(45/46), 61-70. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/23528610>. p63

<sup>188</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p31

<sup>189</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1921). *The Hindu Theory of the State*. *Political Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 79-90. doi:10.2307/2142662. p87

<sup>190</sup> Hawkes, D. (2003). *Ideology*. London, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group. p134

<sup>191</sup> Sen, S. (2015). *Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Restoring the Nation to the World*. London: Routledge. p5

<sup>192</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 4. p272.

to explain that “The volume does not mention the activities of the National Congress and the Moslem League, two associations of Indian politicians who were eminently loyalist in their vision until the Amritsar massacre of 1919, not to speak of the “ideas of 1905”.<sup>193</sup> Even though in this snippet Sarkar appears to be avoiding discussing religion and the Swadeshi movement, he arguably acknowledges that he cannot be caught openly discussing the revolutionary events of 1905 as this may have resulted in prosecution or censorship. Furthermore, the change in the aforementioned loyalist parties indicates that there is some change to the state dynamic and India’s relationship with Britain. Whilst Sarkar seems to pass no judgement of it, he still hints at his dissatisfaction with state power and radicalism. Moving back to *The Hindu Theory of state* (1921) Sarkar writes that “a state is a state because it can coerce, restrain, compel, eliminate control or the coercive element from social life, and the state as an eternity vanishes...a sanctionless state is a contradiction in terms”.<sup>194</sup> The absolute power that the state must hold in this view in order to fully function as a state mirrors the coercive nature of the state shown in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

In conclusion, this chapter on Sarkar emphasises how entangled he was with the works of European philosophers, but also how his work is non-violent and moves away from the Hindu nationalist narrative, which is perpetuated by Ghose, Pal and Sarkar. His disregard for eugenics and Social Darwinist thought also separates him, as it shows that he was not purely motivated by religion or the outcome of a Hindu state. Despite this, he does appear to have absorbed Hegel’s dialectic and like of slow social change, as well as taking on a pessimism about human nature which can be attributed to Nietzsche. In addition to this, his writings on a Machiavellian style state also indicate that he wanted to make India a strong state, and to protect itself from invaders the state must have absolute power. Leading to Sarkar’s main motivation for writing these texts and becoming attracted to certain aspects of European philosophy, as his motivation is clearly concerned with putting an end to British rule and ensuring India has the intellectual capacity to do so. Sarkar appears to embody all three key themes within this thesis as he frequently questions

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<sup>193</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1939). *The Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress*. Calcutta: Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd. Chapter 4. p292

<sup>194</sup> Sarkar, B. K. (1921). *The Hindu Theory of the State*. *Political Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 79-90. doi:10.2307/2142662. p84

liberalism idealism and the self, looking to European ideas to solve Indian problems. Although, he shares the same hypothetical ambitions for a Hindu state and that being 'Indian' relies on common blood which shows how nationalism and exclusion again leads to violent philosophies. Following on from this will be the conclusion which will answer each research question and compare the Indian thinkers in more depth.

## Conclusion

The uniting factors in the chapters above appear to be surrounding spirituality and religion, Hinduism and Hindu nationalism, violence and non-violence and German idealism. These topics also intersect the research questions that were outlined in the introduction :why are the concepts of violence and non-violence so central to modern Indian political thought? Why was the Bengali context so productive of violent political thought? What is the object-orientation of violent Hindu political thought? Which is to say, what did it hope to achieve with regard to the state, social relations, sovereignty, and the modern Indian self? In what ways does Indian political thought appropriate and reinterpret European political thought? In what ways did the thinkers mentioned above innovate new ideas drawn from their Indian context and hybridise these with Western thought? It is also important to note that whilst completing this thesis Kapila released a new book *Violent Fraternity: Indian Political Thought in the Global Age*, so this will only be referred to in the conclusion however this book does share links with this thesis through violence and philosophy.<sup>195</sup>

Ghose, Pal and Savarkar (chapters two, three and four) ground their violence and Hindu nationalist rhetoric by rooting this in spirituality and religion. By referencing ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita as explained in the first chapter, or religious ideals such as the Dharma they justify their beliefs. For example, in Ghose's case his view on spiritualism means that he evaluated different forms of freedoms and related this back to reason, however, Ghose also used Hindu texts in order to justify his violence and nationalist views during the Swadeshi movement. This is later contrasted by his eventual decline into spirituality, meaning that as he aged his views 'mellowed' meaning his philosophy became non-violent and engaged with spiritual practices such as yoga. On the other hand, Pal does not conform to violence within his ideology despite his Swadeshi involvement. Pal's dependence on spiritualism and idealist worldview meant that he saw past materialism and towards evaluating different forms of freedoms in order to search for autonomy. Pal also saw his spiritualism as a defining factor as to why Indian philosophers differed from their

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<sup>195</sup> Kapila, S.(2021) *Violent Fraternity: Indian Political Thought in the Global Age*. Oxford. Princeton University Press.

European counterparts as they could see past the spiritual conforms of liberalism. Savarkar's utilisation of spiritualism aligned itself more so with Ghose's outlook during Swadeshi, as Savarkar utilises Hindu ethical codes and ancient texts in order to justify his violence towards Muslims.

Leading on from this, Savarkar's principles in Hindu nationalism and also pushed against Muslims based on their otherness, as well as questions raised in ancient Hindu texts that could be reinterpreted by Hindu nationalists like Ghose and Savarkar. Sarkar, as explored in the fifth chapter, wrote about the possibility of a Hindu nation and stressed the power that the state would possess. The Machiavellian-type state he describes shows the rigidity of the freedoms that individuals can possess, additionally his Nietzschean-like criticism of a state of nature indicates that there must be some hierarchy-like system in place such as Caste and that the unifying ideal would be Hinduism. This alludes to the possibility of a violent state, which places him with Ghose and Savarkar and their Hindu nationalist ideals rather than Pal. This is because Pal's dislike of Islam became a consequence of his spiritualism due to spiritual detachment within Islam, showing that Hindu nationalism could be a result of spiritualism as well as fundamental ideology within Hindu violent rhetoric. This also shows a slight correlation between violence and non-violence in Hindu political thought as well as ties between Spiritualism and Hindu nationalism, as here those with a greater connection to Hinduism and Hindu nationalism developed a more violent ideology compared with those who had a greater spiritual attachment and 'adhered' to ethical codes (Dharma).

Out of all the forms of European political philosophy that are comparable to Indian philosophy chapters two, three, four and five have subsections that relate back to German idealism, or individuals such as Marx or Hegel. The hybridisation of German idealism is debatable with each individual as they do not all share the same romantic view of it as Sarkar. Sen also comments of the romantic view Sarkar expresses, as he focuses on the similarities of nationhood on both countries. At a broader view all the Indian individuals explored in this thesis examine Hegel's view of metaphysics as well as his thesis-antithesis debate in order to solve Indian problems such as British rule, the 'demand' for a Hindu nation and their quest for autonomy.



Overall, this thesis finds that nationalism and its exclusions leads to violent philosophies, whereas liberalism, idealism and the self tend to lean into non-violent philosophies. This is because as explored in the first chapter Swadeshi nationalism was also directed at lower Castes as well as Muslims, this exclusion then led to violent philosophies. These are most prominently seen in the works of Ghose and Savarkar, as they both utilised their interpretation of ancient Hindu texts to perpetuate the ideal that to be Indian was to be Hindu, further excluding Muslims. Moreover, by creating Hindu ethical codes and highlighting the importance of common blood, more exclusions could be made without just relying on a Caste system which did keep upper and lower Castes segregated but not to this extent. Likewise, romanticised views of European forms of nationalism like Sarkar's show how they fused European and Indian ideals in order to imagine the parameters of a Hindu state and what that could entail. Even though this could have been seen through the scope of idealism, more so with Sarkar's ideals, this still comes back to how nationalism can perpetuate violence. Liberalism, idealism and the self shows how nationalist ideals could have been altered into forms of non-violence. This is because Ghose in his later years as well as Pal show how Swadeshi thinkers can use their religion and spiritualism, as well as their own knowledge and pursue what could be described as finding much deeper meanings in life than nationalism. Furthermore, liberalism and idealism could also be seen as their fight for sovereignty and freedom against British rule which was not non-violent. Thus, liberalism, idealism and the self does not always directly relate to non-violence, it is just not as direct as the path between nationalism and violence as seen throughout this thesis as well as through the research questions.

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