Imperial Responsibilities:
Britain's Destitute Indians and Questions of (Un)Belonging, 1834-1914

Raminder K. Saini

Department of History and Classical Studies
Faculty of Arts
McGill University, Montreal

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the history of destitute Indians in Britain from 1834 to 1914. It focuses particularly on sailors and servants who worked on ships bound for Britain in hopes of good wages and promises of return. On arrival, many of these individuals were abandoned by their British employers, and were left without food, shelter, and resources. This dissertation investigates the experiences of these abandoned Indian migrants through a study of their interactions with Britons in the metropole. It looks specifically at the intervention, or lack thereof, of social and political institutions. Chiefly, it studies the contrast between the treatment of destitute Indians by administrators at the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, and officials within the India Office. Whereas the India Office persistently evaded any responsibility for the destitute, the Strangers' Home became a refuge where charity was offered in the form of food, lodging, and repatriation. In examining Anglo-Indian interactions and questions of social, political, legal, and moral responsibility, the dissertation simultaneously sheds light on how and where Indians fit within the notion of British subjecthood, a concept that remained undefined and contested throughout this period. At once belonging to and being separate from Britain, destitute Indians occupied an ambiguous zone of (un)belonging in the British world.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse examine l'histoire des Indiens démunis en Grande-Bretagne de 1834 à 1914. Elle se concentre spécifiquement sur les marins et les domestiques qui ont travaillé au bord des navires destinés à la Grande-Bretagne dans l'espoir d'y retrouver un salaire décent et un retour à leur terre natale. Dès leur arrivée, plusieurs de ces travailleurs ont été abandonnés par leurs employeurs britanniques et laissés sans nourriture, abri ou ressources. Cette thèse considère les expériences de ces migrants indiens délaissés en analysant leurs interactions avec les Britanniques en métropole. Elle s'intéresse surtout à l'intervention, ou la non-intervention, des institutions sociales et politiques. Elle expose principalement les différences entre le traitement des Indiens démunis par les administrateurs du « Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders » et les officiels travaillant au sein du « India Office ». Alors que le « India Office » a continuellement évité d'assumer la responsabilité pour les démunis, le « Strangers' Home » est devenu un refuge, c'est-à-dire un endroit où la charité était offerte sous forme de nourriture, d'hébergement et de rapatriement. En examinant les relations anglo-indiennes, ainsi que les questions politiques, légales, morales et de responsabilité sociale, la thèse explore le contexte et les méthodes empruntées par les Indiens pour se conformer aux principes de la citoyenneté (« subjecthood ») britannique, malgré la nature contestée et changeante de ceux-ci à cette époque. À la fois intégrés et à l'écart de la Grande Bretagne, les Indiens démunis ont occupé une zone ambiguë de (non)appartenance dans le monde britannique.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms

BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
EIC	East India Company
LCM	London City Mission
LCMM	London City Mission Magazine
LMS	London Mission Society
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

Archival Abbreviations

BL	The British Library, London
CMS	Church Missionary Society, Archives, Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham
IOR	India Office Records, British Library, London
LSE	London School of Economics
SOAS	School of Oriental and Asian Studies, University of London
THLHA	Tower Hamlets' Local History Library and Archives
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
WRR	Wolfson Reading Room, Special Collections, University of Aberdeen, Scotland

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

> *Mr. Yardley: I don't know whether you are acting in collusion with the owner to cheat these poor men of the wages they have fairly earned. I believe that is intended and you are acting for him [the ship owner]. Your conduct is disgraceful; it is disgraceful to your country; it is disgraceful for an English man to act so. Recollect, sir, these are poor East Indians, and you and the owner are especially bound to protect them.*
> -- The Bristol Mercury, 24 Nov. 1855

On November 20, 1855, *The Times* reported on a case of twenty-one distressed South Asian sailors, otherwise known as lascars, who had arrived on the ship *Janet Mitchell*.[1] The ship arrived in Bristol from Calcutta where the lascars were discharged without being paid nine months worth of wages. This was one of several cases that had been garnering public attention in recent years, and is part of a longer history of distressed Indians in Britain that this dissertation addresses. In this particular case, the owner of the ship sent the lascars to London where they were to eventually board and work on his other ship, the *Earl of Eglinton*. The owner, John Mitchell, claimed that after providing further services, they would be paid on their arrival in India. In the meantime, the lascars were, in the words of *The Times*, "homeless, penniless, and, unless the magistrate interfered, would be starving."[2] Their case eventually made it before Mr. Yardley, a London magistrate at the Thames Police Court, who met with both the lascars and Captain Hutton of the *Eglinton*. Yardley stated that the lascars should immediately be paid for their services on the *Janet Mitchell* or "they would have no security whatever for payment of their wages in India."[3] Hutton informed Yardley that the owner of the ship would not pay the lascars until they had returned to Calcutta. The *Bristol Mercury* records Yardley responding to

[1] According to Ravi Ahuja, the term "lascar" comes from the Persian "laskar," which was used from the sixteenth century onwards to refer to Indian seamen and certain military positions. For more on lascars, see Ravi Ahuja, "The Age of the 'Lascar': South Asian Seafarers in the Times of Imperial Steam Shipping," in Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook, eds., *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 110-122.
[2] "Scandalous Treatment of Lascars," *Times*, 24 November 1855.
[3] "The Lascars of the 'Janet Mitchell,'" *Bristol Mercury*, 24 November 1855.

Hutton on November 24 by saying that, "these are poor East Indians, and you and the owner are especially bound to protect them."[4] Unfortunately, the magistrate was not able to effectively intervene as the captain left the country without the lascars on board the *Eglinton*, and the owner was never held accountable.

John Mitchell actually resisted accusations of negligence and was quite incensed by the negative portrayal of him in the newspapers. Mitchell, a resident of Glasgow, wrote twice to the *Glasgow Herald* and *The Times* to dispel the negative portrayal of him by Yardley. In November 1855, he argued that he was the true victim for being wrongfully accused of misbehaviour. He explained that the men, while on the ship, had wished "to quit the vessel on the first opportunity," and that "they drank, refused to work, and misconducted themselves."[5] Then, in January 1856, he wrote that he felt "deeply aggrieved that he should have been thus publicly denounced by a magistrate on the bench, as a cheat and a swindler, and as being guilty of disgraceful conduct, and as being a disgrace to the merchant service of this country."[6] According to Mitchell, it was the lascars who had refused to work and yet he continued to provide for them and even "paid their expenses to London, to join my ship, the Earl of Eglinton, as seamen on wages, in her voyage to Calcutta, which they were bound to do under the articles."[7] Here, he acknowledged that the laws governing shipping and employment bound him to ensure the lascars would be returned to their point of origin, which he was committed to ensuring. The government also caught wind of the case and intervened on Mitchell's side. Later that January, the Secretary of State, Sir George Grey, let it be known that he was displeased with the language used by

[4] Ibid.
[5] "Scandalous Treatment of Lascars," *Times*, 24 November 1855.
[6] "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *Glasgow Herald*, 16 January 1856; "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *The Times*, 26 January 1856; "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *The Morning Post*, 28 January 1856.
[7] "The Lascar Crew of the Janet Mitchell," *Glasgow Herald*, 23 November 1855. Mitchell states in his letter to the newspaper that the lascars had refused to work in Mauritius, as well as in Bristol.

Yardley, and concluded that "Mr. Mitchell has a just ground of complaint." Yardley, in turn, was required to acquiesce, and he apologized for the way he had acted towards Mitchell.[8]

At the heart of this case is whether the lascars were the swindlers or the victims. If they were lying, then they certainly did not merit special attention or sympathy. Yet it is quite plausible that the lascars were the victims as they were first denied their wages, and were then criminalized through accusations of deceit by Mitchell and the state. If Mitchell was the one lying or at the very least stretching the truth, then he was intentionally playing on the prejudices of Asian "otherness" to elicit sympathy for himself while "exposing" the typical, troublesome nature of Asian sailors. Moreover, there was nothing the magistrate could do to provide legal assistance. Yardley, himself, professed that he lacked authority, as "the law cannot be enforced," which suggests how susceptible lascars could be to deceit.[9] Racial prejudice, alongside the lack of a written constitution, and the lack of precedents, all limited legal accountability. The issue of rights was compounded by an uncertainty over what rights were owed and by whom—an issue that remained a source of tension throughout the nineteenth century. Was the captain responsible for ensuring the lascars were paid before he left with them for Calcutta, or was the owner the sole-person responsible for their wages? As Hannah Weiss Muller has argued, understandings of subjecthood within the empire were broad yet vague, making formal recognition of rights difficult.[10] In this case and others like it, there were no legal means to hold renegade British employers accountable for their unjust deeds.

[8] "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *Glasgow Herald*, 16 January 1856; "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *Times*, 26 January 1856; "The Case of the Janet Mitchell," *Morning Post*, 28 January 1856.
[9] *The Bristol Mercury*, 24 November 1855.
[10] Hannah Weiss Muller, "Bonds of Belonging: Subjecthood and the British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 55-56. See also, Rieko Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth, and Modern Britain* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 3.

Though legal means of assistance may have failed, social institutions and individuals did prevail. Lieutenant-Colonel R. Marsh Hughes, a former East India Company (EIC) official and member of the Church Missionary Society, became aware of the case of distressed lascars and was able to provide more tangible assistance. He requested that the distressed lascars be sent to the Poplar Union Workhouse until the EIC could be notified. As he argued, it was the EIC's responsibility to send them home and ensure their wages were paid "as it is bound to do so by act of parliament."[11] At the workhouse, a place meant for the downtrodden, the lascars were each given a small stipend from the poorhouse funds to help alleviate their immediate financial woes. Hughes also interviewed some of the lascars for more information. The lascars denied Mitchell's accusations and clarified that they had withheld their labour as a form of protest in hopes of forcing Mitchell to pay their wages.[12] Hughes argued that the lascars' account was believable, and as he himself had spent time in India, he felt confident in the trustworthiness of the men. Although their reliability remained officially in question by the state, individuals and social institutions were able to provide physical relief to the lascars until further steps could be taken by the EIC.

The disparity and tension between government officials and individuals associated with social institutions, as shown in this case, is what this dissertation addresses. This case, in essence, typifies Anglo-Indian interactions, and the treatment that working-class Indians endured in imperial Britain. The case, and others like it from the nineteenth century, calls into question both the condition of lascars and the responsibilities that were owed to them, especially while in

[11] "The Lascars of the 'Janet Mitchell,'" *Bristol Mercury*, 24 November 1855; R.M. Hughes, "The Lascar Crew of the Janet Mitchell," *Times* 28 November 1855. The reference to the law here is to the Merchant Shipping Acts. Yardley also requested five shillings be given to each lascar from the poor funds to assist them until the EIC could provide further assistance.
[12] "The Lascar Crew of the Janet Mitchell," *Daily News*, 28 November 1855; "The Lascar Crew of the Janet Mitchell," *Times*, 28 November 1855; "The Lascar Crew of the Janet Mitchell," *Glasgow Herald*, 30 November 1855.

Britain (where their contracts were either to be terminated or renewed). Similar situations unfolded with servants and performers who were also hired by the British in India, and then abandoned or unpaid on arrival for their services. The unclear boundaries between migrant labour and poverty, and state and social institutions that are found within this case are all themes that continuously emerge in the records. This case also represents how workhouses were a viable option for destitute Indians. Furthermore, the abandonment of lascars in the early-nineteenth century and Hughes' personal interest in intervening on their behalf is part of the reason why an institution that catered to the specific cultural needs of imperial sailors was established in 1857. This dissertation, then, examines this institute, the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, as a framework for better understanding the experience of migrant labourers.

As scholars have shown, South Asians have been travelling to the United Kingdom since at least the seventeenth century when trade and empire began in India. In the eighteenth century, the EIC and nabobs had interwoven India into Britain through material goods, resources, and servants.[13] By the nineteenth century, India became more visible with the physical presence of transient labourers constantly moving throughout the British ports. South Asians also travelled to Britain in increasing numbers throughout the century in varying capacities. These travellers included working class Indians, such as lascars, servants and ayahs (nannies), performers, and soldiers; professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, students and teachers; and, zemindars (landowners) and royalty. A growing number of working class Indians and zemindars often

[13] For example, see Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Michael H. Fisher, "South-Asian Arrivals during Early Colonialism," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford and Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 23-45; Norma Myers, "The Black Poor of London: Initiatives of Eastern Seamen in the Eighteen and Nineteenth Centuries," in Diane Frost, ed., *Ethnic Labour and British Imperial Trade: A History of Ethnic Seafarers in the UK* (London, 1995), 7-21. See also the web-based blog and resource, *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857: the British Country House in an Imperial and Global Context*, http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/about/.

became stranded and subsequently destitute throughout the century. Petitioners found that securing an audience with the queen was much harder than anticipated, and servants, who had agreed to work on board ships headed to English ports, discovered that guaranteed return passages were in fact empty promises. Likewise, lascars and performers found that their employers were not always willing to make good on wages. Unprepared for a prolonged stay, these individuals found themselves without food, shelter, or a way home. It is with these "unintended immigrants" that this dissertation is concerned as they challenged imperial practices and policy that were designed to deal with an empire abroad and not at home. As I argue, distressed Indians tested the bounds of their so-called British subjecthood.

More specifically, this study focuses on destitute Indians in Britain to better assess the ways in which Britons felt they held a degree of responsibility to imperial subjects. As will be shown, approaches to aiding distressed or mistreated Indians varied between social and political institutions. I begin by analyzing distressed Indians in the early nineteenth century, by looking at their treatment by the EIC and structures for food and lodging (Chapter One). I then look at social structures for support available to Indians after 1857: the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, which was a lodging house and repatriation centre that opened in 1857 (Chapter Two); and the role of missionaries in supporting the distressed while simultaneously trying to convert them to Christianity (Chapter Three). The role of the state through a study of the India Office is also addressed, which highlights both a disinterest in protecting the distressed, and a lack of effective measures to prevent destitution from occurring in the first place (Chapter Four). Interestingly, the India Office was keener to offer assistance when the distressed persons in question were elite or otherwise respected Indians (Chapter Five). In general, social institutions were much more likely to provide support, whether in terms of providing food and lodgings, or through repatriation. The

state, in comparison, exercised a persistent reluctance to accept any behaviour that may have held officials responsible for the treatment of Indians in Britain. At the very least, I show that there was no firm interest or state-sanctioned support to ensure that "lowly" imperial subjects were treated as humans deserving of rights and recognition.[14] Overall, a study of official and unofficial responses to destitute Indians exposes the problematic nature of Indian subjecthood that was endured within the British nation. As I argue, destitution in particular was the point at which it became clear that Indians did not have any tangible rights.

Stuart Hall once noted that the history of tea in England "is the outside history that is inside the history of the English," and "there is no history without that other history."[15] The same can be said for the history of working-class Indians, which is very much intertwined in the wider history of Britain. Current scholarship has largely focused on professionals, royalty, and lascars, while other working-class Indians have received less attention due to the fact that scant sources have made recreating their histories from the nineteenth century rather difficult. Yet, working-class Indians, as the ones most susceptible to falling into a state of destitution and becoming stranded in Britain indefinitely, require more attention. It was their physical occupation of space due to forced circumstances that brought Britons into contact with Indians and its empire. Scholars have already addressed the poor treatment that Indians endured on board ships and their abandonment by their employers, but what is less well known is how they were perceived and treated while in Britain. Indians struggled to survive in Britain and many perished along the way, while others managed to carve out spaces for their survival through odd jobs, such as sweeping streets. The distressed condition of Indians also forced Britons to repeatedly re-examine their

[14] Rieko Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth, and Modern Britain* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 3.
[15] Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," in Anthony D. King, ed., *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 49.

treatment of imperial subjects throughout the century in both social and political capacities. In an effort to unearth these vital histories, this dissertation provides a social history of imperial interactions with destitute subjects between 1834 and 1914. In so doing, I grapple with how, when, and where Indians legally belonged within the landscape of the British Empire.

Historiography: Britain's South Asian Past

The headline of an article in the *Guardian* from 6 November 2013, reads "Britain's Asian past is longer than you might think."[16] This article drew attention to Susheila Nasta's *Asian Britain: A Photographic History*, a novel work of scholarship that used visual materials to depict the social and cultural history of Asians in Britain.[17] *Asian Britain* came out of a larger project called *Beyond the Frame and Making Britain* that the Open University undertook from 2007-2010 under the leadership of Nasta. *Beyond the Frame* was a large collaborative and interdisciplinary project that resulted in an online database, *Making Britain*, which sought to make the history of Asians in Britain more accessible for academic and public consumption.[18] This database has become necessary for the post-Brexit climate, which has shown a broader ignorance of race and multiculturalism within the British past. The "new" anti-immigrant sentiments and questions over how diverse Britain is as both a society and a nation are at odds

[16] Nosheen Iqbal, "Britain's Asian past is longer than you might think: a new book celebrates the long, and sometimes surprising, history of Asian people in the UK," *The Guardian*, 6 November 2013.
[17] Susheila Nasta, *Asian Britain: a Photographic History*, with Florian Stadtler and preface by Razia Iqbal (London: The Westbourne Press, 2013).
[18] *Making Britain Database: Discover how South Asians shaped the nation, 1870-1950*, www.open.ac.uk/makingbritain. Other publications that arose from the project include, Susheila Nasta (ed.), *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Ruvani Ranasinha (ed.), *South Asians and the Shaping of Britain, 1870-1950: A Sourcebook*, with Rehana Ahmed, Sumita Mukherjee and Florian Stadtler (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012); Rehana Ahmed and Sumita Mukherjee, *South Asian Resistances in Britain, 1858-1947* (London; New York: Continuum, 2012); Florian Stadtler, "Britain and India: Cross-Cultural Encounters," *Wasafiri*, 27, no.2 (2012): 1-3; and, Elleke Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). The British Library has also been providing public access to stories of marginal people hidden in their archives through their blog, *Untold Lives*, http://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/about-this-blog.html.

with a past that stretches back at least four hundred years.[19] Most troubling is the fact that too many public perceptions of Britain's imperial past have continued to be clouded with false perceptions of a "glorious" empire. A 2014 survey revealed that a majority of the British public expressed sentiments of pride concerning the British Empire (59%) with only 19% feeling ashamed, and nearly a quarter (23%) being uncertain.[20] This pride represents a lack of knowledge or proper understanding of the history of empire and shows that too many remain under a false illusion of a more idealized white, homogenous past. The result, as an article in the *Hindustan Times* from October 2016 notes, is that "Indians are not welcome anymore."[21] Where, when, and how Indians fit into the narrative of British history thus remains the question that keeps reappearing in the scholarship and in public discourse.

Studies of Asians and Blacks in Britain began in earnest in the 1970s. At this point, the literature largely revolved around questions of race, politics, and society within a traditional colonial framework.[22] In the 1980s, though, three notable post-colonial scholars critically reimagined the presence and impact of imperial subjects moving throughout and residing within Britain. Peter Fryer's *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* provided a rich overview of "black people," by whom he meant Africans, Asians, and their descendants.[23] Fryer's impressive use of archival material charted out a new path for Black British studies, a

[19] An online database aimed at making Britain's migration history available to the public for educational purposes is *Our Migration Story: The Making of Britain*, http://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/.
[20] Will Dahlgreen, "The British Empire is 'something to be proud of'," *YouGov*, 26 July 2014; David Olusoga, "Wake up, Britain. Should the empire really be a source of pride?" *The Guardian*, 23 January 2016. See the full results at https://yougov.co.uk/news/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire/.
[21] Sunny Hundal, "The message from Britain is clear: Indians are not welcome anymore," *Hindustan Times*, 20 October 2016.
[22] See for example, Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1972); Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester University Press, 1978); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Nigel File and Chris Power, *Black Settlers in Britain, 1555-1958* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981); and, Ron Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain* (Aldershop: Gower Publishing Company, 1987).
[23] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, 2nd ed. (1st ed., 1984), Introduction by Paul Gilroy (New York: Pluto Press, 2010).

field that has become a pervasive force in scholarship and in the current public sphere.[24] Fryer was an English Marxist journalist who was instructed to cover the arrival of *Empire Windrush* in 1948. *Windrush*, a ship carrying passengers from Jamaica to the United Kingdom, sparked an interest in Black settlers in Britain that pushed past typical race-based narratives and assessed how immigrants "contributed to the making and re-making of Britain, shaping its radical traditions, social institutions and political habits."[25] The arrival of *Windrush* has also become a marker for studies of Black and Asian immigration to Britain, defining the point at which scholars recognize lively and active communities within the United Kingdom.

Alongside Fryer, Rozina Visram published a book that has defined the field of Asians in Britain. Visram's *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700-1947*, though not as hefty as Fryer's *Staying Power*, nevertheless covers a wide breadth of time and has become equally formative.[26] Despite the passage of time, it is *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes* that the scholarship continues to use as a framework for ongoing research. Visram's extensive archival work on non-elites showed that studies of Indians were possible in a way that opened up new possibilities for social and cultural historians. In terms of lower-, working-class, and subaltern histories of Indians, Visram's *Ayahs, Lascars, Princes* remains the definitive book in the field. Where once it was felt that not enough sources existed to write about Britain's imperial subjects at home, Visram and Fryer's work showcased the types of social and cultural histories that are possible of imperial subjects in Britain. Kusoom Vadgama's less discussed *India in Britain: The Indian Contribution to the British Way of Life*, similarly reconceptualised studies of the British empire. Britons not only made an impact on colonies, Vadgama argued, but colonial or imperial

[24] See, for example, *Black Cultural Archives*, https://bcaheritage.org.uk/.
[25] Paul Gilroy, "Introduction," in Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, x.
[26] Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

subjects also contributed to the everyday lives of the British.[27] These formative works redefined understandings of British interactions with empire.

Moving away from empire abroad, the imperial turn marked a shift in the 1990s when scholars furthered post-colonial critiques of empire. This new imperial history recognized alternative perspectives, separate from the European hegemon, as a focal point for understanding the past and histories of imperialism.[28] Antoinette Burton's seminal piece, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain*, and Ron Ramdin's *Reimagining Britain: 500 Years of Black and Asian History*, for example, looked at the lived experiences of Indians within Britain. By thinking more critically about the experience of imperial subjects and their place within the empire, scholars were able to provide more balanced histories that emphasized the impact of empire on metropolitan societies as well as the interconnectedness of Britain and empire. Race continued to play a key role here in how Anglo-Indian relationships and identities were shaped and defined, especially among the subaltern.[29] As

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[27] Kusoom Vadgama, *India in Britain: The Indian Contribution to the British Way of Life* (London: Robert Royce, 1984).

[28] See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Laura Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Roger Ballard, ed., *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (London: Hurst & Co., 1994); Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and Cultures of Travel* (London: University of Leicester, 1996); Michael H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland and England* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997); Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: 500 Years of Black and Asian History* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

[29] See Dilip Hiro, *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London: Grafton Books, 1991); Ruth Lindeborg, "The 'Asiatic' and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness," *Victorian Studies* 37, no. 3 (1994): 381-404; Norma Myers, "The Black Poor of London: Initiatives of Eastern Seamen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," *Immigration & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* 13 (1994); 7-21; Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: the "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); and Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack: the Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper note, British history became more about the language or grammar of difference that "was continuously and vigilantly crafted as people in colonies refashioned and contested European claims to superiority."[30] Studies on the impact of colonies and imperial subjects between empire and metropole then led to an explosion of scholarship in the 2000s that has further questioned and challenged notions of difference, belonging, and tensions in and amongst the empire.

Spearheading the field were Michael Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, Rozina Visram, Antoinette Burton, and Susheila Nasta. Visram re-vamped her earlier work and published *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* in 2002, which has an even more impressive archival base than her earlier work. In *Asians in Britain*, Visram states that even two decades later, the field remained under-researched. She writes, "scholars have tended to underestimate the significant presence of Asians and their contributions to British society."[31] Some of the more focused studies have been Shompa Lahiri's *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* and Michael Fisher's *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed*, which explored the history of Anglo-Indians through studies of students and individuals.[32] Others have written histories of politicians and lascars in Britain, which provide useful and important insight into how Indians could at once belong to and be excluded from the liberal empire. Laura Tabili's *"We Ask for British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in late Imperial Britain*, for example, contributes to understandings of racial conflict and interracial cooperation through a study of lascars, which has emphasized the social construction of race.[33] Scholars have also

[30] Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*, 3.
[31] Rozina Visram, Preface to *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), ix.
[32] Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); and Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English* (1996).
[33] Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice,"* 2. For other works on lascars, see Marika Sherwood, "Race, Nationality and Employment Among Lascar Seamen, 1660 to 1945," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 17, no.2 (1991): 229-244; Gopalan Balachandran, "Conflicts in International Maritime Labour Markets: British and Indian Seamen,

examined three Indian politicians who became British members of parliament at the end of the nineteenth century. Studies of Dadabhai Naoroji, Mancherjee Bhownaggree, and Shapurji Saklatvala, provide examples of how interconnected India and Britain were as these three men were capable of holding office in Britain despite their Indian origins.[34]

Aside from these micro- and biographical histories, broad overviews of the South Asian presence and the impact that this presence had on British society and culture have been important in understanding the longer history of Indians in Britain. Susheila Nasta's *Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain*, and Michael Fisher's *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857*, for example, are influential works that have continued to address the longer histories of Asians in Britain.[35] This new scholarship was developing alongside larger questions on the interconnectedness of Britain, India, and empire. From Antoinette Burton's *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* to Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose's *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the*

Employers and the State, 1890-1939," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 39, no.1 (2002): 71-100; Ravi Ahuja, "The Age of the 'Lascar'" (2013); Aaron Jaffer, "Lord of the Forecastle: *Serangs, Tindals*, and Lascar Mutiny, c. 1780-1860," *International Review of Social History* 58 (2013): 153-175; and James W. Frey, "Lascars, the Thames Police Court and the Old Bailey: Crime on the High Seas and the London Courts, 1852-8," *Journal of Maritime Research* 16, no.2 (2014): 196-211.

[34] For more information on Dadabhai Naoroji, see Verinder Grover, *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1998); Rustom P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: the Grand Old Man of India* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1968); Omar Ralph, *Naoroji: The First Asian MP: A Biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, India's Patriot and Britain's MP* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1997); and, Jonathan Schneer, "Dadabhai Naoroji and the Search for Respect," in *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale Univeristy Press, 1999). For more on Mancherjee Bhownagree, see John R. Hinnells and Omar Ralph, *Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggree, K.C.I.E.: Order of the Lion and the Sun of Persia, 1851-1993* (London: Hansib, 1995); and, Jonathan Schneer, "The Khaki Election of 1900," in *London 1900* (1999). For more on Shapurji Saklatvala, see Panchanana Saha, *Shapurji Saklatvala: A Short Biography* (Delhi: Peoples' Pub. House, 1970); Mike Squires, *Saklatvala: a Political Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990); and Sehri Saklatvala, *The Fifth Commandment: A Biography of Shapurji Saklatvala* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1996).

[35] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004). See also, Catherine Lynette Innes, *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); N. Jayaram, ed., *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration* (New Delhi: Sage, 2004); Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: the History of Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004); N. Ali, V.S. Kalra, and S. Sayyid, *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain* (London: Hurst & Co., 2006); Fisher, Lahiri, Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (2007).

Imperial World, there has been a rethinking of the non-binary relationship between Britain and empire, colonizer and colonized.[36] As Hall and Rose note in their introduction to *At Home with the Empire*, sometimes the empire simply existed without being "a subject of popular critical consciousness," but "at other times it was highly visible."[37]

Scholarship from the last decade onward has shifted the discourse to emphasize migration and diaspora studies with an emphasis on the networks of empire that had allowed for mobility and immigration.[38] Most saliently, new approaches to the archives, as well as the material available for research in the archives, has allowed historians, anthropologists, and English scholars to know more about multiculturalism in the nineteenth century. In *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England*, Laura Tabili uses a transcultural approach to provide a more inclusive study of race and culture outside of major metropolitan centres. Tabili also states, as Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose did a decade before, that the scholarship continues to privilege the post-*Windrush* period despite the plethora of literature that indicates the Asian presence in Britain has a much longer trajectory.[39] Elleke Boehmer, perhaps

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[36] See Antoinette Burton, ed., *Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Gyan Prakash, *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2003); Antoinette Burton, *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire, a Reader: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Routledge, 2000); Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[37] Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, "Introduction," in *At Home with the Empire*, 2.

[38] See, N. Jayaram, ed., *The Indian Diaspora* (2004); Wendy Webster, "Home, Colonial and Foreign: Europe, Empire and the History of Migration in 20th-century Britain," *History Compass* 8 (2010): 32-50; Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and, Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook, eds., *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013).

[39] Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture*, 6.

most dynamically, pushed past the notion of Indian communities being a largely post-*Windrush* phenomenon. In *Indian Arrivals 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire*, Boehmer charts people, networks, and organizations that provide a meaningful look at cultural interactions in Britain before the First World War.[40] Scholarship, such as Satadru Sen's *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinj*, has also critically assessed the role of identity and belonging within the relationship between Britain and Indian migrants.[41]

In terms of the history of working-class Indian migrants more specifically, there is still a great deal left to know. Many scholars have acknowledged the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, which was a lodging house founded in 1857, as the main institute that interacted with migrant labourers. The Strangers' Home was a unique institute that provided food and lodgings to lascars and distressed imperial subjects with a specific attention to the cultural needs of its residents. Most saliently, Martin Wainwright has addressed the involvement with distressed Indians by Britons through the Home. His work also provides the most notable discussion regarding the interaction of Indians and the India Office. Wainwright's focus, however, is more cursory than detailed in terms of distressed Indians—likely due to the difficulty with source materials. Moreover, his approach is centered on a class-based analysis of Indians, which inevitably leaves the majority of the scholarship on the history of elite Indians in

[40] Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals 1870-1915*. See also, Elleke Boehmer, "The Zigzag Lines of Tentative Connection: Indian-British Contacts in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Susheila Nasta, ed., *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[41] Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinjhi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Laura Tabili, "'Having Lived Close Beside them all the Time,' Negotiating National Identities through Personal Networks," *Journal of Social History* (2005): 369-387; Simon J. Potter, "Empire, Cultures and Identities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth- Century Britain," *History Compass* 5 (2007): 51-71; A. Martin Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians: Social Rank, Imperial Identity, and South Asians in Britain, 1858-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010); Muller, "Bonds of Belongings, Subjecthood and the British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 29-58; Lara Putnam, "Citizenship from the Margins: Vernacular Theories of Rights and the State from the Interwar Caribbean," *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 162-191; and Sunil S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: the Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Britain. Boehmer's *Indian Arrivals* provides a good balance to Wainwright's history, but the focus of her work is on the late nineteenth century. Drawing particular inspiration from both Wainwright and Boehmer's research, I utilize studies of the poor to provide a deeper insight into both the perceptions and receptions of Indians in the metropole. A history of impoverished Indians is a way of measuring British understandings of empire, and exposing the kindness, cruelty, and confusion that went alongside everyday interactions.

Scope of Study: Towards a History of Destitute Indians

A complicated history emerges from scattered records of destitute Indians in imperial Britain. From the EIC's neglect of lascar housing from 1834 onward to the continued evasion of responsibilities towards non-sailor Indians by the India Office throughout the century, a narrative of how the empire provided networks of opportunities for employment, but also spaces for neglect and misguidance emerges. I begin this study a few decades prior to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 with the non-renewal of the EIC monopoly in 1834. The loss of the EIC's trading monopoly led to a heightened awareness among the British public of the treatment that distressed lascars received. It is the EIC's neglect of lascars in the early-nineteenth century, more than the rebellion of 1857, which delineates the relationship between Indians and Britons. The practical, everyday lived experience of what subjecthood entailed was consistently uncertain despite the 1858 India Act, which espoused that Indians were British subjects. The rhetoric of subjecthood and belonging was, of course, constructed to maintain loyalty and subservience from conquered Indian territories. In actuality, Indians being "subjects" was a vague idea with no clear meaning, especially legally. The position of Indians in relation to Britain did matter in some selective cases, but it was never a major concern of officials. The story of distressed Indians is thus

important and interesting because they, more than any other group, frequently challenged social and political institutions to consider how, when, and where Indians belonged within an imperial system that was not interested in protecting them.

Using a micro-history approach, I address broader questions of identity and belonging of transient labourers. As will be shown, destitute Indians presented a persistent concern to official and unofficial authorities, and yet engagement regarding the actual needs and desires of Indians themselves were rarely, if ever, consulted. Scholars have documented aspects of this history, though as mentioned, the focus has largely been on elite migrants. Histories of sailors and labourers in Britain expands well past the influx of immigration after the Second World War, yet archival resources for earlier periods are difficult to navigate. Nevertheless, I have taken up the challenge of source material in my construction of a history of imperial interactions and questions of responsibility towards Indians in the nineteenth century. Careful and close readings of missionary records, the few remaining annual reports of the Strangers' Home as well as reprints in newspapers, India Office Records, and periodicals, have allowed for a fruitful avenue towards a history that better represents how working-class Indians may have lived and survived amongst the British in the metropole.

The main geographical scope of this study is London's East End. Although Indians moved through several British ports, such as Glasgow and Liverpool, sources for these ports are much more difficult to locate and cobble together for a rich narrative.[42] Given the already difficult nature of sources, I have utilized those most closely related to the Strangers' Home and India Office to provide a sustained and deeper history of destitute Indians. Unfortunately, both these institutes were located in London, and therefore hinder the scope of this study. On the one

[42] Laura Tabili in *Global Migrants*, and Rozina Visram in *Asians in Britain*, acknowledge the time, patience, and resources needed to comb through local archives to piece together available documentation for these histories. Unfortunately, such a large-scale project was beyond the means of this dissertation.

hand, these archival sources present a history of a group of Indians that has gone underrepresented in the literature. On the other hand, due to the nature of the sources, the central focus of the study hinges on the port of London, which largely excludes histories of Anglo-Indian interactions in other parts of the United Kingdom. Yet, the Strangers' Home did become known across the country and provides links to port cities across the U.K. Though few and far between, I highlight the non-London cases whenever possible. Even if London cannot provide a true representation of the lives of destitute Indians throughout the U.K., there would have been similarities throughout British ports. I am also confident that as the contents of colonial archives are re-scrutinized, more of these non-British histories will begin to shine through.[43]

Another challenge of the dissertation is both the focus on Indians, and representing Indians through proper terminology. Many of my sources come from the Strangers' Home. These records largely focus on Indians as most of the employees of the Home had previously worked in India as captains and government officials, or were otherwise involved in mission societies there. As will be seen, though, there are a few references to South East Asians and Africans in addition to Indians as the Home extended its services to all imperial subjects. Moreover, the references to "Indians," "South Asians," or "Asians" are never fully adequate in representing the core subjects of this study. Some Indians were from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), and the subcontinent of India itself included present-day Pakistan, Bengal, and Bangladesh, with each region being diverse in terms of caste, ethnicity, religion, and language. The British themselves differentiated between Indian and colonial subjects in the late-Victorian era, with Indian subjects being from the subcontinent, and colonial subjects being from Sri

[43] This is already occurring in London with the British Library's *Untold Lives Blog*, and at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives where they have recently begun to catalogue a series of boxes that provide rich resources on the history of the Chinese Community in the area—I am thankful for email correspondence that provided this information. The London Metropolitan Archives has also been able to locate a number of migrants through parish records, see http://learningzone.cityoflondon.gov.uk/dataonline/lz_baproject.asp.

Lanka. Due to the focus of this dissertation on peoples from the subcontinent of India, I use "Indians" and "imperial subjects" throughout to emphasize their status as tenuous subjects of the British Empire.

Methodologically, each chapter utilizes a different set of sources to highlight the varying social and political aspects of British imperial responsibilities. Together, the chapters also address questions of Indian belonging and subjecthood from 1834 to 1914. Chapter One, "'Protection for Lascars': Creating Spaces for Relief," examines the early history of distressed lascars in Britain, and how the problem of increasing numbers of abandoned and destitute lascars led to the creation of spaces for relief. Chief among these spaces was the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, which was established in 1857 in an effort to provide a solution to lascars who were not being adequately housed by the EIC. Whereas most scholars limit the discussion of the origins of the Strangers' Home to 1857, I utilize newspapers and periodicals to show how plans for the Home originated much earlier. I thus situate the origins of the Home within a broader history of domestic charitable relief for migrant labourers. The main issue, as I show, was a lack of housing and financial resources to properly house foreign sailors. A lodging house for sailors was established in the 1830s to address the shortcomings of the EIC, but some Britons felt this institute was inadequate for the cultural needs of sailors, such as diet. Workhouses, as a state relief mechanism, after 1834 were available to Indians, but the Poor Laws were not equipped to deal with people who originated in communities outside of Britain. Issues over housing thus led to the formation of the Strangers' Home between 1855 and 1857.

Chapter Two, "In and Out of the Strangers' Home: The Experience of Indians in London's East End," looks at the history of destitute Indians, both sailors and non-sailors, after 1857. In the early-nineteenth century, all Indians, and not just lascars, became the target of

British humanitarian efforts, which I address in this chapter. It had become apparent to administrators at the Strangers' Home that other Indians, including male and female servants, were also being taken advantage of and abandoned by British employers. This chapter is thus on the charitable mission of the Strangers' Home, which sought to provide food and lodgings to destitute Indians. Employment was also found on outward-bound ships as a way to repatriate Indians. Methodologically, I rely on a close reading of sources on the Home to provide a detailed narrative on its operations as it regarded the poor. These sources include extant copies of the Home's annual reports, and various excerpts of no longer existing reports that were published in newspapers to provide a fuller, and richer history of the Strangers' Home than exists to date. Specifically, I explore histories of the residents of the Home by analyzing written accounts of its philanthropical operations. The chapter, overall, questions the motivations for providing charity, as repatriating destitute Indians had an underlying intention of ridding Britain of unwanted imperial subjects.

Chapter Three, "'There is a work to be done *at home*': Missionaries and their Work Among Britain's Destitute Indians," examines how missionaries interacted with destitute Indians. Studies of missionaries to Asians in Britain largely focus on the work of Joseph Salter, and utilize his two autobiographical works: *The Asiatic in England*, and *The East in the West*. I expand on this history by going beyond his two oft-cited works and by situating Salter within the larger context of domestic missions. Using missionaries' reports in the annual reports of the Strangers' Home as well as the *London City Mission Magazine*, I provide a history of interactions between destitute Indians and missionaries that goes beyond the walls of the Strangers' Home. These missionary reports are particularly important for providing information on George Small and Carl Haupt, two missionaries who also worked for the Home in the

nineteenth century and interacted with the residents. Sources from these missionaries, though one-sided, are rich in the nuggets of information they provide about the Indians with whom they interacted, and shed light on Indians' expectations and livelihoods in Britain. Furthermore, the reports provide information on "The Asiatic Rest," which was a space for imperial subjects that Salter created in the East End specifically for discussing Christianity. As with the Chapter Two, I question in this chapter the motivations of missionaries, which seemed to be caught between missions and philanthropy; though the two often went hand-in-hand.

Chapter Four, "The India Office: Evading Institutional Responsibilities," shifts the dissertation away from social institutions and examines what was going on at a political level in terms of destitute Indians' legal rights. After the Indian Rebellion, Indians became full British subjects, and in theory had the same rights as Englishmen. Whether or not the India Office could and should have taken steps to provide assistance to Indians was a constant source of tension. Laws governing imperial responsibilities were unclear, and the issue of rights and accountability was compounded by contentious understandings of what rights were owed and by whom. Beginning with the early decades of the India Office, this chapter examines India Office policy towards destitute Indians. Officially, the policy was to avoid engaging with cases of destitution, as the office was not required to provide assistance. In the 1880s external factors caused officials to reconsider their position, and by the end of the century policy had shifted somewhat to include numerous "exceptional" cases. Reading India Office Records closely, this chapter shows how officials continuously evaded establishing any institutional responsibilities. The chapter also asks how Indians were simultaneously British subjects under the guise of empire and yet treated as neither Indian nor British when they needed help.

Chapter Five, "New Challenges at the Turn of the Century: *Zemindars*, Sailors, and Students," is centered on a committee that was established in 1909 by the Secretary of State for the Colonial Office to look into the treatment of distressed colonial and Indian subjects and to present a solution. Leading up to the establishment of the committee was a shift in the numbers of distressed subjects and the types of people falling into distress. Students and petitioners, as well as an influx of destitute African sailors became a new concern. I try, then, to understand the mounting pressures on the government (or at least the India Office) to take a more proactive role in addressing all distressed subjects found within Britain. In so doing, I also tease out Indian agency. Landowners petitioning land claims, for example, provided a new challenge to the India Office because of their class, so leaving them in a destitute state was morally difficult to uphold. The committee and report that followed hinted at the India Office needing to provide a larger responsibility in assisting the distressed, but the overarching decision by the committee was to maintain the status quo—a position that had remained unchanged, and inconsistent, since the founding of the India Office in 1858.

What remains absent from the dissertation is the strong and consistent voice of the subaltern. This absence is due mainly to the sources themselves, and to the difficulty of reading the colonial archive. Most lascars and servants would not have had strong educational backgrounds, and have not left written records—or at least not ones that are easily traceable. To try to bring some balance to a history centered on British perspectives and interactions, I read the sources against the grain in an attempt to unearth the experience of those about whom they wrote. Highlighting the Indians involved in discussions of protecting, repatriating, or neglecting Indians is my way of trying to tell their stories as best I can. Even though the sources only allow for representations and assumptions based on a British, imperial perspective, the lived

experiences of destitute Indians are still there. Accordingly, their stories deserve to be mentioned as much as possible despite my inability to provide a detailed narrative from their point of view. Inevitably, the pages in this dissertation are not always centered on destitute Indians themselves. Indeed, too few of them are, but they are written with those lost Indian voices in mind. The subaltern may not be able to speak, but I hope to have at least resurrected their presence in some small capacity in an attempt to reinsert it into our knowledge of Britain and India at the height of empire.

CHAPTER ONE

"Protection for Lascars": Creating Spaces for Relief

"You must have observed," stated a letter to the editor of *The Times* in 1834, "considerable numbers of East India sailors begging and shivering about the streets of London." The writer, George Horne, appears to be have been a concerned individual; he thought the East India Company (EIC) was "according to law, bound to take care of them [lascars]." Horne was hopeful that in publishing his letter, those Britons "devoted to the cause of humanity" would help "save them from perishing in our streets."[1] Horne's early interest in enticing the public to help alleviate the suffering of lascars reflects but one concern within a larger, ongoing problem. Two decades later in 1855, a London magistrate from the Thames Court was recorded in an article, titled "Protection for Lascars," as saying, "there was not a greater evil, or one producing more wide-spread misery, than the abandonment of lascars in this country."[2] Also included in this article was a statement from Colonel R. Marsh Hughes, a former EIC employee, who lamented, "The abandonment of these strangers had caused a large amount of misery and crime."[3] These early recognitions of abandoned lascars, and their subsequent destitution, became a part of a longer struggle to provide for distressed Indians in Britain. This chapter, in analyzing the mistreatment of lascars, shows how distressed working-class Indians in Britain who had suffered because of neglectful employers caught the attention of the British public in a manner that led to the establishment of a dedicated lodging house. It also discusses the options for the relief of destitute imperial subjects within Britain itself in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

[1] "To the Editor Of The Times," *Times* 20 March 1834.
[2] "Protection for Lascars," *Standard*, 20 October 1855; "Protection for Lascars," *The Morning Chronicle*, 20 October 1855; "Protection for Lascars," *Friend of India*, 20 December 1855. This article was about a case of an abused lascar, Ramroo, who had a broken leg because of abuse by the captain of the ship he worked on.
[3] "Protection for Lascars," *Standard*, 20 October 1855.

In the early nineteenth century, there were 10,000-12,000 lascars who were engaged in the British merchant service, with approximately 2,000 sailing into Britain annually.[4] According to the calculation of Hughes in *The Laws Relating to Lascars and Asiatic Seamen* (1855), of this number, roughly 60% were from India, 20% from the Straights of Malacca, 10% from China, and 10% from East Africa and Arabia.[5] The number of South Asian sailors and non-sailors travelling to Britain increased after 1869. Many were typically reluctant to travel to Britain because of Hindu caste regulations that made it taboo to cross large bodies of water, such as the Indian Ocean (*kala pani* or black water).[6] The journey was also long and expensive. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, this journey became shorter, more bearable, and more affordable. There were also new opportunities to study abroad as the Indian Civil Service was opened to Indians for the first time after 1869, which required travelling to London to sit the examinations. Elleke Boehmer has found that over time the canal and increased educational opportunities led to "more flexible caste regulations (involving procedures for caste reinstatement)," especially as Indians "began to seek permission from their caste elders to travel."[7] By 1891, the numbers of "Indian and colonial subjects had risen to 111,627, attributed

[4] Shompa Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," in Michael Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford and Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 98; Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2000), 99; Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 22-3.
[5] Lt.-Colonel R. M. Hughes, *The Laws Relating to Lascars and Asiatic Seamen Employed in the British Merchants' Service, or Brought to the United Kingdom in Foreign Vessels* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1855), 5.
[6] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 67; Mariam Pirbhai, *Mythologies of Migration, Vocabularies of Indenture: Novels of the South Asian Diaspora in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). The caste restrictions on crossing the *kala pani* largely applied to Brahmins, but others were not immune from the symbolism of losing caste.
[7] Elleke Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 18-19. See also Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 110; and, Ravi Ahuja, "The Age of the 'Lascar': South Asian Seafarers in the Times of Imperial Steam Shipping," in Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook, eds., *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013), 112.

in part to the increased size of the Empire," as per Laura Tabili's findings.[8] Though these statistics are neither necessarily representative of the actual number of destitute Indians in Britain, nor are they particularly high, they are nonetheless telling of the size and scope of the Indian presence in the nineteenth century.

While the numbers of Indians falling into destitution also increased over the course of the century, the early efforts to aid distressed lascars inspired broader efforts at alleviating the suffering of imperial subjects in the metropole. It is this longer history of distressed Indians that I tap into through a study of the plight of lascars and tenuous attempts to protect them from abandonment in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Specifically, this chapter looks at the inability of the EIC to adequately provide for lascars in British ports, and the alternative spaces where Indians could find relief. As more impoverished lascars were found and written about in newspapers, their treatment both on ships and in British ports was exposed. In light of the inadequacy of the EIC, social organizations and actors felt they owed a degree of responsibility towards sailors. In addressing the problem of distressed lascars, I show in this chapter how Britons were forced to contend with the practical and ideological aspects of the empire at home. Although the intersection of Britain, India, and imperial responsibilities was in its early stages, the early nineteenth century nevertheless is indicative of the way Anglo-Indian interactions would play out over the course of the century.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the situation of lascars in the early 1800s. The EIC was legally responsible for lascars until 1834, but even before then their efforts were minimal and ineffectual. Frequent reports of abandoned and distressed lascars in the early decades of the century led to an official inquiry in 1815. The Sailors' Home was established in

[8] Laura Tabili, "A Homogenous Society? Britain's Internal 'Others', 1800-Present," in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 69.

the 1830s to provide better accommodation for all sailors, but it did not solve the overall problem of neglected lascars. I turn next to the workhouses, which became viable spaces to send destitute Indians. These, however, were never meant to accommodate foreign sailors. As a better alternative for lascars, members of the Church Missionary Society garnered enough public social and financial support to open the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, which I look at in the last two sections. In situating the opening of the Strangers' Home within a larger discussion of how lascars were treated in the early 1800s, I also highlight the longer origins that led to its establishment. Previous scholarship on both destitute Indians and the Strangers' Home typically begins either in 1857 or with the late Victorian empire, yet earlier cases of lascars in distress instigated the creation of a space dedicated solely to the subjects of empire.

The East India Company and Distressed Lascars in the Early 1800s

Theoretically, abandoned and destitute lascars should not have been an issue in Britain. The East India Company was legally responsible for feeding, clothing, housing, and repatriating lascars. And yet, distressed lascars were an all too frequent sight in the 1800s. Part of the problem was the mistreatment of lascars by captains and ship owners, especially in terms of abandonment and unpaid wages. Although the EIC should have at the very least prevented lascars from being without food and shelter, the Company's own dwindling financial and administrative capacities impacted the sailors under their control. As Michael Fisher has discussed, the ability to meet their responsibilities began to crumble in 1814 when the company's monopoly over trade with India ceased. More significantly, Parliament suspended the EIC's monopoly to trade in Asia for twenty years in 1834, which "legally absolved the Company of

responsibility for Indians in Britain."[9] Fisher argues that these events led to lascars increasingly engaging with British society as more of them were forced onto the streets to fend for themselves. In turn, a so-called "oriental quarter" developed in London's East End, the area closest to the docks that was most frequented by the men.[10] Similar situations likely unfolded in other British ports as well. From 1834 onwards, then, the British had to contend with distressed lascars roaming the streets around port cities.

In 1815, parliament commissioned a committee to look into the current state of non-European sailors and to outline regulations that could be adopted to help improve living conditions. The *Report from the Committee on Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen* (July 1815) found that existing regulations on sailor recruitment in India, and "the care of them when arrived within The United Kingdom," were not clear. The regulations in use had been determined by parliament rather than the EIC, and so clashed with the standard EIC practice (not regulation) of obtaining an Asian crew through an agreement made with the *ghat serang* in port cities. Ghat serangs were agents for contracting maritime labour. It was the ghat serang, the committee wrote, "who contract[ed] to furnish a crew for the voyage at a given sum per head, of which he receives a proportion in advance, and who is at liberty to make his own bargain with the individuals whom he employs."[11] It was through the serang that payment was typically made to the crew. Serangs on board ships also functioned as boatswains. These were Indian petty officers

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[9] Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 177-78. See also, Michael H. Fisher, "Making London's 'Oriental Quarter'," in Gyanendra Pandey, ed., *Subalternity and Difference: Investigations from the North and the South* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 88-90; and, Yu Po-Ching, "Chinese Seamen in London and St Helena in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Mario Fusaro, Bernard Allaire, Richard Blakemore, and Tijl Vanneste, eds., *Law, Labour, and Empire: Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers, c. 1500-1800* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 289.
[10] The Oriental Quarter was the area around the docks inhabited by lascars and other migrant labourers from Asia, see Fisher, "Making London's 'Oriental Quarter.'"
[11] BL: OP-fGPA.273, *Report from the Committee on Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen* (House of Commons, 1815), 3. Ibid. For regulations, see the Appendix, "Regulations made by the Directors of the *East India* Company, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament of the 54th Geo. III, cap. 134, relating to the Care, during the Voyage to *England* and Return to *India*, of Asiatic Sailors and Lascars."

who oversaw the work of lascars, in addition to functioning as mediators and translators, which allowed for communication between captains and lascars.[12] The committee also found that on arrival from India, the men were "placed under the inspection of a Surgeon resident at *Gravesend*, who visits the several ships and [then] reports to the Company the state of the crews." The men were next placed into the care of "a person who is under an agreement with the Company to receive, to feed, and to lodge them during their continuance in this country."[13] Sometimes the lascars were returned to the ship well before the date of departure, leading to undue confinement and potential health issues, but the committee remained unconcerned.[14]

At this time lascars were typically lodged in barracks-style accommodations by the EIC, which were inspected by the parliamentary committee on a surprise visit for their report. They hoped a spontaneous appearance would make for the most accurate depiction of the living conditions. The committee found that life in the barracks was organized as follows:

> These barracks appear to be divided into rooms of various dimensions, calculated for the reception of a considerable number of persons, as well as for the convenient distribution of them, according to the ships in which they arrive and the religion and country to which they belong, points to which, as Your Committee were informed, the habits and feelings of these people render it very desirable to attend. […] The men usually slept on the floor which is planked, without bedding, and covered with a blanket; the rooms were without furniture of any kind: But although the ordinary articles of *European* furniture are not in use among the natives of *India*, yet the want of hammocks, which the *Lascars* use at sea, or of low bedsteads, to which they are accustomed in *India*, appears to be a material defect.[15]

The barracks accommodated up to 1,000 lascars during the busiest time of year. According to the committee, this number "exceeds the utmost calculation of the number for which they are intended, or for which they can afford reasonable accommodations, consistently with a due

[12] Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 33-34.
[13] *Report from the Committee on Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen*, 4.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid, 4-5. There was a separate building for Chinese sailors. As per the report, "There were not more than three or four persons then occupying them, though at the period of the arrival of the *China* ships they frequently contain a great number. The building seemed well adapted to its purpose; the apartments were clean and airy; and a general appearance of comfort prevailed, which was not be observed in the quarters of the *Lascars*. This Your Committee attribute to the different character of the nations, and the habits which distinguish them" (5).

regard to the comfort, health and cleanliness of the people."[16] Despite these shortfalls in housing, the committee determined that the mortality rates were on the whole marginal and largely due to the unaccustomed climate of Britain rather than a need for better protection and attention. They also felt that the current state of lodgings was adequate though perhaps a bit barren.

"Adequate" may have been a bit of a stretch. Leading British abolitionists and social reformers, such as William Allen and Bishop William Wilberforce, had inspected a company barracks in 1814 after an abused Indian cook sought out their help.[17] Allen and his colleagues were appalled by the living conditions, and learned that lascars were often beaten by serangs in addition to captains, pointing to an overall neglect by the EIC.[18] Some causes of neglect included "the custom of boarding and lodging healthy in the same apartment with the sick, the dying, and the dead," as well as the physical harm endured by seamen through "want of food, clothing, and lodging."[19] In response, the Society for the Protection of Asiatic Sailors was formed in February 1814 to ensure "the protection of these strangers in the peaceable enjoyment of their privileges under British laws while in this kingdom."[20] The society's resolutions noted "these people have been subject to grievous hardships and abuse, to which they are, from their ignorance of the customs, manners, and language of this country, peculiarly liable."[21] Indeed, the picture the society painted was of a dirty and bleak room cramped full of as many men, living or dead, that

[16] Ibid.
[17] Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 165.
[18] "Facts interesting to humanity: a Society for the Protection of the Asiatic Sailors employed in the East India Trade, while in this country," in *Philanthropist: or Repository for Hints and Suggestions Calculated to Promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man* (London: Printed by Richard and Arthur Taylor, 1814), 174-77. See also, Shompa Lahiri, "Contested Relations: The East India Company and Lascars in London," in H.V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln and Nigel Rigby, eds., *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2002), 176.
[19] "Asiatic Sailors," *Times*, 9 December 1814.
[20] "Facts interesting to humanity: A Society for the Protection of Asiatic Sailors," 176; and, Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 165.
[21] "A Society for the Protection of the Asiatic Sailors," 176-77.

could be held. To try to put pressure on those who did house them, the society recommended that members make bi-weekly visits to keep better tabs on the barracks.

Other public and religious philanthropic societies became equally eager to provide aid to those in need, including the Society of Friends for Foreigners in Distress, the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity, the Distressed Sailors' Asylum, the Society for Relief and Instruction of Poor Africans and Asiatics in London, and the Society for the Destitute.[22] As Yu Po-Ching's research has shown, during these early decades of the century, "how to improve the daily situation of groups considered to be exploited, like slaves, sailors or children, became an important topic of discussion."[23] Though little is known about the work of societies like the Society for the Protection of Asiatic Sailors, they do point to a widespread belief that Britons had a moral responsibility to imperial subjects, part of a shift toward British middle-class ideals of respectability and morality. If doing charitable deeds was good Christian behaviour, then what could have been more charitable than aiding a "helpless" group of "strangers" from the empire? Alongside the discourse on aiding and civilizing foreign subjects abroad, these societies took on an overly paternalistic attitude couched in a language of imperial responsibilities.

Perhaps it was a response to mounting pressure from these societies that led to the 1815 state inquiry. Though the Committee on Lascars felt lodgings were adequate, they nevertheless suggested the formation of a separate building to better accommodate the increasing number of lascars in the country. The barracks were also overseen by people hired by the EIC on a contractual basis, and were not directly members of the Company.[24] The committee thus recommended placing the barracks "under the immediate authority and inspect[ion] of the *East India* Company." This inspection was to include policing the barracks and the people within,

[22] Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 177.
[23] Yu Po-Ching, "Chinese Seamen in London and St Helena," 299.
[24] For more information on early lascar accommodation, see Lahiri, "Contested Relations," 169-181.

giving the impression that the committee was not only concerned with the way Asian sailors were treated, but also with their personal behaviour. For example, the committee stated that there was a "total want of all regular authority either to prevent their wandering from the barracks by day or night, or maintaining order amongst them while within them."[25] Additionally, the committee wished for such a space that allowed for the good order, health, and morals of the sailors. They also recommended hiring an individual, ideally a surgeon, who had previous experience in India and was conversant "with the language, the habits, the wants and characters of the *Asiatic* sailors."[26] This recommendation for a healthcare professional who could speak the men's language shows some appreciation for the importance of communication, but it also suggests a desire for a better means to maintain control over the lascars. Moreover, no inquires were made with the lascars themselves. The voice of the subjects in question was completely ignored, as was all too often the case in colonial discourse. And, the barracks themselves fell out of use by the EIC as they had become a financial burden by the 1830s.

Perhaps even worse than not addressing lascars' personal needs was how the report did not lead to any tangible results. In the summer of 1835, for example, *The Morning Post* reported on a case of two abused lascars. The captain and officer of the ship were sent to the Thames Court because the serang of the crew had filed a complaint in which he said that two of the lascars had unnecessarily died. Of the two deceased men, one had fallen overboard, "and the Captain and Chief Officer had desired that no assistance should be afforded him."[27] The other had been stabbed and funeral rites were denied to him. Several other complaints were brought forward of lascars having been mistreated and gravely abused by the captain and his chief officer. However, too few witnesses were available, and so the investigation was postponed,

[25] *Report from the Committee on Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen* (House of Commons, 1815), 6.
[26] Ibid., 7.
[27] "Police Intelligence," *Morning Post*, 17 August 1835.

though the magistrate did want inquiries to be made given the vast number of complaints.[28] In a similar case from 1843 when a lascar perished due to neglect, the coroner was recorded as saying protection should have been provided to "these poor creatures" and that "owners of all ships were both morally and legally bound to see that they were not neglected."[29] Moral responsibilities, though, did not carry the same weight as legal responsibilities. The company was certainly "legally bound," but there were no agreed upon moral laws. The laws themselves were not held accountable, but this would not itself have led to the coroner believing that ship owners were morally bound to protect lascars from neglect. Nonetheless, the coroner's proclamation of a need for a moral responsibility does reflect the broader cultural ideals of Victorian morality and respectability.

Complicating the issue of responsibility over lascars were reports of the behaviour of lascars themselves. Some Britons argued that lascars intentionally behaved in an unruly manner on ships, and squandered their own money—distress was a self-inflicted wound, not a company problem. In 1823, *The Times* recounted a police report on a group of lascars whose wages were withheld. A serang had complained to the authorities that the lascars for whom he was responsible for were in a poor state because their wages had been withheld. The captain's position was that the money had to be withheld to prevent the lascars from mismanaging and squandering their money:

> The Lascars had of late become exceedingly troublesome to the Company, who were always anxious to send them home as soon as possible, but were often prevented from doing so by a sudden fight upon the part of the Lascars, who, upon receiving their money, mixed with all sorts of vagabonds…and, in fact, never were to be seen until they were not worth a farthing, and were broken down with debauchery and disease.[30]

[28] Ibid.
[29] "The Lascars," *Times*, 20 November 1843.
[30] "Police: Mansion-House," *Times*, 9 December 1823.

It was because of alleged "typical" behaviour that the captain proactively withheld the men's pay—he did it for their own good, as he saw it. The behaviour and agency of the Asians themselves was being put into question, and yet they were the actual victims. If the lascars pressed for their wages, they were met with force.[31] In addition to not being able to afford food, clothing, and lodgings, one *Times* article hints at how withholding pay meant their families in India would not have received any financial support.[32] How money would have been sent to India in advance of the lascars' return, though, is not addressed.

Nonetheless, there were consequences to withholding pay. A captain's "need" to withhold payment from lascars in this and other cases was fully supported by the superintendent of the East India Company's barracks, Hilton Docker. Shompa Lahiri has best exposed the problematic EIC view of lascars as incompetent and unruly. Lahiri writes that Docker not only defended himself, the EIC, and ship captains, but also "felt vindicated in arguing that contrary to claims of negligence, lascars received superior accommodation, clothing and diet than some class of English sailors."[33] This so-called "vindication," however, ignored and disregarded "the actual levels of impoverishment facing lascars."[34] As Lahiri has been able to show in her research, lascars "squandered" their pay not because of incompetence or negligence, but because of a lack of funds that forced them to pawn their meagre belongings in exchange for necessities. Without receiving wages that were owed to them, lascars did not have much choice but to spend their money in questionable places to feed and clothe themselves at cheaper rates, or to sell their

[31] "Asiatic Sailors," *Times*, 9 December 1814; and, Anita Anand, *Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary* (London, New Delhi, New York, and Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015), 164-5.
[32] "Scandalous Treatment of Lascars," *Times*, 24 Nov. 1855; Joseph Salter, *The East in the West, or Work Among the Asiatics and Africans in London* (London: S.W. Partridge and Company, 1895), 16.
[33] Lahiri, "Contested Relations," 176.
[34] Ibid.

belongings to obtain funds.[35] Thus, by not recognizing withheld wages as a root cause of lascars in distress, company officials and captains failed to provide a viable solution.

The issue of poorly housed and maintained lascars also extended to European sailors. To combat the problem of all neglected sailors, concerted efforts were made in the late 1820s to provide a safe and reliable space for sailors of all nationalities to reside. Captain Robert Elliot and Captain Gambier became involved in a project to ease the growing problem of destitute sailors. Both had decided that a building to house European sailors as well as those from Africa, India, China and other parts of the empire, such as Australia, was needed given that the EIC was no longer legally bound to provide lodgings. The outcome was a lodging house they called the "Sailors' Home."[36] To get a better sense for living conditions in East End London, Captain Elliot even left his home in the West End and relocated to live among the sailors—an early example of "slumming," if you will, that reveals a certain dedication to housing transient sailors.[37]

The doors to the Sailors' Home opened in May 1835 to accommodate one hundred sailors, but plans for the building had begun years earlier. In 1828 when the newly built Brunswick Theatre collapsed (killing eleven people), the officers saw a space on which a building could be erected. The site was purchased and construction began shortly thereafter, in 1830, opening its doors five years later. Lodgings at the Sailors' Home were not meant to be free. Instead, sailors had to pay 15s a week for board, and masters and shipmates paid 18s 6p per week, so as to keep the institute self-sustaining.[38] In addition to providing sailors with housing, the intent of the captains was to improve the moral character of residents by providing sufficient

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[35] See Anand, *Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary*, 164-5; Po-ching, "Chinese Seamen in London and St Helena," 289; and Lahiri, "Contested Relations," 177.
[36] H.A. Page, "In Safe Haven," in Rev. Donald Macleod, ed., *Good Words* (London: Daldy, Isbister, & Co., 56, Ludgate Hill, 1874), 460.
[37] Ibid. For later examples of slumming, see Seth Koven, *Slumming*: sexual and social politics in Victorian London (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[38] Page, "In Safe Haven," 460.

entertainment to keep them from vices such as alcohol. This entertainment included reading rooms, and rooms for games, such as chess and billiards. A bar was even added later to prevent the men from frequenting undesirable public bars. Daily prayers were also offered every morning and evening at the Sailors' Home—a typical component, it seems, of social institutions of the period.[39] This lodging house was successful enough that a second building was built a few years later to accommodate another five hundred boarders. The erection of this second building indicated the need for more comfortable (or respectable) accommodation and the existing demand for it. Despite this success, the general problem of under-housed and fed lascars remained a cause of concern.

By the 1840s and 50s, the neglected condition of lascars was written about more frequently in newspapers and had began to garner further public attention.[40] In the 1842 edition of *The Evangelical Magazine*, for example, a letter to the editor commented on lascars' lack of clothing and food, and how they had generally "been left behind [by employers] to become vagrants in our streets, until disease and the severity of the climate have killed them."[41] The author, writing under the pseudonym of "Philanthropos" further complained about the continued inadequacy of their lodgings: "I went to Limehouse and Blackwall, and saw the miserable building, or rather two small buildings, in which three or four hundred Lascars had lately been

[39] Page, "In Safe Haven," 460; and, BL: 8277.s.11, *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Sailors' Home* (London: Printed by J. Roche, 1875), 3-6.
[40] Examples include, "Crimping-Kidnapping-Sailors-Lascars," *Friend of India*, 15 July 1841; "The Lascars in London," *Morning Post*, 25 January 1844; "Lascars in England," *Times*, 25 January 1844; "Cruelty to Lascars," *Morning Chronicle*, 25 October 1850; "Alleged Murder of Five Lascars," Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 2 October 1853; "Condition of Lascars and Natives of India in England," *Standard* 15 July 1854; "Treatment of Lascars in a Glasgow Ship," *Glasgow Herald*, 21 November 1855; "Protection for Lascars, *from the Morning Chronicle, Oct. 20*," *Friend of India*, 20 December 1855.
[41] "State of Lascars in London," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, volume xx (London: Thomas Ward and Co., Paternoster-Row, 1842), 449.

huddled together."[42] He argued in this article for the better treatment of lascars for their physical benefit. He was also concerned with their spiritual well-being, stating that in addition to better accommodations, "the Scriptures and other books should be given [to] them."[43] Likewise, the Church Missionary Society reported on the state of lascars and concluded that a charity house should be established to alleviate the suffering. Unfortunately, insufficient funds prevented such a project from actually being developed at this time.

Similar concerns were further expressed by James Peggs, a former missionary in India who wrote about the physical and spiritual well-being of lascars in *The Lascars' Cry to Britain* (1844). Peggs wrote the book on behalf of Asian sailors in order to appeal to British readers, particularly those with a penchant for charity, though it is doubtful that he had consulted any lascars first regarding his intent. He wrote about the treatment of lascars and asked questions such as whether "they [have] a good supply of food and clothing, suited to the different climate and circumstances in which they are placed," and if "Christian philanthropy [was] attentive to their spiritual destitution."[44] Peggs personally felt that behind the lascars' neglect lay a lack of understanding over who they were. Peggs, who had spent time in India, thought those who were more familiar with Indians were more likely to provide the needed attention and charity to the lascar cause. He thus hoped his book would reach a broader audience to make English men and women better aware of the presence of desperate lascars in the metropole.[45] Peggs' work is an example of using the public as a way to highlight the moral and spiritual needs of lascars that he felt Britons needed to pay more attention to.

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[42] "State of Lascars in London," 450. See also a letter by Rev. John Charlesworth to Thomas Clarkson, excerpted in Joseph Salter, *The Asiatic in England: Sketches of Sixteen Years' Work Among Orientals* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Holliday, 1873), 4.
[43] Ibid.
[44] BL: Tract 1388 G.9, James Peggs, *The Lascars' Cry to Britain: An appeal to British Christians, on behalf of the Asiatic Sailors, who resort to the ports of London, Liverpool, &c., more particularly addressed to the Directors of the Missionary Societies*, (London: T. Ward & Co., Paternoster Row, 1844), 6.
[45] Ibid.

Even twenty-five years after the Committee on Lascars and Asiatic Seamen drew up its report on the condition of sailors and recommended changes, the inhumane treatment of lascars had not yet subsided. Legislation, though, was being considered and passed to rectify gaps in existing policy. In the 1820s, regulations were drawn up that held ship owners and captains liable to a £10 penalty for breaching rules. These regulations included provisions for contracts obtained with Indians to work on ships bound for Australia, the United Kingdom or elsewhere, so long as they secured the return of Asian sailors to their own countries.[46] These regulations were further entrenched in the 1850s: The *Merchant Shipping Act of 1854*, the *Merchant Shipping Repeal Act* (1854), and the *Merchant Shipping Amendment Act* (1855) all re-iterated that the East India Company, captains, and commanders or owners of ships were legally responsible for ensuring the well-being and return of lascars and other non-European seamen.

Within the merchant shipping acts were specific clauses pertaining to lascars. These clauses emphasized the unique circumstances governing the employment of a non-European labour-force that required transportation to a port outside of Europe at the end of one's contract. For example, in the 1855 amendment act, regulations stipulated that it was the responsibility of the EIC "to take charge of and send home or otherwise provide for all persons, being Lascars or other natives of the territories under the government of the said Company, who are found destitute in the United Kingdom…"[47] Colonel Hughes of the EIC compiled the relevant clauses pertaining to lascar employment into a cheap tract "so that these important laws may be placed within the reach, and obtained at a small cost by all who are henceforth to be governed and

[46] 4 Geo. IV. Sec. 28., cited in Edward William Symons, *The Law Relating to Merchant Seamen* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844), "Appendix V," 232-253.
[47] 18th and 19th Vic. Cap.91, clauses 22, 23, and 24, in Hughes, *The Laws Relating to Lascars and Asiatic Seamen Employed in the British Merchant Service*, 18-19.

guided thereby."[48] These acts were a concerted effort to clarify the rules regarding contracts and responsibility with Asian seamen to better ensure the good treatment and return of lascars to their port of origin. Though on paper Asians sailors would henceforth be protected, with assurance that anyone who did not respect shipping regulations would be slapped with a hefty penalty, in practice lascars continued to be mistreated.

These cases led to a mounting discourse on who should be responsible for lascars in light of the failures by official authorities. Newspaper reports of the "scandalous" treatment of lascars along with general public concern about marginalized groups in the early to mid-nineteenth century presents a British public that questioned the conduct of the EIC. Public discourse increasingly held the EIC morally and civically accountable for the care of lascars. Yet the increasing number of lascars travelling in and out of Britain also fuelled fears of their presence on British streets. As Michael Fisher has argued, "*Lascars* in the Oriental Quarter appeared as particularly dangerous: unmarried, sexually uncontrolled, non-white men who crossed racial boundaries, mostly non-Christian, transient Asiatic seamen living in the British imperial capital."[49] The 1815 Report itself had discussed a desire to control and restrict the mobility of lascars in Britain. The committee at that point was keen to expand the overall supervision of lascars, as there was a "total want of all regular authority either to prevent their wandering from the barracks by day or night, or maintaining order amongst them while within them."[50] Wanting to maintain control was thus linked to ideas of responsibility.

[48] Hughes, *The Laws Relating to Lascars and Asiatic Seamen* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1855), 5.
[49] Fisher, "Making London's 'Oriental Quarter,'" 94.
[50] *Report from the Committee on Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen*, 6.

Indians in the Workhouse

Coinciding with the EIC's decline in 1834 was the reform of the Poor Laws that same year, which led to an overhaul of how poor relief was administered in Britain. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act centralized relief under the authority of the government by consolidating the old structure of parishes into poor law unions and establishing boards of guardians who oversaw the workhouses.[51] The workhouse was to replace outdoor relief with indoor relief, meaning the "able-bodied" poor could be provided with relief through hard labour.[52] Paupers who needed relief from the workhouse were often characterized as "immigrants, profligates, unwed mothers, and other vagrants whose circumstances forced them to accept state aid."[53] Indians and imperial subjects could enter a workhouse as any other pauper in Britain, though this was not without its challenges, as many of these imperial subjects knew very little English. The role of the workhouse as an official institute for relief that catered to imperial subjects was debatable, and became a source of tension in later years. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, though, the workhouse was one of the few places where distressed Indians could be sent after the EIC's legal responsibility for them collapsed.

One of the ways in which the government attempted to prevent the destitution of lascars, as well as other migrant labourers, was to impose a penalty. Ship owners could be held to a £30 penalty "for any Native of Asia, Africa, or of any of the Islands in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean, or of any other country, not having any Consul in the United Kingdom, who is brought by them and *left*." The penalty also included those who ended up in the workhouses, thus

[51] See David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); Robert Humphreys, *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Marc Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: The East End of London, 1885-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
[52] Marilyn D. Button and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, "Injurious Charity," in Marilyn D. Button and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorians and the Case for Charity: Essays on Responses to English Poverty by the State, the Church and the Literati* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013), 8; and, Green, *Pauper Capital*, 2.
[53] Button and Sheetz-Nguyen, "Injurious Charity," 9.

becoming "chargeable upon the Poor's Rates," as well as those who ended up "commit[ing] an Act of Vagrancy."[54] In other words, if imperial subjects became a burden to British society either through their occupation of space within a workhouse or through criminal activity due to their impoverished state, then the owner of the ship in which they arrived would be financially liable for their maintenance and repatriation. The penalty, as with the requirement that the EIC provide food and lodgings, was ineffectual. Between 1854 and 1856, 1,331 sailors were admitted into the Dreadnaught Hospital, with a large number residing in the workhouses, and 40 coroners' inquests into the deaths of lascars had been made as well.[55] The average number of Asians in total in the workhouses in London at this time was no less than fifty.[56] In February 1855, the *Morning Post* reported that "there were upwards of 400 Indian, Chinese, and East African Lascars, or sailors, living on board ships," in addition to at least eighty Chinese sailors and 200 lascars living on shore "in the most loathsome and wretched dwellings."[57] Sending these imperial subjects to the workhouse was one way to alleviate some of their suffering, even if the workhouse itself was designed to be for the most downtrodden.

Moreover, despite Indians not being Christians, religion was not a barrier for Indians to enter the workhouse. Clause nineteen of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act stated that "no rules, orders, or regulations of the said commissioners, nor any bye-laws at present in force or to be here-after made, shall oblige any inmate of any workhouse to attend any religious service which may be celebrated in a mode contrary to the religious principles of such inmate…"[58] As Crowther argues, the Poor Laws may have had a strong religious element to them, but "the

[54] Hughes, *Laws Relating to Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen*, 7.
[55] "Third annual meeting," *Times*, 8 June 1860. In the winter of 1854 there were seventeen, and in 1855 there were twenty inquests.
[56] "India Office, 4 Mar. 1859," *Times*, 28 April 1859.
[57] "Strangers' Home for the Natives of Heathen and Mahomedan Lands," *Morning Post*, 2 April 1855.
[58] *Act for the Amendment and Better Administration of the Laws Relating to the Poor, in England and Wales* (Poor Law Amendment Act), 4 & 5 Will. IV c. 76, 1834.

purpose of the institution was social rather than spiritual."[59] The social-based focus of poor relief permitted Indians and non-Anglican residents of a union territory, such as Irish Catholics, to enter a workhouse. Workhouses, however, were designed to deter paupers as well as to find work for the able-bodied. Indians were disadvantaged because, as Preeti Nijhar has found, "the authorities could not find employment for Asian paupers" as they were not permitted to work in Britain as per the Indian Emigration Acts.[60] Even when finding work was a possibility, language barriers almost certainly made it difficult for Indians to be integrated into British society. This is not to mention that many would likely have wanted to return home to their families, making the social and cultural problems of sending Indians to a workhouse all the more atrocious.

Most problematically, the workhouses were ill-equipped to provide Indians with aid beyond food and lodgings. The settlement clause in the New Poor Law allowed boards of guardians to remove paupers from their workhouses to their place of origin. As David Green describes, "the right to receive relief was extended to the poor who resided in parishes in which they did not necessarily have a legal settlement."[61] The settlement clause was an integral component to the new poor laws, as industrialization had led to the migration of vast numbers of paupers from their original parishes to industrial centers in search of work. The clause, then, was designed to take into consideration the inadequacy of the parish system because of industrialization. Consequently, Indians could also be admitted into a workhouse after 1834 despite not being British-born subjects, as relief was not tied to one's parish of origin. To some extent, poor Indians could be conceived as British citizens in this period in the same manner that

[59] M.A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System, 1834-1929: the History of an English Social Institution* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1982), 66.
[60] Preeti Nijhar, *Law and Imperialism: Criminality and Constitution in Colonial India and Victorian England* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 89; and, A. Martin Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians: Social Rank, Imperial Identity, and South Asians in Britain, 1858-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 103-5.
[61] Green, *Pauper Capital*, 3.

poor Britons were citizens. In the case of Indians, though, the settlement clause did not actually account for those born outside of the U.K. and so legally (and financially), returning Indians to their place of origin was out of the question. Thus, Indians' rights to the workhouse were incomplete at best.

One of the benefits of the British workhouse system under the Poor Laws, arguably, was that Indians had access to them as British subjects. The problem with the workhouse system was that it was not a place in which Indians could easily access a return to their own homes or point of origin due to the limitations of the settlement clauses. Access to the workhouses also did not provide a solution to the real problem at hand, which was that lascars were being abandoned, unpaid, or left with no viable accommodations. Moreover, workhouses were designed to deter people from being so desperately poor that they had to revert to the workhouse as a last resort. Just as impoverished Britons had no choice in utilizing the workhouse as a last resort due to poverty, so too were Indians susceptible to impoverishment and entering the workhouse because of circumstances out of their control. Thus, the workhouse may have been a viable space for relief, but it was certainly not a solution to the initial cause of Indian distress.

Finding a Solution: A "Home" for "Strangers"

It was missionaries who, believing that Britain had a responsibility to protect and educate its colonial visitors, became actively involved in providing a space for lascars to reside in during their stay in London. Their interest in lascars led to the formation of a lodging house dedicated to non-European sailors in the 1850s. This lodging house, to be called the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, was founded by members of the Church Missionary

Society (CMS) in London in 1857 as "an Asylum for Foreign Sailors from heathen lands."[62] From its opening in 1857 until its closure in 1937, the Strangers' Home provided lodgings to lascars, even becoming the official state-sanctioned lodging house for lascars in the twentieth century in heightened wartime need. Whereas the Sailors' Home was designed for seamen in general, this new institute was to be exclusively for non-Europeans. According to Henry Venn, a prominent member of the CMS and founder of the Home, this institute would help offset the inability of the Sailors' Home to properly appeal to the cultural needs of Asian sailors. Venn wrote, "The habits of strangers are so different from those of our own countrymen, that those excellent institutions which bear the name of 'Sailors' Home' are unsuitable for them."[63] There was a cultural distinction that Venn saw and wanted to adhere to in his concept of a specialized lodging house. Interest in developing the Strangers' Home had begun as early as the 1840s in response to growing public concern over the treatment of lascars, but the idea for the institute was not realized until 1855.

The Strangers' Home is typically described as being established by Henry Venn and the CMS. Venn's biographer, William Knight, writes that Venn was the originator of a home "which has enlisted so wide sympathy, and of the Christian Vernacular Education Society for India." Knight adds that even though Venn established the home, "he was best satisfied to remain unobserved, and to prompt others to zeal and devotion."[64] Hughes himself wrote that it was through Venn's "powerful influence and exertions the Society was formed," and that "England

[62] SOAS: MMS/01/02/01, *Proposal for a Home for Natives of Distant Lands. For providing Christian Instruction for the Lascars, Hindoos, Africans, and others, visiting or remaining in this Country* (1858), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London).
[63] Henry Venn, "Preface," in Joseph Salter, *The Asiatic in England: Sketches of Sixteen Years' Work Among Orientals* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Holliday, 1873), i.
[64] William Knight, *Memoir of Henry Venn, B.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, Fleet Street, 1882), 178.

itself, owes a debt of gratitude."[65] Venn, though, was not the first who sought to find a residential solution for housing lascars. As early as 1842, the CMS had advocated for a charitable organization or institution to help provide for the moral needs of lascars. Additionally, the official proposal for the Strangers' Home noted how "the Secretaries [of each Missionary Society] have long desired that some systematic measures might be organized for placing within the reach of all such Foreigners the means of Christian instruction and advice."[66] The growing awareness of lascars in Britain—their starvation, mistreatment, and lack of pay—turned the attention of missions inward towards Britain.

Venn did not work alone, but rather relied heavily on two other members of the CMS, Hughes and Tudor Lavie, to take on the majority of the labour necessary to ensure the success of the institute. Lavie, who is absent from current scholarship, appears to have been an important member who was heavily involved in the ensuing project, even though not much is known about him. At the very least, he was an active member of the managing committee into the 1870s.[67] Hughes, as already mentioned, had a clear connection to the project and much insight to offer. He was a former employee of the EIC and a former captain of the 12th Regiment of the Bombay Army. While in India and involved in the EIC, he was interested if not actively involved in producing tracts that made laws regarding court proceedings and merchant shipping accessible and knowable to a larger public. Hughes' role in the CMS further demonstrates his penchant for community involvement.[68] As described in the *Sunday Magazine*, Hughes was "a perfect

[65] Hughes, in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 8.
[66] SOAS: MMS/01/02/01, *Proposal for a Home for Natives of Distant Lands*.
[67] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics* (1873).
[68] See CMS: B/OMS/C I3 O5/10, Copy of a letter addressed to Major Hughes by a friend from Scinde; R.M. Hughes, *The Duties of Judge Advocates: Compiled for Her Majesty's and the Hon. East India Company's Military Regulations, and from the Works of Various Writers on Military Law* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1845).

gentleman with the high conscientiousness of a sincere Christian," who was also, "'the right man in the right place'."[69]

Hughes also had a conversation in 1854 with the Bishop of Bombay, Bishop Carr, which further piqued his interest in the need for a missionary institution in Britain. In asking Carr about the progress of missionary work in India, Carr responded by asking why the same interest in missionary work was not being undertaken in Britain. He asked of Hughes, "the poor helpless natives of India we see in such numbers about the streets; cannot you do something for them?"[70] Hughes attributed his attention to lascars' spiritual as well as physical needs in London and across Britain to this conversation. Venn himself spoke favourably of the commitment Hughes made to the establishment, writing "[Hughes] has borne the chief burden of all the anxious and successful labours connected with the undertaking."[71] Together, Hughes and Lavie worked hard to raise the funds necessary for an institution that would be both a lodging house and missionary center.[72] They began by organizing a preliminary meeting for November 22, 1854, where a provisional committee was formed to scope out initial interest and garner financial support.[73] The committee then looked into the numbers and conditions of foreigners who were actually in need and used those figures to justify to potential patrons their need for public support. They found that in 1842, 3,000 lascars were estimated to be in the port of London in a "state of the utmost temporal and moral destitution."[74] By 1854, the number had increased to at least 5,000 lascars.[75]

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[69] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, edited by Thomas Gutherie (London: Strahan & Co., 36, Ludgate Hill, 1872), 278.
[70] R. M. Hughes, "Introduction," in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 7.
[71] Henry Venn, "Preface," in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, v-vi.
[72] Although CMS members took on the initial work, the Home was to be an interdenominational evangelical institution as members from various missionary societies became involved in a number of ways, including being representatives on the Board of Directors.
[73] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society, its Environment, its Men, and its Work, in three volumes*, Vol. 11 (London: Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Square, 1899), 382-3.
[74] "State of the Lascars in London: Robert Ferguson to the Late Rev. George Smith, Trinity Chapel, Poplar," in *Evangelical Magazine, and Missionary Chronicle* (November 1842), 551-552.

There was also a further 100 "natives of the east (of the more respectable class), and servants, residing in different parts of the metropolis."[76]

These findings were reported on 28 March 1855 at a public meeting chaired by Edward North Buxton.[77] Having a member of the Buxton family chair a meeting aimed towards a missionary-related social cause shows the influential networks that Venn, Hughes, and Lavie were able to establish early on as the Buxtons were immensely involved in numerous charitable and social organizations. The Buxtons are perhaps best known for their involvement in Africa and abolition. Edward Buxton would continue to provide his patronage to the Strangers' Home in the years to come. After presenting their findings to those who had gathered, Hughes and Lavie recounted the need for their proposed establishment. Their committee report supported their argument that they had to take on the responsibilities of "this great metropolis of the world" by providing a place where lascars could reside. They argued this missionary-supported endeavour could provide lascars with "the opportunity to receive Christian sympathy, advice and instruction."[78] Missionaries, for example, could aid with the problem of language and translation. Language barriers caused lascars to be easily taken advantage of and robbed by lodging house owners. Lascars, in attempts to find lodgings, ended up being robbed of their money and belongings. They were often compelled to stay in places of "infamy and vice" and "in times of sickness, few ever obtained medical aid, and many died unattended and uncared for."[79] Inability to communicate their wants and needs only worsened their experience. It was these more personal matters that the committee wished to tackle and incorporate into their scheme.

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[75] "Strangers' Home for the Natives of Heathen and Mahomedan Lands," *Morning Post*, 2 April 1855.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Elizabeth Baigent, "Buxton, Edward North (1840–1924)," *ODNB* (online ed. May 2009, accessed 8 August 2017).
[78] "Scandalous Treatment of Lascars," *Times*, 10 April 1855.
[79] "Strangers' Home for the Natives of Heathen and Mahomedan Lands," *Morning Post*, 2 April 1855.

The desire to have people who could communicate with the residents directly echoed the recommendation made in the committee report of 1815. While serangs were useful on ships, this was not always the case while docked, as lascars tended to disperse. This was especially the case after 1834, when the typical EIC barracks-style accommodation was disbanded. Moreover, lascars who were left behind in Britain, or otherwise discharged, lost their principal means of communication. The proposed home offered a space where lascars could be understood and could communicate their needs and reasons for being in Britain and whatever troubles they had faced—all issues that otherwise would have been lost for lack of translation. Specifically, the committee proposed that, "the cooks and servants will be Natives, and all connected with the establishment must speak Hindustani." The proposed Superintendent "spoke four Indian languages, his wife two; and an old Bombay Medical man, who speaks two of the Native languages, has offered his services gratuitously as Physician to the Institution."[80] As Shompa Lahiri has emphasized, there were issues with only having one person (the serang) represent, translate, and speak on behalf of all lascars, so bolstering the number of South Asian language speakers was vital to stronger communication.[81]

As plans for the lodging house solidified, the official *Proposal for a Home for Natives of Distant Lands* outlined three key aims of the institution. First, "that a house be provided, sufficiently large to admit of an Office, a reading room, and, if possible, a few sleeping rooms, as a *Christian Home.*" Second, "that *Scripture Readers* be engaged, one of whom should be a Native Convert speaking the Hindustani language, to be employed to seek out and visit any foreigners who may be willing to receive Christian instruction." Third, "that the proposed

[80] *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 30 May 1855. It is not clear who the proposed superintendent was, though it is possible that the reference is to Colonel R. Marsh Hughes who did become the first secretary of the Home.
[81] Lahiri, "Contested Relations," 171-75.

Institution should be in communication with the various Missionary Societies, in order to obtain the aid of Missionaries speaking the different languages of strangers, who may be unable to converse in English."[82] In this way, the initial plan to establish an alternative lodging house to the Sailors' Home came to encompass a missionary component. To best appeal to prospective patrons, the proposal also drew on the work of foreign missions to advocate their proposed work within the metropole. Several examples of previous cases of success were provided. For example,

> Another interesting case occurred a few years ago, when the benevolent Christian Visitors connected with St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, addressed the message of the Gospel to the native attendants connected with the Chinese Exhibition, one of whom not only embraced the message, but was received into St. Aidan's College for further instruction, from which he was transferred to the Missionary College at Islington, and was engaged by the Bishop of Victoria to accompany him to China as a Catechist. He is now so employed by the Bishop, and will probably ere long become an ordained Native Missionary.[83]

Lascars and Asian sailors made up a large portion of travellers and labourers in Britain, and it was argued that a dedicated lodging house would help spread missionary work in meaningful ways. Accordingly, planners proposed a missionary department comprised of at least one missionary to visit the streets, workhouses, hospitals, prisons and other areas.[84]

The official name of the lodging house was to be "the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders." The title appears to be a reference to the Merchant Shipping Acts, which said that ship owners were responsible for "any Native of Asia, Africa, or of any of the Islands of the South Sea or Pacific Ocean."[85] The origin of the word "strangers" in the title is less clear. Newspaper articles at the time were making references to a home for "strangers," a phrase taken from the King James Bible: "be not forgetful to entertain strangers." This quotation

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[82] SOAS: MMS/01/02/01/79, *Proposal for a Home for Natives of Distant Lands*.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Hughes, "Introduction," in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 8; and, "Be Not Forgetful to Entertain Strangers," in *Quiver: An Illustrated Magazine for Sunday and General Reading* (London: Cassell & Company, 1888).
[85] Hughes, *Laws Relating to Lascars and other Asiatic Seamen*, 7.

was strewn across annual covers and became the theme of the institute. That being said, covers for the annual report also reinforced a sense of "strangeness" or "otherness." Five figures were depicted on the cover, likely representing men from Britain's colonies. As Wainwright argues, the cover and motif of the Home is indicative of missionary work in the metropole. He writes, "if Britannia's commercial empire formed the economic and political context for the presence of people of colour in the United Kingdom, it was British Christianity that provided the ethical context for the founders and directors of the organizations that catered to those whom commerce discarded."[86] In other words, social reformers and members of mission societies provided the impetus on the grounds of moral and ethical reasons to create a space that best catered to the needs of lascars. Yet the cover clearly embodied the over-arching British imperial view that Britain ruled over its imperial subjects. The Strangers' Home was not to be a space in which imperial subjects found equality, but rather a space in which their difference was reinforced.

Nonetheless, the main purpose of the institute centered on rectifying the struggles that non-European sailors endured during their stay in Britain. Thus, first and foremost, the Home was designed to provide cleaner, more comfortable lodgings for lascars. As Salter describes, it was "to be a Home for the Heathen in our great Christian metropolis, a rendezvous for the Asiatic in the centre of Western power and commerce."[87] Britain was seen as the center of empire, and a missionary institution in the heart of the empire would exemplify the perception of British kindness and prosperity by providing a missionary solution to the empire's problem of distressed lascars. Accordingly, the committee hoped the proposed institution would be a sort of haven for lascars in the future:

> It might prove an Asylum for Foreign Sailors from heathen lands, where they would be sure of finding sympathy and useful directions during their stay in England; and the

[86] Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 69.
[87] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 39.

> Captains of ships, and mercantile houses abroad, might be induced to recommend men to the Home, and so to save them from the degradation and ruin into which they are too often plunged upon their first arrival in this Christian land, through the evil agencies which infest the resorts of Sailors.[88]

Local residents and company officials alike had for too long mistreated lascars, and this proposed institution was meant to end any and all misery. All that was needed were sufficient funds to make their desires a reality, so as to avoid the failed hopes of the 1840s.

The Opening of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics

In the spring of 1856, sufficient financial support was successfully secured to allow the Strangers' Home committee to commence with their plans. Funding came from various sources. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, for example, donated £300 to the cause.[89] The Wesleyan Missionary Society contributed £25 per year, and at least two donations of £50 were received from the London Missionary Society in 1857 and 1862 (this was likely an annual donation, but it is difficult to confirm). The Baptist Missionary Society and the Moravian Missionary Societies each provided ten guineas in 1857.[90] The committee also managed to gather a significant amount of funds from the EIC, which initially donated £200 towards the lodging house and provided an additional £300 in April 1856. The EIC Court of Directors received a letter from Hughes stating that they "are ready to commence the erection of the Home, but do not feel justified in doing so unless they are guaranteed the means of completing it, and praying some further contribution from the East India Company towards the Building Fund."[91] £500 was a significant sum, but in supporting a lodging house dedicated to lascars—the most difficult group of sailors for the EIC

[88] SOAS: MMS/01/02/01, *Proposal for a Home for Natives of Distant Lands*.
[89] "The Epitomist," *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Adventurer*, 8 January 1857; "Epitome of news," *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 10 January 1857.
[90] "The Asiatic in England," *Church Missionary Intelligencer: A Monthly Journal of Missionary Information*. Vol. IX. (London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1873), 217.
[91] IOR: B/232, Court of Directors Minutes, 16 April 1856.

to provide board and lodgings for—the directors saw an opportunity to alleviate their legal and moral responsibilities. The India Office would later pledged £200 per year to support the institute.[92] Having a specialized hostel to lodge their crew would have been a way to subdue public criticism. Though the EIC still carried a financial burden, it was minimal and worthwhile in exchange for passing on the responsibility of "caring" to a social organization.

A high-profile Indian made the most substantial donation to the building fund. Maharajah Duleep Singh was an exiled Indian prince whose terms of surrender, after the British conquered his lands, provided him with a pension in return for his loyalty to Britain.[93] This pension amounted to £25,000 per year in 1857. In addition to pledging allegiance, Singh converted to Christianity and became well regarded by Queen Victoria and the British upper class.[94] Drawing from the stipend he received from Britain, Singh donated £500. Hughes recalled conversing with Singh who asked him "whether there was any Asylum for his countrymen." He remembered the "reproach of our past neglect; and it gave a fresh impulse to the scheme so long resting in our thoughts."[95] Singh thereafter became invested in providing Indian sailors with a safe haven in Britain—much like he had been able to receive after his own exile. Anita Anand argues that the Strangers' Home would not have been established were it not for Singh's patronage. Distressed lascars became an issue again at the end of the century, which Anand attributed to Singh's subsequent wandering attention. His daughter Sophia picked up where her father left off in the 1890s, using her own resources to alleviate lascar suffering. Singh's patronage likely helped encourage the support of other Indians in the metropole to support the Strangers' Home, as a

[92] See for example, WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics* (1861), and IOR: L/PJ/6/1482, No.1552, *Annual Report for the Year 1915* (14 April 1916).
[93] Duleep's name is also spelled as "Dhuleep" and "Dalip" in the records.
[94] Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 71; Syed Muhammed Latif, "Successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," in S.P. Gulati, ed., *The Tragic Tale of Maharaja Duleep Singh* (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1998), 110-111; Amandeep Singh Madra, "Singh, Duleep (1838-1893)" *ODNB* (online ed. 2004, accessed 13 May 2016).
[95] Hughes, "Introduction," in Salter, *Asiatic in England*, 6-7.

contribution of nearly £100 was made by a number of other Indians. It is not known who these other contributors were, but it is possible they were members of Singh's entourage.[96]

Initial collected funds amounted to £7,125, which went immediately into acquiring the site for the building, with £1,250 being paid for the freehold of the site.[97] The building itself came to a total cost of £9,500, and additional expenses went to advertising (£710), furniture and fixtures (£1,100), insurance (£260), salaries (£265), and secretary's miscellaneous expenses (£175). The total expenditure was just over £13,000, which left a balance of £6,400 "to be raised in order to clear off the debt."[98] Donations in hand, the project moved forward and the building was erected in Limehouse in the East End. The area was near the docks and so easily accessible to those arriving by ship. This institute was an expensive endeavour in both scope and size (see Illustration 1.1). The architect, C.L. Bracebridge, designed a building that was described as being in the Italian style and "whose plans and arrangements of the commodious building have been the admiration of all who have personally examined it."[99]

Construction itself began in an air of celebration. To mark the beginning of construction, a high-profile event was held. Prince Albert was in attendance to ceremoniously lay down the foundation stone and to give a speech to the congregation. The *Times* reports Albert saying,

> These natives were told … that our laws and institutions were the admiration and envy of other nations; that it was a country governed by a Sovereign whose Christian virtues were known and emulated by all classes; and they know also that the people of England were a people professing the Christian religion. It was, therefore, a most painful thing, and one most degrading to the character of that country, to find that no better welcome was accorded to those poor and helpless natives of other countries who visited our shores.[100]

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[96] "Home in London for Oriental Strangers," *Times*, 1856.
[97] A lease for the site totally £270 was also paid initially. Why a lease and payment for ownership of the property was paid is unclear, though it is likely that Venn first rented the land until sufficient funds could be procured to purchase it. Either that, or, the lease actually refers to a down payment on the property.
[98] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Daily News,* 4 June 1847.
[99] "Home in London," *Times*, 2 June 1856; "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 4 June 1857.
[100] "Home in London for Oriental Strangers," *Times*, 2 June 1856.

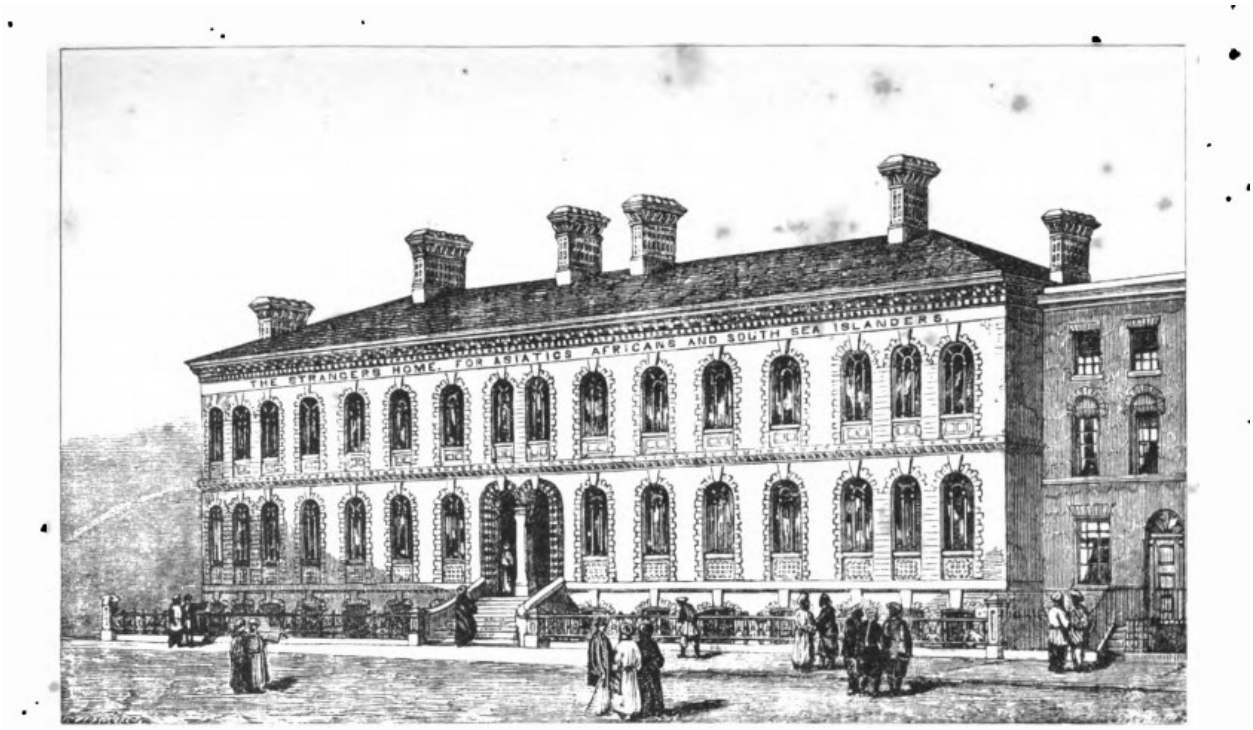

Illustration 1.1: The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders. Source: Joseph Salter, The Asiatic in England (London, 1873).

Albert further added that he saw it as the duty of Englishmen "to assist and protect, as far as lies in our power, from the dangers and temptations to which their helplessness and ignorance expose them, the natives of remote regions who are brought to our shores."[101] Though Albert had a vested interest in Britain's empire, his speech was a manifestation of the ideals of empire and not the realities, or practicalities, of governing the empire. The EIC exemplifies how, aside from some labour regulations, the state failed to provide for its imperial subjects. Moreover, while state finances may have bolstered the Strangers' Home, it was a social, not a political, project.

Many others attended the ceremony. In attendance were employees of the EIC, such as chairman Colonel Sykes. Also in attendance were Lord Henry, the Marquis of Cholmondeley;

[101] Ibid.

Rev. E.R. Jones (the Rector of Limehouse); Rev. Tidman (the foreign secretary to the London Missionary Society); and, a number of missionaries from the other societies.[102] The gathering was not an exclusively British affair either. At the gathering were Maharajah Duleep Singh; Mir Jaffer Ali, the Nawab of Surat; the Syrian Archbishop; Parsee bankers; and several other "Mahomedan, Burmese, and Chinese Gentlemen."[103] These "distinguished Orientals," as they were referred to in the newspapers, were noted as donning "magnificent national costumes," for the event. In addition to these elites, there were at least fifty other colonial subjects present for the occasion.[104] There was, thus, a significant Asian population present in Britain at the time that was aware of this endeavour, and they too had come to show their support. In this way, the erection of the Strangers' Home is not strictly a part of the domestic British narrative. From donations to public support, there was a degree of South Asian involvement in the creation of the institute. As noted in the *Illustrated London News*, "[letters] from several Indian gentlemen have been received, thanking the directors for the efforts they are making for the welfare of their countrymen who are brought to England."[105] The people in attendance had forged connections with Britons and, as is seen with Duleep Singh, had the means and interest to invest in British philanthropical projects. Although the Strangers' Home would ultimately work to heighten notions of "otherness," there was an appreciation and recognition that non-European sailors merited care and hospitality.

The lodging house officially opened in the summer of 1857, but construction had been completed earlier that year. Colonel Sykes, the EIC Chairman, and Captain Eastwick of the EIC, paid an official visit to inspect the newly finished building on February 20, 1857. Both Sykes and

[102] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 67.
[103] "The Strangers' Home," *Illustrated London News*, 14 June 1856.
[104] "Home in London," *Times*, 2 June 1856.
[105] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Illustrated London News*, 28 February 1857.

Eastwick were pleased to see the final product. They "expressed their entire satisfaction with the completeness and arrangements and perfect adaptation for the purpose for which it has been erected."[106] However, the launch stalled despite the efforts of Hughes and Lavie who tried to obtain sufficient funds to help defray their mounting debts and allow for the opening of the Home.[107] The problem was that despite strong initial support and widespread agreement on the need for such an establishment, public support for the institute was not as forthcoming as had been hoped by the creators. Nevertheless, they continued to press for additional donations and subscribers, which they eventually mustered for the official opening in June.

Though financial hurdles remained to be overcome, other steps were taken to further strengthen the purpose of the home. In order to be most helpful to lascars, the directors of the Home acquired from the Board of Trade a licence to ship Asian seamen.[108] This meant that the directors did not have to take jobless lascars to the EIC to find work or passages for them, but rather could take on the responsibility themselves. Hughes became the secretary of the Home and took on the responsibility of repatriating lascars. He would spend the remainder of his days providing work for lascars who had been released from their duties on landing in British ports. Finding either work or passages for lascars meant engaging with ship owners, captains, and occasionally the India Office. His task was not limited to London either. Despite the location of the Home at the London docks, Hughes established networks across the British Isles to ensure the well-being and repatriation of all lascars in the United Kingdom. This network of communication and exchange was an enormous commitment. In this way, Hughes and Lavie

[106] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Morning Post*, 21 February 1857; "Multiple News Items," *Standard*, 21 February 1857; "Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Illustrated London News*, 28 February 1857.
[107] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Morning Post*, 21 February 1857; "Multiple News Items," *Standard*, 21 February 1857; "Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Illustrated London News*, 28 February 1857.
[108] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Daily News*, 4 June 1857. See also TNA: MT 9/25 M439/1866, Board of Trade renewal for license, January 1866.

paid careful attention to the root cause of the "lascar problem," namely the need for not simply housing sailors but also repatriating them.

Thus, when the Strangers' Home opened its doors to prospective lodgers on June 3, 1857, it was well equipped to manage what the administrators saw as the most pressing needs of non-European sailors. As with the Sailors' Home, there was to be a fee, which, coupled with donations, would render the institution self-sufficient.[109] Lascars were to pay 8s a week or 15d. per day for stays of less than a week. The Sailors' Home, in comparison, charged almost twice as much at 15s per week. Included in the fees were three meals per day, medical attendance, baths, washing, bed and board. Beds could also be rented out for three pence a night.[110] The Board (as far as can be discerned) also established a Store Room within the Home to provide clothing at reasonable terms.[111] The building further included "apartments for the superintendent, a hospital registry, shipping and secretary's offices," as well as a spacious hall (capable of accommodating 200 people), a library, two verandas, the "Victoria and Albert" dining hall, a kitchen, and a house for the missionary at the back of the yard.[112] A reference in *The Sunday Magazine* notes that there were separate dining rooms "for those who still hold by their creed and caste, and those who have adopted European habits."[113] These amenities were provided to ensure that residents had "a comfortable and respectable lodging, with wholesome food, at a cost which it is presumed they can afford."[114]

In the early days of the Home, the directors felt that they were being successful. The first crew that entered the building was comprised of a crew of forty lascars from *Whirlwind*, a ship in

[109] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 7 June 1859.
[110] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, South Sea Islanders," *Times*, 10 April 1855; "The New Strangers' Home," *Morning Post*, 8 November 1855.
[111] *The North – China Herald* 12 April 1856; Page, "In Safe Haven," 459.
[112] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 68-71.
[113] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, 278.
[114] "The Strangers' Home," *Illustrated London News*, 14 June 1856.

the West India Dock. Salter describes the men entering the Home as being "some of the [most] ragged, wretched beings we saw." After several weeks at the Strangers' Home, Salter claims they underwent a transformation:

> The sorrow and the haggard look are changed for the hearty laugh, and the laugh had a meaning in it, for they have lost their rags, they have each a box on board containing a suit of warm clothing. They have just come on deck from their native meal of curry, and they are about to sail for their own homes after months or years of detention in England.[115]

In addition to this crew, hundreds of Asiatics crowded around the Home on a daily basis seeking help, but not everyone could be helped. As Salter explains,

> Each one had his tale of woe and suffering to tell. Fraud robbery, begging, imprisonment, starvation, formed the common history of each […] But what is to be done for this starving, anxious mass? The friends of the Home have pushed forward the building, and commenced work with a debt of £7000 and cannot help them yet; they must suffer and starve a little longer.[116]

Though not everyone could be supported, the amount of money spent on advertising seems to have worked, as there was an acute demand. Reflecting on the first few years of the Home, the directors reported an overall success in alleviating the lascar problem. The winters of 1854-5 and 1856-7 had been particularly cruel to lascars. Seventeen coroners' inquests were made in 1854. During the winter of 1856-7, though, "not a single inquest had been held, and the number in the unions of the metropolis has not exceeded six, while the average number of Asiatics found in gaol in 1856-7 was 10; in 1858-9, only three."[117]

One Indian travelling through Britain also commented on his own hopes for the improved condition of Indians in Britain. Syed Abdullah, an Indian gentleman who at the time worked for the Rajah of Coorg on his visit to Britain, and who later became professor of oriental languages in London, expressed his appreciation for this establishment. According to the *Daily News*,

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[115] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 85-86.
[116] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 20 November 1857; "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Morning Post*, 21 November 1857.
[117] "India Office, March 4, 1859," *Times*, 28 April 1859.

Abdullah's travels to England on a previous trip led him to question the well-being of Indians in Britain and he wondered whether anything was being done for those who perished on the streets. He was pleased to see the opening of the Strangers' Home in 1857, as "such a reproach could no longer be made."[118] Unfortunately, several years later he wrote to the India Office complaining of the persistent distress of lascars and hoping officials would get involved as the Strangers' Home was not ultimately able to put an end to the suffering of colonial subjects.[119]

Nevertheless, administrators remained keen and ever vigilant. Even before the official opening of the Strangers' Home in June, the first secretary, Colonel Hughes, had begun making known the existence of the establishment and offered his services.[120] In May 1857, for example, a case regarding the poor treatment of a Chinese sailor at a lodging house was brought before the Thames Court: "*Charles Fenwick*, described as a lodging-house keeper, of No. 27, Lower Cornwall-street, St. George's-in-the-East, was charged with having detained £10, the moneys of a Chinaman, whose real name is Arze, but who has adopted the English name of John Williams."[121] The prosecution of Fenwick took place on behalf of Colonel Hughes of the Strangers Home, and Fenwick was ordered to pay the money owing to Arze or face two months' hard labour. The amount was paid, and it was noted that the Strangers' Home would soon be opened. Not for the first time, Colonel Hughes involved himself in a case of poorly treated lascars, which went beyond the duties of merely managing the soon-to-be-open lodging house as an administrative secretary. As will be shown in the next chapter, despite the Strangers' Home being opened as a lodging house for lascars more specifically, Hughes also extended the Home's mission to provide charity to other imperial subjects in need.

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[118] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 4 June 1857.
[119] Hansard Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 3rd ser., vol. 194, 25 Feb. 1869, cols 310-1.
[120] How precisely the home was advertised beyond the use of newspapers is unclear.
[121] *Morning Post*, 18 May 1857.

Conclusion: Cultivating a Social Responsibility to Help

The history of distressed Indians in imperial Britain begins with the problem of abandoned and distressed lascars in the early nineteenth century. As early as 1814, Britons were concerned with the social and political problems of impoverished lascars due to an overall neglect by those who had brought them into the country. Situating the plight of lascars within a history that includes the opening of the Sailors' Home, the Poor Laws and the workhouses, as well as the establishment of the Strangers' Home, provides a social history of poverty within Britain that is better entrenched within an imperial framework. As distressed lascars increasingly caught the public attention, alongside the failure of the government to provide for better housing and maintenance of lascars, the British public's interest was aroused. In particular, newspapers portrayed the lascars as the victims of abuse and neglect at the hands of the British, and highlighted lascars as a moral problem of empire.

Morally speaking, the presence of destitute South Asians in the metropole made Britain look bad and damaged the image of Britons as the protectors and rulers of a vast empire. As the London Magistrate Yardley put it, the poor treatment of lascars by some was disgraceful to the country and "it [was] disgraceful for an English man to act so."[122] Reflecting on the state of charities in London in 1872, the *Sunday Magazine* would look back on earlier periods and write that the condition of lascars at the beginning of the century was "an outrage on humanity; a scandal to our country and a disgrace to our religion."[123] Britons, as good Christians, had a responsibility to teach and to help imperial subjects, or so the argument went. The magazine also noted that once docked, lascars were "plundered by *crimps* among whom they were thrown like the carcass of an old horse into a kennel of hounds, and exposed in their shivering rags to our

[122] "The Lascars of the 'Janet Mitchell'," *Bristol Mercury*, 24 November 1855.
[123] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, 276.

inclement weather, [where] they fell thick and fast, victims of our neglect and inhumanity."[124] It was not until a group of "earnest" social reformers from the Church Missionary Society attempted to redress British neglect and inhumanity that a viable solution was found.[125] Perhaps inevitably then, the Strangers' Home became a visible symbol of imperial virtue.

Over the course of eighty years, the directors of the Home would do their best to temporarily house the jobless, the abandoned and the destitute. They strove to fill the gap left first by the EIC (1856-57) and then the India Office, in addition to providing a feasible solution to the increased number of impoverished and dying lascars. This gap existed largely because the government was reluctant to follow-through with legal requirements to ensure the proper treatment of lascars. The EIC, captains, and ship owners were responsible for repatriating lascars, but they were all too often unwilling to do so as there was a lack of legal accountability for their actions. The Strangers' Home here aimed to prevent lascars from ending up in a workhouse and subsequently becoming chargeable to the poor rates (and thus taxable to the British). Whereas the settlement clause of the Poor Laws made repatriation legally unfeasible through the workhouse, the Home's adoption of a lascar shipping office allowed administrators at the Home to be actively involved in repatriating abandoned, and unemployed lascars. What became wearisome was the realization that lascars were not the only ones in need of food, lodgings, and financial aid. There were a number of non-sailors who did not readily fall under the scope of the shipping acts. Consequently, the Strangers' Home evolved into a space that not only housed paying lascars, but also took on charitable cases as part of its missionary and philanthropic endeavour.

[124] Ibid.
[125] Of course, I qualify "earnest" here as people like Venn and Hughes were actively invested in the imperial project more generally.

CHAPTER TWO

In and Out of the Strangers' Home: Indians' Experience in London's East End

The Strangers' Home was established in 1857 to provide much needed housing for lascars during their stay in Britain. In addressing the needs of sailors, secretary Colonel R. Marsh Hughes and the Board of Directors came to see that non-sailors were equally in need of British support. Distressed Indians, for instance, included former servants and ayahs who were also either abandoned by their employers or left without any means of support upon the death of their employers.[1] It became a part of the Home's mission to provide for as many charitable cases as they could. In order to best aid the distressed, administrators not only lodged destitute persons, but also found employment for them on ships headed east. They wanted to find "employment for all *without delay*, so that they shall not be thrown on the streets to seek their livelihood by begging, or fall into the hands of those who have hitherto made use of them for this purpose."[2] As per one of the Home's annual reports, "all cases of destitution have been inquired into, relief afforded, and every exertion made to put a stop to Asiatic MENDICANCY."[3] The lodging house's personnel, then, went above and beyond similar residences, fusing rent-based temporary lodgings with philanthropical motivations. It is the latter mission to aid all distressed Indians by providing charitable lodgings that this chapter addresses.

At the 1869 annual meeting of the Strangers' Home Board of Directors, the board discussed how people viewing the institute were often surprised that "inmates" (as the paying

[1] "Indian Beggars," *Times*, 20 July 1852.
[2] BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Report of the Proceedings at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders* (1868-69).
[3] BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*. Capitalization of "mendicancy" is from the original source.

guests were called) did not constantly fill the Home to capacity. This meeting suggests the British public anticipated the Strangers' Home to be overwhelmed with the number of "inmates." Yet, for their part, board members did not see the home from a "pecuniary point of view." Rather, they considered the Home as a place "to offer respectable lodging and board at a reasonable rate." It was, after all, for the welfare of lascars that the Home had been designed and founded in the first place. Accordingly, the Strangers' Home was always presented as a charitable institute and not merely a lodging house. Moreover, the board and its supporters also saw themselves as good, Christian Britons, who had a *responsibility* towards any and all "strangers" who found themselves distressed in Britain. This form of charity, then, was understood as a way to improve the moral state of Britain, or at least the perception of Britain that travellers took back to India. There was a serious concern expressed by some of the perception that the colonies may have had of Britain, and likely a fear of the contradictions of their "liberal" empire being exposed. The Strangers' Home thus came to be seen by missionaries as having "saved [the] country from the dishonour which must be attached to her in the minds of those distant peoples as they hear of what awaits their countrymen on our shores."[4] This so-called "home" was thus a space of tangled interests, at once benefitting the destitute while appeasing the moral concerns of the administrators.

Informing the relationship between Britons and Indians was the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The impact of this event had on the relationship and ideas of racial superiority between impoverished Indians and Britons is unclear, but what is clear is that Hughes and his colleagues used 1857 as a way to strengthen the mandate of the Home and to garner more funds to keep it self-sufficient. Indeed, as much as 1857 marked a shift in which the British government took

[4] H.A. Page, "In Safe Haven," in Rev. Donald Macleod, ed., *Good Words* (London: Daldy, Isbister, & Co., 56, Ludgate Hill, 1874), 464.

direct control over British India from the EIC, so too did it mark a shift in which ex-EIC officials took control of Indians in Britain. Within this transformation, charity became central to the functioning of the Home, and to exercising control over a transient migrant and labour population that was increasingly viewed in racial terms by the broader public. The Indian Rebellion brought Indians to British attention in a new way, and in light of this, the Home came to be seen as a kind of refuge to aid those who were increasingly seen as dangerous. In its ability to house and feed "oriental strangers," the Home became a point of contact, a migratory space in which the two worlds of Britain and India collided. The institution was a safe, home-like place that catered to the cultural needs of its residents while simultaneously monitoring the number of destitute strangers roaming the streets of London and beyond.[5] In this way, the Home was able to shelter Britons themselves from working-class Indians by creating a space that brought Indians from across the U.K. into one, centralized space.

This chapter examines the relationship between destitute Indians, both lascars and non-sailors, and Britons in London's East End, while focusing specifically on the actions of the Strangers' Home. Most scholars who have written on the Home have acknowledged the institute's uniqueness, but their histories of the Home itself are often cursory at best. Martin Wainwright provides the most thorough scholarly account of the Home and its operations, but he too falls shorts of a detailed study of the many aspects of the institute, especially that of charity. The issue is the scarcity of extant sources. Existing scholarship on the Strangers' Home relies heavily on two autobiographical accounts written by Joseph Salter, and the British Library's India Office Records. These sources, however, fail to illustrate the full extent of the Home's charitable side. To capture this aspect of the Home, I therefore rely on close readings of extant

[5] Antoinette Burton has a discussion of regulating and supervising encounters between Indians and Britons in A. Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 54.

annual reports that collectively provide for a richer history of both the institute's purpose and the destitute Indians who were admitted to it.[6] Due to the charity extended to distressed imperial subjects by administrators, the Strangers' Home provides useful, though fleeting, information on who the distressed were or at the very least how they were written about. Sources on working-class Indians, aside from lascars, are scarce for the early nineteenth century, but it is clear from records of and related to the Strangers' Home that Indians were occupying various areas of East London. In trying to aid lascars in these neighbourhoods, other Indians in the area caught the attention of the administrators. In an atmosphere ripe with tension, Indians residing in the metropole became more visible and exposed. Running alongside this history are also shadows of a counter-narrative that show how integrated some Indians had become within British society.

I begin this chapter by looking at the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the impact it had on Indians in Britain, specifically British perceptions of Indians who were residing in London's East End. Next, I look at how the Strangers' Home provided free food and lodgings to distressed Indians in London, and how the Home garnered public support to fund the institute's philanthropical operations. In so doing, administrators simultaneously presented an image of Indians as being inherently good but in need of charity, and worked to remove Indians from Britain through repatriation. I end with an analysis of the potential racial implications of repatriation, which was seen as a form of charity. Within the walls of the Strangers' Home, the concepts of helping, caring, and philanthropy took on complicated meanings, which I use to nuance understandings of interactions between working-class Indians and British humanitarians in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

[6] The eight complete annual reports are for the years 1861, 1869, 1870, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1896, and 1915. There are fourteen partial reports in newspapers, from 1858-60, 1864-5, 1867, 1869, 1871-3, 1893, 1897, and 1911. Scholarship to this date has not yet tapped in to the full potential of the annual reports, which are rich in statistical details and examples, despite being few in number.

1857: From Rebellion to Racial Discourse

The British Empire's steady expansion eastward led to increased networks of trade and the movement of people that inevitably meant exercising control over a greater number of non-white, colonized subjects.[7] Expansion was particularly important in terms of resources between Britain and India, as the latter "offered opportunities for trade in cotton, silk, indigo dye, tea, and opium."[8] The Indian Rebellion, which began in May 1857, disrupted this increasingly intertwined economic and political relationship between Britain and India. One cause that led to conflict was the EIC's introduction of the Enfield rifle to Indian troops. A rumour quickly spread that the Enfield's cartridges were greased with beef and pork fat, which were offensive to Hindus and Muslims respectively.[9] In the face of these rumours, sepoys (Indian soldiers) mutinied in the Bengal Army. This was but one aspect of a larger rebellion, though, as Indians elsewhere had also begun to mobilize against the EIC's rule and land conquest. The British public was kept informed about this rebellion, which lasted nearly a year. Within the press, news stories focused on the atrocities committed by Indians, largely ignoring the equally horrific behaviour conducted by the British.[10] These rumours included "Indian men raping and torturing English women at Cawnpore and elsewhere," which heightened the stereotype of Indians as dangerous.[11]

Reflecting on his work in 1873, the London City Mission's Joseph Salter wrote of the impact that he saw the rebellion having on Indians in Britain. Prior to the outbreak of the

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[7] Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 63.
[8] Ibid., 64.
[9] Ibid., 67.
[10] For a sense of how the rebellion was portrayed in the media, see Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Tim Pratt, "Ernest Jones' Mutiny: *The People's Paper*, English Popular Politics and the Indian Rebellion 1857-58," in Chandrika Kaul, ed., *Media and the British Empire* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 88-103.
[11] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 68; Clare Midgley, "Bringing the Empire home: women activists in imperial Britain, 1790s-1930s," in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239.

rebellion, the province of Awadh, located in the north of India near present-day Nepal, "had recently been absorbed into our Indian empire, and the son of the widowed Queen had been deposed."[12] Awadh had been, wrote, "the only remaining Mohammedan kingdom of India, with any show of independence; so that the Governor-General, by this step, had deprived the Mohammedan race of their last signs of royalty."[13] Salter saw this annexation of Indian lands as necessary because of the alleged lawlessness in Awadh, failing to acknowledge, of course, that British colonization was the very reason for the "lawlessness." He had heard that "life and property were utterly insecure in Lucknow, that natives had been shot in their own bazaars, and the murderers had taken possession of wives and property with impunity." It was in an attempt to bring order to the otherwise "distasteful and troublesome" area that the British had invaded and displaced the Awadh royalty, he argued.[14] The king's mother had subsequently travelled to Britain to plead her son's case, "with a numerous suit [of 120-130 people] to intercede with the Queen of England for her imprisoned son."[15] Having heard of their arrival, Salter managed to gain access to their residence in London.

Salter himself had recently learned to speak Hindi from Mir Jaffer Ali, who had previously arrived in London. It was Mir Jaffer Ali who gave him an opportunity to engage with the "turbaned munshis, eunuchs, astrologers, and bawarchis," who had just arrived in London.[16] Salter saw this group of people as uncivilized, having previously written that "their claims to civilization, and their position in the social scale of life, may be estimated from the fact, that chairs and tables, knives and forks, shoes and stockings, were luxuries, the use of which they had

[12] Joseph Salter, *The Asiatic in England: Sketches of Sixteen Years Work Among Orientals* (London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday, 1873), 53.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Joseph Salter, *The East in the West, or Work Among the Asiatics and Africans in London* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1896), 138.
[16] Ibid., 139.

never learnt."[17] He spent three years with them as a missionary, conducting classes to teach English, but also to learn Hindi and "to bring the doctrines of the Cross before the minds of the natives."[18] He notes that his time with them ended when "the Indian Mutiny, with all its horrors and adventures, startled Europe." Salter writes that the rebellion made elite Indians in Britain "alarmed for their own safety, and [so they] escaped from England with all possible speed."[19] The desire to flee was a direct consequence of the resistance against British rule in Awadh. As a result, the widowed queen of Awadh tried to petition the British from France, arguing that her family had no connection to the rebellion. She also tried to assert her allegiance to the British crown.

As scholars have shown, the Indian Rebellion bolstered a negative perception of Indians, and nursed fears of those residing within Britain. Antoinette Burton has found that the rebellion brought "images of empire home to Britons like no other event of the century."[20] Popular literature had already been describing South Asians as sexualized beings not to be trusted with English women. Novels like *The Lustful Turk* (1828) described Muslims as having "'inflammable' minds; they were presumed to lust after white women who were thus at risk and therefore in need of protection from them."[21] News of rape and violence coming out of the rebellion reinforced this popular image of lascars, who were predominantly Muslim, as being dangerous. Though lascars dying on British streets in the 1840s and 50s had slowly been creeping into newspapers and garnering British attention, the rebellion of 1857 heightened

[17] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 55.
[18] Ibid, 58.
[19] Salter, *The East in the West*, 139.
[20] Antoinette Burton, "New Narratives of Imperial Politics in the Nineteenth Century," in Hall and Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire*, 215.
[21] Humanyun Ansari, *"The Infidel Within": The History of Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004), 74. See also, Hyungji Park, "'The Story of Our Lives': *The Moonstone* and the Indian Mutiny in *All the Year Round*," in David Finkelstein and Douglas M Peers, eds., *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media* (Hampshire and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

existing racial perceptions of these individuals. They went from being seen as starving and mistreated lascars neglected by the British to dangerous subjects who were not to be trusted. As Michael Fisher has argued, after 1857, "dominant British racial attitudes against non-whites, especially against non-white men, hardened for various reasons."[22] These reasons include the Indian rebellion and the development of scientific racism that was derived from Darwinism, which fuelled wrongful and harmful misconceptions of Indian imperial subjects.

Fisher further shows that post-1857, government officials expected Indians who lived among the British "to proclaim and demonstrate their submission to Britain."[23] A petition to the House of Lords by the Queen of Awadh in August 1857 exemplifies this need to perform Indian loyalty. On August 6, the House of Lords discussed a petition presented to them by the Queen of Awadh and the King of Awadh's brother. Lord Campbell, a Whig member of parliament, exclaimed that in the petition,

> They expressed the deepest pain and regret at the news recently received from the East Indies of the general defection of the Native troops in the Bengal Presidency, and they went on to state their surprise at its being supposed that their relative the King of Oude had been at all concerned in that movement. They denied all complicity in it on the part of the Sovereign, and they said they felt confident from assurance they received from him that he was entirely innocent of the charges brought against him…that all the members of the Royal Family of Oude were faithfully attached to the connection with Great Britain.[24]

The petition ended with a request to let the King of Awadh know the charges that were being laid against him and to give him a chance to prove his innocence. During the discussion, Lord Redesdale brought to the House's attention that the word "humble" was omitted from the petition. According to Redesdale, all petitions had to present themselves as "the humble

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[22] Michael H. Fisher, "Making London's 'Oriental Quarter'," in Gyanendra Pandey, ed., *Subalternity and Difference: Investigations from the North and the South* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 94. Other events included Jamaica in 1865, and New Zealand (1845 and 1872).
[23] Michael H. Fisher, "Being Indian in Britain during 1857," in Andrea Major and Crispin Bates, eds., *Mutiny at the Margins: New Perspectives on the Indian Uprising of 1857* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2013), 134.
[24] "The King of Oude.—Petition," 6 August 1857, *Hansard*, HL Deb 6 August 1857, vol 147 cc1119-21, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1857/aug/06/the-king-of-oude-petition, accessed, 28 May 2016.

Petition," which was omitted here. The petition also ended with the writers signing off with "pray" instead of "humbly pray."[25] Consequently, the petition was withdrawn due to the technicality, though this likely represents the larger disinterest in the Awadh royal family. Nevertheless, the story of the Awadh family petition and their departure to France highlights the tensions that arose between Britons and Indians within the metropole after the rebellion. These tensions, though, were uneven.

Despite the growth in racial tension after 1857, attitudes towards Indians were varied and unequal throughout the remainder of the century. In talking about the impact that the rebellion had on Indians in Britain, many scholars have stressed their declining fortunes in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion. Martin Wainwright, for example, argues that the rebellion produced a more starkly defined division between the two races within the British mindset.[26] Indians now needed to justify their presence in Britain in more subdued and submissive ways—or at least greater obedience was expected of elite Indians. Yet, the situation was different among the labouring classes whose submission was already a necessary component of their jobs, be that sailing or serving. Lascars and other working-class Indians were also sometimes seen as equal to Britain's own poor, though with the added dimension of racial difference. Humanyun Ansari, in writing against class-based narratives of Indians and Britons such as Wainwright's, emphasizes how cultural and racial intolerance towards Indians varied.[27] Indeed, studying the experience and perception of Indians in the East End complicates the argument that racial tensions between Britons and Indians in Britain escalated post-1857.

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[25] Ibid.
[26] A. Martin Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians: Social Rank, Imperial Identify, and South Asians in Britain, 1858-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 14. See also, Fisher, "Being Indian in Britain during 1857."
[27] Ansari, *"The Infidel Within"*, 64.

Reflecting on the East End in the 1850s, H.A. Page described the neighbourhood of Bluegate Fields as being laced with "abject corruption and poverty." The buildings were reminiscent of prisons and he saw women "squatted and chatting, as it would appear, quite comfortably in the sun, amid the dust and steaming filth of the gutter." Occupying this poverty-stricken neighbourhood were

> women, loose-haired, thrust out; there a negro smoking, as he leans over resting his elbows; yonder again is a Malay, with a very sleepy look, yet telling of incipient desperation,--and no wonder, for there, right in front of us, is Chinese Jack's opium divan, of which most people have heard vague rumours.[28]

The neighbourhood of Bluegate Fields was part of what Fisher refers to as the "Oriental Quarter." It was by all accounts a multiracial area, defined largely by the presence of non-European sailors, opium-smoking dens run by migrants such as "Chinese Jack," and inter-racial couples. Salter writes, "some of the tenements were occupied by Mahommedans who married English wives, whose half-caste families had free run of the court."[29] East London, however, was not the only part of Britain that "suffered" from being inhabited by impoverished, foreign migrants. Indeed, Salter writes that colonial vagrants were "in nearly every considerable town in England."[30] Yet within these discussions of inter-racial relations are snippets of how different races did interact and co-exist. There was certainly a great deal of intolerance, but there were some trace moments of poor Indians getting along with poor Britons.

Alongside opium-dens, South Asian men set-up lodging houses with the help of their English compatriots. Typically, Indians founded their lodging houses with the aid of English women. Salter states that some of these women "had lived so long in this element, that they use

[28] Page, "In Safe Haven," 458-59.
[29] Salter, *The East in the West*, 25.
[30] Ibid.

the Oriental vernacular and have even been known to act as interpreters at the Police-courts."[31] For example, one woman named Emma lived with a Chinese man. She came to be known as "Chinese Emma," a name that speaks to the negative racialization of women who associated with non-Europeans. She had lost, it seems, her Englishness. Salter, on learning more about Emma, exclaimed in his writing, "What a triumph of sovereign grace it would be, should the Lord touch Chinese Emma's heart, and exalt her to her proper position in society."[32] According to Salter, Emma eventually entered an asylum (The Sisters of Mercy), "but it was an asylum in which the efforts of a sister in Christ were effaced by the puerilities of Rome," and so after a week she returned to her lodging house and "oriental" ways.[33]

Similarly, there was a public house where lascars and English women were frequently seen visiting together. Emanating from this building were sounds of comingling that Salter found troubling. When Salter made inquiries about women entering this public house, the owner or manager reassured him that nothing untoward was occurring in the building. Regarding his concerns about the behaviour of visitors, he was told, "it's only a jollification and a spree these Lascars have with the ladies of the neighbourhood when they come on shore. They are all well-known here, and, poor fellows, they like to have some fun when they do come, and you well know they have nowhere else to go."[34] Though such a comment was meant to be reassuring, Salter continued to see lodging houses as "pest-houses of sin and death," and sought to make the Strangers' Home more well-known so people knew that there were better, safer, and cleaner lodgings to turn too.[35] In many ways, his concern mirrored the racial attitudes of many middle- and upper-class Britons toward colonial subjects. Yet, as Fisher notes, "Salter's evidence reveals

[31] Salter, *The East in the West*, 28.
[32] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 28-30.
[33] Ibid., 30.
[34] Ibid., 32.
[35] Ibid., 34.

how these lodging houses became Asian-centered spaces in London, incorporating British women as well as Indian *lascars*."[36] The scant evidence that exists of these spaces shows that Indians and the like were not necessarily seen as dangerous, corrupt, or sexual predators. Women like Emma formed life-long bonds with the foreign men who they encountered.

Racial concerns aside, lodging houses in general were not seen as hospitable places. An evangelical pamphlet on lodging houses in London from 1846 talks just as disparagingly of them as Salter does, yet contains no references to colonial subjects, just travellers. In the pamphlet, lodging houses are described as housing "the very worst of mankind, who could with ease live elsewhere, but who prefer these wretched places of abode, because they best answer their own evil purposes."[37] These lodging houses were generally small and yet housed thirty or more travellers. A report found that in one house, "fifteen have been found sleeping in one room, three or four in a bed, men, women, and children, promiscuously."[38] Lodging houses then were not corrupted by the presence of colonial subjects travelling to Britain, but were already undesirable spaces that the British upper class viewed as immoral dens in need of better control and regulation.[39] Colonel Hughes saw these lodging houses as taking advantage of Indians who were vulnerable and had no other place to go.

The problem, then, was not necessarily race, but rather poor living conditions in the East End and the lack of support offered to the Indian working class. Understandings of race was always complicated by the category of class, and it was class distinctions more so than racial

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[36] Fisher, "Making London's 'Oriental Quarter'," 92.
[37] *The Lodging Houses of London, extracted from the London City Mission Magazine* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, Fleet-Street, 1846), 3. Sold at the Office of the Society for private circulation at the cost of one penny.
[38] Ibid., 4.
[39] Michael H. Fisher, "South-Asian Settlers and Transient Networks and Communities in Britain, 1830s-1857," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford/Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 93.

divisions that heightened after 1857.[40] Race did matter, but when it came to working-class Indians, race was more similar to British perspectives of the pauper class. 1857 is taken as a marker for a change in the relationship between Indians and Britons, but it cannot simply be understood as having the same implications for all Indians in Britain. Administrators at the Strangers' Home, which coincidentally opened in 1857, took advantage of the precarious atmosphere of imperial and racial tensions and, in expanding the Home's mission, presented itself as the ideal asylum for Indians who were increasingly being seen as problematic.

The Residents of the Strangers' Home

The Strangers' Home was a unique, migratory space that provided certain appealing comforts that set it apart from other lodging houses. To best aid the residents of the institute, part of the Home's mission was philanthropy and repatriation. Hughes, and the secretaries who succeeded him, not only ensured a place that provided safety and shelter to lascars, but also to those who were destitute. During a period of shifting racial perceptions of Indians post-rebellion, the Home became a pervasive charitable endeavour. Charity extended beyond providing food and shelter, as administrators also helped to repatriate its residents. Passages, albeit working ones, were found aboard ships headed east for both lascars and non-sailors, which administrators saw as a form of charity. Charity seen in this way was a means to help the distressed but also to protect Britain and Britons from the potentially contaminating influences of foreigners. The rhetoric of the Home, though, was always around the good that could be brought to Indians, both physically and spiritually, rather than on their dangerous nature. Yet at the same time, the "progress" and "success" of the Home were measured in terms of how many Indians were taken

[40] For an informative discussion of race, class, and gender, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

off the streets of Britain and removed from the island. Moreover, the success of the Home—as with charities in general—depended on patrons' support, as "money is the life blood of any organization."[41] Hughes and his colleagues consistently offered charity to those in need, but receiving financial support from the public in order to offer this charity was a constant challenge.

What made the Strangers' Home unique was that it offered a haven of sorts that was much more attuned to the cultural needs of residents than other lodging houses in the United Kingdom. At the Home, one's language could be understood and even the food catered to residents' requisite diets. When he was setting up the services to be offered, Hughes ensured that cultural differences were adhered to, especially when it came to food. There were two dining halls in order to cater to both working-class and elite residents, as the Board wanted any and all residents, regardless of status, to find comfortable lodgings at the institute. Accordingly, there was a first-class mess at 14s. per week, and a rice and curry mess for 10s. a week. Meals at both halls were provided three times a day.[42] The attention paid to food was highlighted in a review of the Home in 1872:

> [In] the kitchen, where a grizzly, spare Hindoo was sweating over a mighty stove, we found him cooking neither English beef nor Scotch mutton, but fish; and this for sailors, from Zanzibar and other parts on the coasts of Africa, whose religion, or something else, makes them averse to use any other kind of animal food. The customs and consciences of Mahomedans are equally respected. That there may be no ground even for a suspicion on their part that Christians would take advantage of their necessities to tamper with their faith, swine meat of all kinds is strictly interdicted, nor allowed on any account to be brought into the Home.[43]

What the residents made of the separate halls and the food provided is not known. While it is easy to assume that there would have been an appreciation for this attention to detail, the diet

[41] Sarah Flew, "Unveiling the Anonymous Philanthropist: Charity in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 20, no.1 (2015): 21.
[42] LSE: Booth.B.138 (1895), Interview with Mr. M. Johnson, supt. Of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders.
[43] "Charity in London," in *Sunday Magazine*, ed. Thomas Guthrie (London: Strahan & Co., 1872), 279. See also, "India in London: Poor Orientals who come to Interview the Queen," *Daily Mail*, 26 August 1899.

was not so different from that provided to Indian seamen on ships. It is also not unreasonable for Asian and African sailors to have expected their cultural diets to be respected, especially from an institute that referred to itself as a "home" for strangers.

Other services included medical and financial services on site. Medical doctors, such as F.M. Corner, Esq., provided professional aid to sick residents, and transportation to hospitals was provided when necessary.[44] Additionally, bank-like services were on offer; lodgers could store their money and valuables with the secretary for safekeeping, and their possessions would be returned to them on their departure—like a modern-day safety deposit box.[45] Due to the quality of lodgings offered, many lodgers stayed at the Home on repeated trips to London. As per the annual reports, many were "old boarders," or sailors who had repeatedly returned to the Home instead of taking up lodgings elsewhere in subsequent trips.[46]

The residents themselves came from all across the empire. They came from the Punjab, Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Sri Lanka, Malacca, Malta, Mauritius, the South Sea Islands, Madagascar, East Africa, West Africa, the East and West Indies, Turkey, Arabia, China, and Japan. Most residents, though, were from South Asia. As part of their efforts, the Board of Directors reached out to Asians throughout Britain. Hughes and the Board felt that "Asiatics in the provinces throughout England should receive the attention of the Home, as far as it is possible to benefit them."[47] For this purpose, the Home's missionary was instructed to travel to across the United Kingdom looking for Asians to whom he could bring the scriptures, and to let them know that they could find assistance at the Strangers' Home if needed. Assistance was offered to "the same class of strangers out of the Home whether in hospitals, gaols, workhouses,

[44] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report of the Sixteenth Anniversary of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders* (1873), bound with pamphlets on China Holdings, 15.
[45] WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 3.
[46] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 4
[47] BL: Tr. 152 (c) 1869 Vol 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 17.

or elsewhere."[48] Bristol, Bath and Cardiff were among the areas visited. The missionary working for the Home also regularly visited Southampton where he met with many Asians both on steamers and in the town.[49] Largely he would bring translated scriptures to them. In more pressing cases, translators were needed, such as in hospitals and courts—a service that the Strangers' Home could provide as the missionary could speak Hindi. Efforts were extended to continental Europe as well. In 1886, for example, 33 cases of destitute persons were sent to the Home from European (continental) ports, and 126 were sent there from British ports.[50] The following year, 31 came from European ports and 181 from British ports.[51]

The occupations of residents were also quite varied. While most were lascars, others were cooks, stewards, servants, ayahs (nannies), doctors, translators, and even firemen (see Table 2.1).[52] An Aboriginal man from Australia, for example, was received in 1888 after having been found starving on the streets. The man, Timber Ninghay was sixteen years old and had been found by employees of Dr. Barnardo's organization who brought him to the Home. Ninghay was orphaned at the age of ten and was brought to England via Calcutta shortly thereafter, though it is not known why or by whom. He then spent several years in northern England "living on alms, and doing little jobs of work at times."[53] One of the jobs he learned and developed good skills for was gardening. Consequently, at the Home, he was employed as a gardener where he worked until he was enticed to leave by a man who had asked Ninghay "to accompany him about to fairs." Ninghay eventually found his way back to the Home where he was then found

[48] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics.—The eleventh," *Times* 9 June 1868.
[49] BL Tr. 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 7.
[50] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886* (20 April 1887), 3.
[51] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887* (18 April 1888), 4.
[52] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 30 May 1865; BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*; "Strangers' Home,-The thirteenth annual report," *Times*, 1 June 1870; "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Times* 29 May 1873; "Strangers' Home for Asiatics,-The 17th," 2 June 1874."
[53] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888* (17 April 1889), 5.

	OCCUPATION			
YEAR	Lascars	Cooks, Stewards, Servants	Ayahs	Other
1864	130	29	6	25
1868	54	57		12
1869	132	57	7	15
1872	183	72	5	102
1873	111	84	2	74
TOTAL	610	299	20	228

Table 2.1. Occupations of residents of the Strangers' Home, 1864-73. Other occupations included doctors, interpreters, coolies, nestorians, zemindars, convicts, engineers, pilgrims, soldiers, traders, clerks, planters, and firemen. Firemen made up the bulk of "other" residents in 1872-73. Source: Strangers' Home Annual Reports, 1864, 1868-69, 1872-73.

employment as a servant on a ship for £2.10s per month. The superintendent was later informed that the captain and the crew took kindly to the man and treated him well.[54] Although the majority of residents were Indians, Ninghay's case is one among others that shows how administrators at the Strangers' Home took in all imperial subjects from the colonies.

The majority of the Strangers' Home residents were also male, but there is evidence that the Home catered to both male and female servants, at least for a short while. As with lascars, ayahs too had been neglected by the EIC. Ayahs, as described by Salter, were "an interesting class of East Indian nurses who attend English ladies and their children, either on the outward or homeward passage."[55] In 1833, a case was brought before the M.P. for Sheffield, which described a woman who had come from India on successive voyages since 1823 to attend on English families returning to Britain. In April 1833, she arrived in England after having served Mr. and Mrs. Charles of Brunswick Terrace, but instead of being provided a return passage as she was promised, "she was refused the necessary assistance to return back to her own

[54] Ibid.
[55] "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1888, 206-207.

country."[56] The EIC, unsurprisingly, did not provide her with any aid and it is unknown what happened to her.

Records both of and by ayahs are just as difficult to find as those by other working-class Indians, so piecing together their history is equally challenging. However, as fleeting as their records may be, there is sufficient evidence to show that the Strangers' Home did try to accommodate women. The original plans for the institute had specified two buildings to accommodate both male and female servants.[57] Though a separate building was never constructed, there appear to have been rooms set aside for women. Missionary reports drawn up for the Home, for example, provide evidence of the presence of women both in the Home and around the ports. In his report for 1860, Joseph Salter mentions an ayah whom he had directed to the Home.[58] The annual report for 1861 also states that the Home was not to be exclusively for lascars, as "accommodation is provided for *all* classes of Orientals, male and female, for whom separate apartments, perfectly distinct from each other are set apart."[59] An article in the *Sunday Magazine* in 1872 also refers to an "Ayah's Room" in the establishment.[60] That a space was dedicated for ayahs suggests that there were a significant number of female labourers travelling to Britain.[61]

Due to the nature of the sources, it is difficult to discern how many women ended up staying at the Strangers' Home, as references to them are few and far between. What is known is that annual reports continued to provide rates for both male and female servants for at least a few

[56] "Mansion-house: Mr. Buckingham, M.P. for Sheffield, accompanied by a poor Indian female," *Times*, 3 July 1833.
[57] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *The Times*, 10 April 1855.
[58] "Recent Reports of the Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 May 1860, 159-60.
[59] WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 7.
[60] "Charity in London," in *Sunday Magazine*, 278. There is also a reference in BL: IOL.1947 a.2622 (J), *Report of the Proceedings at the Re-Opening of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders* (1870), 2.
[61] Rozina Visram has found that there were an increasing number of ayahs being employed from the mid-century onwards. See, R. Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 51-54.

decades. In 1862, for example, "male and female Asiatic servants [were to be] charged 10s.6d. each."[62] By the 1880s, specific references to male and female servants are absent from the costs for boarders and casual visitors, so it is likely that the Strangers' Home was not able to effectively provide secure and comfortable lodgings for women, and therefore gave up on the venture sometime in the 1870s. Writing in 1891, former EIC servant Robert Cust discussed the Home and commented on how "perhaps one reason for the harmony, which prevails in the motley crew of males, [was] the absence of that sex, which either intentionally or not, generally gets men into trouble: 'Well called Wo-man, who brings woe to man!'"[63] If Cust's crude and bigoted reference is to be believed, then the Strangers' Home was definitely a male-only abode by the 1890s. A lack of physical presence at the Strangers' Home, though, does not mean that the administrators no longer aided women. In fact, the Strangers' Home annual reports show that visits were made to the ayahs at lodging houses, and that women were conversed with on occasion by a missionary. Distressed females also have a place amongst this larger history of providing for distressed imperial subjects in Britain despite the scholarship suggesting that the Home was a strictly male-only establishment.

What may explain the low numbers of ayahs at the Strangers' Home and eventual removal of the Ayahs' Room, was the existence of another lodging house dedicated specifically to ayahs. The Ayah's Home was established at some point in the mid-century by a Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, and was located on Jewry Street.[64] Although scholars have been unable to find much information on the building and ayahs themselves, it is known that the Home had 30 rooms with

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[62] S.C. Hall, "Sailors' Home," in *St. James' Magazine* (London: W. Kent and Co., Paternoster Row, 1862), 73.
[63] Robert Needham Cust, *Linguistic and Oriental Essays, written from the year 1847 to 1890* (London: Kegan Pau, Tranch, Trubner & Co., 1891), 338.
[64] There are conflicting accounts about when exactly the Ayahs' Home was opened, and the nature in which it was founded. The dominant assumption appears to be that a lodging house eventually came to exclusively house ayahs. See Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain*, 51-54; and, "Ayahs' Home," *Making Britain Database*, http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/ayahs-home (accessed 6 August 2017).

over 100 residents, and it seems to have developed out of a pre-existing lodging house. As with the Strangers' Home, the Ayah's Home "served as a refuge for ayahs who had been ill-treated, dismissed from service or simply abandoned."[65] In 1888, this Ayah's Home was set to close, "and the Ayahs are anxious and doubtful about the future," as "they are a helpless and defenceless class to be unprovided for," writes Salter.[66] Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, who could no longer financially support the institute, approached the LCM, "and offered, whilst handing it over to them, to continue to manage it under their guidance and control on the same lines as heretofore."[67] Thus the LCM took over the Ayah's Home and relocated it to King Edward Street in Hackney.[68]

On the whole, the Strangers' Home did relatively well in providing lodgings for its paying residents and charitable cases. From the opening of the Home in June, up to December 1857, the Directors were able to take in 75 destitute cases, and provide gratuitously for them. This was in addition to shipping 322 lascars and servants back to India, "the transfer of some having been arranged by the agent at the request of the owners or captains of the vessels they belonged to."[69] Likewise, those who "had been sent or came over from foreign parts in Europe, and were, with only a few exceptions, obtaining their living by begging in the streets of the metropolis" were found employment on board ships headed for the east.[70] On average, 326 people from China, Africa, and India had been lodged for a period from 2-3 days to 2 months.[71] The largest number of residents at any given time that year was ninety, and the lowest was six. In

[65] Visram, *Asians in Britain*, 51; and, Shompa Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-continent* (Oxford/Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 106.
[66] "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1888, 207.
[67] "The Ayahs' Home," *LCMM*, 2 July 1900, 174.
[68] Ibid., 172-73. Included on these pages are what appear to be actual photographs of the establishment!
[69] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 20 November 1857; and in *Morning Post*, 21 November 1857.
[70] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 20 November 1857; and in *Morning Post*, 21 November 1857.
[71] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 20 November 1857; and in *Morning Post*, 21 November 1857.

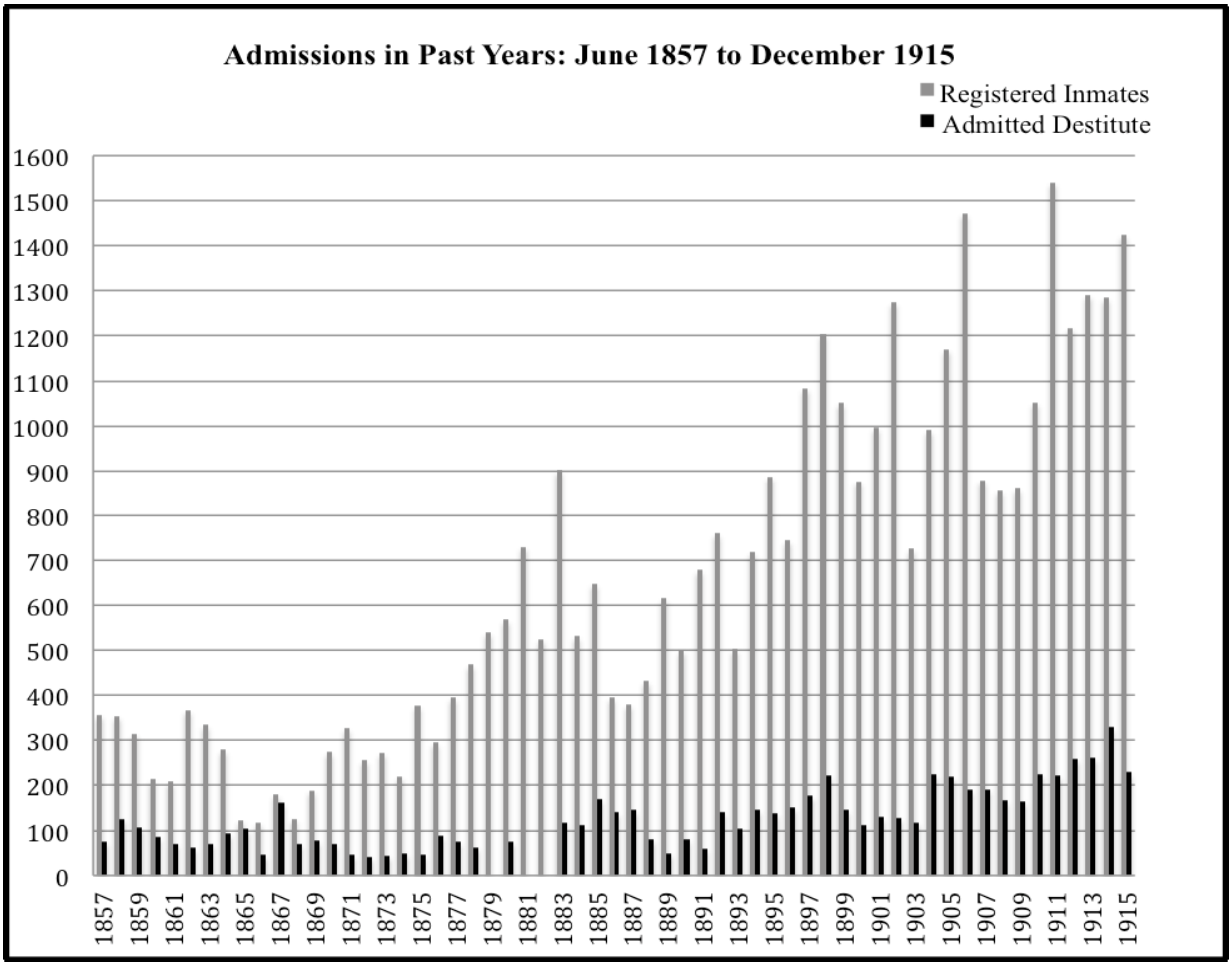

Figure 2.1: Admissions into the Strangers' Home for Asiatics from 1857-1915. There is no data on how many were admitted destitute for the years 1879, 1881, and 1882. Source: Strangers' Home Annual Report, 1915 (BL: IOR L/PJ/6/1482 F.1552).

other words, the average number of daily lodgers between June 9 and October 31 was 25, putting it at 11% of its full capacity. Unfortunately, this number was problematic because directors needed 60 paying lodgers per day for the Home to be self-supporting.[72] In the 1915 *Annual Report*, there is a record of registered inmates as well as the number of destitute cases provided for since 1857 that illustrates annual admittance into the Home (see Figure 2.1). These numbers show that on average 45-80 destitute subjects were admitted per year until the 1880s when the

[72] The cost of board and lodging, and wages totalled £373 13s. 5d., and the receipts to £228 7s., leaving a balance of £135 6s. 4d. "to be defrayed from the general fund," *Daily News*, 20 November 1857.

average rose to over 100.[73] Despite issues over a lack of paying residents, funds were increasingly spent on supporting destitute persons "for whom it is, generally speaking, impossible to find employment."[74]

During these early years, the Home was seen as being rather successful. By 1859, 7,073 lascars and servants were "engaged and shipped from the Home," and the numbers had further increased by the mid-1860s.[75] An excerpt of the 1864 annual report notes that more lascars were needed for ships leaving from Britain than could be supplied during this period. The following year the Lascar Shipping Office at the Strangers' Home almost immediately employed all lascars on their admittance to the Home as they were in high demand.[76] By 1868, the Home's missionary reported, "nearly every variety of Asiatic, and a large number of Africans and South Sea Islanders have come within the influence of the Home."[77] The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 further facilitated imperial trade and had a corresponding impact on the demand and utility of the Home.[78] By 1872, for example, "a larger number of Asiatic Seamen than usual came to the port of London."[79] Two years later, the *Times* reported that the increase in numbers of lascars frequenting London "has taxed the accommodation of this establishment to a considerable extent."[80] Trade, however, went down in the mid-eighties, and so too did the number of men making use of the Home. But in 1888, "the revival of the shipping trade" led to a more "useful

[73] IOR: L/PJ/6/1482, file 1552, *Annual Report for the Year 1915* (14 April 1916), 17.
[74] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 5.
[75] "3rd annual meeting for 1859," *Daily News*, 7 June 1860.
[76] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Daily News*, 30 May 1865.
[77] BL: Tr. 152 (c) 1868 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*.
[78] Elleke Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals, 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 18-19; Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 110; Ravi Ahuja, "The Age of the 'Lascar': South Asian Seafarers in the Times of Imperial Steam Shipping," in Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook, eds., *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013), 69.
[79] BL: Tr. 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 14; SOAS: CWML O.204 *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders*, 6.
[80] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics.—the 17th," *Times*, 2 June 1874.

and prosperous year" at the Home.[81] Increased trade also meant "greater facility in finding employment for Asiatic seamen, so that there were opportunities to dispose of even half-castes and others who had little or no previous training for the sea."[82] The demand of the Home thus hinged on the strength of imperial trade. The more ships that went out, the more spaces there were for lascars and servants to fill on those ships as labourers.

Unfortunately, in terms of being a self-supporting institution, the numbers of paying lodgers was not reliable enough to make financial ends meet. In 1869, there were 354 paying residents. The number continued to decrease until 1872 when it briefly went up to 367.[83] The Home was in a rough shape that year both physically and financially, and the cost for lodgings had risen from eight shillings a week to ten. Repairs to the building could no longer be avoided, "which, from want of funds, have been put off from year to year, and are now so much needed throughout the Home."[84] The repairs were extensive enough that the building had to be closed for a short while during the winter of 1869-70. It was reopened in January 1870 after "having been repaired, painted throughout, and completed as originally intended on its erection."[85] An increase in the number of residents in 1871 and 1872 helped the Home pay off some of their debts, and allowed it to be self-sufficient for at least a few months.[86] Yet it remained in constant need of funds, and it was felt by some that the public was doing a great disservice by not contributing more to the Home's funds. The Marquis of Cholmondeley, who chaired the 1873 annual meeting, proclaimed that "when we consider the small amount which the Home costs, it

[81] TNA: MT 9/368 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 2. Likewise, several crews were received and their food and board was paid for by the shipping companies in 1898, see "Strangers' Home for Asiatics.—the annual," *The Times*, 21 April 1898.
[82] TNA: MT 9/368 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 2.
[83] "Statistics of Working of the 'Home'" in BL: IOL.1947 a.2622 (j), *Report of the Proceedings at the Re-Opening of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders*.
[84] BL: Tr. 152 (c) Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 8.
[85] BL: IOL.1947 a.2622 (j), *The Re-Opening of the Strangers' Home*.
[86] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders*, 8.

is a reflection on those who love missionary work, who desire to see the truth brought home to these poor Asiatics who visit our shores, that they are so backward, and do not give us more efficient support."[87]

Part of the Home's persistent struggle with finances can be traced to the original debt that had been accumulated in opening the Home. Due to the initial debt, the Home faced a significant financial burden even in prosperous years when the income matched expenditure. In 1860, the Board of Directors remained £5,300 in debt, and still owed £5000 in 1869.[88] In 1865, administrators had requested that the public donate one thousand pounds in total to the Home. This amount, they felt, "will not be considered an unreasonable sum to invite the British public to provide annually for carrying on the duties of such an important national institution."[89] The number was reduced the following year to £850 per year, as that was the sum recorded to keep "the asylum" (the Home) in operation.[90] They also remained steadfast in their belief that they were doing important work that the public could and should support.[91] Rev. Dr. Hoole, Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, for example, said, "I shall be glad to afford any service in my power to an object so benevolent and so worthy the Christians of this great city."[92]

To help garner public support, administrators spoke positively of the Home's work to encourage donations. The home's administrators also played on imperial connection to India in order to encourage donations. As General H. A. Brownlow commented at the 1887 annual meeting, Britons were "bound to support this Institution because England is the ruler of India." It

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[87] Quoted in SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders*, 9. The Home was vested, as per the deed, in the names of Lord Henry Cholmondeley, George Arbuthnot, T. Fowell Buxton, Esq., W.E. Hubbard, Esq., and Lieut.-Colonel Robert Marsh Hughes, see "3rd annual meeting for 1859," *Daily News* 7 June 1860.
[88] WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 11; BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 2.
[89] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *Daily News*, 30 May 1865.
[90] "The Strangers' Home," *Times* 14 June 1866.
[91] "The Annual Meeting," *Friend of India*, 6 August 1863.
[92] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 4.

was argued that given the success of the trade between Britain and India, "and how many derive wealth from it, this Home ought to be supported largely and liberally."[93] Brownlow here echoed a speech that Thomas Babington Macaulay gave in the House of Commons on April 7, 1840. Macaulay, commenting on the war with China, wrote that lascars were "our Lascars, people of a different colour from ours, but still our fellow-subjects, [who] were flung into the sea."[94] Indian labour was a necessary part of the British Empire as their labour filled voids that were left by the voyage from Britain to South Asia. Working-class Indians' place in the empire only solidified with the Indian Rebellion. The link between Britain and India hinged on Indian labour, and the Home became a part of preserving the image of this imperial bond.

Success of the Home, even a perceived success, was necessary to convince subscribers and donors that their money was being used in support of an advantageous cause. So too was transparency.[95] Middle- and upper-class Victorians, Susie Steinback writes, "were always on the lookout for signs of feigned distress, for poverty that was the individual's own fault, and for sexual impropriety."[96] Annual meetings were thus open to members of the public, where they could hear of the work conducted by the secretary and the directors. Visits to the Home itself were also encouraged.[97] The meetings were not exclusively for the white British public either. Maharajah Duleep Singh, for example, attended the meetings on occasion, and, at one meeting,

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[93] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887*, 15, and 21.
[94] T.B. Macaulay, *Speeches of Lord Macaulay, corrected by himself* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877), 108.
[95] Flew, "Unveiling the Anonymous Philanthropist," 21. See also Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange, and Bertrand Taithe, "The Charity-Mongers of Modern Babylon: Bureaucracy, Scandal, and the Transformation of the Philanthropic Marketplace, c.1870–1912," *Journal of British Studies* 54 (January 2015): 118-137.
[96] Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians*, 120.
[97] The annual meetings were at first consistently held in Willis' Rooms, "a noble suit of assembly rooms," which were opened in 1765. The building's rooms were "let for public meetings, dramatic readings, concerts, balls, and occasionally for dinner," Edward Walford, *Old and New London* (London, 1891), 196. The meetings always ended in a similar fashion: with a discussion of the "good" work done by the Home. By the 1880s, the meetings were held at the Home, which allowed not only regular attendees but also inmates to attend ("inmates attended the meetings and were most orderly and attentive," TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 1, and *Annual Report for the Year 1887*, 1.

Mancherjee Bhownaggree, an Indian who later became a member of parliament, "expressed gratitude as a native of India for the excellent work of the institution."[98] The Home's residents also attended the meetings, demonstrating an interest in the Home's proceedings.[99] It is doubtful, though, if the opinions of Indians or other residents had any tangible influence in the work carried out in the home. Moreover, the lack of sufficient paying residents and continued financial debt puts into question how much a custom lodging house was actually desired by imperial subjects themselves.

Helping Indians Outside of the Strangers' Home

Throughout the remainder of the century, the Board of Directors would continue to remain confident about the suffering they had alleviated in the East End and the good they were doing for imperial subjects in Britain. But alongside discussions of reduced suffering were also discussions of "cleaning-up" British streets. An excerpt of the Strangers' Home annual report in the *Daily News* (1860) records that the directors were able to "induce Asiatic crimps [lodging house keepers] in London, whose houses were the haunts of all the Asiatic beggars in the metropolis, to return to their country, and that there was not a single Asiatic crimp residing in the east end of the metropolis."[100] It was further noted that there were only some forty crimps in London who had not yet been convinced to return "home."[101] It is not clear whether the lodging house keepers still considered their place of origin (India or elsewhere) as home, or if they had come to call London home, especially as some married into British society and these lodging

[98] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics.—The annual." *Times* 29 April 1897; "The Strangers' Home," *Times* 5 June 1860.
[99] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 1; TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 1.
[100] "3rd annual meeting for 1859," *Daily News*, 7 June 1860. Note also that "crimp" in this instance is being used to indicate lodging house keepers rather than strictly labour recruiters. "Asiatic crimps" in this way seem to be distinct from the typical "crimps" in Britain that are referred to later on in this chapter.
[101] "The Strangers' Home," *Times*, 5 June 1860.

houses were businesses that they ran for a living. As the decades wore on, the Strangers' Home was ceaselessly presented to the public as a force for good, yet the Home's charitable mission was at times a conflicting one.

Administrators would aid imperial subjects who had been mistreated and abused by the British. In 1872, for example, Sir W. Hill discussed how South Sea Islanders were forced from their homes in British colonies and sold into bondage by those "who call themselves Englishmen, but have not the English spirit."[102] Two years later, there was a case concerning Horatio Walters, captain of the *Emily Augusta*, who was indicted for the murder of the seaman Fugeer Ali. Testimony given by fellow seaman Khalee Khan states that Walters was an abusive captain whom he had witnessed hitting Ali on various occasions, sometimes with his hands, sometimes with ropes. As Khan stated, "the captain strike him all night and all the time; he strike everybody, night and day."[103] Several others were also questioned. One seaman, Hamed Khan, told the court through a translator that he too witnessed Ali being hit by the captain. John Freeman, the superintendent of the Strangers' Home, spoke of the entire crew of the *Emily Augusta* being brought to the Home. When Ali arrived, he was in very bad health. On September 20, Police Sergeant Hansom showed up to question Ali, which he did with Salter acting as interpreter. The Sergeant then questioned Walters and asked if the statement that he had beat Ali was true. At the end of the court proceedings, Walters was found guilty of manslaughter.[104] In these types of cases, the Home's administrators were useful in helping both the authorities and their residents, particularly through the use of translation and medical services.

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[102] Ibid., 15.
[103] "Trial of Horatio Walters," 23 November 1874, *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.2, accessed 23 July 2015).
[104] Ibid. For other examples of the S.H. administrators intervening, see: "Trial of Charles Mossoe," *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, July 1884; "Trial of Chip Lye," *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1861. In 1893, "The 32 Lascars convicted last May of assaulting an engineer on the steamship *Workshire* were received at this Home when they came out of prison," "Strangers' Home.--The 37th annual." *Times*, 20 April 1894.

Another example of administrators successfully aiding a mistreated man is from 1877, when four Muslim farm labourers arrived in London. Having letters directing them to the Ottoman Consul in London, they had made their way there only to discover that the consulate was closed. They were then sent to the Strangers' Home; since they were "completely ignorant of the English tongue, quite destitute, and having only their clothes, they gladly turned to that shelter."[105] According to an article in the *Freeman's Journal*, after resting at the Home, the men "ventured out for a walk, and soon began to experience the delightful welcome of English civilization. A mob gathered and followed them, shouting, jeering, and demanding from them money and tobacco."[106] Since the men did not speak English they kept walking until they reached "Gun-lane," which was described as "a hideous locality" where the men "were speedily hustled, knocked down, mobbed, and three of the four stabbed." The men then managed to make their way back to the Stranger's Home where Hughes was able to ensure that two of the mob were taken into custody (likely by helping translate the men's statements and ensuring their account of the event was taken into consideration, though the details of the case are not provided).[107] Stories like these in newspapers and periodicals were designed to showcase the horrors of uncivilized, poor Britons who were all too eager to take advantage of the helpless, and unknowing strangers. Whether true or not, these cases demonstrated to the British public that there was a need for the work done by the Strangers' Home. They also show elements of what life outside the Strangers' Home was like, both in terms of the violence and integration that was possible in the East End.

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[105] "Miscellaneous," *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 5 October 1877.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., Hughes gave the statement that, "the inhabitants of the houses where the assault occurred and was witnessed by many, will not come forward to give evidence, from the fear of suffering from the desperate characters who committed the outrage. I hope, however, that in due time the perpetrators will be found out and meet their just reward."

Buying into the perception of the Home's good works were Indians themselves. M. Monockjee Cursetjee provided a testimony about the Home at the annual meeting for 1867. He wrote that though he was not a Christian and "although I may differ on one of the important principles of which this Institution is an embodiment," he could not help but admire the important and necessary work carried out by administrators "for the good of mankind. Cursetjee stated, "apart from religious considerations, and the sectarian feelings that prompt you to support the Institution, I say, an Institution which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and supplies the necessities of poor, forlorn strangers, is one that commends universal approbation."[108] Though how residents themselves felt about these "comforts" is not known, Cursetjee did provide an insight into how imperial subjects, even of the upper class, viewed the institute. If Cursetjee saw the Home as a blessing that addressed practical necessities, perhaps some if not all its residents felt similarly.

In 1869, Rev. George Knox presented the following discussion he had had with an Indian gentleman at the annual meeting:

> [Mathura Das] came to this country with recommendations to many influential friends, and with large resources of his own, sufficient to procure him a home and every requisite. 'But,' he said, 'I had much trouble here, because I did not know the customs and habits of your nation.' Now, if a gentleman of that class, possessing these resources, experiences an inconvenience in coming to this country, what must be the position of a poor wanderer who arrives here without money and without friends?[109]

Indeed, if an elite Indian with connections and resources had struggled in Britain, then what of those without any means? Moreover, in recognizing the difficulties experienced by the English in India regarding culture and language, British supporters of the Home felt a yearning to make the Home better known. As the secretary, Major J. A. Fergusson, states in the 1888 annual report,

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[108] "The Recent Work in Various Parts of Great Britain of the Missionary to the Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *LCMM*, 1 January 1867, 16.
[109] BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 13.

"What, then, must it be to a foreigner who has no power of speaking to those whom he sees around him, who is of a different race, and even of a different colour."[110] And despite stating that opium dens were largely eradicated, there remained a concern into the late Victorian period with the number of people being coerced or otherwise enticed into opium shops where the owners made money by swindling their visitors.[111]

Despite an official policy of openness, not all applicants to the Strangers' Home received admittance. On the one hand, Hughes stressed in the annual report for 1868 that a fundamental rule of the institution was "That no one can be admitted without payment" and that this resolution was in place "to prevent imposition, and to prevent many who would otherwise throw upon the Institution the expense of cases which they ought to pay and provide for."[112] On the other, Hughes wrote that, "not a single genuine case of destitution has ever been refused admission to the Home."[113] Though contradictory in nature, the underlining implication appears to be a desire to have explicit control over what constituted "genuine" cases. This fit with an earlier concern expressed by the Board of Directors, who were concerned with providing charity to the undeserving:

> The Directors have no doubt the benevolent heartily desire and believe when giving alms to these Oriental mendicants that they are relieving the destitute, but they are not aware that in almost every case, instead of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, they are in reality administering to vice, and doing injury to the recipients of their bounty, who, finding the profession of begging enables them to live agreeably to their vicious habits and taste, prefer carrying it on to gaining an honest livelihood by returning to their native country at good wages, which are procurable for all who *really* desire it, employment having been offered to a great many on advantageous terms, and declined during the past year.[114]

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[110] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 25. For more on Fergusson, see "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Illustrated London News*, 29 November 1899.
[111] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 15.
[112] BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 9.
[113] Ibid.
[114] WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 6.

Within this statement are elements of a line being drawn between the deserving and undeserving. As with the domestic poor, foreigners not willing to work and accept the employment that was found for them were viewed with disdain.

Siddram Tudostan, for example, was a butler from Calcutta who worked his way to London from New York in 1893. On his arrival, he initially stayed at the Strangers' Home. He had only £1 on him, and was criticized for having chosen the first-class mess where his money would not last as long whereas it "would have lasted him for 16 days on the 2nd mess [second class rice and curry mess]." [115] Moreover, he turned down employment that was found for him on board a ship, and was denied re-admittance later. Then there was the case of an Indian man who came to London pretending to be a doctor. He went to the house of Surgeon-General Francis, who was away at the time. Pretending to know the surgeon well, he gained entry into the house. When Francis returned home, he found the man in his armchair and discovered him to be an impostor. Dr. Francis believed that he had come to England "deliberately for the purpose of getting an English wife."[116] Accordingly, Dr. Francis argued "the Directors should give a stern reception to persons of this character."[117] Further details of this case are omitted, as is how the man knew of Francis and why he went to his house. It is possible that the two men knew each other and had a falling out.

In 1886, a steamer arrived at the Royal Albert Dock and most of the crew brought their advanced pay to the Strangers' Home "to be cashed as usual [and] subject to deduction on account of board due by the holders to the Institution."[118] However, six Arabs took their notes

[115] IOR: L/PJ/6/449, File 1148, Chamier to Sir Philip, India Office, 14 June 1897. See also, CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report* (29 March 1897). The Strangers' Home also did not tolerate violence, as one of the conditions of receiving service was that abusive language could be used towards other residents, see IOR: L/PJ/6/449, File 1150, Letter by Chamier, 11 June 1897.
[116] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 18.
[117] Ibid., 18-19.
[118] Ibid., 4.

(pay) to a crimp (labour recruiter in this instance) "as he had supplied them with beer," and so the Home lost its potential fee for boarding them. Once the crew set sail for India and made its way back to London, "it transpired that four out of the six men had either deserted in Australia or been sent to prison for bad conduct."[119] The remaining two were back in London but they were refused admittance to the home, "an action which has had, and probably will still further have, a good effect."[120] Mostly, administrators were concerned about men assuming anyone would be taken into the Home and cared for: "It is the practice of the crimps, if they can, to persuade men that the Home is supported by the Government, so that they have a right to be admitted and to remain as long as they wish, whatever their conduct may be."[121] An example of this provided in the Home's annual report is the case of John Budloo who went to the Home hoping to be admitted. He is described as having arrived with empty pockets as he had sent all his money to India. The Home's superintendent, however, "knew something of this gentleman, and, being wide awake, refused to admit him. After a week Budloo returned to the Home *with money* in his hand, having had experience for that time of a neighbouring lodging-house."[122] These cases reveal that the staff of the Strangers' Home saw some Indians as being problematic and undeserving.

In addition to being selective with who was admitted into the Home, administrators also imposed a limit on how long distressed individuals could reside at the institution. Though charitable cases were taken on, the institute was not meant to be a long-term solution to a work-related issue. The Strangers' Home was not exclusively a home for the homeless, a residence akin to the workhouse, but merely a temporary lodging house that catered to both lascars and

[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 18.

Britain's destitute Indian population. As a result, the administration was only willing to provide food and lodgings long enough to find employment on ships for residents so they could return to their place of origin. Inmates, both paying and charitable cases, were required to leave sixty days after admission if they were unable to find employment or if they ceased their payments. The secretary also argued that if they refused offers of employment and were thereby unable to pay for their lodgings, it was reasonable to require them to leave. On their departure from the Home after refusing employment, their cases were also to be "communicated to the India Office or to the Colonial Office, and to the Magistrate of the Thames Police Court," so governing officials would be aware of "vagrants" potentially returning to the streets.[123] Here again there is a confusing duality as to the Home's central purpose and perception of its residents.

Class prejudice no doubt influenced the decision-making process of the Home's administrators. G. Gordhamdas, a native of Quetta, was admitted destitute on 12 January 1896. Gordhamdas was traveling the globe when he was robbed of £200 in Paris. He pawned his rings and used the proceeds to travel to London, where he arrived without any money. His case was then reported to the India Office and Quetta (via telegraph). His relatives in Quetta replied that they would send money, but only if Gordhamdas would return to Quetta, which he refused to do as he must have had other ambitions. No shipping company was willing to take him as a labourer as he had no experience as a sailor, and so to get rid of the man, "on March 7th, the Home paid the sum of £10 for a passage to India, and gave him the sum of £2 for expenses on arrival at Bombay."[124] It was not typical of the administrators to simply pay for a resident's passage, as standard procedure was to find a working passage for individuals. The fact that in this case they did pay instead of sending Gordhamdas to the workhouse or simply turning him out onto the

[123] IOR: L/PJ/6/440 No.346, "Rules passed by the Board of Directors," 17 February 1897; IOR: L/PJ/6/449 No.1148, 8 June 1897.
[124] CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report*.

streets suggests that he may have belonged to the Indian upper-class, and was thus treated better than those with a poorer background; his family was, after all, willing to pay for him to return home, and so administrators may have believed there was a possibility of having his expenses reimbursed.

In addition to class, race-based prejudices no doubt influenced decision-making at the Home. Racial connotations are certainly present throughout the annual reports. In one report, an attendee of the annual meeting expressed surprise that the "inmates" were so "civilized". J.H. Fergusson recounted at the meeting how he visited the Home on "an ordinary day," and "could not but notice…the excellence of all the internal arrangements, and I would especially mention the wonderful cleanliness, which, knowing Asiatics as I do, struck me very much." Fergusson further stated that, "I saw evidences of good management and discipline, and not less the evidence of great kindness."[125] Furthermore, Fergusson also referred to the residents as children:

> When we think of the great blessings, temporal and spiritual, which this Institution has been the means of conferring on the children of tropical climes when they visit this country, and when we think of the misery and the cruel and diabolical violence from which they have been preserved in the opium and other infamous dens…[126]

This reference to "children of tropical climes" speaks to how some viewed residents—imperial subjects—as not fully developed and insufficiently mature. The way in which inmates were talked about is indicative of the racial and colonial ideas that permeated the empire. In 1886, for example, there is a reference to residents anxiously waiting for employment. It was reported at the annual meeting that those impatiently waiting for work sometimes got into "mischief from

[125] SOAS: CWML O204, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 15-16.
[126] Ibid., 16.

the men getting intimate with the bad characters of the locality."[127] It was further added that this "applies particularly to certain of the Arab boarders."[128]

Race also played a role in the types of Asian sailors who were chosen to labour on ships. Asian sailors are not infrequently mentioned as being preferred to African sailors by ship captains and the Board of Directors. In the 1888 annual report, the board stated that Africans could not "be discharged in Eastern ports, like Asiatics, nor do they and Asiatics always work well together."[129] This reference to African sailors from the 1888 annual report is perhaps one of the first instances where the Home's administrators talk about the racial differences between sailors. According to the report, in the summer of 1888, a crew of 28 mostly African sailors was employed on a steamer headed for New Zealand. At the time, it was "hoped that this would herald the opening of a new source of employment for the natives of the Dark Continent; but on the return of the steamer, the arrangement was reported to have been a failure." It was a failure because of the "want of harmony between Africans and Asiatics," which meant "no more such mixed crews could be taken."[130] The superintendent of the Strangers' Home also told Charles Booth that lascars were "most orderly, docile & temperate, & so are preferred" to the English even though they were "a physically inferior race to the English."[131]

What is most troubling in terms of the Home's charity and repatriation agenda is the impact these efforts had on Indians themselves. Despite having access to an institution that would allow them to find work on ships and to return to where they once came from, people

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[127] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 3-4. See also TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 3.
[128] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 4.
[129] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 2. See also, "Mission Work Among Foreigners in London," *LCMM*, 2 September 1872, 191.
[130] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 2.
[131] LSE: Booth.B.138 (1895), Interview with Mr. M. Johnson, supt. Of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, West India Dock Rd. See also, "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics.—Sir Walter," *Times* 26 April 1912.

from across the empire continued to reside throughout Britain. The London City Mission reported that many were content with the meagre work they were able to find in England. Some even had established family ties that made them decline the "help" offered at the Strangers' Home to leave Britain.[132] In 1869, for example, Joseph Salter noticed that they were still "as much scattered about as ever, and even now, though I have paved some twelve years at the work, fresh cases continually come to light of individuals who have been in England for many years, but hidden in the country towns and villages, only coming up to London occasionally."[133] Salter also claimed that many of them were even aware of the Home's existence but did their best to avoid its "influences." He wrote that they "speak in condemnatory terms of it [the Home]" because he assumed they did not know any better.[134] No matter how good Salter's intentions, and despite his assumption that he knew what was in their best interest, Asians in Britain became increasingly cautious of the motives of the Strangers' Home.

That same year, 1869, Salter had met a native of Rangoon. An officer had brought the man, Mound Mou, to Britain. When the officer died he left Mou impoverished and unable to return to India, or at least this was the story recounted to Salter who did not believe Mou, "knowing all this statement to be false."[135] Regardless of the truth of Mou's story, he was now a beggar, and Salter seemed keen to help him. But Mou refused Salter's entreaties to come to the Strangers' Home. Mou's wife certainly did not want him to go either: "his wife, an English woman, fearing he was really going to be sent off, came with her marriage certificate to claim her husband, and to state that he had a family to keep."[136] This case is a curious one as it is not

[132] "Annual Report of the Missionary to the Asiatics of London, from March 1, 1864 to Feb. 28, 1865," *LCMM*, 1 March 1865, 45.
[133] BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 6.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

clear why the wife was fearful of her husband being sent away. Were Asians often forced or coerced into leaving Britain? Though no clear answer exists, there is an underlying subtext here that the Strangers' Home employees were working to remove non-white "vagrants" and mendicants from Britain. Perhaps without proper documentation Mou would have been forced or coerced into leaving Britain; the sources in this case certainly lend themselves to more questions than answers as to Salter's intentions as a representative of the Strangers' Home.

Similarly, others did not want to leave, but rather hoped to stay in Britain. John Hoa, a Chinese man, was brought to the Strangers' Home on 8 April 1896 from Holloway Jail, where he had been arrested for begging and there spent ten days. Hoa had also spent the past thirty years in London. When he first arrived, he resided at the Strangers' Home, but eventually left. He now returned to the Home and was kept for five weeks free of charge. After five weeks, "he left to go to Manchester," in hopes of finding employment that would keep him in the United Kingdom.[137] Cases of men not wanting to leave Britain highlight one of the problems with the Strangers' Home. Hughes and subsequent administrators talked about the progress of the Home in terms of the number of paying residents and destitute men removed from Britain and returned "home." However, "home" had come to mean Britain for some migrants who, not finding a way to their place of origin, had established a livelihood for themselves in Britain.

Conclusion: Protecting Indians or Protecting Britons?

Whether intentional or not, the Strangers' Home became a place in which imperial subjects were scrutinized, recorded, and ultimately controlled. Hughes himself had managed to record the location of 200 destitute Asians in 1861, and continued to inquire into the numbers of

[137] CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report*.

destitute persons in subsequent years.[138] This recording of numbers suggests that there were concerted efforts to monitor how many Asians were not only in distress, but also how many resided within Britain. In repatriating the destitute, administrators also actively removed Indians from Britain. Their intentions may have been noble on the surface, but their actions do bear racial and imperial connotations. Despite the rhetoric of needing to help the distressed in the name of British humanitarianism, it is not clear that administrators were wholly impervious to mounting racial prejudice, especially in the wake of rebellion in 1857.

That being said, the actions of the Home's administrators in aiding or protecting distressed Indians were not necessarily good or bad. There is a fuzziness that shrouds the charitable aspects of the Strangers' Home that makes questions of motivation difficult to answer in clear-cut ways. Hughes' interaction with Indians suggests a genuine interest in helping those who had been abandoned. Even before the opening of the Home, he had involved himself in several cases regarding distressed and abandoned lascars. Moreover, he would have had to put in a great deal of time and energy to find suitable passages going to the right ports to ensure that individuals were able to return to their rightful homes. And the Home itself catered to the cultural needs of its imperial residents. If the main goal was to track down and coercively remove Indians from Britain, then the attention to detail at the Home would not have been necessary.

It is thus difficult to draw definitive conclusions over what kind of a place the Strangers' Home was, and the motivations behind the charitable work associated with the institute. There are certainly elements of racial violence that can be detected in some of the Strangers' Home

[138] WRR: Thomson 215/21, *Report: Strangers' Home for Asiatics*, 6. There were 50 in London; Dublin, 12, Edinburgh, 6; Liverpool, 15; Manchester, 20; Birmingham, 8; Oxford, 2; Leeds, 6; Halifax, 3; Lynn, 6; Norwich, 7; Yarmouth, 3; Preston, 2; Wolverhampton, 6; Derby, 5; Leicester, 5; West of England, 10; South coast, etc. 10; On the Tramp, 30. The term "Asiatic" is used loosely by Hughes to refer to both Asian and African subjects.

records, but there are also many moments of sympathy within a classical Victorian approach to philanthropy. At the very least, the intricacies of the Strangers' Home provide snippets of information as to the lives of Indians themselves. Mound Mou's story in *The Annual Report for 1869*, for example, highlights how Indian servants were able to forge relationships and lives for themselves in Britain. He may have served an officer as his means of employment, but his life in Britain did not exclusively revolve around serving, as he ended up marrying an English woman. Unfortunately, these stories come up in the records in terms of the Home's employees attempting to send impoverished Indians back "home." Many certainly wished to return to their families who they had left behind in India, but for others home had come to mean Britain. Saying that these people had started to create communities in Britain may be a bit of a stretch as the numbers are too small, but it certainly points to the origins of integration into British society that would eventually grow stronger by the twentieth century. In this way, a study of the Strangers' Home helps to shed light on these early Anglo-Indian encounters.

CHAPTER THREE

"There is a work to be done *at home*": Missionaries and Their Work among Britain's Destitute Indians

"The Natives of the far East cannot now visit these shores, and on their return to their native country tell their relatives and friends they have not met with Christian sympathy or hospitality during their sojourn in England," wrote the directors of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics on 28 January 1870.[1] In addition to providing respectable lodgings and charity, a key part of the Strangers' Home mandate was to engage in missionary outreach to imperial subjects in Britain.[2] Though spearheaded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Home's Board of Directors was comprised of representatives of various missionary societies from throughout Britain. Secretary Hughes' aim from the beginning was to hire a missionary who spoke Hindi or other Indian languages "to carry out the resolution approved of by the subscribers, to set the Gospel before those Mohammedans and heathen who were willing to listen."[3] The Strangers' Home thus became a place where the British public could see the impact of missionary work. As the CMS argued, the impact of missionaries across the empire was not always visible to those in Britain, but it was easy to go to London's East End and "inspect the records of the Strangers' Home, to witness the condition of the inmates, and to test the statements of the Missionary."[4] Hughes argued that by "ameliorating the condition of the helpless Oriental" in the streets of

[1] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders, *Friend of India*, 7 April 1870. See also, "A Group of Asiatics in London," *Church Missionary Gleaner*, March 1875, which states, "And it is very pleasing to know that some heathens from China and India, who came to our island attracted by commerce or curiosity, have gone back to tell of the Saviour they have unexpectedly found."
[2] Shompa Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford and Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing, 2007), 97.
[3] "Charity in London," in *Sunday Magazine*, ed. Thomas Guthrie (London: Strahan & Co., 1872), 280.
[4] "The Asiatic in England," *Church Missionary Intelligencer: A Monthly Journal of Missionary Information*. Vol. IX (London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1873), 218.

Britain, foreign missions were also strengthened, since the Home proved false the claim that "no one in England cared for these benighted strangers."[5] This mission work was also the way in which the Home became entangled in the larger imperial project, further revealing the Home's philanthropic agenda.

Missionaries played a critical role in bringing charitable cases to the Strangers' Home, as well as scouting out, recording, and repatriating Indian migrants. The Strangers' Home annual reports, Joseph Salter's autobiographies, and the *London City Mission Magazine* (*LCMM*) are the main sources showing why missionaries became invested in extending their work within Britain through the Strangers' Home.[6] The *LCMM*, in particular, is an invaluable source as it sheds light on Indians (including ayahs), missionaries, and the Asiatic Rest. Though relying heavily on one source is of course problematic, the *LCMM* is an integral source that sheds light on imperial missions within Britain. Missionaries' reports to both the LCM and the Strangers' Home also provide tantalizing snapshots of a handful of imperial subjects and the ways in which they were perceived to be occupying space in Britain. These sources also highlight how missionaries were keen to exercise power and control over vulnerable and distressed subjects.

This chapter delves into the interactions between missionaries and imperial subjects in Britain. The chapter begins with a look at foreign missions and how missionaries turned their attention inwards with the founding of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics in the mid-nineteenth century. Next, I provide a focused study of Joseph Salter, the Home's best-known missionary. While most scholars who have studied Salter focus on his missionary work at the Strangers'

[5] Colonel Hughes, "Introduction," in Joseph Salter, *The Asiatic in England: Sketches of Sixteen Years Work Among Orientals* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1873), 8.
[6] Though cited by all notable scholars, these sources have only painted a brief, overview of Joseph Salter's involvement of the Strangers' Home. I read the existing sources closely for a deeper analysis of the information buried in the *Annual Reports* and *The London City Mission Magazine* (hereafter *LCMM*), which are often overlooked or underrepresented in the scholarship.

Home, I incorporate the work he did outside of the Home as well in order to better emphasize his relationships and interactions with the people he encountered. In the next section, I look at some of the other lesser-known missionaries who also worked with imperial subjects in the metropole. Unlike Salter who travelled across Britain, their work was concentrated in London's East End and focused more heavily on conversions. Though little is known of the Home's other missionaries, this section tries to shed light on how successive missionaries interacted with imperial subjects through the intermediary of the Strangers' Home. Lastly, I conclude with a discussion of the Asiatic Rest, an establishment created by Salter after he left the employment of the Strangers' Home, which few scholars have hitherto examined. The Asiatic Rest, like the Home, arose out of a desire to create a social space dedicated to Asians, but was much more mission-oriented in purpose. Central to the narrative of this chapter are also snippets of the lives of the people on the streets as encountered and written about by missionaries.

Imperial Missions within the Metropolis

Missionary outreach to imperial subjects within Britain arose out of broader political and public shifts in evangelicalism and empire in the early nineteenth century. Organizations promoting Christianity had begun in the early 1700s with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), both were sponsored by the Anglican Church, and both largely operated in the West Indies and North America. Throughout the eighteenth century, promoting education and religion overseas became intertwined with British imperialism, though missionaries remained relatively marginal until the 1790s.[7] As Elizabeth Elbourne argues in *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest*

[7] Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 25; Penelope Carson, *The East India*

for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853, there were many disagreements between non-conformists, dissenters, and Anglicans over which branch of Protestantism best represented Britain at the end of the eighteenth century.[8] Fuelling disagreements were the desires of nonconformists, such as Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers, to challenge the Church of England as the sole denomination in England with political rights.[9] As part of the non-conformist challenge to Anglican hegemony, a number of missionary organizations were founded in the final decade of the nineteenth century. These included the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in 1792, and the London Mission Society (LMS) in 1795. Then in 1799, largely in response to this competition, evangelicals within the Church of England established the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Each society had a "complex, integrated, and nationally extensive organizational structure" that supported the massive undertaking of spreading Christianity to imperial subjects across the globe.[10]

The CMS became an important organization for the missionary work that underpinned the founding of the Strangers' Home. John Venn, who had founded the Society for Bettering the Poor in Clapham in the 1790s, became a founding member of the CMS.[11] Venn and the Clapham Sect wanted to establish an Anglican missionary society for Africa and other "heathen" lands to spread the faith to a larger number of people.[12] The proposed society initially met some resistance, even within the Church of England, as the CMS had arisen out of a new type of

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Company and Religion, 1698-1858 (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2012), 52-69**.** See also, Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008); and, Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[8] Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 12.

[9] Ibid., 28.

[10] Steven S. Maughan, *Mighty England do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850-1915* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 6.

[11] Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Transformed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), 176.

[12] Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect*, 176.

evangelicalism that centered on "activism, biblicism, and conversionism."[13] The CMS, alongside other mission organizations, found it a challenge to convince existing organizations to send out lay missionaries to Africa and Asia. The East India Company, for example, initially refused to permit missionaries into India, "believing it would throw the colony into turmoil."[14] It was not until 1813 that missionaries were reluctantly permitted into India by permission of the EIC and British government with the renewal of the company's charter after heated debates on the utility of missionaries abroad.[15] Steven Maughan questions the overall impact that these missions had on the empire.[16] In *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850-1915*, Maughan finds that "missions had far less control over missionary institutions and converts than they pretended."[17] Nevertheless, missions and their networks were, as Elbourne argues, important in that they "linked people in Britain, even if only in imagination and often in patronizing ways, to fellow Christians elsewhere in the empire."[18]

Mission work also linked missionizing to improving the lives of the poor. In 1835, the London City Mission (LCM) was founded to help domestic missionaries better reach out to Britain's own poor—considered a sort of heathen class itself. The Religious Census of 1851 described the LCM as a cross between the Church of England and the Protestant dissenting churches whose "300 missionaries visit the dwellings of the poor – distribute tracts – and hold

[13] Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good*, 67.
[14] Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect*, 177.
[15] For more information on the struggles over sending missionaries to India, see P. Carson, *The East India Company and Religion, 1698-1858*, especially 55, 110-127, 130-148.
[16] Maughan also brings together questions of the impact of empire on Britain with a look at both the Maximalist and Minimalist arguments. Maximalist: the insistence that imperial knowledge and attitudes did have a noticeable and lasting impact on Britain. Antoinette Burton falls under this category. Minimalist: many were barely aware of the empire, never mind the impact it may have had on society and culture, an example here is Bernard Porter (*Mighty England Do Good*, 9-10).
[17] Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good*, 19.
[18] Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 379.

religious conversations."[19] Founded by David Nasmith, "lay workers of various Protestant denominations and of working-class origins literally sought to bring Christianity home to clients not willing or able to attend established churches."[20] As Alison Twells argues, the need for missions that targeted the British poor aided in the development of the identity of the English middle class as charitable and invested in civilizing the "heathen" classes of people.[21] The mandates of domestic missions fused with foreign missions, Twells argues, as both came to espouse the goals of "missionary philanthropy." As outlined by Twells, the missionary philanthropic movement consisted of an ambitious and multifaceted agenda: "to make loyal, moral and industrious subjects out of the working classes at home; to promote 'civilisation' in Africa and other 'savage' regions; to abolish slavery and the slave trade: and to save Hindu and other 'heathen' girls and women from infanticide, ignorance, sati and domestic oppression."[22] Missions thus evolved to be more than organizations aimed at the spread of Christianity, as missionaries combined with their religious concerns a desire to civilize both imperial subjects abroad and the domestic poor and working classes. Evangelicals, then, came to see Britain's domestic poor just as worthy subjects for their missionary work as "heathens" overseas.[23]

The resolve to provide more domestic missions to the lower classes increased with the 1851 census. The Religious Census of 1851 revealed a decline in church attendance, which led to a concern over the state of Christianity in the country. David McIlhney's research shows that the census produced a sense that the Church of England was in rapid decline, and so "a mission to

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[19] *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Religious Worship in England and Wales. Abridged from the Official Report made by Horace Mann, Esq., to George Graham, Esq., Registrar-General* (London: George Routledge and Co., 2, Farringdon Street. Printed by George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1854), 99.
[20] Ruth Lindeborg, "The 'Asiatic' and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness," *Victorian Studies*, 37:3 (1994): 383.
[21] Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The "Heathen" at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 50-51. See also Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect*, 175.
[22] Twells, *The Civilising Mission*, 2.
[23] Ibid., 12.

the slum was essential not just to save the poor from the fate of the unchurched; it was essential, as well, to save the Establishment."[24] Amongst the need to expand domestic missions, a space was opened in which to think about interacting with the growing number of imperial subjects living in Britain. Just as the census put into question the strength of Christianity among the British, so too were images of imperial subjects starving and suffering in Britain gaining public attention. It was during this period of religious missionary discourse that the lascar problem of the 1840s and 50s arose and led to the formation of the Strangers' Home by members of the CMS. The involvement of mission societies in the functioning of the Strangers' Home brought the realm of foreign missionary organizations directly in contact with the British homeland.

As described in the 1858 issue of the *LCMM*, it had become clear to mission societies that not enough attention was being paid to imperial subjects in Britain. The magazine states that while missionary societies were reinforcing their foreign missions and extending their operations in India, "there is a work to be done *at home*, which should not be neglected, and till lately has been altogether overlooked, viz., the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Asiatic heathen who come to our shores."[25] Once on shore, these "Asiatic heathens" transformed London's East End into unrecognizable neighbourhoods that came to be recognized as "foreign". Joseph Salter in recalling his early experiences as a missionary described this oriental quarter as a foreign place, and almost as if it were a representation of Britain's far-off colonies:

> In speaking of the moral boundaries of my district, I have almost to forget that I am in London, for the imaginations and thoughts are in a moment carried away to peoples who talk a strange tongue, and who are influenced in thought and action as different from our own as their language.[26]

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[24] David B. McIlhiney, *A Gentleman in Every Slum: Church of England Missions in East London, 1837-1914* (Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1988), 17-18. Scholars have since noted that religious belief was not in as dire a state as the census had made it appear.
[25] "The Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 November 1858, 277.
[26] "Annual Report of the Missionary to the Asiatics of London," *LCMM*, 1 July 1863, 147.

In other words, the East End came to characterize a place of difference and otherness in the heart of the British Empire. The term "East End" itself was frequently used by the 1880s as a pejorative term, one that McIlhney describes as having denoted "a different world, an unknown world, within the same city" that came to be seen "as a hopeless parasite on the rest of the city."[27] The increased presence of lascars and other imperial subjects moving through London and other British ports only increased the sense of difference and the urgency of mission work. Here, within Britain herself, were imperial subjects—subjects who when in the colonies were seen as needing the help of missionaries, yet within the metropolis were being neglected.

The erection of the Strangers' Home with its origins in the mission movement allowed evangelicals to address the neglect of imperial subjects in Britain. Recognizing the need to relieve both bodily and spiritual suffering, the administrators did what they could to provide Christian service. The missionaries visited the various ships docked in the port of London, including the Peninsular and Oriental Company (P&O) ships, British India Company ships, the Clan Line Company, and the Glen Line Company ships. They also visited institutions such as the Ayahs' home, common lodging houses, the London Hospital, the Poplar Accident Hospital, the Greenwich Seamen's Hospital, and various workhouses.[28] At these various locations, "scriptures" and "tracts" were disseminated in over twenty different languages. Extant sources show that in 1886, 267 scriptures were given out along with 2406 tracts in 29 different languages including Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Chinese, Danish and Dutch, English, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Italian, Japanese, Malabari and Malayahu, Malayan, Marathi, Norse and Swedish, Persian, Portuguese and Spanish, Singhalese, Tamil and Telugu, Turkish, Yoruba and

[27] McIlhiney, *A Gentleman in Every Slum*, 11.
[28] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886* (20 April 1887), 16-17; TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887* (18 April 1888), 13; TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888* (17 April 1889), 15.

Swahili.[29] Fewer numbers were recorded in 1887, with 264 scriptures and 2251 tracts disseminated in 25 languages. Then, in 1888, there was a resurgence in dissemination with 775 scriptures and 4976 tracts in 23 languages being dispersed.[30]

In disseminating these pamphlets, the Board of Directors hoped to persuade the Home's non-Christian residents to convert of their own accord. The rhetoric espoused by board members was that they wanted the destitute Indians to convert to Christianity, but they wanted them to do so on their own accord, and not to be seen as influencing this decision:

> It is not the wish or intention of the directors to interfere with the prejudices of the natives of the East, but they feel it their duty as Christians to set the Gospel before those who are willing to listen, and to give some portion of the Holy Scriptures to those who can read and desire to have them in their own language.[31]

This intention of not wanting to "interfere" with other religions is interesting given the Home's backing by mission societies whose intentions were very much to interfere with "the prejudices of the natives." Most likely, the Board wanted to exercise subtlety so as to encourage non-Christians to use the Home's facilities. In any case, to avoid imposing on residents, the main tactic of the directors was to expose residents and visitors to Christianity as much as possible. All those who expressed an interest were encouraged to listen and "to receive instruction or to refuse it at their own discretion and on their own responsibility."[32] In true evangelical fashion, there had to be a genuine conversion experience, and so missionaries hoped that the Gospels would appeal to the sensibilities of "heathens" and allow them to be taken in by Christian help and influence.[33] In 1869, Rev. George Knox commended the administration of the Strangers' Home for preaching

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[29] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 16-17.
[30] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 16. This increase is likely due to the appointment of a new missionary, Carl Haupt, who expressed great enthusiasm in his work.
[31] H.A. Page, "In Safe Haven," in Rev. Donald Macleod, ed., *Good Words* (London: Daldy, Isbister, & Co., 56, Ludgate Hill, 1874), 463; Hughes, "Introduction," in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 12.
[32] "The Asiatic in England," *Church Missionary Intelligencer* Vol. IX (London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1873), 217.
[33] Ibid., 218.

the gospel "to the heathen; here the poor are cared for; here those who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth are objects of Christian solicitude…"[34] Not all, though, were pleased with the missionary aspect of the Strangers' Home.

In the mid-1860s, an offer was made to the Strangers' Home by Cama and Company, a Parsi-run business that offered to provide the Home with £4,000 to help alleviate their hefty debt. However, the money was conditional, as Cama and Company would only donate the funds if the Home agreed to stop promoting Christianity to their residents.[35] Despite the Home's strained financial circumstance, the directors refused to accept the money because the missionary work was central to the Home's raison d'être. "We declined doing so," began Captain Francis Maude (the temporary chairman in place of Lord Henry Cholmondeley), at the twelfth annual meeting of the Home. He continued to state that after declining the offer by Cama and Company,

> in the course of a few weeks—before the circumstances could have become known in India—we received a similar amount from some of the native merchant princes of that country. Instead of halting doing our flag, we kept it nailed to the mast, and I trust we shall always act on the same principle (cheers).[36]

While the effectiveness of their missionary endeavour is questionable, there certainly was strong devotion to their commitment. At the very least, employing missionary rhetoric in a climate of imperial expansion would have helped illustrate to patrons of the Home that it was a worthwhile investment of their income.

The Home itself as a space for Christian instruction was unique as not all the administrators were of the same denomination. Colonel Hughes, for example, was an Anglican, the superintendent (John Freeman) was a Baptist, and Joseph Salter was a Wesleyan Methodist.[37] In this way, the Home not only brought together various people from across the globe, but also

[34] Rev. George Knox in BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home* (1868-69).
[35] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, 280; Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," 99.
[36] Francis Maude quoted in BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*, 2.
[37] Page, "In Safe Haven," 463.

various denominations within Britain as well. Moreover, given the number of representatives from various societies who served on the Board, the Home certainly reflects the interdenominational bent of evangelicalism. As expressed in the *Sunday Magazine*, "here was a field on which different denominations of Christians met to work, side by side, in beautiful harmony." The article goes on to say that "however the storms of controversy raged without its walls, peace reigned within them; and here the true unity of the Reformed Churches was practically exhibited."[38] Thus, the need to extend mission work onto the transient imperial labourers in Britain was a common ground on which all could agree.

Overall, the Strangers' Home became epitomized missionary work within a domestic context. As with the tenets of missionary philanthropy, its Board of Directors not only sought to make working-class Indians into loyal and moral subjects, but felt it their duty to do so as social agents of the imperial project. However, as Maughan argues, the impact of missionary work was unpredictable. Some converts, he shows, used Christianity in ways that were "often at odds with the intentions of the missionaries who preached it."[39] Missionaries themselves often confused the religious, conversion-centered aspect of missions with the need to either civilize or protect imperial subjects in Britain from the negative influences of Britons themselves. When it came to Indians, the focus could shift from religious-based instruction to both shaping them into loyal subjects with good morals, and fostering a positive image of Britons for them to spread on their return home. This is not to say that religion did not matter, but rather that the interactions between missionaries and stranded or distressed Indians were much more complicated than the straightforward mission agenda. Joseph Salter, the most ardent and longest-serving missionary at the Strangers' Home is well-known as a chief instrument of domestic missions, yet his own

[38] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, 281.
[39] Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good*, 19.

writings provide a balance if not tension between missionary work on the one hand and philanthropy on the other.

Joseph Salter: The First Missionary to Asiatics, 1857-1876

Joseph Salter, of the London City Mission, was one of the most successful missionaries in promoting and engaging in missionary philanthropy to imperial subjects in London and throughout Britain. He is best known as being the first missionary who worked at the Strangers' Home for Asiatics from 1857 until 1876. Salter spent the better part of two decades working for Hughes, and scholarship on him predominantly focuses on the work he conducted at the Home. However, after his time at the Home, he continued to devote his energy as a missionary to Asiatics at the LCM until his retirement in 1899. His main writings, two autobiographical sketches of his life's work, heavily emphasize his work at the Strangers' Home. But they, alongside annual reports he prepared and submitted for the LCM, reflect a broader interest in working with imperial subjects. Indeed, beyond his work as a missionary at the Strangers' Home is a tale of his passion for philanthropy, which makes his history more complicated than has otherwise been understood.

Joseph Salter was formerly a ladies' shoemaker and widower with one child, a child who died at a young age. In the early 1850s, he decided to enter into the services of the LCM. Salter was 32 years old at the time of his application in 1853, and though he had received little education in his youth, the LCM's committee noted he was shrewd and intelligent, and had a fair knowledge of the Scriptures. He was admitted into the Mission on November 7, 1853 with a starting salary of £75 per year. He then began his work in the Chapel Street District of Edgeware Road. This district "did not supply foreign work [work with foreigners], but was the stepping-

stone to it," as he was first exposed to Indians in Britain in this area.[40] He consequently wanted to know more about how Indians got to London, how they came "to be in this fearful condition," and why some preferred to beg rather than work.[41] This curiosity led him into the suite of Mir Jaffer Ali, the Nawab of Surat who had recently arrived in England. Salter spoke to the Nawab and his entourage about salvation, seeing an opportunity to advance the LCM's cause. These interactions further cultivated his interest in working with imperial subjects and became the starting point of a long career that eventually resulted in him styling himself as the "Missionary to Asiatics."[42]

More crucially, it was through his desire to communicate with Mir Jaffer Ali that he came to learn Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu). Salter never actually travelled abroad, yet over his career he came to learn several Indian languages and dialects, in addition to Swahili. Ruth Lindeborg has argued that Salter's interests in acquiring languages were "purely utilitarian, constructing language-knowledge as merely one more resource to be used for the advancement of Christian values."[43] Although his obvious intention was conversion and the spread of Christianity to the imperial subjects with whom he contacted, his career suggests that his language-acquisition ran deeper than his mission work. His work, for example, often involved him translating and acting as a mediator between Indians and Britons. Salter ultimately split his time between being a devoted missionary, translator, and cultural broker.

Salter's long career as a "Missionary to Asiatics" began when Hughes hired him in 1857. Hughes had recognized Salter's ability to speak Hindi as an asset for the Home.[44] Salter was

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[40] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 41.
[41] LCM: Committee Minute Book reference. Joseph Salter, born 1821, accepted by LCM on 7 November 1853, Placed on Disabled Fund 30 November 1897, Date of death: 3 March 1899.
[42] Salter, *The East in the West,* 138.
[43] Ruth Lindeborg, "The 'Asiatic' and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness," 391.
[44] LCM: Committee Minute Book references for Joseph Salter: 31 October 1858; 7 November 1853; 14 November 1853; 20 March 1854; 13 April 1857.

specifically instructed by the Board to provide "Christian instruction" while systematically ascertaining "the history of every Asiatic, African, and Polynesian found in Workhouses, Hospitals, and Jails, as well as in the principal outports and large towns throughout England and Scotland."[45] His duties were divided between sharing knowledge of the Gospels and knowledge of the Strangers' Home in order to help distressed Indians return to their place of origin. He would travel across the United Kingdom as a representative of the Strangers' Home determined to spread awareness of the help that could be offered at the Home for lascars and non-sailors alike. Over the course of his career, he spoke to thousands of foreigners, read the Bible with them—or rather at them—and distributed books, pamphlets and scriptures. He was convinced that "England was failing to do her Christian duty by them [the imperial subjects]," and was determined to help alleviate this disposition.[46] As per the Home's agenda, he made sure "all care [was] taken not to seem to take advantage of their position to *press* Christianity upon them in any way."[47] Salter and the Home's directors wanted Asians to actively denounce their "heathen" beliefs and to convert to the "true" Christianity through enlightenment, not through coercion. This was what Salter attempted to bring about by conversing daily with vagabonds about religion.

His main motivation was fear of "a large number of Asiatics always coming and leaving by this port [London] who never hear of the Saviour."[48] He was convinced that "If these and their heathen brethren be allowed to return to India and to bear testimony that there is more Christianity to be found in their own idolized towns than in Christian London, it certainly seems

[45] Hughes, "Introduction," in Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 13.
[46] Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 55.
[47] "Charity in London," *Sunday Magazine*, 278.
[48] "Mission Work Among Foreigners in London," *LCMM*, 2 September 1872, 193.

like casting an insuperable stumbling-block in the way of missionaries and converts too."[49] Salter thus saw a disparity between the empire, where mission work was being zealously pursued, and Britain, where there was a lack of Christian outreach. He was particularly concerned with how the image of having missions overseas but not within Britain may be negatively impacting British interactions with imperial subjects abroad. He further argued that "in London they were left in their heathenism, unsought after, uncared for,--forming plague-spots of Oriental vice, festering sinks of corruption in the lowest levels of our city."[50] The problem was not Indians themselves but the British who had failed in their duty to act as good, Christian Britons.

Salter's work made him a point of contact and communication, as well as an interpreter, for many South Asians because his knowledge of languages allowed him to speak with them whereas many in Briton could not. He writes of how they would "tell me their troubles and seek advice from me, and they apply to me to read and write their correspondence."[51] Salter, in turn, taught them how to read and write in their own language or in English as circumstances merited, in addition to helping them return to their homes abroad through the use of the resources of the Strangers' Home. He also worked as a translator in court cases and police interactions.[52] Alongside Hughes, Salter actively sought interaction with Indians that stretched beyond the boundaries of mission work. Many could not speak English and were taken advantage of because of their inability to communicate. Here, the Strangers' Home had the resources, by way of Salter and Hughes, to provide Indians with the practical necessities to traverse the English landscape they often found themselves trapped within.

[49] "The Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 November 1858, 280.
[50] Salter, *The East in the West*, 16.
[51] "The Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 November 1858, 280.
[52] Ibid.

In his various annual reports and two autobiographical accounts of his daily work, one can hear the voices of people who found themselves either intentionally or otherwise in Britain. Although it is not possible to clearly discern their individual experiences through Salter's writings, these sources do, at the very least, show the many ways in which people tried to earn a living. For example, Salter met a man who he referred to only as "H—h—h." This man appeared to be dying, but it was really just a ruse. H—had a false sore that he put on every day to get food and pity from the public.[53] Another man, named Jan Ameer, carried a board around with him with the inscription "Christian sympathy to give the poor convert to Christianity some help." Salter soon discovered that Ameer actually knew nothing of Christianity. He had simply bought the board from someone, discovering that the sign brought in sufficient charity that allowed him to survive.[54] Salter, on the one hand, saw these men as being unnecessarily deceitful, but on the other, viewed them as individuals who could have been saved from their corrupt behaviour.

In *The Asiatic in England*, Salter wrote that "some of these [men] are unpleasing specimens, but they are what their vile associates, and the painful circumstances of their past lives, have made them."[55] What is striking about this quotation and his language (once you get past the severity of it) is that he seemed to believe that it was "nurture" not "nature" that led to moral impropriety. As such, he believed that the British were themselves culpable, or at the very least felt that the British poor were allowed to seduce what could otherwise be good, moral people into sin and degradation. At the same time, the poor too were seen as having been neglected by British missions and missionaries. It was felt that in allowing Britain's own impoverished to fall away from Christianity, created conditions that led Indians to fall victim to the corruption that characterized the impoverished areas surrounding the docks.

[53] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 75.
[54] Ibid, 75-6.
[55] Ibid, 70.

Salter found deception by the English themselves to be the most problematic issue when it came to the treatment of Indians in London. Recalling an event early in his careers, he wrote of a lascar returning to a lodging house in the East End to collect his belongings, which had been taken or given away by the owner by the time the lascar returned to claim them. After a heated exchange, an interpreter took the lascar to the Police Court where he was to be arraigned and imprisoned for a month because, in explaining why the lascar had gotten angry, the interpreter had wrongfully described the lascar as the chief culprit, rather than the guilty lodging house owner. Salter intervened and explained to the magistrate that the lascar was not in the wrong and that he could help return him to his native homeland. The magistrate, in this case, took Salter's plea into consideration and released the lascar to Salter.[56]

The interpreter, Salter writes, was none to happy with this outcome, as he often made money by taking advantage of the lascars. He defended his craft to Salter by arguing that he "reminded captains of their responsibility to provide for their men, have offered to relieve them of it, and have often pocketed £20 for undertaking to do so." The lascars' best interest, Salter argued, was not being taken into consideration here. "Don't you see…that while the poor fellows are waiting to take their trial and you get your double fee, they lose their ships, and are left beggars on the streets." None of this mattered to the interpreter, who subsequently lost his job, became a potboy at a public house and eventually committed suicide. Responding to the interpreter's death years later, Salter wrote, "and thus one avenue of evil was closed, though at a fearful price."[57] This case provides an example of how Salter was not merely a missionary concerned with converting people, but was also troubled by the plight of the mistreated and thus acted as an important cultural broker.

[56] Ibid, 77-78.
[57] Ibid, 78.

Unfortunately for Salter, his missionary work was not always successful. He himself noted that there was little likelihood of bring about lasting conversions among the Indians he encountered due to "the short period those visited by him are under his influence, and also from the heathen and vitiated state of their morals." He also believed that the results were "in the hands of God, and it would be presumptuous to speculate on the success or failure of missionary enterprise in such work."[58] Missions, thus, did not always have the impact that their founders and sponsors hoped. Occasionally this was less because of Salter's perceived inability to reach out to Indians due to the short duration of their time in Britain, and more due to their lack of interest in participating in the missionary project. Abdool Rehmon, for example, arrived in London from Bombay around 1838. He began earning a living by sweeping, but then got involved in a lucrative business in Bluegate Fields where he "pander[ed] to the vices of his countrymen when they arrive[d] in England", supplying them with both women and a room for smoking opium.[59] Much to his dismay, Salter could not reach out to Rehmon or to the handful of other establishments like Rehmon's. Rehmon thus provides a glimpse, however exceptional, into other spaces that Indians and imperial subjects etched out for themselves within the metropole. His case is also another example of how not all Indians wanted to be "saved" religiously or materially, as some had established homes and lives for themselves in Britain.

Indeed, Salter's presence and outreach were sometimes actively resisted. One evening, Salter was passing by Drury-lane's "neighbourhood of thieves" when he noticed "a dark stranger" scurrying into a dark passage with tracts under his arm. It was too difficult to access the houses for there was a "ruinous" and dark yard there, so he went back into the lane. Here he met an Irish woman and to her he spoke of his intention to speak to strangers from abroad. Salter

[58] "Recent Reports of the Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 May 1860, 149-150.
[59] "The Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 November 1858, 287.

writes that "she made many inquiries, became insolent, and would give me no information." This he later found out was because "she was living with a Lascar in the first floor back."[60] Evidently, this woman did not want Salter to ruin the life she had with her partner. There were other similar cases of English women who had children with Indians who did not wish for their husbands to be taken from them, a reasonable fear considering that the Strangers' Home often pursued repatriation.[61] It was thus clear to Salter that there were a number of Asians who "would rather live with their English female associates a vagrant life than go to their native country."[62] Salter's writing expresses disapproval, and the fact that he relayed these interactions and examples to the reading public through his published annual reports may have been a way of encouraging further support for the missionary cause. Yet these writings, as problematic as they may be for understanding the lives of Indians, have an element of sincerity lying beneath the words that reveals the fear, frustration, and anxieties that Indians had to cope with when making decisions about their lives and careers.

Salter's writings, especially his reports that were published in the *LCMM*, also provide invaluable information about South Asian women in Britain. Scholars have found that between 100 and 200 ayahs visited London annually by the end of the nineteenth century.[63] Needless to say, attempts were made to convert them to Christianity. Salter began visiting ayahs when he commenced employment at the Strangers' Home, and he and all subsequent missionaries would make annual visitations to the ayahs in London lodging houses. Writing in 1858, Salter only made brief mention of ayahs though he realized they "deserve more notice than I can give."

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[60] Ibid., 290.
[61] "Annual Report of the Missionary to the Asiatics of London," *LCMM*, 1 July 1863, 160-61; "The Recent Work in Various Parts of Great Britain of the Missionary to the Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders," *LCMM*, 1 January 1867, 13, 15.
[62] "Annual Report of the Missionary to the Asiatics of London," *LCMM*, 1 July 1863, 149.
[63] "Mission to the Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 2 May 1881, 93.

There was not a recognizable home for ayahs early on as they were often found crowded in various lodging houses where men could also be found. At one of the houses, the windows were boarded up because they were broken due to "drunken riots of the ayahs."[64] However, as noted in the previous chapter, one lodging house became recognized as the Ayahs' Home, and like the Strangers' Home, and it became a place of refuge and rescue.

As with the male residents of the Strangers' Home, ayahs came from various parts of South Asia: "they have come from Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon, Bombay, Goa, and other places in India."[65] Some of them were identified as Christians who had received an education in Mission schools. Salter nonetheless felt that even those who were not Christians appreciated talking to missionaries. Despite being Hindus and Muslims, Salter described them as always appreciative of "a prayer that seeks a blessing from God on them and their children."[66] Carl Haupt, a later Strangers' Home missionary, described always feeling welcome at the Ayahs' Home. He said, "They would while away their time in reading the Gospel, so that I found them well informed on certain subjects on which I questioned them."[67] Some missionaries even found that by 1900, there was an increasing number of ayahs who were educating their children in Christian schools, and so had children who could speak English.[68] This reference to children also hints at ayahs establishing families of their own in Britain, pointing to Indian communities in Britain in the making.

In addition to knowing more about the ayah presence in Britain, Salter's annual reports of his missionary work, that discusses women, presents a different side to Salter. Shompa Lahiri

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[64] "The Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 November 1858, 291.
[65] "Among Asiatics and Africans in the London Docks," *LCMM*, 2 April 1894, 86-7.
[66] "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 2 May 1898, 95; "Among Asiatics and Africans in the London Docks," *LCMM*, 2 April 1894, 86-7.
[67] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 15.
[68] "Work Amongst the Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 1 May 1899, 83-4.

emphasizes one example in which a woman from Madras was found in West London and "'it was said she refused to work and therefore was dismissed by her employer. The fact was, she was a young mother who had left her three bairns in Madras, to whom she longed to return. She eventually returned to her family."[69] There was also Sing Sung, a Chinese woman who could not speak English "and was an heathen, one of two widows of the same husband" who stayed with Salter until a passage was found to send her back to China.[70] In his report for the year 1860, Salter talks about a wet-nurse named Jawran. He does not provide many details, but he does say that after visiting her several times she went to the Strangers' Home on his advice.[71] Like Sing Sung, Jawran longed to return home. On the one hand, these examples fit with the agenda of the Strangers' Home to remove imperial subjects from the streets and have them repatriated. On the other, they hint at Salter's personal desire to help those longing to return to their families, which is distinctive from Lindeborg's interpretation of Salter as a self-interested missionary devoted exclusively to the conversion-agenda. Salter himself was a widower with a child who had died young, which may have shaped the way he reflected on the needs of women.

These examples of Salter's interactions in London show how invested he became in the lives of the subjects he encountered. Salter's chief task as a representative of the Strangers' Home was to offer charitable relief and a religious education to encourage conversions, but his engagement with Indians represented more than mission work. The type of work that Salter specifically did makes him an intriguing character of study because he symbolized a contact zone between Britain and India. Through Salter, relationships were forged between English-speaking philanthropists and the distressed, non-English speaking victims of empire. Distressed lascars and working-class Indians in Britain had led to an overlap of empire and Britain, which required

[69] Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 105.
[70] Salter, *The Asiatic in England*, 106.
[71] "Recent Reports of the Missionary to the Orientals of London," *LCMM*, 1 May 1860, 157-58.

the same kind of missionary attention in the home front as did imperial subjects abroad. This attention was most heavily provided by Salter, as both a missionary for the LCM and representative of the Strangers' Home. Salter worked first and foremost as a missionary, but also as a translator—he was a link between Indians and the English-speaking British world. And Salter was but one of other missionaries who contributed their time to the Strangers' Home. For reasons that are unknown, Salter was relieved of his duties at the Home in April 1876 at which point he went back to working exclusively at the LCM.

George Small and Carl Haupt: Missionaries at the Strangers' Home, 1876-1896

The first missionary to replace Salter at the Strangers' Home was Rev. George Small of the CMS. He was formerly a missionary at Benares (Uttar Pradesh, India) and remained at the Home until 1887.[72] The few records of Small in the Strangers' Home annual reports mostly regard him discussing converts. Though little is known of Small's work at the Home, his language in the missionary reports that he wrote for the Home's annual meeting indicates that he was less optimistic and enthusiastic about the prospects of fully converting Asians. For example, Synd Abbas was a young Persian who was baptized on 3 February 1887. Small met Abbas and described him as a "diligent student of the English language," but one who "never made rapid progress in the way of conversation."[73] Then there were men like Meerza Nowroz Allee with whom Small frequently met. Allee was an enthusiastic convert who "tried to do some Evangelisitic work amongst the Inmates."[74] He had converted in India through the efforts of the CMS, but Small felt Allee had only genuinely converted many months after having been

[72] Rev. George Small helped compile *Anglo-Urdu Medical Handbook or Hindustani Guide* for the use of Medical Practitioners (male and female) in Northern India. See, *The Calcutta Review*, 1 July 1895, xvi.
[73] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887*, 11.
[74] Ibid., 12.

baptized. Small writes, "he was never really converted, that is regenerated, until he met with an officer of the Salvation Army (I think Mr. Tucker), subsequent to which he was baptized."[75] The way he talks about Abbas and Allee suggests doubt and hesitation in believing the authenticity of those who claimed to have converted. Small, then, may have been a more realistic agent in contrast to Salter who held an unwavering optimism about the impact of mission work. Nevertheless, the Board of Directors at annual meetings noted Small as being an exceptional missionary.

Small, unlike Salter, seems to have been more concentrated on mission work more specifically than philanthropic work. Yet, the job often meant missionary work involved that of philanthropy. The most notable example of his charitable work is from 1886 when he participated in a cooperative effort to help five Punjabi performers and their bear from Kashmir. Small, Salter, the India Office and Strangers' Home administrators were all involved in helping these five men out of their impoverished situation. The five Punjabi performers had arrived at the Strangers' Home with a bear from Kashmir in 1886. Small and the secretary, J.H. Ferguson, thought a place might be found for them in The Liverpool Exhibition. Mr. Cross, the proprietor of the Indian entertainment provided at the exhibition, had "asked to be informed should any Orientals or curiosities cast up suitable for his purpose."[76] Exhibitions displaying peoples from across the empire were often used to draw in paying customers. Imperial subjects looked and talked differently, and in an atmosphere of increasing racial difference, they were viewed too often as "objects" for entertainment and consumption. In this particular case, Cross was contacted by the Home's agents and he quickly made his way to the Strangers' Home to see the bear. Though Cross was pleased with the appearance and performance of the bear, "he and its

[75] Ibid.
[76] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 13-14.

owners failed to come to terms [and] were left on our hands."[77] The rejection was unfortunate as the Punjabis had made good profits travelling with the bear all over India and were hopeful of the potential for work overseas. They had been advised to go to Britain for more performances and profit, but no terms could be agreed on.

The group decided to try their own luck, but also to no avail. Small writes that he helped them set-up a place from which they could conduct their business:

> Full of high hopes, they decided to set up as showmen on their own account, and, with great difficulty, I succeeded in getting a hired house for them in a crowded thoroughfare, and did all I could to assist them. Expelled, after a fortnight, as a nuisance, they tried several other localities, but the final result was that, failing to earn even enough for their rent, they were obliged to give up in despair.[78]

By December 1886, the performers turned to the Strangers' Home but were not readmitted as the group already owed £15. Freeman and the Board were also reluctant to consider re-admission as destitute cases unless the bear was sold or otherwise removed from their party.[79] Freeman and Small's denial of re-admittance indicates that not everyone was admitted into the Home. Destitute or not, the Punjabis owed debts to the Home and administrators were not willing to take on the further burden of providing for them. Instead, the workhouse was their only alternative as they were penniless and impoverished, but they refused to go. Freeman did write to the India Office, though, to inform officials there that the five Punjabis were trying to sell their bear, and wanted admittance at the Strangers' Home. Since they were already in debt, Freeman was not able to take them in and so, "I am therefore advised to ask you if the India Office will

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] IOR: L/PJ/6/206 No.1185, December 1886. Whether the bear was too large to be housed at the Home or a threat is unclear, as is where the Punjabis kept the bear, though it appears it was well behaved and treated not dissimilar to a pet.

take up these men and pay their board and lodging if we again take them in."[80] Mr. Godley from the I.O. responded by saying the department would not be helping.

In the meantime, the group went to Joseph Salter for advice. Salter records his visitors as saying, "'You are our father, and we are your children.' Then followed their tale of misfortune, and a request that I would provide for them and their animal."[81] Salter then also wrote to the India Office, but to the Secretary of the Revenue Department. He told the secretary about the five Punjabis who were "in very distressed circumstances," having failed as entertainers, who "now huddled together in an empty house."[82] Salter too wanted to know if the India Office would be willing to help provide payment for lodging at the Strangers' Home: "I am aware of a difficulty in the way, and how many trouble the Indian Council under some-what similar circumstances. But I trust the council will be able to help these men out of their perilous position."[83] It was reiterated, "this Dept will not be responsible for any expense incurred on behalf of the 5 Punjabees you mentioned."[84] The government, in other words, would not be intervening: distressed Indians were not its responsibility. If financial help was needed, it was up to the Strangers' Home or Salter to procure the necessary funds.

What happened next is a bit unclear as there appears to be a disparity in written records over who ended up dealing with the bear and the performers. Small claims that, "I succeeded, in December, in getting the bear taken into the Zoological Gardens ('on sale or return') as a gratuitous boarder, and got very cheap lodgings for the men in the neighbourhood of the

[80] BL: IOR L/PJ/6191 No.2122, J. Freeman to the India Office, 10 December 1886. See also, IOR: L/PJ/6/206 NO. 1185.
[81] "Annual Report of the Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1887, 204. Salter by this point had established The Asiatic Rest, a place for spiritual advice.
[82] IOR: L/PJ/6/191 No.2122, J. Salter to the Secretary of the Revenue Department, India Office, 23 December 1886.
[83] Ibid.
[84] IOR: L/PJ/6/191 No.2122, Draft letter from Fitzgerald to J. Salter, 24 December 1886.

Home."[85] Meanwhile, Salter claims that he had "arranged for this Asiatic bruin to be lodged at the Zoological Gardens."[86] Either Small and Salter worked together to secure a place for the bear, or one of them did and both were trying to take credit for it. I am inclined to believe there was some degree of competition between Small and Salter. The latter, after all, was referred to as "the Missionary to Asiatics," was widely known, and could speak numerous Indian dialects. Taking credit for "rescuing" the bear and aiding the Punjabis may have impressed each of their respective employers (the Strangers' Home and the LCM) and their patrons. In any case, there was an overlap between the two missionaries in providing aid to the distressed Indians.

By 1887, the bear had not yet been sold, though it was in "comfortable quarters," while the men had managed to make their way back to India.[87] Two of the men were found working passages to Calcutta by Small and Fergusson.[88] The other three were offered free passages to Demarara by Messrs. Scrutton & Sons, who provided the passages as a favour to Salter.[89] Overall, their case exemplifies how missionaries were involved in philanthropic work even if their main agenda was to provide materials to aid Indians in converting. Even Small, who was predominantly interested in mission work, ended up getting involved in aiding the physical well-being of Indians. Moreover, it is notable that it was George Small and not the secretary or another member of the Strangers' Home who was charged with assisting the Indian performers. As important as mission work may have been, it could, and sometimes did, take second place to the more pressing physical needs of those who were distressed. In the case of the bear, no where was it mentioned that Small or Salter attempted convert the Indians; instead, the focus was on

[85] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 13-14.
[86] "Annual Report of the Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1887, 204.
[87] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887*, 11.
[88] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 13-14.
[89] "Annual Report of the Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1887, 204.

first finding them lodgings, and then finding them passages back to India. George Small retired the following year due to poor health and bad eyesight after twelve years of service.

Small was replaced by Carl Haupt, who had gained experience working with imperial subjects at the London and Seamen's Hospitals, and appears to have spoken Hindi. He states that at the hospitals, "Oriental patients listen to me with pleasure, and it does them good to be addressed by the sympathizing stranger."[90] Haupt certainly regarded himself with pride and high esteem. With respect to his work with patients at hospitals, he gives an example of Ameer Ally in his 1888 report to the Strangers' Home. Ally was from Calcutta and was brought to the Greenwich Hospital in a poor state, the details of which Haupt does not provide. He stayed in the hospital for over five months and had to undergo two surgeries. Haupt, boasted that "When he got somewhat better, I left him some good reading, in the way of Tracts and Gospels in Hindi, all of which he read with great interest, believing in the historical facts about our Lord." However, Haupt also admitted that, "it took him a long time before he could grasp his personal interest in the great Sacrifice." Haupt thus "[left] him to the Lord for further light and comfort by believing."[91] In spite of Haupt's belief in the power of his influence, there appears to be a degree of forcefulness in the way Haupt recalls his experience with Ally. Taking a degree of speculation into consideration, this case gives a slight impression that Haupt may have forced Ally, and thus likely others, into hearing him out. Persistence likely caused many to profess a feigned interest in the tracts and scriptures that he handed out.

While at the Strangers' Home, Haupt worked diligently to look after both the temporal and spiritual welfare of the residents, putting them in touch with "Gospel truth and good literature" whenever possible through means such as with his daily morning services. In his first

[90] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1888*, 14.
[91] Ibid.

year at the Home, Haupt handed out 775 scriptures and 4976 tracts in 23 languages, which was roughly three times as many as the annual averages for the previous years. Haupt certainly appears to be the most enthusiastic of the Home's missionaries and ardent in his dedication to preach the scriptures and provide a Christian education to all those he could in order to encourage conversion. He also spoke favourably of the impact he believed he had on Indians. For example, he wrote of a Bengali man who had attended his services for several weeks. He expressed an interest in reading the New Testament and "kept aloof from drink and evil company," as a way to show his dedication. One day, "a berth was got for him in a ship for the East with others" and he succumbed to a glass. After getting drunk, the man "jumped through a window, falling into the area below, and breaking both his wrists."[92] He was then taken to the Poplar Accident Hospital where Haupt says the Bengali felt regretful and hoped he would not drink again. Despite the Bengali's indiscretion, Haupt appeared proud to have been able to provide him with moral and spiritual support.

Haupt remained confident about his work, even stating that, "those who have read the Gospel do not hide their convictions, but state them quite freely in presence of their own religious teachers, thus assisting me in my endeavours to do them good."[93] He also told the Board and the annual meeting that many were seeking him out to learn more of Christianity. Haupt writes, "Several of them [lascars] have asked me to take them away from their surroundings and to give them chances for further enlightenment, and that they might learn the right ways of Christians. Altogether, about four thousand Orientals, seafaring men, have had the Gospel brought before them."[94] Haupt, though, does not provide any statistics or examples that can be used to confirm whether his statement is truth or fantasy. 4000 people receiving the

[92] Ibid., 13.
[93] Ibid., 14.
[94] Ibid.

Gospels certainly does not confirm that each was compelled to convert. Moreover, his claim that several workers at the dock were desirous of leaving "their surroundings" may simply have been due to their desire to either find more work or to leave Britain and return to their families elsewhere. Nevertheless, Haupt's reports of success were received favourably. J.H. Ferguson wrote that Haupt "has had very fair encouragement so far during this year…and whilst he appears to deal with them quite faithfully, he is yet treated by them in general with courtesy and respect."[95] Haupt remained the Strangers' Home missionary until 1896, when he was replaced with Rev. Charles Neil, Vicar of St. Mathias' Parish, Poplar who worked at the Home until at least 1902.[96] Unfortunately, not much is known about Neil or successive missionaries who worked at the Strangers' Home.

The Asiatic Rest

The Strangers' Home was not the only place from which missionary outreach to Indians in Britain was based. After leaving the Strangers' Home in April 1876, Salter reinvested his time and energy into mission work at the London City Mission. Although he continued to traverse the streets for distressed Indians, he also established a place of his own to receive "strangers." Several blocks from the Strangers' Home, he established "the Strangers' Rest" or "Asiatic Rest" (377 East India Dock Road) just a few years after having left the Strangers' Home. The Asiatic Rest was "intended to give rest to the bodies of the travellers who have reached us from the distant East, or inner Africa. Strangers in a strange land, where their customs and language are so

[95] Ibid., 18.
[96] CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report*. The LCM's "Missionary to Orientals" began dividing his time between the LCM and the Strangers' Home—either due to an absence of a missionary at the Home or the increased number of South Asians at the Home. As the LCMM points out, there was a higher than average number of South Asians in Britain in 1902 due to the coronation of King Edward VII, see Reference to "Missionary to Orientals," in *LCMM* 1 July 1902, 173; "Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 August 1903, 202.

little understood, such a home is greatly needed."[97] The Asiatic Rest was thus similar to the Strangers' Home in terms of its mission agenda, but it was not to be a lodging house or charity center. The main objective of the Asiatic Rest was "to bring before the visitor the full, free, and finished atonement God has provided for sin."[98] Salter was concerned that Asiatic visitors were reluctant to show interest in Christian doctrine "when surrounded by their countrymen on board" vessels in the docks, and felt certain that "they will follow the missionary ashore and come freely to the Asiatic Rest."[99] This was, then, to be a dedicated missionary space where "men could meet by themselves, read, write their letters, hear news from home, and obtain advice, both temporal and spiritual."[100]

Finding a location for the Asiatic Rest was not easy, and Salter was even met with a lot of resistance. Salter writes in *The East in the West*,

> The prejudice against bringing foreign labour under any circumstance into the east of London was very great. Hence, when it was known that premises were required for a place of rest for foreigners, objections came from all quarters. The contemplated building was regarded as a disgrace to any neighbourhood; for, unfortunately, the Asiatics are credited with all the wrong-doing in any assault which the roughs make on them.[101]

The opening of the Rest would mean there would be two dedicated spaces for the "other" in London's East End. The Rest, while providing a safe space for imperial subjects, were increasingly falling under the influence of the discourse of scientific racism and social Darwinism, which was on the rise. Salter himself wrote in heavily-racialized language that some were concerned about "noisy Malays, Chinese with long pig-tails, coal-black Africans and dusky Lascars sitting on the steps, climbing on the wall, and swinging on the railings, singing 'Hallelujah!' and shouting 'Amen!' till midnight, relieved not unfrequently [sic] by a free

[97] Salter, *The East in the West*, 150.
[98] "Annual Report of the Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1887, 204.
[99] Salter, *East in the West*, 150.
[100] Ibid., 151.
[101] Ibid., 152.

fight."[102] It is not evident that Salter himself explicitly disagreed with this image of Asians. Even amongst the impoverished areas of London, racial discourse was creeping in and becoming a cause for concern, and Salter may not have been immune to this.

Nonetheless, Salter and the LCM found a suitable location near the East India Docks.[103] Once established, the Rest was open every evening and on Sundays. A library was made available, consisting of Salter's own personal collection, which consisted of "Guzerati, Bengali, and Hindustani books," including a Qur'an; Salter states that some of the books were procured from Britain, but "some of the valuable issues of the Lodiana Mission Press were gratuitously sent; [and] the works of the converted Maulvi Amad ud Deen are here [too]."[104] On Sunday afternoons he offered tea and biscuits for those who "stay to the Bible reading." He was concerned though that "with many their faith is not sufficiently flexible to allow them to partake of it [Bible reading]."[105] It is possible that Salter used refreshments as a means to convince Indians, and others, to listen to him read the Bible. However, considering the work Salter undertook among Britain's destitute South Asian population outside of the Strangers' Home and Rest, it is quite possible that many of his visitors—who would have been destitute and in need of help—simply "played" along. In any case, the Asiatic Rest, over time, became an alternative space to the Strangers' Home where missionary work could be taken up and Christianity extended to the non-Christian. But those who used the Rest did not always view the space as an exclusively missionary one, and over time it became a sort of unintended refuge for the migrant labourers seeking advice from a man who could speak their language.

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 153.
[104] Ibid.
[105] "Mission to the Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 2 May 1881, 91-2.

Early on, up to thirty people visited the Rest on a daily basis. Salter describes his visitors (in rather colourful language) as being "mostly Mahommedans, varying from the bigoted Afghan and Arab to the semi-fetish-worshipper of Africa. But not unfrequently [sic] the Buddhist, the Sikh, and the adherents of other forms of Hinduism meet here."[106] Evidently, Salter thought much less of Africans than he did of Indians. Writing in 1893, he wrote of Africans as needing "special attention, for they have yet to realize the real meaning of friendship and sympathy," and he hoped he "could so far raise them to a sense of their manhood as to esteem my friendship and come under my roof."[107] This reference to effeminacy here fits into a broader discourse of colonial masculinity at the end of the century, showcasing a shift in Salter's own writing that adheres to the broader British imperial narrative.[108] His distinction between Indians and Africans also fits with typical British views, and reinforces the different relationship that Britain had with India. Nonetheless, he found "hopeful" cases among both. Three Gujarati Hindus who worshipped "the avatar known as Rama" were described as attentive listeners who promised to reflect on Christ and take the religion into consideration.[109] There was also Assi, a Swahili-speaking native of Arabia. Salter found Assi in a hospital, where Assi was kept for at least six weeks. After being discharged, Assi visited Salter at the Rest and talked about the New Testament, which Salter had provided him in Arabic translation. Salter writes that Assi, on departure said, "The Arabs and Swahilis do not know the good things that are in that book [New Testament], but I will tell them wherever I go."[110]

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[106] Salter, *The East in the West*, 153.
[107] Ibid., 151-2.
[108] See for example Sinha Mrinalini, *Colonial Masculinity: the 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).
[109] "Annual Report of the Missionary to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 July 1884, 165.
[110] "Missions to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 August 1883, 176. See also, "The Asiatic Rest," *LCMM*, 1 September 1890, 233.

As with the Strangers' Home, missionary periodicals reported on the progress of evangelizing at the Rest in favourable terms. The *Coral Missionary Magazine*, for example, wrote about how visitors left the Rest and started "by-and-by on their homeward voyage, carrying the Scriptures in their hands, the Gospel teaching in their hearts. In many cases we know that the seed thus sown has not been in vain."[111] Salter also displayed a degree of pride when talking about those who had shook off their "heathenism" and converted. For example, in 1895 he received a letter from an African, who had first visited the Rest a decade earlier, and this letter articulates compassion towards Salter. The former resident had first arrived as Captain's boy at the age of twelve and is described as "a woolly-headed, chubby, black lad."[112] The boy, allegedly, was intrigued by Salter's scriptural readings on board the docked ship and so sought him out at the Rest. He had been in touch with Salter ever since, and "grew up to be a professing Christian, and was baptised in London."[113] Indeed, Salter and the LCM kept in contact with many Indians in Britain whom they had helped to convert.[114] It is suggested in his missionary reports that those who converted often remained in urban port cities "for by doing so they escape their heathen surroundings and secure Christian society."[115] It is not clear if any of these converts worked as missionaries across the globe on behalf of the LCM. These examples are also imbued with stronger racial language than Salter had invoked in his earlier writings about Asians in Britain, providing a mixture of racist thought with sentiments of caring—both not uncommon to the period.

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[111] "The Asiatic Rest," *Coral Missionary Magazine*, 1 June 1892. For other examples, see "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1888, 206; "The Asiatic Rest," *LCMM*, 1 September, 232; "The Asiatic Rest," *LCMM*, 2 May 1898, 92-3.
[112] "Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 2 September 1895, 212.
[113] Ibid.
[114] "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1888, 206; "Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 2 September 1895, 212.
[115] "Annual Report of the Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1887, 205.

Although statistical data is wanting, numerous issues of the *LCMM* suggest that not many Asians actually converted. Indeed, their reasons for being at the Rest went beyond sheer interest in learning more about Christianity. More pressing concerns preoccupied those who visited the Rest; they were the unintended "residents" of the East End, the poor, the impoverished, and those desiring to return to their homes elsewhere in the empire. Even Salter acknowledged in 1879 that many were "more or less inimical to Christianity—that they know nothing, or very little, of the Gospel, and never sang a hymn, then indeed the number of visitors and the motives that influence them to visit become interesting."[116] In his report to the LCM in 1888, Salter notes, "often they call with their merchandise for a rest, for they are fond of bringing something to sell in our London streets. Our audience is likely, therefore, sometimes to be very promiscuous." The article goes on to say that at one meeting they had "three suratees, two swahilis, four Punjabees, a monkey, and a parrot." Admittance was never refused "but we wish they would keep their merchandise away. We are glad, however, to give them the Truth under any circumstances."[117] Thus, not all of the Rest's visitors were keen on Christianity and converting. They had ulterior motives for visiting the Rest, which largely revolved around their material well-being. Ultimately, what the Rest became was yet another space, or a zone, in which imperial subjects could interact with one another and where they could seek advice from the man who could not only speak their language, but had earned a reputation of helping the distressed.

Indeed, the Asiatic Rest became a place to question, critique, and connect with religions, and not just Christianity. Nazneen Ahmed has argued that Salter's writing "signalled respect for

[116] "The Strangers' Rest for Asiatics," *LCMM*, 1 August 1879, 186-87.
[117] "Mission to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 September 1888, 206.

religious distinctions."[118] Though caution should be applied when reflecting on the extent to which Salter was respectful and even tolerant of other faiths, he did not allow his disapproval of them to prevent him from helping the poor. At the very least, he allowed discussions amongst those of differing beliefs, though the debate always circled back to Salter emphasizing the virtues of Christianity. In 1880 Salter wrote that "some are in distress, and need help; others in trouble, and seek advice. Some come to convince the Missionary of his error, and convert him to Mohammedanism; [while] others come to seek further instruction in spiritual things."[119] For example, in 1895, the *LCMM* printed Salter's account of seventeen "hostile Mohammedans" visiting him at the Rest to challenge him on Christianity. One of the men, Gazi Mohammed had frequently visited the Rest and so was familiar with Salter's teachings on Christianity. Salter describes Mohammed as having "a strong element of the bully about him," and that "the best way to deal with such men is to let them exhaust themselves, which it generally does not take long to do." Salter, very much an old man at this point, describes himself as being courageous, heroic even, in how he "answer[ed] their objections in a few words, and fill[ed] up the vacuum with Gospel truth." The men then grew tired of hearing of the Gospel and were ready to leave.[120]

Where Salter seemed to provide the most room for negotiation and discussion of religion was with the ayahs. There are two occasions when Salter emphasizes ayahs visiting the Rest. One is in *The East in the West* where he states, "one of the most interesting meetings at the Rest is on the occasion when the ayahs, or female Indian nurses, gather there."[121] Twenty-four ayahs had responded to an invitation he had sent to the Ayahs' Home to visit the Rest. The ayahs

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[118] Nazneen Ahmed, with Jane Garnett, Ben Gidley, Alana Harris, and Michael Keith, "Historicising Diaspora Spaces: Performing Faith, Race, and Place in London's East End," in Sondra L. Hausner and Jane Garnett, eds., *Religion in Diaspora: Cultures of Citizenship* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 59.
[119] "Missions to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 August 1883, 176.
[120] "Asiatics and Africans in London," *LCMM*, 2 September 1895, 211-212. See also, Salter, *The East in the West*, 159.
[121] Salter, *East in the West*, 164-5.

consisted of Hindus, Mahommedans, Roman Catholics, and Protestant Christians. Their arrival, Salter notes, "stirred considerable attention, for they came in all their gay Eastern attire to celebrate the occasion, with bangles, nose jewels, and other native ornaments, to take tea at the Rest with their English 'mam' and the padre."[122] Because of their attire, two omnibuses were called to take them home. The other instance is in the *LCMM* for 1890 where Salter discusses twelve Ayahs visiting him just before the departure of three for India. On this visit, "scriptures were circulated among them and some portions read, and hymns were sung in Hindustani and Bengali."[123] Though the ayahs had walked three miles to see him, Salter made sure to call an omnibus to take them home because "their nose jewels, bangles, and Oriental attire were too attractive to be pleasant in the East of London."[124] Although it is easy to read these visits as yet another attempt by Salter to bring more people under the influence of evangelicalism, it is also clear that Salter enjoyed conversing with these women. While the main goal was conversion, he seems to have been equally content with people seeking him out for tea, conversation, and counsel.

Around 1887, after thirty-five years of service, Salter began preparing for retirement. He had begun training his "brother Missionary," Abraham Challis in Hindustani and Swahili at the request of the LCM so he could be understood by the imperial subjects who came to the docks from across the empire.[125] Challis was described as already being "sufficiently advanced in his studies to render valuable help amongst the many thousands of Orientals who yearly visit our metropolis," but he lacked finesse.[126] As noted in the *LCMM*, "Mr. Salter's pupil has

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[122] Ibid. Salter at some point had re-married. His wife, "the 'Mamma' of the Rest" died in 1894 and Salter saw her absence as "a loss to the Rest for she had acquired enough Hindustani to be useful to the visitors in the absence of the Missionary," "Among Asiatics and Africans in the London Docks," *LCMM*, 2 April 1894, 87.
[123] "The Asiatic Rest," *LCMM*, 1 September 1890, 229.
[124] Ibid., 230.
[125] LCM: Committee Minute Book, 6 December 1886; 14 March 1887; 18 July 1887; 1 September 1888.
[126] "Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 June 1888, 130.

encountered some difficulty from the fact that the *patois* spoken by most of these Orientals differs considerably from the correct forms of speech he has learned from his grammar, dictionary, and Testament."[127] In his first year, Challis found attentive listeners. He read the bible in Urdu to those who would listen, and found that "the tenderness of a good many expressions in the Psalms is very striking to a Mohammedan."[128] Although Challis does not seem to have continued Salter's Rest, he did visit the docks frequently. He also found that the East End now had an influx of Jews, which was changing the demography of the area. The East End was certainly a more diverse place by the end of the nineteenth century than it was mid-century, with a relatively high population of non-Britons. Although the main foreigners were not Asians in terms of residents and immigrants, Asians themselves were beginning to settle in higher numbers and missionaries were conducting their business in a way not dissimilar to people like Charles Booth who were conducting sociological studies of the poor.[129]

As for Salter, he retired a decade later in 1898, and passed away the following year. His life story remains an interesting one. He is the best-known missionary in Britain in terms of those actively engaged with imperial subjects. Aside from Salter and a handful of missionaries who worked at the Strangers' Home, there do not appear to have been too many "missionaries to Asiatics" within Britain in the nineteenth century. When he began his work in 1857, he stated that, "I had a large amount of opposition, and often difficulty to find a seasonable opportunity to introduce the subject of saving truth, but after eighteen years' labour I seem to have earned my

[127] Ibid., 131.
[128] "Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 June 1889, 185.
[129] For more information on nineteenth century studies of the poor, see Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Thomas R. C. Gibson-Brydon, *The Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London: Charles Booth, Christian Charity, and the Poor-but-Respectable* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016). See also Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968).

position."[130] There was, then, perhaps a resistance by the English themselves who lived or worked in the docks and neighbourhoods that Salter visited. Nevertheless, he made a mark in the East End and his Asiatic Rest was certainly a place of comfort for many, or at least it was until the Rest fell out of use without Salter at its helm. Salter's legacy as "Missionary to Asiatics," though, did carry on with his successor.

Conclusion: The Impact of Missions to Britain's Domestic "Heathens"

Missions by the mid-century had become an integral component of the imperial project, even if there were debates over the utility of missionaries in "civilizing" the people of the empire. Within Britain, missionaries were most heavily invested in sweeping Indians off the streets and bringing them to the Strangers' Home where they could be offered food, lodgings, and a return passage to Indian through repatriation. Most saliently, missionaries worked to amend the contradictions of the British Empire; Britons claimed to civilise the world through trade and enlightenment, but the economic structures created by the empire actually left its imperial subjects to die, not just in faraway lands but also on the streets of the imperial capital. Thus, the need to provide for the spiritual and moral "needs" of distressed Indians, in addition to their bodily needs, led to a different kind of responsibility that missionaries felt was owed to Indians. Missionaries to Asians in Britain, especially Joseph Salter, felt they owed it to the distressed, as good, benevolent, Christian Britons, to provide charity *and* religious instruction whenever possible with neither necessarily taking precedent. Salter in particular noted the discrepancy between the opportunities opened by empire and the negative impact that too often came with it, such as abandonment and neglect of imperial subjects in the employ of the empire.

[130] "The Missionary to the Asiatics of London," *LCMM*, 1 July 1875, 139.

For Salter at least, Indians were British subjects that deserved to be treated better than they were by the British.

What Indians themselves may have made of this missionary philanthropy is difficult to discern. At the very least, the sources provide slight insight into the lives of South Asians in Britain in the nineteenth century. There were many Indians, it seems, who were eager to converse with Joseph Salter at the Asiatic Rest, and some even expressed an interest in learning about Christianity. Salter, Small, and Haupt never actually provide details on how many people they managed to convert, which does allude to the fact that their missionizing may not have been as successful as they would have liked. What was more, cases like Ameer Ally and the Irish woman who was the wife of an Indian in Drury Lane show that not everyone was eagerly waiting to talk to missionaries. Unsurprisingly, missionaries would impose themselves on imperial subjects who, in turn, would have had to be careful in how they negotiated the topic of Christianity, especially when either seeking financial or legal aid and repatriation, or hoping to be left in peace with their wives and families. Snippets of Indian lives through missionary accounts also expose a growing concern over poverty on the streets of East London. In the late nineteenth century, during the heyday of Charles Booth's mapping of poverty in London, impoverished foreigners in London was becoming a notable sign of East End neighbourhoods yet this poverty was never fashioned as a multi-racial one. Yet, within these neighbourhoods were spaces in which Indians could reside and interact with Britons.

CHAPTER FOUR

The India Office: Evading Institutional Responsibilities

In September 1913, the secretary of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics wrote to the India Office asking for assistance with two Indians who had recently been admitted in a state of destitution. The men, Fazulla Mahomed Ali and Shah Navaz, had left India in search of employment elsewhere in the empire. However, their finances had quickly run out and so they ended up at the Strangers' Home where the secretary admitted the two distressed men. The secretary then wrote to the India Office asking for officials to step in and aid the men. In discussing the case, the India Office's Judicial and Public Committee determined that "the Strangers' Home will keep the men for some time if there is any chance of obtaining employment for them. If not, or if they refuse work, they will probably have to go to the workhouse."[1] Given this, "the Secretary of State [did] not think that repatriation at the cost of Indian revenues [was] justified."[2] The decision that there was no need for the India Office to intervene, particularly because of the existence of charitable institutions like the Strangers' Home, is but one case among many and is indicative of a longer history of governmental neglect of destitute Indians in Britain. Even though destitute Indians could turn to the Strangers' Home, and even workhouses, these institutions did not, and could not, legally address the problem of distressed Indians. Administrators at both the Home and workhouses were also keen on India Office administrators taking greater responsibility for destitute Indians. It is the India Office's relation to destitute Indians that this chapter addresses.

[1] IOR: L/PJ/6/1269 No.3493, Dept. minute paper, 29 September 1913.
[2] IOR: L/PJ/6/1269 No.3493, Draft letter, 29 September 1913.

Whether or not the India Office should have taken measures to help destitute Indians was a constant source of tension and debate between the India Office, the Strangers' Home, and Poor Law authorities largely because the law itself was unclear. The issue of rights and accountability was compounded by contentious understandings of what legal rights were owed and by whom. Hannah Weiss Muller has found that "legal and popular understandings of subjecthood" were expansive yet ambiguous in the eighteenth century, and that while "many subjects assumed they were entitled to certain rights, very few of those rights were formally recognized."[3] The same can be said of subjecthood in the nineteenth century. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 after the Indian Rebellion established that Indians in British-controlled India were British subjects, but in practice the treatment of Indians as equal to British-born subjects occurred in an inconsistent manner.[4] India Office officials did argue that Indians had access to poor relief in Britain, yet the Poor Laws were not adequately equipped to deal with non-white subjects because of religious and dietary requirements, language barriers, and the issue of settlement. The Strangers' Home did cater to specific religious and cultural needs, but a lack of finances made it difficult to consistently provide support to aid Indians. As in the case of Ali and Navaz, there was a disconnect between the empire providing opportunities for employment, expectations that the British government would be responsible for its imperial subjects, and the lack of structural and financial support for relief or repatriation.

This chapter examines how the India Office, which argued that it did not have the financial, legal, or moral responsibility to provide relief, coped with persistent requests by Indians and British patrons for assistance. In demanding that the India Office accept its

[3] Hannah Weiss Muller, "Bonds of Belonging: Subjecthood and the British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 53 (2014): 55-56.
[4] See A. Martin Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians: Social Rank, Imperial Identity, and South Asians in Britain, 1858-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 99; Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 22-23.

responsibility to distressed Indians, the Strangers' Home and Poor Law Unions continuously questioned the place of pauper Indians within Britain's legal and institutional frameworks. Meanwhile, the India Office attempted to shift accountability for the management of imperial subjects in Britain onto charitable associations, which only further entrenched the legal ambiguity of Indians as British subjects. The lack of interest in supporting the repatriation of Indians also implies that British administrators were not nearly as concerned with the social ills of pauper Indians mingling with white English women as traditional narratives of Victorian Britain would suggest. Policy regarding the treatment of Indians was established early on and maintained as precedent and did not change despite increasing racial discrimination. If anything, it was a growing interest in enhancing Britain's imperial image in relation to India toward the end of the century that impacted decision-making.

In analyzing the discourse within the India Office, I focus on three key periods. First, I look at the early- to mid-nineteenth century and the shift from company to crown rule of India, paying particular attention to the issue of distressed non-lascars and the establishment of the India Office. Then I examine the critical moment in the 1880s when the India Office acknowledged that the treatment of destitute Indians required proper attention and officials even established a committee to address the matter. Lastly, I end with an analysis of the situation at the turn of the century when the India Office came to rely more extensively on the Strangers' Home as a solution to aiding distressed Indians who sought out government assistance. By this point, performers had become a particular nuisance, as employers were quick to take advantage of Indian entertainers. Laws were passed in India and the colonies to provide some security to migrant performers, but the enforcement of legislation remained just as ambiguous as ever. In analyzing several cases of administrative deliberations, I argue that repeated debates over the

treatment of destitute Indians in Britain highlight competing understandings of British imperial responsibilities in terms of Indian subjecthood. As I argue, a history of the India Office provides a strikingly different notion of imperial responsibilities than what was felt by Britons within social, charitable, and missionary-oriented institutions. In so doing, I also add to existing understandings of the domestic functions of the India Office.

Seeking Institutional Relief at the India Office

When the East India Company's (EIC's) rule was on the decline at the beginning of the century, lascars were not the only ones struggling to have basic human rights respected by British employers. Non-lascars, such as servants and ayahs, were often abandoned by their employers as well either on arrival in Britain or after their employment was no longer needed. In the 1830s, several Indian provinces required deposits to be made on departure of Indian servants to England as a way of preventing the neglect of these working-class Indians. In 1832, for example, the province of Madras required employers taking Indian servants to England to make a £100 deposit to ensure a return passage would be provided for them. The deposits were reduced to £50 in 1840 and then the practice was altogether abandoned in 1844 as the system was proving to be ineffectual.[5] The Government of Bombay also tried the system of deposits but they too were repealed because the deposits were "not found [to be] of much practical use, and had fallen into desuetude."[6] As a result of these ineffective deposits, lascars were not the only South Asian labourers in distressed circumstances on arrival in Britain. As described by retired Madras Civil Servant Henry Morris, who reflected on the situation in the mid-nineteenth century, "there can be no doubt that they were sadly neglected," and that "England failed to do her duty

[5] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, "Treatment of Native Paupers in England," 24 January 1879
[6] Mr. Grant Duff, in, *Hansard*, Commons Deb, 3rd ser., vol. 194, 25 Feb. 1869, cols 310-1.

towards them."[7] The establishment of the Strangers' Home helped alleviate this suffering, but it was merely a social institution that provided charitable relief. Its administrators could not prevent the misuse of migrant workers or tackle overarching institutional problems.

Nevertheless, lascars and their employers did make use of the Strangers' Home as a viable place for Indians to stay while in London. The EIC, and later the India Office, provided a £200 annual subscription to the Home, recognizing it as a valuable lodging house for Asian sailors that could ease its own inability to establish proper accommodations.[8] This annual subscription to the Strangers' Home, however, did not account for non-sailors. As per the Merchant Shipping Acts, the EIC was only responsible for sailors employed by the Company and no one else. The Strangers' Home administrators, well aware of the presence of non-sailors who were falling into destitution in Britain, repeatedly challenged the India Office on the rights that were legally owed to mistreated subjects. Administrators at the Home were among the more vocal Britons at pressing government officials to undertake greater responsibility for British imperial subjects. Being largely a missionary-oriented institution, the main motivation for the Strangers' Home was a concern that Indians returning to their homes might have "carried with them an evil impression of our Christianity, being, in reality, worse heathens than when they came."[9] Attempting to get the India Office involved and invested in protecting working-class Indians became yet another venture taken on by the administrators of the Strangers' Home.

Although destitute Indians were helped at the Home, administrators were not able to provide food and lodgings indefinitely, especially as the number of those in need increased. Occasionally, administrators even had to send people out of the home because of a lack of

[7] Henry Morris, "Introduction," in Joseph Salter, *The East in the West, or Work Among the Asiatics and Africans in London* (London: S.W. Partridge and Company, 1895), v.
[8] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886* (20 April 1887), 19. The Crown Colonies also provided £84 and the British India Steam Navigation Company contributed £100.
[9] Morris, "Introduction," in Salter, *The East in the West*, vi.

resources.[10] Consequently, cases of destitute Indians were brought to the attention of the India Office in hopes of obtaining relief and repatriation for the person in need.[11] Letters written to the India Office from the Strangers' Home, Poor Law authorities, and even Indians themselves regarding cases of destitution instigated repeated discussions within the India Office on the treatment of non-sailor Indians in Britain. This discourse was repetitive and often drew the same conclusions, but continued efforts at addressing the issue of pauper Indians indicates that the topic was important. It is also clear from the sources that some were reluctant to go to a missionized institution and turned directly to the India Office for aid.

Regardless of what social spaces existed for distressed Indians, the responsibility of providing relief or repatriation of Indians should have, at least in theory, fallen to the newly established India Office. After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the India Office was formed in 1858 to aid the British crown in directly controlling India. Much like its predecessor, the EIC, the India Office was comprised of numerous correspondence departments, each with a committee of four to five men.[12] The Secretary of State for India oversaw these small yet influential committees that, together, had the power and authority to make and administer rules for the effective governance of India. Under the Act, there were to be significant reforms in the Home Government of India, but, as Donovan Williams notes, "the Act of 1858 was a disappointment."[13] This Act had made the Government of India "responsible to the Parliament through Ministers of the Crown."[14] In practice, the India Office, specifically the Secretary of

[10] IOR: L/PJ/6/440 No.346, "Rules passed by the Board of Directors," 17 Feb. 1897; IOR: L/PJ/6/449 No.1148, 8 June 1897.
[11] The India Office Records have numerous correspondences from the secretary of the Strangers' Home asking for assistance in relieving destitute Indians.
[12] Donovan Williams, *The India Office, 1858-1869* (Hoshiarpur, India: Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, 1993); Arnold P. Kaminsky, *The India Office, 1880-1910* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986); Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 27-46.
[13] Williams, *The India Office 1858-1869*, 20.
[14] Ibid.

State for India and his departments, did not fall under the control of the British parliament, which meant that it acted as a semi-autonomous body.

The correspondence departments were the main crux of the India Office. They were, as Donovan Williams notes, "elitist in tendency and drawn together by the common concern of the formation of policy."[15] There were three main committees that the departments corresponded with: the Finance, Home and Public Works Committee; the Political and Military Committee; and the Revenue, Judicial, and Legislative Committee (later the Judicial and Public Department). Though designed to oversee the management of India, no department within the Office was specifically equipped to deal with Indian subjects within Britain. The task thus fell to the Judicial and Public Department, which was responsible for political and administrative reforms, justice, law and order.[16] The structural problem of not having a department to cope with distressed imperial subjects who were not sailors in Britain heightened what Satadru Sen has recognized as the problem of identity when it came to people moving across the empire.[17] In theory, Indians had the same rights as Englishmen, but in practice, identity and subjecthood were shifting concepts based on location, status, and wealth.[18] Destitution in particular was the point at which the tenuous nature of Indians' rights was exposed through their relationship with the India Office.

The first recorded discussion in Parliament of the treatment of destitute Indians was in 1869, when William Stacpoole, a member of parliament and Irish nationalist politician,

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[15] Ibid., 78.
[16] For a list of the Committees of the Council of India, 1858-1905, see Kaminsky, *The India Office, 1880-1910*, Appendix G, 252-282.
[17] Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity and K.S. Ranjitsinjhi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 12.
[18] Preeti Nijhar, *Law and Imperialism: Criminality and Constitution in Colonial India and Victorian England* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 79-94; Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 1-32; Rehana Ahmed, "Equality of Citizenship," in Ruvani Ranasinha with Rehana Ahmed, Sumita Mukherjee and Florian Stadtler, eds., *South Asians and the Shaping of Britain, 1870-1950* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 21-44; Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 99-123.

discussed a letter by Syed Abdullah. Abdullah was an Indian professor of languages in London, who wanted to know more about Indian servants who were brought to England and "frequently thereafter found destitute in the streets of London."[19] The Under Secretary of State for India responded to Stacpoole by saying "the fact was that the Oriental vagrants in the streets of London were not generally dismissed servants, but adventurers or suitors who had come here on their own account."[20] However, not all were so-called adventurers. Though data is fledgling at best, existing records on occupations of Indians in the Home show that between 1864 and 1873, approximately 929 of 1157 people at the Strangers' Home were mostly of the labouring classes. This group consisted of lascars, cooks, servants, stewards, and ayahs (nannies). While some Indians did travel to Britain for personal and private reasons, the bulk of Indian migrants were transient labourers, not permanent settlers. If these numbers from the Home are used as a way to understand the typical annual breakdown of occupations throughout the century, then it is possible that a large percentage of Indians were, in fact, dismissed servants.[21]

As the Under Secretary of State for India acknowledged, the "whole of this subject…was of importance, and was receiving attention."[22] Indeed, the subject had received attention in 1868 by Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State for India under the conservative government of Disraeli. Northcote looked into the matter after being confronted with a letter from Colonel Hughes stating he had a party of eleven performers in a state of destitution. The troupe arrived in England to perform but their employer had failed to pay them so they went to London seeking justice. In London, the Strangers' Home Directors wrote to the India Office hoping they would

[19] Mr. Stacpoole, in *Hansard*, Commons Deb., 3rd ser., vol. 194, 25 Feb. 1869, cols 310-1. Abdullah had expressed similar concerns in 1857, see *Daily News*, 4 June 1857.
[20] Ibid.
[21] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Daily News*, 30 May 1865; BL: Tr 152 (c) 1869 Vol. 152, *Report of the Proceedings at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders*; BL: IOL.1947 a.2622 (j), *Report of the Proceedings at the Re-opening of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders* (1870); SOAS: CWML O.204 (1873), *Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Strangers' Home*.
[22] Grant Duff, in *Hansard*, Commons Deb., 3rd ser., vol. 194, 25 Feb. 1869, cols 310-1.

help defer the cost of a return passage to Bombay (estimated to be at least £180). The directors also hoped that the office would take pre-emptive measures to prevent "poorer classes of Asiatics from being brought to the United Kingdom."[23] In response, Northcote decided to treat the troupe "as a special case," paid the expenses for repatriation, and looked into preventing similar cases. He even sent a letter to the Governor General of India in Council asking him to "take into consideration the question of adopting adequate measures for ensuring the provision of a return passage for all Natives engaged in India for service out of that Country…"[24] Northcote remains one of the few India Office officials who was generous when it came to the plight of impoverished Indians—before leaving office he donated £1000 to hospitals and other institutions in India, one of the largest contributions made by an official.[25] This contribution did not help Indians in Britain, but it does speak to the philanthropic nature of Northcote's efforts in comparison to attempts made at the India Office by future figures.

The subject of destitution was re-addressed in June 1869 under the Liberal government of Gladstone when the new Secretary of State for India, the Duke of Argyll, sent a dispatch to the Governor General hoping the resolution proposed "will be successful in checking the serious evil which has for some time attracted attention." In his dispatch, Argyll discussed section 3 of the 1864 Emigration Act. This act stipulated that it was not legal to bring Indians to England for work as "England is not a place to which emigration from British India is lawful," and so it was "a punishable offence to make a contract with any Native of India" for purposes of emigration.[26] Argyll, then, asked the Government in India to prevent labourers from heading to Britain in the first place, just as Northcote had done the previous year. At the same time, the letter also stated

[23] IOR: L/PJ/2/47 No.7/264, R.W. Hughes to the Undersecretary of State for India, 12 August 1868.
[24] IOR: L/PJ/2/47 No.7/264, Letter, Public No.152, 7 October 1868.
[25] W.D. Rubinstein, "Stafford Henry Northcote," *ODNB* (online ed. May 2009, accessed 8 August 2017).
[26] IOR: L/PJ/6/158 No.1282, Duke of Argyll to the Government of India, 1869. For a discussion of the Indian Emigration Acts, see Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 103-05.

that it *was* permissible to engage in a contract with menial servants who would be provided with a return passage to India. Indians, then, were allowed to be in Britain for short periods of time even though legally they were not permitted to travel to Britain on long-term work-related contracts. The law itself was thus obscure as to what constituted a legal contract with working-class, non-sailor Indians. Unsurprisingly, nothing practical materialized from Argyll's measures, especially since the Government of India denied any responsibility for Indians in Britain. Indeed, the Indian government is consistently absent from the records.

The only meaningful action taken at the time was that port authorities were issued instructions to assist the men entering an engagement as servants with "securing a satisfactory arrangement for their return passage."[27] In practice these so-called instructions were futile and not legally binding. In 1885, for example, an inquiry was made by officer J. Howard Bomer "as to the legal liability of an officer bringing an Indian servant to England and promised return passage to India."[28] The India Office responded that there were "no absolute laws on the matter…but practically, people bringing them are expected to send them back."[29] In 1899, there was a case concerning an English woman who brought an ayah, Nasiban, to London, but then turned her out without notice or wages.[30] The Secretary of State refused to provide financial aid, stipulating it would be against the practice of the India Office. These cases, spanning several decades, highlight a consistent failure to provide practical measures for supporting abandoned Indians due to a lack of legal precedent. Servants and other transient labourers, unlike lascars, were thus not properly protected by any legal measures—in lieu of official contracts, these individuals were to obtain guarantees for return passages through verbal agreements and hope.

[27] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, Public Dept. Minutes, 24 January 1879, "Treatment of Native Paupers in England."
[28] IOR: L/PJ/6/158 No.1282, Letter from J. Howard Bomer, 13 July 1885.
[29] IOR: L/PJ/6/158 No.1282, Dept. minute paper, 16 July 1885.
[30] IOR: L/PJ/6/518 No.1676.

Agreements sans paper contract seems risky, but when confronted with the prospect of gainful employment, it is hardly surprising that many were keen to improve on their families' financial situations. Moreover, some if not most of these workers may not have been used to paper contracts depending on their degree of literacy and social background. Accordingly, lower literacy levels would have better enabled the British to exploit working-class Indians.

Throughout the nineteenth century, attempts were continuously made by advocates to get the India Office to intervene on behalf of these neglected persons. Colonel Hughes, the first secretary of the Strangers' Home, was particularly active in this endeavour. Writing to the office in 1879, Hughes began by insisting that the Merchant Shipping Amendment Acts, which legally held the government responsible for the well-being of lascars, also applied to non-sailors. Challenging the India Office, Hughes asked if the act only applied to those connected with shipping, then "on whom does the responsibility rest and from and by whom is the cost of relief to be recovered for those who are not seamen?"[31] In response, the Public Department discussed whether or not to ask the Government of India to repatriate destitute Indians in Britain.[32] They also acknowledged Northcote's attempt in 1868 to hold the Governor General of India accountable. Specifically, the committee deliberated on the following:

> First, what is the extent of the evil, and 2ndly, what circumstances bring the Natives of this Country who form the pauper class in England, i.e. are they for the most part servants who fail to obtain re-engagement to go back to India on being discharged by their employers, or are they principally of the petitioner class…who come to England to get their grievance redressed by the empress of India.[33]

Hughes estimated that 300 destitute "natives not seamen" had been sent back to India by the Strangers' Home between 1858 and 1878. Of these, only 50 had been returned in the past decade, and so the secretary of the political department "doubt[ed] whether the evil is as serious

[31] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, Letter from Colonel Hughes, 24 January 1879.
[32] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, "Treatment of Native Paupers in England," 24 January 1879.
[33] Ibid.

as to require a legislative remedy."[34] These numbers gave the impression that all destitute Indians in need of assistance had made their way to the Home and were provided relief by the Home's secretary, but it is not clear that these numbers were representative of all those who may have been unintentionally stranded in the metropole.

Committee members from the public department were further concerned with the social and political ramifications of aiding destitute Indians. As stipulated by Sir William G.S. Fitzgerald, the Secretary of State's political aide-de-camp (ADC), "a proposal for repatriation originated here might be regarded as an admission of a moral obligation to deal with such cases which would be inconvenient if the Treasury declined to concur in the proposal."[35] The department further stated that "the difficulty is that the restrictions on the departure of Natives from India able to pay their passage to this Country, would be regarded as an interference with the liberty of the Subject," and that re-introducing mandatory deposits to those leaving British India "would be felt to be a great hardship."[36] The language of "liberty" that is evoked here relates back to the House of Commons debate in 1869 in which it was assumed that those finding themselves destitute were actually just "adventurers"—Indians who had travelled of their own accord and were thus responsible for their own outcomes. Yet these sentiments are at odds with the claim that the office did not want to take on a moral responsibility for distressed Indians, suggesting the issue had less to do with the liberty of Indians and more to do with the India Office's own inability or unwillingness to provide aid. It may also be a reflection of wanting to uphold the ability of Britons to continue to hire Indians for service on ships to Britain. In any case, Fitzgerald insisted that "the Home government will not and cannot be expected' to bear the

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, "Treatment of Native Paupers in England," 24 January 1879.

expense and so 'the Government of India is alone left."[37] Both in 1869 and 1879, then, the burden of assistance was being shifted away from the India Office.

Fitzgerald further argued that the India Office could not afford to relieve destitute Indians because the government had to provide for Britons who became destitute in India. He wrote that the government "already repatriate their own subjects found destitute abroad at the expense through the Foreign Office alone of about £1000 a year, and we have no means of compelling the Unions to undertake the duty." In lieu of the Government of India providing financial assistance, Fitzgerald felt the Strangers' Home or the workhouses should deal with those in the United Kingdom since "I cannot think that a native of Hindustan should be placed in a better position in such circumstance than a native of Belfast or Bristol."[38] Destitute Indians, then, were to be treated the same as the British poor. This juxtaposition of Britons receiving relief in India and Indian subjects being thrust into the workhouses would later be challenged by an exiled Indian prince in the 1880s.

The 1880s: Reconsidering Repatriation and Responsibility

From the 1880s onward, the dynamic between the India Office and destitute Indians underwent a shift as Indians were increasingly brought to the British public's attention and their treatment by the India Office was challenged. In 1885, a London department store recreated an Indian village with performers and entertainers, but the Indians were treated poorly. Shompa Lahiri writes that the treatment of these Indians was widely published and resulted in a "financial and public relations disaster."[39] The following year, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was held

[37] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, Letter from the financial department, 28 January 1879.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Shompa Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, eds., *A South-Asian History of Peoples from the Sub-Continent* (Oxford and Westport, CT: Greenwood World

to showcase Britain's empire and imperial superiority. Concurrently, there was an increase in the number of Indian men writing travelogues in English. Antoinette Burton has found that these accounts presented an overview of what life was like for Indians in Britain, especially for students who might have considered a university education there.[40] Then in 1887, the Imperial Conference was held to showcase the perceived unity across Britain's vast empire.[41] It is the context of empire on display, and increasing interactions between Britons and Indians in the media, that allowed for renewed criticism of the India Office's treatment of Indians. This period is also characterized by high imperialism in Europe, marked most notably by the Berlin Conference (1884-5) and the Scramble for Africa. In contrast, as Britain was maintaining its prestige through heightened imperial control and expansion, Indians were beginning to challenge existing colonial authority.

Maharajah Duleep Singh wrote to the India Office in 1884 requesting British administrators to provide relief to a destitute Indian named Nake Mahamed.[42] Duleep Singh, once a favourite at court, had himself become a disruptive force among the British aristocracy. As scholars have articulated, Singh had gone from being an exiled prince of the Punjab to a converted Christian who was well regarded by Queen Victoria and the British upper class.[43] His terms of surrender had provided him with a £25,000 pension in return for his loyalty to Britain. Singh, however, lived a rather lavish lifestyle and consequently encountered financial problems.

Publishing, 2007), 119. See also David Finkelstein and Douglas M. Peers, eds., *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media* (Hampshire and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

[40] Antoinette Burton, "Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian Travellers in Fin-de-Siècle London," *History Workshop Journal* 42 (1996): 127-8, 132-133.

[41] Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 23; Elleke Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals, 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 89.

[42] Amandeep Singh Madra, "Singh, Duleep (1838–1893)," *ODNB*. See also Michael Alexander and Sushila Anand, *Queen Victoria's Maharajah: Duleep Singh, 1838-93* (London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

[43] Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 71; Syed Muhammed Latif, "The Successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," in S.P. Gulati, ed., *The Tragic Tale of Maharaja Duleep Singh* (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1998), 110-111; Madra, "Singh, Duleep (1838–1893)," *ODNB*.

It seems that as his debts accrued, his penchant for the British diminished. He wanted the India Office to provide him with more funds, and later came to argue that the annexation of the Punjab and his exile were injustices. By 1886, Singh had converted back to Sikhism and was making plans to travel to India. As Alexander and Anand have pointed out, the India Office was worried about his potential return to India because of "mounting feeling among Indian intellectuals that they should have more say in the running of the administration."[44]

It was during this atmosphere of Singh's criticism of both the India Office and British administrators that Singh advocated on behalf of Nake Mahamed. In his inquiry, Singh asked whether "it is not fact that European paupers are sent home at the expense of the Public revenues of India?" He commented that, "it appears incredible that the Government should refuse to send back Indians who pay taxes that furnish the Revenues so wasted."[45] Singh questioned why Indian taxes were being used to pay for the relief of white British subjects in India, while those same resources were refused to Indian subjects in Britain. In a drafted letter, the department responded that while "the law provides for the temporary maintenance, and in some instances for the deportation from India of European paupers where such a [case] appears to Govt to be desirable…the maintenance of natives of India destitute in England is ~~equally~~ provided for by the Local rates."[46] "Equally" is crossed out in the original document, suggesting the department did not want to imply that there was a parallel system of relief in Britain for Indian paupers. It was also more effective to deport European paupers than to keep them in India because there was no Poor Law equivalent in India to deal with paupers. Moreover, in the margins of a preliminary draft, it was written that it might not be wise to discuss European paupers with Singh: "It is

[44] Alexander and Anand, *Queen Victoria's Maharajah,* 174.
[45] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Letter from Duleep Singh, 5 September 1884.
[46] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Letter (draft), 28 Oct. 1884. See also, "Relief to Distressed British Subjects," IOR: L/PJ/6/227 No.844.

gratuitously brought in by having no immediate connection with the question of the native stranger here. And it will likely encourage a saucy rejoinder."[47] Of course, the India Office already had a tenuous relationship with Singh and so was reluctant to take him seriously.

Nevertheless, the public department eventually ended up providing Mahamed with assistance. The secretary of the financial department negotiated with the secretary of the Strangers' Home to find Mahamed a working passage back to India, but emphasized that "all that is done unofficially, and the Secretary of State cannot adopt it as an act of state without departing from the rule that the India Office admits no liability in respect of these Indian paupers."[48] Despite growing concerns over Singh's actions, helping Mahamed was one way of showing Singh that he was wrong about British attitudes towards the treatment of Indians. Nevertheless, the committee insisted that "in Great Britain the Poor Law makes provision for the maintenance, out of funds provided by a local note levied everywhere throughout the Kingdom of all paupers who are found in the Country whatever may be their nationality."[49] These laws, Fitzgerald argued, meant that Indians too had "a right to be admitted to a workhouse like any other pauper."[50] By relying on the Strangers' Home and workhouses as alternative spaces for relief, the India Office continued to place Indians into the same category as the British poor while simultaneously excluding Indians from the same rights as white British subjects who fell into distress abroad.

In April 1886, discussions on how best to "dispose" of "Natives of India" who became paupers in Britain were renewed in greater zeal.[51] Administers, such as Fitzgerald, agreed that

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[47] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Draft reply, 5 September 1884.
[48] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Dept. minute, 5 Sept. 1884. I have found four other cases between 1868 and 1890 in which negotiations between the Strangers' Home for Asiatics and the India Office resulted in the return of destitute Indians: IOR: L/PJ/2/47 No.7/264; L/PJ/2/49, No.7/280; L/PJ/2/49, No.7/305; and L/PJ/2/52.
[49] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Draft reply, 5 September1884.
[50] IOR: L/PJ/6/134 No.1749, Fitzgerald to the Political Dept.
[51] IOR: L/PJ/6/172 No.432, Public dept. minute, 23 March 1886; IOR: L/PJ/6/173 No.609, 20 April 1886.

"In Law the Government of India is in no way liable but in practice it is found to be impossible to stand upon legal rights and the whole subject, I think, requires reconsideration."[52] In particular, the office acknowledged that, "Great hardship is really entailed . . . where his language is not understood, where there is no complying with the rules of his religion, and where the food is unsuitable to his constitution and offends his caste prejudices."[53] The goal then was to deport Indians rather than finding permanent places for them within Britain. To do so, the department hoped "to induce the English Poor Laws authorities to send, -or at any rate to contribute substantially towards sending, -'Eastern' paupers back to their native country: also [to get] the law altered [so] as to legalize the deportation of paupers."[54] This would be a challenge though as the department knew "the Poor Laws Board have always strongly resented and resisted having to maintain paupers of this class . . . and it will be difficult to bring them to see that it is for their interest that they should pay to have them sent away."[55] The department had thus finally recognized the impracticality of handling cases of destitute Indians with no clearly outlined policy or procedure.

To remedy the situation, the public department insisted on the formation of a committee to look into the matter. The appointed committee consisted of the following representatives: Arthur Macpherson, secretary in the Judicial and Public Department of the India Office; William Fitzgerald, Political ADC representing the India Office; Edward Wingfield from the Colonial Office; and Hugh Owen representing the Local Government Board. The Home Office, under a liberal Gladstonian ministry, chose not to get involved, stating that the case of destitute persons

[52] IOR: L/PJ/6/172 No.432, Extract from Report of the Political Dept. to the Secretary of State, 27 February 1886.
[53] IOR: L/PJ/6/172 No.432, Letter to the Local Gov. Board, 8 April 1886; "Foreigners in England," *Newcastle Courant*, 2 November 1883. For more information on the social implications of food in the workhouse, see Nadja Durbach, "Roast Beef, the New Poor Law, and the British Nation, 1834-63," *Journal of British Studies* 52 (2013); and, Ian Miller, "Feeding in the Workhouse: the Institutional and Ideological Functions of Food in Britain, ca. 1834-70," *Journal of British Studies* 52 (2013).
[54] IOR: L/PJ/6/172 No.432, Public dept. minute, 23 March 1886.
[55] Ibid.

only pertained to the Home Government when it was a criminal matter or if the person caused some other public nuisance.[56] The India Office's main agenda was to convince the Poor Law Unions to take responsibility for destitute Indians.

Prior to the meeting, Macpherson put together a report on behalf of the Secretary of State to outline the India Office's position. Titled the "Memorandum as to the proposed disposal of Natives of India who are paupers in the United Kingdom," this report suggested that arrangements "should be made by which the Unions generally (by establishing a fund for the purpose) or any particular Union on whom a pauper native of India is charged should at their own or its own expense remove the pauper to India."[57] Giving the Unions such an authority was felt to be the most efficient policy as "it is far cheaper for the Union – and it is in every way better for the Union as well as for the Native – that he should be sent back to India." In so doing, the Unions would remedy the cultural issues of having Indians in the workhouses: "Natives of India who become paupers in this country are in hopeless condition; once they reach that stage they will practically never find work for themselves or the means of subsistence."[58]

The committee itself only met once on 28 July 1886 at the office of the Local Government Board. At the end of the meeting, the committee provided the India Office with a brief report on the five questions that they had discussed: whether the Unions should have the power to repatriate Indians, and if so then "in what way is the power to be exercised;" whether it was "desirable to impose it as a duty on Unions to (deport or) to remove to India natives who become paupers;" whether the British government had any "obligation (moral or otherwise)" to pay out of imperial taxes; whether the principle of removal should "be extended by treating India as a place of settlement;" and, whether the proposed changes should apply also to "Asiatics or

[56] For an example of a public nuisance case, see IOR: L/PJ/6/365 No.77.
[57] IOR: L/PJ/6/181 No.1099A, "Memorandum as to the Proposed Disposal of Natives of India," 26 July 1886.
[58] Ibid.

Africans &c., belonging to colonies and settlements under the Colonial Office."[59] After having "had a long discussion," the meeting ended without coming to any conclusions and the committee adjourned until the fall.[60] In November, Owen looked into the numbers of Asians in workhouses in and around London and discovered that there were seventy-seven Indians, Africans, and Native Americans who had been relieved by the workhouse.[61] But aside from this inquiry, nothing further was discussed, as the India Office argued "there seemed no prospect of any change being adopted which would benefit India or the unfortunate paupers."[62] Though no explicit reasons were provided, it would seem then that the India Office could not shake the Poor Laws Unions' resistance towards financially maintaining Indian paupers.

The lack of decisive resolutions continued to lead to confusion over whose responsibility Indians were. In July 1887, the Guardians of the St. George's Union wrote to the India Office regarding three Punjabis in the Fulham Workhouse: Mehram Buse, age 65; Mahomed Yar, age 50; and Katubudder, age 35.[63] The public department acknowledged that a committee had been appointed in the previous year to establish a policy for such cases but that no effectual change would actually be implemented "until the parishes feel that so many natives come on the rates as to make it their interest to make special arrangements for them."[64] The department unsurprisingly continued to force the issue onto the unions. Sir John E Gorst, the Under Secretary of State, reinforced the decision in the House of Commons a few weeks later, commenting how "The Secretary of State does not consider [that] the relief of the three Natives of the Punjaub [sic]…or of destitute Indians in England generally, would be a proper application of the Revenues of

[59] IOR: L/PJ/6/181 No.1099A, Memo of 28 July 1886.
[60] Ibid.
[61] IOR: L/PJ/6/209 No.1399, Copy of a letter to Mr. Hedley, 10 November 1886. See also, IOR: L/PJ/6/172 No.432, Letter to the Local Gov. Board, 8 April 1886.
[62] IOR: L/PJ/6/206 No.1185, Dept. minute, 5 July 1887.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

India."[65] Accordingly, only the guardians could provide relief through the use of the Poor Law funds. In the case of Buse, Yar, and Katubudder, the St. George's Union did manage to find a ship bound for the port of Karachi (now in Pakistan) and sent them back by using union funds, but without financial support to send back all pauper Indians, this practice could not be sustainable.[66]

While Gorst was reasserting the decision not to relieve destitute Indians, the Foreign Office was encouraging the Secretary of State for India, Sir Richard Assheton Cross, to reconsider his decision.[67] Cross had informed the Foreign Office that he "could not defray from Indian revenues the cost of supporting Indians who become distressed abroad."[68] To support this decision, the public department referenced Louis Mallet's letter to the Foreign Office in 1877, which expressed concern that repatriation would "encourage the evil that it is desired to suppress" and so those who are not sailors should "not [be] entitled to conveyance to their Country at the Cost of the Government of India."[69] The reference to "the evil" here highlights an underlying motive behind the office's refusal to accept responsibility; the fear was that financial support would only increase the number of Indian paupers. Much like British attitudes towards the British poor, financial support for Indian paupers was to be discouraged and Cross upheld this decision in 1887.

Complicating this policy were the British consuls in other colonies and European countries who were relieving distressed Indians abroad in certain instances. The Foreign Office hoped the India Office would comply because if the decision to not help persisted then "there

[65] *Hansard*, Commons Deb., 3rd ser., vol. 317, 25 July 1887, cols 1881-2; IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1289, J&P Department, Minute Paper, Question in the House of Commons by Mr. J.W. Lowther, 22 July 1887.
[66] IOR: L/PJ/6/208 No.1335, Saint George's Union to Cross, India Office, 27 July 1887.
[67] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Foreign Office to the Under Secretary of State for India, 15 July 1887.
[68] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Public Dept. Meeting Minutes, 16 July 1887.
[69] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Extract from a letter sent to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1877.

[would] be no alternative but to instruct Her Majesty's Consuls abroad to abstain from relieving any distressed British Indian subjects who may apply to them."[70] Governments in three colonies, in particular, Malta, Mauritius, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), even took it upon themselves to "accept the responsibility of repaying the expenses incurred on account of Colonial subjects distressed in foreign parts or in other colonies."[71] Not wanting to instruct the consuls otherwise, the Foreign Office wrote that "Lord Salisbury trusts, that, in view of the serious and painful consequences that must follow such a step, the Sec. of State for India will reconsider his decision."[72] The India Office, though, continued to resist "a recognition of the responsibility the Foreign Office attempts to cause upon India."[73] By August 4, the Public Department sent a formal decision to the Foreign Office stating that the secretary of state had reconsidered and "sees no reason to depart from the decision he has already come to on this subject." He also instructed that the consuls should be the ones "to abstain from relieving any distressed British Indian subjects" (those who were from the subcontinent of India specifically).[74] Cross was not only emphasizing the distinction between the jurisdictions of the India Office and the Colonial Office, but also underling how each office should be able to pursue separate policies due to their independent nature.

The Foreign Office continued to challenge Cross and the India Office as British Indian subjects continued to receive relief in some instances from the consuls. Cross was "furnished with copies of the Circulars to Consuls of February 26, 1869 and February 27, 1877," and a letter sent in May from the Foreign Office explained that relief was provided because "every

[70] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Foreign Office to the Under Secretary of State for India, 15 July 1887.
[71] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Letter to the Colonial Office, 26 July 1887; Circular from the Foreign Office, 26 February 1869.
[72] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Foreign Office to the Under Secretary of State for India, 15 July 1887.
[73] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Letter, 20 July 1887.
[74] IOR: L/PJ/6/207 No.1247, Letter to the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 4 Aug. 1887.

government, whether British, Colonial, or Indian, is, speaking of course generally, responsible for the relief and if necessary the repatriation of its own subjects destitute in foreign countries."[75] After a series of correspondences,

> Lord Cross ha[d] agreed to admit as a charge upon the revenues of India such reasonable expenditure as may be incurred in the relief of persons who are really British Indian subjects, provided that in each case the Govt. of India has been communicated with and has authorized the expenditure.[76]

Before authorizing the charge of Indian revenues, Cross also asked that "reasonable proof must be given to that Govt. as to the nationality of the person relieved" because "natives of Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, Mauritius, or of any other country not under the administration of the Govt. of India are not included" in the term "British Indian" subjects.[77] In this way, concessions were made but the need for confirmed nationality and approval from the Government of India in each case meant that the India Office continued to hold a body other than itself accountable for the relief of Indians. In drawing the distinction, Cross was also continuing to prevent the consuls from relieving British Indian subjects—the so-call "reasonable proof" appears to be more of a means to prevent relief outside Britain than to further relief measures within.

By failing to establish an explicit and consistent policy to effectively dealing with those in need of assistance, the Secretary of State for India perpetuated an inadequate policy of ambiguity. For example, in 1890 the India Office refused to aid the Stepney Union in deporting five Indians (Bulah Singh, 50; Abealo Sing, 40; Goulah Sing, 55; Kidsab Sing, 40; and Kirpas Sing, 47) from the Poplar Workhouse despite the 1888 concessions.[78] In 1892, a member of the City Parish in Edinburgh wrote to the India Office on behalf of three destitute Indians who were,

[75] IOR: L/PJ/6/227 No.844, Letter, 23 May 1888.
[76] IOR: L/PJ/6/227 No.844, Draft Circular to Consuls, June 1888, and Public Dept. Draft Letter, 4 July 1888.
[77] Ibid.
[78] IOR: L/PJ/6/287 No.1775.

unsurprisingly, refused assistance.[79] Similarly, a Manchester workhouse paid for an ayah to return home in 1895 after being refused assistance by the India Office.[80] These cases are examples of how those outside the India Office continued to turn to the India Office for assistance but administrators, through their actions, maintained that the responsibility was anyone's but theirs.

The goal of the 1886 committee, then, seems meaningless. Yet, given the context of "empire on display," it is not surprising that a committee was formed. After all, 1886 marked the year of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, held in South Kensington. In 1884, the Prince of Wales asked India and the other British Colonies to participate in the establishment of an exhibition to "give to the inhabitants of the British Isles, to foreigners and to one another, practical demonstration of the wealth and industrial development of the outlying portions of the British Empire."[81] Planned work for the India Section of the Exhibition began in early 1885, and to showcase the vast and complicated administration of India, a large space was provided to the various departments of the Indian Government.[82] Like the others that came before it, this exhibition represented, as Peter H. Hoffenberg argues, "the idealized relationships between groups within the nation and empire."[83] The Colonial and Indian Exhibition attracted over five million visitors and likely influenced decision-making in the India Office in the mid-1880s as more Britons became aware of the extent of their empire. Although no direct link exists in the sources, the broader context of empire on display certainly suggests an important connection in understanding the formation of a committee to deal with the ongoing issue of paupers while

[79] IOR: L/PJ/6/323 No.1066.
[80] IOR: L/PJ/6/395 No.608.
[81] Frank Cundall and Thomas Riley, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: W. Clowes, 1886), 1-2.
[82] J.R. Royle, *Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1887), 14-15.
[83] Peter. H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

stressing to the public both the might and prowess of British imperialism. Regardless of why the Committee was established, the proposed resolutions proved ineffectual.

Indian Performers and Policy at the Turn of the Century

Despite the continued ineffectual policies upheld by the India Office, small and covert concessions were occasionally made. A change in legislation in India regarding performers after the turn of the twentieth century helped in aiding India Office officials repatriate individuals without taking on their own legal responsibilities. The India Office also began accepting cases from the European Continent that further complicated inconsistencies amongst official decisions regarding destitution. Cases of destitute Indians in Europe would be sent to Britain by European authorities or the Colonial Office. By the 1900s, the India Office became more willing to repatriate Indians stranded in Britain and European countries, though repatriation was not always a matter of providing free passages to India. Moreover, external pressures from the British government and public had an influence on when repatriation was permitted.

In 1900, for example, Belgian Authorities sent forty-one South Asians who were abandoned by their employer, Mr. Fairlie, to England. This group of performers consisted of men, women and children from British India, Singapore, Burma, and Siam. While in Belgian, the British Consular urged the Belgian authorities to keep the Indians there until a reply came from the Colonial Office, "but the Minister for Foreign affairs informs me that owing to material difficulties they regret they cannot extend delay beyond Friday morning at ten."[84] The party was then sent to Dover where they were held in a workhouse while waiting for advice and instruction from the India Office. It was found that only sixteen of the forty-one Indians actually came from British India and the others were from the British colonies. The Colonial Office decided to

[84] IOR: L/PJ/6/535 No.560, Letter from Dover Union, 17 March 1900, and Telegram, 15 March 1900.

repatriate those from the British Colonies, and the India Office, deeming the case an exceptional one, also repatriated the sixteen British Indian subjects at the cost of £208-1-10 with the help of the administrators of the Strangers' Home.[85] Here, the number of people in distress forced the officials to intervene as forty-one destitute subjects might have attracted public attention and possibly caused a public nuisance.

Of course, not all cases from the continent resulted in repatriation. In 1899, the same Fairlie responsible for the forty-one distressed performers had brought five Indians to Europe: two men, their wives, and a child. Under his management, the group of Indians "gave performances consisting of dancing and singing at various places in Austria and Germany until Mr. Fairlie left them at Magdebourge [sic] without giving them any wages."[86] The group made their way to Hamburg where the consulate sent them to London. They then spent a month in England looking for work, and eventually sold their belongings and left for Paris where they felt they could "obtain a free passage on board an outward bound British Steamer."[87] They were denied a free passage in Paris, but the British Consulate did write to the India Office asking what to do. While waiting on a response, two of the Indians left the city with their child in an attempt to find work, leaving "only one man and his wife to be disposed of."[88] Unlike with the case of sixteen Indian performers in Dover, "the Secretary of State for India [did] not feel justified in sanctioning any expenditure from the revenues of India on behalf of these persons."[89] Presumably, these performers spent the rest of their lives in Europe unless some charitable institution provided them with the funds to return home.

[85] IOR: L/PJ/6/538 No.738, Minute Paper, 20 April 1900, and letter from the Strangers' Home, 19 April 1900.
[86] IOR: L/PJ/6/529 No.99, Letter from the British Consulate at Paris, 13 Jan. 1900.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., Letter from the British Consulate, 16 January 1900
[89] Ibid., Draft letter, 18 January 1900.

In response to the poor treatment of Indian entertainers, especially that of the Burmese case, legislation was passed in India in 1902 to better regulate those who provided their labour for purposes of entertainment. This law, as G.E. Shepherd the representative of the Judicial and Public Department put it, was passed "to secure natives engaged for the purpose of spectacular performances in Europe and for other purposes against being stranded by their employers."[90] Specifically, the law was structured such that all employers engaging Indians for performances outside of the colony to "enter into a bond for the sum of 150 rupees in respect of each native engaged, and that a native who wishes to leave of his own accord for this purpose shall enter into a bond for a similar sum."[91] A customs officer collected the deposits, and the legislation was remarked in 1910 "to have been effective," despite a few cases of distress.[92] Similar legislation was passed in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the Straits Settlements and helped prevent cases of distressed Indian performers from arising. An ordinance was also passed in Mauritius in 1906 to regulate migrant labour for those outside of the colony. Employers here too were required to provide a deposit of 150 rupees and to ensure that emigrants were returned to Mauritius on the completion of their contracts.[93] These laws focused largely on migrants hired for "spectacular purposes," which referred to performers such as musicians and jugglers. Shepherd confidently stated in 1910, "I do no think we have had any case since 1902 of men of that kind."[94] Repatriating performers, then, would have been much easier for the India Office to undertake when deposits were already made on the other end allowing for the cost of repatriation to be recuperated.

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[90] "Interview with Mr. G.E. Shepherd, representative of the J&P Dept. of the India Office," *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*: *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134 (April 1910); and, "Report of the Committee," 15.
[91] "Report of the Committee., 16.
[92] Ibid., 15-16.
[93] IOR: L/PJ/6/741 No.3827, Annex: Ordinance No. 7 of 1906, 5 September 1906.
[94] "Interview with G.E. Shepherd," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*.

As per usual, maintaining and upholding existing legislation proved to be challenging in securing migrant labourers from exploitation. John Dorasami, a Hindu violinist, for example, signed a contract that included neither a deposit nor a repatriation clause. Dorasami signed an agreement with George Hubert Stapleton-Boyne, a U.S. agent who hired entertainers for performances across Europe and the United States. The agreement was signed in Singapore in August 1905 and witnessed by a solicitor from the Straits Settlement. Following Boyne's instructions, Dorasami arrived in London along with a secretary, Rajia. But only a week after his arrival, "Boyne said he could not keep up to his agreement and in a week's time absconded."[95] Consequently, Dorasami and Rajia found themselves "utterly helpless" as they had expected performances would be sorted out and a payment would be made as per the signed agreement. They did manage to get introduced to a music hall where Dorasami performed on 12 July 1906, but that was not sufficient for them to stave off impoverishment. Boyne turned out to be just as problematic an agent as Fairlie with the Burmese performers, and it was because of this that "an Indian Act was passed to give some control over the engagement of natives for such purposes," in 1902.[96] Unfortunately, Dorasami's agreement contained details such as pay (provided weekly) and the passage out (paid for and provided by the employer and to be repaid later by the employee), but there was no specific clause that outlined how the employee would be retuned to his point of origin.

Why the agreement lacked a provision for repatriation as per the Straits Settlement's Ordinance was a mystery to the India Office. Officials began reviewing his case in September and had asked Rajia for a detailed account of Dorasami's case. By November, Curzon Wyllie, the political aide-de-campe to the Conservative Secretary of State to India, Lord George

[95] IOR: L/PJ/6/778 No.3240, Letter from Rajia to the India Office.
[96] IOR: L/PJ/6/778 No.3240, Minute Paper, 1906.

Hamilton (1895-1903), decided the case should be treated as an exceptional one.[97] He noted how exceptions had previously been made for performers in Britain, such as the Burmese, and that Dorasami's agreement should have included a repatriation clause in the first place. Boyne had clearly failed in his responsibility for ensuring the well-being of his employee, but Wyllie also exclaimed that Dorasami was "a very respectable delicate-looking man, scarcely capable of acting as a coal trimmer or doing other rough work on board ships." Wyllie further noted that, "there is little doubt that the men are the victims of fraud & misrepresentation & are deserving of pity," adding "on the other hand, they have only themselves to thank for their folly in listening to Stapleton Boyne."[98] Wainwright believes this case to have been assessed exclusively on class lines because Dorasami and Rajia were well-educated and upper caste.[99] However, he does not account for either the changes to legislation that should have prevented this case from arising in the first place, or Wyllie's overall demeanour when it came to distressed Indians.

Indeed, in his will, Wyllie specified establishing a memorial fund to be erected with all proceeds going to the Strangers' Home to help those in need.[100] An article in the *Times* reports how "Sir Curzon worked for and warmly commended this institution." His memorial fund had garnered numerous subscribers, and had a total initial amount of £390 14s.[101] This fund helped the Strangers' Home pay for the maintenance of destitute persons in the early twentieth century, and while it was not sufficient to solve all financial problems it was a useful resource to draw upon.[102] The *Times* reported in 1912 that several deserving cases had received assistance from

[97] For more on Curzon Wyllie, see F.H. Brown, "Sir William Hutt Curzon Wyllie (1848-1909)," *ODNB* (online ed., 2010, accessed August 3, 2017).
[98] IOR: L/PJ/6/778 No.3240, Reference Paper, Wyllie, 29 October 1906.
[99] Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 143-44.
[100] The Curzon Wyllie Memorial Fund was established in 1909 after his passing. See *Times*, 9 April 1909.
[101] Ibid. The article includes a full list of initial subscribers.
[102] See for example the case on Shammon Sasson, IOR: L/PJ/6/1249 No. 2386, 30 June 1913. Sasson did not actually want to return to India as he desired to go to his friends in America, but the Home would only send him back to India. He had no money to pay his passage to New York.

the memorial fund.[103] "Deserving" in this case appears to refer to those cases that show clear signs of fraud, such as with Dorasami. Although the India Office as a whole attempted to remain indifferent to the plight of destitute Indians, individual personalities help to explain why there were inconsistences in providing financial aid to Indians. Wyllie, for example, was more concerned and passionate about extending charity and good will to Indians whenever possible. Perhaps more than anyone else, Wyllie helped forge a strong relationship with the Strangers' Home and encouraged the India Office to pay for the maintenance of distressed Indians for at least a temporary period. That being said, his discussion of Dorasami does seem to represent personal sentiments of Indian inferiority that required British patronage (if not paternalism) than strictly financial aid, which may explain his support of the Home's function. It is odd that Dorasami was so readily offered a return passage, but then again the passage of ordinances concerning Indian entertainers and their repatriation would certainly have been factored in as well.

On the whole, when it came to repatriation, India Office officials inconsistently switched back and forth between providing either working passages or paid passages depending on what officials deemed as most appropriate. In 1903, Purdil Khan, from Peshawar became distressed in Constantinople, and by request of the Foreign Office was repatriated to Bombay "at the least possible cost."[104] The Judicial and Public Committee, in their deliberation, stated that some cases of Indians at Constantinople had been repatriated and the same would happen with Khan because of his "good record" and because "he should apparently be able to do something in the way of working his passage."[105] The discussion of a "good record" here indicates that moral judgements were an element in making the decision to repatriate Khan. This reference to a good record is not

[103] "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics.-Sir Walter," *Times*, 26 Apr. 1912.
[104] IOR: L/PJ/6/653 No.2665, Minute Paper, 27 November 1903.
[105] Ibid.

something that is present in other cases. Moreover, important to the decision in this case was also Khan's ability to work his way back to India. In contrast to Khan's case, in 1909 the Secretary of State for India "authorized to arrange for the repatriation at the cheapest rate" for Kalika Shadulla and his family from Port Said to Bombay so they could return to their home in Bengal, rather than finding working passages for them.[106] The outcome was the same in a 1912 case, where the Secretary of State for India authorized the repatriation of a destitute British Indian from Lisbon.[107]

Certainly, there was a shift in the way the India Office managed cases of destitute non-sailor Indians, particularly performers, by the turn of the twentieth century. Part of the change was due in part to legislation regarding migrant performers, though the increasing reliance on the Strangers' Home was another contributing factor to the change. By the end of the nineteenth century, officials began to send destitute Indians who approached the India Office to the Strangers' Home or would pay for their lodging, which in a way made the Home a semi-official, government-sanctioned lodging house. In 1910, for example, two destitute Indians from Bombay were sent from the India Office to the Strangers' Home, and their lodgings were paid for from India Office revenues.[108] Furthermore, due to a growing reputation, destitute Indians elsewhere in the United Kingdom were relying on the Strangers' Home to provide assistance. This, as was seen, had happened as early as 1868 with the party of eleven performers.[109] Another useful example is from 1878, when a clerk from a Liverpool parish wrote *first* to the secretary of the Strangers' Home asking what to do with an Indian in their workhouse. It was only after Colonel Hughes wrote back and instructed Henry, the Clerk, to first report the case to the India Office

[106] IOR: L/PJ/6/965 No.3611. See also IOR: L/PJ/6/1179 No.2664; and, IOR: L/PJ/6/1155 No.1335.
[107] IOR: L/PJ/6/1179 No.2664.
[108] IOR: L/PJ/6/979 No.65, J&P Department. Minute Paper, case of two distressed Eurasian natives of Bombay (not seamen) now at the Strangers' Home, 5 January 1910.
[109] IOR: L/PJ/2/47 No.7/264, 12 August 1868.

that a letter was sent to the Secretary of State.[110] In these cases, it was the authorities at the Strangers' Home not the India Office who were first being consulted for assistance. Not to mention that the secretary would find working passages if not cheap passages for destitute Indians, which was a service not offered by the India Office.

These examples also suggest that there was more accountability from the India Office towards British Indian subjects found destitute in and around Europe when the Foreign Office became involved. When it was just the British consulate making inquiries, the Secretary of State for India had no qualms about refusing to authorize repatriation. The same does not seem to be the case when the request for authorization came from the Foreign Office. Instead, there seems to have been some accountability to the Foreign Office, which in turn resulted in favourable responses for relief and repatriation. This difference explains the inconsistencies between the Secretary's general rule of not providing relief and making exceptions on occasion, especially when the distressed persons in question were brought to Britain from a British consulate or were stranded overseas in foreign countries. A distinguishing factor for repatriation or not was thus a matter of which governmental body was involved. The Strangers' Home became another option of aiding destitute Indians without actually following through with repatriation as officials could pay for the cost of living for a short while and the secretary of the Home would secure working passages. All these concessions, though, remained inconsistent, based more on individual circumstances and decisions than established procedure.

Conclusion: The Fissures of Imperial Policy

The relationship between the India Office and working-class Indians was perpetually ambiguous and lacked legal clarity. Yet the India Office was also a space in which Indians could

[110] IOR: L/PJ/2/58 No.7/559, 30 November 1878.

and did interact with imperial institutions in a way that challenged where they fit into the wider imperial scheme. Interactions between migrant Indians and the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, the Poor Laws Board, and the India Office can be best understood within the definition of "contact zones." As first defined by Mary Louise Pratt, contact zones are "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[111] Pratt was specifically referring to interactions on colonial frontiers, whereas later historians, such as Simon Potter, have used the term more broadly to refer to spaces in which "people of different races and classes interacted."[112] Potter extends the definition of contact zones to include Britain as another space in which imperial interactions took place. This study of Indian interactions within Britain builds on the divisive history of the empire by showing how Indians' needs clashed with those of Britons within a domestic setting. Inevitably, destitute Indians, who were corporeal manifestations of the empire, did not fit neatly within the boundaries of Britain. Using Pratt's definition, destitute Indians were often in unbalanced relationships, whether at the mercy of charitable Britons or unsympathetic administrators within the India Office.

In the broader political sphere, the British government was exercising greater control over its colonies by the end of the nineteenth century, but this process was not directly emulated in the India Office. The specific instances of destitute Indians in Britain are examples of a continued lack of government control. If anything, the India Office's treatment of destitute Indians exemplifies a stasis in governance when it came to distressed subjects. As a largely independent body, the Secretary of State for India was able to resist the evolutions in governance

[111] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.
[112] Simon J. Potter, "Empires, Cultures and Identities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain," *History Compass* 5 (2007); 56-57.

in contrast to the Home Government. There was also no clear distinction between the treatment of Indians between the predominately liberal and conservative governments that dominated British politics in this period. Consequently, by the turn of the century the India Office was treating cases of destitute Indians not much differently than before. In the 1913 case of Fazulla Mahomed Ali and Shah Navaz, mentioned earlier, the India Office decided they were already well cared for at the Strangers' Home and if they could not stay there then the two could go to a workhouse.[113] These debates regarding responsibility for destitute Indians in Britain over the course of the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century showcase the fissures of imperial policy when it came to Britain's migrant Indian population, and helps elucidate a lesser-known social history of Indians. In particular, this history on the ambiguous nature of Indians in Britain emphasizes how ill defined their subjecthood was within Britain and empire more broadly. Working-class Indians were on the one hand able to find work that took them to Britain, and had access to the workhouse in case they fell on hard times after the journey. On the other, there destitution was a symptom of British negligence, but no provisions or policies existed to prevent their impoverishment.

The early 1900s did see some concessions to British Indian subjects, but these often came because of new legislation regarding specific migrant workers or at the request of the Foreign Office. Despite greater numbers of Indians being sanctioned for repatriation through India Office funds, precedents and legal requirements remained vague. Even though performers legally required deposits to be made before their departure to Britain to ensure repatriation, this legislation did not extend to domestic servants. This legislation also required an enforcement of the law that did not always take place, much like the failed attempt at deposits for domestic servants in the 1830s. Adding to the question of how to best interact with distressed Indian and

[113] IOR: L/PJ/6/1269, No.3493.

colonial subjects were new challenges that simultaneously arose at the turn of the century; a challenge that the Colonial Office tried to take up and explore alongside the India Office (in a more forced capacity) on behalf of the Home government in 1909.

CHAPTER FIVE

New Challenges at the Turn of the Century: *Zemindars*, Sailors, and Students

At the turn of the twentieth century, Indians becoming distressed because of British actions continued to pose a burden for India Office officials. Despite the concessions being made with their greater use of the Strangers' Home and decisions to pay for some, individual cases, external government bodies continued to press the India Office to take more action. Adding to the pressure for more concrete plans was the arrival of a new group of imperial subjects. These included African sailors, Indian students, and Indian landowners (zemindars) petitioning land claims. The latter two were referred to as "peculiar cases" in the 1897 annual report for the Strangers' Home. African sailors did not fall under the purview of the India Office, but they became a cause of concern among the Colonial Office, which instigated a committee report in 1909-10 that involved the India Office. Indian students and landowners, on the other hand, were people of some wealth and status, which raised moral questions among officials as to whether or not these were more deserving of government support. In this chapter, I address how India Office administrators, who were finally beginning to sort out how best to manage distressed Indians, were forced to consider new demands for assistance.

From the late Victorian period into the early years of the Edwardian era, distressed subjects visibly occupying space in Britain, especially in London where the seat of imperial power was held, presented social concerns that the British liberal empire was not well-equipped to address. It was within a political climate ripe with instability that the India Office was finally managing to provide some consistency to its approach of distressed non-sailor Indians of the working class. Petitioners and students in particular challenged state control over its late

Victorian Empire as people with a sense of entitlement presented themselves before government officials.

As ties between India and Britain strengthened, so too did desires for a British education. Indians would study for the bar or medicine at Oxford and Cambridge. Indians were also dependent on a U.K. education to join the Indian Civil Service.[1] Sometimes these incoming students had a false sense of what kind of support would be offered. In 1897, for example, an Indian travelled to Britain to study for the Bar, but had come expecting "the rich people of London to pay all his expenses."[2] These cases were few and far between, but students often found themselves without adequate finances and thus often became impoverished. Simultaneously, the British were ever encroaching on Indian territories, which caused many problems for those who previously owned the lands. These landowners would bring their cases to Britain hoping Queen Victoria would be able to alleviate their lost lands. As with students, they travelled with inadequate financial resources that left them too poor to afford a passage back home. Unlike lascars and other working-class Indians, this new group represented an increasingly global world order in which Indians of wealthier status felt they were owed certain entitlements from the Queen and British government. As this chapter will show, the India Office also felt more inclined to aid petitioners and students as they were people of means, with better education, and more important to maintaining British control over India.

Litigants are among the most intriguing group of destitute persons as they were zemindars with clear intentions of returning home to their families and their properties. They had been beset by imperial governance back home and were now bringing forth their grievances to

[1] For more on Indians and the Indian Civil Service, see J.M. Compton, "Open Competition and the Indian Civil Service, 1854-1876," *English Historical Review* 83, no. 327 (April 1968): 265-84; and C. J. Dewet, "The Education of a Ruling Caste: The Indian Civil Service in the Era of Competitive Examination," *The English Historical Review* (1973): 262-285.
[2] "Strangers' Home for Asiatics,-The annual," *Times* 29 April 1897.

the imperial government in Britain. Despite being men of means, litigants often succumbed to poverty because they were ill prepared for the day-to-day living costs that were endured in the metropole due to unanticipated prolonged stays. These litigants came to Britain with expectations that they would be able to obtain an audience with Queen Victoria and then return home. The notion that they *could* and *would* meet with the queen is indicative of how imperialism had instilled ideas of British responsibility and accountability among its subjects. Among many of these zemindars, it was felt that Queen Victoria as Empress of India could be talked to and reasoned with; if anyone was going to hear the plight of the suffering landowner, it would be the monarch. A lack of written documentation from these individuals themselves makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about what they hoped for and expected in London, but there are enough traces in existing colonial documents to establish that they had clear expectations that the British government should intervene on their behalf even if legal structures said otherwise.

In this chapter, I provide some balance to the discourse of British imperial responsibilities by introducing different groups of imperial subjects who held their own understanding of what responsibilities were owed to them. I begin with a discussion of colonial sailors, students, and litigants at the turn of the century. Litigants provide an example of a group of Indians with clear expectations for the British. African sailors and distressed Indian students show how the Colonial Office and India Office came to overlap with responsibilities towards imperial sailors in the metropole. Their increased presence at the turn of the twentieth century provided a basis for the establishment of a review committee in 1909-10, which I turn to last. The 1910 Committee on Distressed Indian and Colonial Subjects was unlike any committee or inquiry that came before in that it made an extensive analysis of the treatment of distressed colonial subjects. In a change

from previous inquiries, this committee conducted numerous interviews over the course of nine days to determine how institutions dealt with the problem of destitute colonial subjects and what changes should be implemented. The committee report provides a contrast to Indians' expectations of Britons and highlights tensions between charitable institutions and government officials. 1910, then, marks a continuation of policy that persisted from the onset of the India Office into the twentieth century.

A Moral Dilemma: The Indian "Petitioner Class"

Disappointed and displaced landowners travelling to Britain was not a new problem at the turn of the century. Litigants came from across the empire throughout the century to plead their cases before the monarch. Even in India, the East India Company had been causing territorial disarray and mayhem in India for decades. Their exploitative activities, Sophie Gilliat-Ray argues, "caused a great deal of local resentment, bringing a stream of Muslim emissaries and petitioners to Britain in order to complain about the company and to seek redress for land and property they had lost."[3] Colonization of India throughout the century led to disruptions of Indian land ownership, which in turn led to influxes of land claims cases being brought to the Indian courts. Petitioners travelling to Britain, then, were not an altogether new phenomenon. What was troubling for authorities was that despite earlier petitioners having been denied aid, and attempts to convey that only the Indian courts of law could legally manage their cases, Indians continued to travel to Britain to present their cases to the monarch. There was a miscommunication between what the British in the United Kingdom could do for Indians, and

[3] Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25.

what Indians expected of the British. I attribute this miscommunication to the problematic language that the British used of Indians being British subjects.

The language of subjecthood intimated notions of belonging, yet this imperialistic lingo was at odds with the physical impact that imperialism made on India. Among the effects of imperialism was the industrialization of India, such as with new railroads and canals. Industrialization of agriculture, especially, led to the displacement of Indian property and uprooted societies. For example, in the British province of Berar, in central India, the British used force to take over existing properties and reorganized the province into a new system. As Mike Davis has shown, "7,000 villages and 10.5 million aces of cultivable land" were impacted from 1861-1877.[4] As the British crept across the subcontinent, many more landowners became displaced. Despite the destructive practices of colonization and industrialization, the British also cultivated a discourse of British paternalism that led aggrieved zemindars to believe (or at least hope) that investing the little funds that they had to plead their case half way across the world was a viable option.[5] As Martin Wainwright puts it, imperial authorities refused "to recognize the damage that imperial capitalism was exerting on India's agrarian communities."[6]

Wainwright also shows that it was not merely the displacement of land, but the impact that it had on social classes as well. British irrigation projects, for example, "encouraged internal migration and colonization," as the landscape became altered to meet British ideals.[7] In turn, newly reorganized lands with improved irrigation were to be filled with the best agriculturalists.

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[4] Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 313. See also, Laxman D. Saya, *Cotton and Famine in Berar, 1850-1900* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997).

[5] For an overview of the social and economic impact of British colonization in India, see Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, Chapter 10; Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 206-244; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj: Northern Indian in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

[6] A. Martin Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians: Social Rank, Imperial Identity, and South Asians in Britain, 1858-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 135.

[7] Ibid.

Wainwright's research also shows that a division quickly arose between new agricultural yeomen and older landowners based on caste:

> [yeomen] came almost exclusively from a limited set of sub-castes, including Arains, Kambohs, Sainis, and Gujars. Most important among these 'agricultural castes' were Jats, who formed the largest group of landholding peasants in Punjab and cut across the three religious communities that dominated the region's population: Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh. By contrast, British officials regarded the 'landlord' castes, which drew their income mainly from rents, as consisting mainly of Qureshis, Rajputs, and Syeds.[8]

Old agriculturalists were given smaller plots of land whereas those who made profits from rents were given larger plots. Agriculturalists would earn a profit from working the land and so the, argument went, they needed less land. Emulating the British model, the Government of India also implemented the practice of enclosures, "denying subsistence farmers access to them."[9] The reorganized system of land was thus inevitably designed to yield the most capital for the British through a system of exploitation. Adding to the stress of land ownership and financial problems were famines, such as the ones in the Central Provinces from 1876-79, and 1896-1902.[10] The implementation of new irrigation schemes, compounded by famine, convinced some to take the drastic step of crossing the ocean to confront the monarch when their grievances failed to be acknowledged in the Indian courts.

Indians first brought their grievances to the Indian law courts, and when these court cases were not successful, some litigants would then make the decision to seek compensation from the monarch. After Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India in 1877, the number of litigants in Britain increased. These litigants, who struggled to cope financially in Britain and with the decision from Indian courts regarding land claims, were dubbed "the petitioner class" by Sir

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[8] Ibid., 136.
[9] Ibid., 137. See also, Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 312-317, and 326-331.
[10] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 7-8, and 318-323. The famine in the '70s led to an official inquiry. The final report from the Famine Commission refused to accept that the poor should be entitled to relief in times of famine, as this "would probably lead to the doctrine that they are entitled to such relief at all times, and thus the foundation would be laid of a system of general poor relief, which we cannot contemplate without serious apprehension" (Famine Commission of 1878-80, quoted in Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 33).

Gerald Fitzgerald, the political aide-de-camp of the Secretary of State for the India Office.[11] This so-called petitioner class was made-up of small-scale farmers, mostly from the Punjab, "with the hope of gaining a reversal from the queen 'in ignorance of the fact that no appeal lies in this country against the decisions of Indian Courts.'"[12] Saloni Mathur has argued that Fitzgerald felt these litigants were trying "to take advantage of the queen's role as empress of India; they glorified her as the 'fountain of justice,' and this created, in his view, an 'evil' that demanded 'legislative remedy.'"[13] Fitzgerald, however, seems less interested in a legislative solution that Mathur makes it seem. On 24 January 1879, for example, it is recorded that "the secretary in the Political Dept. doubts whether the evil is as serious as to require a legislative remedy and states that the class of petitioners with political grievances is a very limited one."[14] Indeed, the office on the whole tried to maintain policies and decisions that prevented the need for India Office involvement.

In any case, the problem remained that the British fostered the idea and understanding that the British monarch was the supreme leader of India, and that this ruler could be trusted. Titles such as "empress of India" only reinforced the (false) imperial image that Indians were a part of Britain. Yet in practice, the language of a reciprocal relationship was simply a ruse to justify and glorify British imperialism. Certainly not all Indians bought into this oppressive dynamic, but there was nevertheless a hierarchy of state structures that placed Britain as the overseer of justice. Thus, when Indians travelled to Britain with their petitions, they thought they had access to a British justice system regardless of whether that was in India or Britain. For

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[11] Fitzgerald, quoted in Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars, Princes: Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 25. See also, Shompa Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," in Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri, and Shinder S. Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent* (Oxford and Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 108.
[12] Fitzgerald, quoted in, Saloni Mathur, "Living Ethnological Exhibits: The case of 1886," *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (November 2000): 512-13.
[13] Mathur, "Living Ethnological Exhibits," 513.
[14] IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/567, "Treatment of Native Paupers in England," 24 January 1879.

example, a Muslim named Mohammed Ali Khan travelled to Britain in 1899 "to enforce a claim for wages against his master." Khan had travelled all the way to Britain specifically to dispute an issue of wages. He squatted in front of Windsor Castle, waiting to be seen. The India Office intervened by calling the police and having Khan sent off to jail. He was then sent to Hanwell Lunatic Asylum where he remained for awhile. Once released, Khan gave up on his petition and set off for a pilgrimage to Mecca.[15] This particular case was even publicized in the *Daily Mail*. Khan was determined to see the monarch and have his grievance heard and redressed, but, in turn, he was treated as a resilient and troublesome person deserving of being sent to an asylum. Khan does help show the issues of access that Indians could face as well as their determination, if not desperation, in seeking justice.

Another example is of Girwal Singh who brought his case to Britain in November 1886. Singh is described in the Strangers' Home annual report as "a good-looking young man of very prepossessing manners," who hoped for a re-trial of his case in the British courts. The secretary, unlike in most cases of litigants, took Singh to lawyer who spoke his language and would thus be able to examine his documents. The visit to the lawyer was to be conditional though, as Singh was told he had to abide by the barrister's decision, regardless of what that may be. Singh agreed to these terms and after the consultation, the barrister informed him "his documents were defective, and his case untenable—at least, in this country—and strongly advised [him] to return at once to India."[16] Singh stayed true to his word and left on a passage procured for him by the secretary of the Home. Compared to most cases of litigants, this one is atypical in that the Strangers' Home provided the opportunity for Singh to speak to a lawyer, whereas the India

[15] "India in London: Poor Orientals who come to Interview the Queen," *Daily Mail*, 26 August 1899.
[16] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, Annual Report for the Year 1886 (20 April 1887), 12-13.

Office would likely have turned him away.[17] This case may hint at the possible sympathy felt by administrators at the Strangers' Home, though it may also have been a ploy fabricated between the secretary of the Home and the barrister to convince Singh to leave Britain as soon as possible. Only speculation can be provided here though it is not an unreasonable assumption given the relationship between distressed Indians and the British within the metropole.

In the 1890s, the British government was informing the local provinces of India to instruct Indian claimants who lost their appeals in Indian courts that nothing further could be done for them. Cross emphasized in his letter to the Governor General of India that "a warning might be added that petitioners coming to this country merely waste their money and expose themselves to great inconvenience and hardships, with the risk of being unable ever to return to their native country."[18] Then, in 1900, the Land Alienation Act was passed. Wainwright argues that the act reduced the number of litigants in Britain by 1907, especially as the social and economic famine of the 1890s subsided and alleviated immediate pressures. However, there were enough litigants arriving in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century for the issue to remain a cause of concern among government officials.

Litigants presented a new kind of problem for the authorities. The chief concern for British officials was a mixed set of attitudes towards distressed landowners that conflicted with the typical treatment of Indian labourers. Landowners presented a moral dilemma to the India Office—officials were not keen on repatriating Indians or providing other means of support, but the office was generally inclined to treat litigants with more respect due to their status. As David Cannadine and Martin Wainwright have argued, the British tended to treat wealthier Indian

[17] For other examples, see CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report* (29 March 1897); TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 12; TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1887* (18 April 1888), 12; "Missions to Asiatics and Africans," *LCMM*, 1 August 1883, 183; "Strangers' Home for Asiatics," *Morning Post*, 25 June 1890.
[18] IOR: L/PJ/6/281 No. 1270, Bernard to Governor General of India, 28 August 1890.

visitors differently, replicating British class-based attitudes.[19] Indian litigants were perceived as a better, and more respectful class of citizens that posed a serious nuisance for the office. It would been inconceivable to see a landed elite of British society enter the workhouse, and likewise the petitioner class deserved to be back in India, not in a British poor house. The end result was that the India Office's usual response of not providing any relief to destitute Indians was severely challenged as many litigants were provided relief under the category of "exceptional" cases.[20] As Mathur argues, petitioners posed a threat to the geographic space between "home" and "colony" that "was painstakingly maintained by the British in power and the socially divided space of urban London with its starkly mapped inequalities and separations."[21] This group of Indians with a stronger status than the usual distressed workers that sought assistance pushed even further the division between India and Britain; petitioners more than most others brought the fissures and destruction of empire to Britain's doorstep.

According to one India Office Record, in 1896, two Punjabis tried to bring a land claims appeal to the queen. Once in Britain, and learning that nothing could be done for them, "They were unwilling to return to India, although offered a free passage 'as a special case.'"[22] They were then kept at the Strangers' Home for a few weeks, and the India Office even paid for their lodgings, before they finally accepted deck passages to Bombay. Officials not only paid for their lodgings but also found passages to take them back to India; these were free passages that did not require the litigants to work their way back as was more typical. In having accepted some responsibility for caring for Indians, the record shows a simultaneous concern with having

[19] Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 137-38, and 140; and David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xviii.
[20] See Fitzgerald's correspondences in IOR: L/PJ/2/59 No.7/67, 24 January 1879.
[21] Mathur, "Living Ethnological Exhibits," 515.
[22] IOR: L/PJ/6/1001 No. 1280, "Précis of cases of destitute Indians abroad"; IOR: L/PJ/6/413 Nos. 104, 113, and 196, Assistance for Daya Ram and Jai Mul of Hissar, 3 Jan. 1896.

helped: "It was pointed out that this case afforded a dangerous precedent, and Sir Horace Walpole expressed the hope 'that in any future case it will be carefully considered whether passage money back to India should be paid by the India Office.'"[23] At least one person then was opposed to the idea of providing financial aid except for in exceptional circumstances. As Sir Horace Walpole argued, "I am strongly of opinion that except in very special cases this should not be done."[24] Of course, making exceptions with petitioners also allowed the office to remove those Indians whose complaints would have made the officials nervous. Again, Indians' struggles because of British imperialism were not merely problems occurring in a land far away. Rather, the struggles were brought to the British *at home* as exemplified by the physical presence in London of those who suffered at the hands of British policy in India.

Unsurprisingly then, exceptional cases were made on a number of occasions. For example, Hidayat Ali (about 30 years old), the son of a Punjabi zemindar, wanted to overturn a decision from the Punjabi Court regarding his father's land. Curzon Wyllie reviewed Ali's father's papers regarding the case, while trying to explain to Ali "that he had come on a foolish errand and that nothing could be done for him." Wyllie goes on to say that Ali's only purpose and intent for being in England was due to a "vague idea of obtaining justice."[25] Repatriation was sanctioned by the India Office, but Ali was not interested in leaving. Chamier, the secretary of the Strangers' Home, explained to Ali that he would be removed from the Home after a month (the maximum number of days that charitable cases could be kept), thereafter being forced to turn to the workhouse. Two Punjabi soldiers residing at the Home tried to explain the case to Ali as well, trying "to point out to him the folly of his obstinacy," but they too were not successful.[26]

[23] IOR: L/PJ/6/1001 No. 1280, "Précis of cases of destitute Indians abroad."
[24] Ibid.
[25] IOR: L/PJ/6/838 No. 4092, Letter, Wyllie to the Strangers' Home, 26 November 1907.
[26] IOR: L/PJ/6/838 No. 4092, Letter, Chamier to the Under Secretary of State for India, 18 December 1907.

Consequently, Ali was turned out of the Home on December 11 as Chamier felt the best way to convince Ali to return home was to let him out onto the streets: "until he feels what cold and starvation is in a strange country he will not accept the passage granted by the Secretary of State, otherwise I would pay for his board myself."[27]

Ali's refusal led to the involvement of lawyers and the government. On 11 January 1908, his father's papers were still with the India Office (they were only to be returned upon Ali's departure) and were being forwarded to a lawyer, Mr. Ross, who occasionally handled cases for the Government of India. Mr. Hope, the Registrar of the Privy Council became interested in seeing Ali, and the Lord Chancellor had expressed an interest in the case as well. The Judicial Committee then reviewed the case and reported the following:

> Mr. Coldstream said that Hidayat Ali was anxious to have some 'writing' to take back with him. I think that probably the best document that he can have will be a Transcript of the Shorthand Notes which were taken at the hearing of his application. I accordingly enclose a copy of it. Perhaps you will be kind enough to have it transmitted to Hidayat Ali. I think you did explain to him at the interview which he had at the India Office when I was present, that in making this application personally before the Lords of the Judicial Committee he has in effect made it before the King, for any petition or application relating to any Order or Decision of any Judicial Court in India is of necessity referred by the King to the Judicial Committee.[28]

As far as can be discerned, the petition was discussed but not overturned, and papers were produced to satisfy Ali and his family that his case had been reviewed. A few weeks later, on 18 February 1908, Ali was ready to return home and subsequently left on March 3. His case went further than Hidayat Singh's had gone in that the Judicial Committee actually reviewed it, even though the outcome was no different than that of the courts in India.

Reasons for government intervention in regards to repatriation is most telling in the case of Dewa Singh (aged between 55 and 60 years old) and Hakim Singh (30 years old). On 2 June

[27] Ibid.
[28] IOR: L/PJ/6/838 No. 4092, Letter, E.S. Hope to Sir Curzon Wyllie, 4 February 1908.

1909, the India Office wrote to the Strangers' Home regarding the two Sikh zemindars who arrived at the office "to appeal against the Order of the Chief Court of the Punjab, No. 155 of 1900, upholding the Order of Mr. J. Kennedy, Divisional Judge (1 December 1899)." Dewa Singh claimed "possession by redemption of mortgage of a certain plot of ground, and the High Court has come to the conclusion that the redemption has not been approved." Singh had already petitioned the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab as well as the Governor General in Court, but both declined his petition.[29] Major Chesney, the secretary of the Strangers' Home (c.1909) responded to the India Office's by acknowledging the case was hopeless for the two petitioners who could not even speak English. Chesney was also able and willing to provide food and shelter for Dewa and Hakim Singh for up to fourteen days unless the India Office provided further funds.[30]

Meanwhile, the Political ADC and the Secretary of State agreed for the men to be repatriated but only as a special case. The letter they drafted to Chesney came to the following decision:

> Sir, with reference to your letter of the 1st instant the Secretary of State cannot interfere with the decisions of the Chief Court of the Punjab. Since it appears that both men are destitute, and that they are of respectable position […] I am to ask whether you could procure for them a return passage to Bombay at the lowest possible cost. It is understood that the men would not be able to work out their passages.[31]

As with other cases regarding Indian repatriation, the case was to be formally acknowledged as an exceptional case so as not to set any precedents. However, unlike with their usual process, one official noted in the letter to Chesney that the men were to be informed, "that their repatriation at the public expense is sanctioned as a special act of compassion."[32] Some members of the India

[29] IOR: L/PJ/6/942 No. 2043, Letter from the India Office to the Strangers' Home, 2 June 1909.
[30] IOR: L/PJ/6/942 No. 2043, Letter from Chesney to Wyllie.
[31] IOR: L/PJ/6/942 No. 2043, Draft letter to the Strangers' Home, 15 June 1909.
[32] Ibid. The draft letter for the Strangers' Home has an addendum by Colin G. Campbell.

Office, then, were more sympathetic to the plight of Indian petitioners. Their desire to help was eased by the Strangers' Home, which provided a way in which help could be offered without accepting and encouraging an official responsibility through established precedent.

Charles E. Bernard, the secretary of the India Office's Revenue and Statistics Department (c.1888-1901), for example, was keen on helping poor petitioners though he knew the revenues of the office were not able to sustain repatriation on a regular basis. Offering repatriation though was not the same as providing an audience with the queen and overturning their land claims. As Bernard put it, "we have found from experience…[these men] generally and often at the last moment refuse to go," due largely to their determination to present their land-related petitions.[33] Even Fitzgerald, who was generally disinclined to aid destitute Indians, "offered to pay privately for the repatriation of a litigant who had been arrested on the grounds of Balmoral Castle in Scotland, attempting to gain an audience with the queen, but the man in question would not return until his appeal was heard."[34] Secretary of State for India Lord Cross too found it both pitiful and frustrating to deal with zemindars' petitions. In a letter to the Governor General of India, Cross noted how persons denied aid from the India Office often ended up in prison as vagrants or in the workhouses as mendicants, "a state of things [all] the more regrettable as many of them are respectable men, who, through ignorance incurred great expense and personal [hardship] coming here *bona fide* in search of what they consider to be justice."[35] In the case of Dewa and Hakim, for example, it was noted that repatriation was "simply a question [of] whether it is 'necessary' to prevent two respectable Sikh landholders from drifting into a London

[33] Bernard, quoted in Mathur, "Living Ethnological Exhibits," 513.
[34] Wainwright, *"The Better Class" of Indians*, 139.
[35] IOR: L/PJ/6/281 No. 1270, Cross to Governor General of India, 28 August 1890.

workhouse."[36] Moreover, unlike in previous cases regarding Indians from the lower end of the social spectrum, litigants shook the more Malthusian-type mentality of not aiding impoverished individuals.

After Dewa and Hakim's case, officials put together a précis of cases for the India Office to outline and emphasize how the general rule remained not to provide help as petitioners travelled to Britain for their own, personal purposes, and thus nothing was owed to them. This précis listed cases stretching from 1897 to 1908 and included cases in which repatriation was offered and denied.[37] What is not clear is what criterion determined which litigants were able to receive financial assistance in the form of charity from the India Office. Nonetheless, for all their attempts at not wanting to establish precedents, the so-called "exceptional" cases contributed to an inconsistency between the official denial of assistance or government intervention on the one hand, and the practice of making exceptions for some individuals on the other. No doubt it was this discrepancy in official and unofficial actions that provided hope to those who felt an audience with the monarch could help right the wrongs that they had endured. The official policy may have been that help was not to be found in Britain, but given that officials were susceptible to making exceptions, then it may have been worth taking the risk to journey to London.

Thus, part of the problem with litigants unsuccessfully travelling to Britain and subsequently falling into destitution was a widespread idea that it was acceptable and practical to bring petitions directly to the monarch. Queen Victoria becoming the Empress of India may have projected a sense of British maternalism, a protecting and nurturing queen mother who saw Indians as being as much as hers as those born and bred in Britain. The sense that the monarch

[36] IOR: L/PJ/6/942 No. 2043, Minute Paper. Other examples are included in this file, such as Khemchund, a Hindu who came to present his case before King Edward II, and that of Rajeadyo Kumar Pen and Kiday Ali. All were repatriated on the grounds of them being "respectable" zemindars.
[37] IOR: L/PJ/6/1001, *Précis of Cases of Destitute Indians Abroad from 1896* (1910).

herself was all-powerful and personally had the power to make and carry out decisions was simultaneously deceptive and influential as Indian litigants fell victim to the rhetoric of British subjecthood. Indeed, arriving in Britain only to discover that the money they had spent on travel and lodging to present a petition to the monarch was a futile effort would certainly have been devastating, especially to those already distressed by a loss of property. There was a reason why these men were convinced that their presence in front of the monarch was permissible and logical. Almost certainly this reasoning stemmed from the language of empire—one that was not easily dispelled. While it was helpful that the India Office repatriated some zemindars, repatriation was not what these litigants were seeking. They wanted their grievances redressed, not their impoverished selves removed from Britain only to return to their families empty-handed. As far as the India Office was concerned, repatriation clearly provided a means for the British to dispose of a nuisance that would have further exposed the harmful effect of British colonization of India and Indians.

Towards an Inquiry: African Sailors and Indian Students

Alongside the presence of Indian petitioners was an increase in the number of African sailors and Indian students in the country. Adding to the pressure that petitioners placed on the India Office, the latter two contributed to yet another official inquiry into the treatment of imperial subjects in Britain. A look at the increase of African sailors sheds light on why an inquiry was made in 1909, at the instigation of the Colonial Office, and it helps to show that distressed imperial sailors were not an exclusively India-related problem. Analysis of the experiences of students demonstrates that even those with means could find themselves

unprepared for residing in Britain. Moreover, when it came to the question of their repatriation, Indian students posed the same moral dilemma for the India Office, as had Indian petitioners.

From 1901 onwards, one-third of seafaring labour was comprised of "coloured" sailors—those from Africa, India, and other parts of the empire. Diana Frost argues in "Racism, Work and Unemployment" that African seamen "came to dominate specific departments, especially those below deck," and it was this increase in labour that led to a growing problem of destitute African sailors.[38] A difference in the types of contracts signed on by European sailors compared to colonial labourers in part explains the increase in destitute African sailors, as does the growth of imperialism in Africa at the end of the century. In terms of contracts, Asiatic contracts and other standard articles (contracts) had clauses that required basic provisions such as lodgings and repatriation of "a man to his home port after a one-way voyage."[39] Some African sailors, and Indian sailors too, would abandon their ships once docked at a port in Britain in hopes of getting better employment; higher wages could be secured if employers were not responsible for paying for repatriation, lodgings and general care while in Britain, especially when only one-way labour contracts were required.[40] In attempts to prevent sailors from deserting their ships and trying to find better wages on another, the government and shipping companies regulated the work of sailors through contracts as preventative measures.[41]

As scholars have shown, ship labour was based on race and social divisions that gave European sailors better pay and better work. As Laura Tabili describes in *"We Ask for British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain*, labour aboard British ships

[38] Diane Frost, "Racism, Work and Unemployment: West African Seamen in Liverpool 1880s-1960s," in Diane Frost, ed., *Ethnic Labour and British Imperial Trade: A History of Ethnic Seafarers in the UK* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 26.
[39] Laura Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 47.
[40] Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice,"* 47.
[41] Sarah Glynn, *Class, Ethnicity and Religion in the Bengali East End: A Political History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 8.

replicated racial divisions and hierarchies within the empire. Tabili has argued that labour by Africans and Asians was "systematically undervalued," and that, "the case of merchant shipping illustrates the material mechanisms whereby imperial political and economic inequalities and colonial racial mythologies were imported and refashioned in Britain."[42] Moreover, Frost has also shown in her research how African seamen were used to provide cheaper labour and arguing that "[they] were specifically engaged to perform work deemed unsuitable for white seamen in the tropics."[43] As the British shipping trade increased in the late-nineteenth century, the use of African labour concurrently increased for quick, cheap labour. In turn, Frost, argues, "this increased use of foreign seamen on British vessels became the subject of both public and parliamentary concern."[44] The National Sailor's and Firemen's Union, for example, was concerned about the use of foreign labour. There was a petition in 1906 in which "British seamen complained of the cheapness of foreign sailors and firemen, who were seemingly doing British sailors out of a job."[45] The conditions endured by Asian and African sailors were much poorer than those of Europeans, but the later were worried about being replaced or losing work because of the cheapness of African labour.

Concerns of foreign, or rather colonial, labour were enhanced by the growth of spaces for non-European sailors in and around port cities. Peter Fryer's research has found that by 1881, the numbers of African and Asian sailors was high enough for new lodgings and institutions to be established for them across Britain, such as with the Sailors' Rest in Cardiff. Cardiff also became "second only to London in the proportion of its population that was foreign-born," with 700 of these being African or West Indian sailors. Foreign sailors would be laid off in the port cities,

[42] Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice,"* 42.
[43] Diane Frost, *Work and Community among West African Migrant Workers Since the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 77.
[44] Frost, *Work and Community*, 77.
[45] Ibid., 26.

such as Cardiff, Newport, Barry, London, Liverpool, Hull, or Glasgow, and then "found it hard to get another ship, harder still to find work ashore."[46] Resistance and angst directed towards distressed foreign sailors was symptomatic of racialized concerns that had only heightened throughout the century. As noted by Barbara Bush in *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945*, racial antagonism was a leading proponent in "growing concern about the welfare of destitute black seamen" prior to the First World War.[47] After the war, tensions erupted into race riots in Liverpool, Cardiff, and other port cities (1919).[48] Increased racial discrimination and the unease of cheap non-European labour made life for imperial sailors much more difficult than ever before. In the early decades of the twentieth century, racial factors and increased levels of distressed African sailors also led to increased state-scrutiny into imperial subjects in Britain. Fryer and Frost argue that these numbers of distressed sailors were high enough to cause a parliamentary inquiry in 1909.[49]

Also influencing the inquiry was the overall presence of imperial subjects and their active involvement in Britain. After 1886, Indians became both increasingly visible among the British public, and active participants of British society in newfound ways. The election of Indians to Britain's House of Commons was partially responsible for drawing attention to the presence of Indians. In 1892, Dadabhai Naoroji was elected as a liberal member of parliament for Finsbury

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[46] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, 2nd ed. (1st ed., 1984), Introduction by Paul Gilroy (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 295.
[47] Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 206.
[48] Jonathan Hyslop, "Steamship Empire: Asian, African and British Sailors in the Merchant Marine c.1880-1945," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no.1 (2009): 61; Roy May and Robin Cohen, "The Interactions Between Race and Colonialism: A Case Study of the Liverpool Race Riots of 1919," *Race and Class* 14, no.2 (1974): 111-126; Michael Rowe, "Sex, 'Race' and Riot in Liverpool, 1919," *Immigrants and Minorities* 19, no.2 (July 2000): 53-70.
[49] Frost, "Racism, Work and Unemployment," 26; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 295.

Central in London.[50] Shompa Lahiri has shown in her research that there was a lot of publicity surrounding Naoroji's campaign, including mocking remarks by the Conservative Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who was not happy with the results of the election. Prior to the election, he had commented that despite the community having overcome some racial prejudice, "I doubt if we have yet to [get] to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man."[51] Naoroji was also a critic of British rule in India. Two other Indians became MPs following Naoroji. There was Mancherjee Bhownaggree who became the conservative MP for Bethnal Green in 1895.[52] After Bhownagree, Shapurji Saklatvala became a Labour MP during the general election in November 1922 (he was defeated the following year) in Battersea North.[53] After Saklatvala's election, there would not be another Asian MP in the British parliament until after the world wars.

These elections show that there were spaces in which Indians could participate legally within the British government. Public support, wealth, and means were also necessary to receive enough votes to be elected, which points to a degree of acceptance of Indians who were actively participating in British society. Moreover, these elections only solidified the idea that all Indians

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[50] For more information on Dadabhai Naoroji, see Verinder Grover, *Dadabhai Naoroji: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1998); Rustom P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1968); Omar Ralph, *Naoroji: The First Asian MP: A Biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, India's Patriot and Britain's MP* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1997). It should be noted that Naoroji was not the first Indian MP, though he was, arguably, the first notable MP in terms of stirring up public interest. For more information on an earlier MP, see Michael H. Fisher, *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre: Victorian Anglo-Indian MP and "Chancery Lunatic"* (New York: Columbia Press, 2010).

[51] Lord Salisbury, quoted in Lahiri, "Indian Victorians, 1857-1901," 121-22.

[52] For more on Bhownagree's background, see John R. Hinnells and Omar Ralph, *Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggree, K.C.I.E.: Order of the Lion and the Sun of Persia, 1851-1993* (London: Hansib, 1995); and, Jane Ridley, "Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownagree, 1851-1933," *ODNB* (online ed. 2004, accessed 3 August 2017). Jonathan Schneer has a lively discussion of how Bhownagree was caught between the success of being elected and the disdain by Indian nationalists who saw him as antithetical to their cause, see Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 240-248.

[53] For more on Shapurji Saklatvala, see Panchanana Saha, *Shapurji Saklatvala: A Short Biography* (Delhi: Peoples' Pub. House, 1970); Mike Squires, *Saklatvala: a Political Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990); Sehri Saklatvala, *The Fifth Commandment: A Biography of Shapurji Saklatvala* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1996); Mike Squires, "Shapurji Saklatvala, 1874-1936," *ODNB* (online edn. January 2011, accessed 8 August 2017).

had access to the British state. Although drawing a direct link between the elections and litigants is difficult, the participation of some Indians within British politics and society would only have helped to encourage landowners to bring their petitions directly to Britain; Indians, as they could clearly see, could and did have a voice within the British state.

Shompa Lahiri's *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930*, provides a rich study of Indian students in Britain and their relationship with both the public and the state from 1880 onward. The pertinent issue with students seeking education in Britain was them becoming impoverished despite having financial support from their families back in India. Lahiri has found that since students were supported solely by their parents, "any unforeseen circumstances which prevented the arrival of the funds could suddenly plunge an otherwise financially secure student into debt and poverty."[54] In some cases, Lahiri writes, "parents did not properly estimate the cost of educating a son in Britain. N.G. Ranga's father risked all his hard-earned savings to send his son to England and, although Ranga did not become destitute, his expenses were twice as much as his father anticipated."[55] Clements, for example, was a man who went to Britain to study law, "but after some time his remittance from India ceased and he became destitute."[56] Clements' funds allowed him to make it as far as Alexandria from which place he applied to the consulate in Alexandria for assistance. The Secretary of State did agree to pay for his return to India, yet other men were viewed as being naïve for having journeyed to Britain without sufficient assets.[57]

Occasionally, the students' limited funds were a sense of embarrassment. Aurobindo Ghose, for example, was sent to Britain at the age of seven for school with his brothers, but after

[54] Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, 66-7.
[55] Ibid.
[56] IOR: L/PJ/6/1001 No. 1280, "Précis of cases of destitute Indians abroad," referencing J&P 320/06.
[57] CMS: G/AC 4/4157a 1897, *Fortieth Annual Report*; "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics.-The annual," *Times*, 29 April 1897.

a while his father was unable to provide the three brothers with sufficient funds "for the most necessary wants," and so they felt they were in "an embarrassed position."[58] Others were less embarrassed to seek help. Jivan Singh requested a return passage to India from the India Office due to a lack of funds to support himself in Britain and, with the support of missionaries' testimonials, his request was granted.[59] Meanwhile, L. Rahman was less fortunate. Rahman received "the usual response in such cases" when he applied in 1886 to the India Office for assistance.[60] Lahiri has found that seventeen students applied to the India Office between 1887 and 1909, and each case was a result of parents' inability to provide adequate funds.[61] The India Office repatriated many students. These students were not necessarily requiring the state to help them, and yet officials were more willing to provide repatriation than they otherwise were, which could speak to the low numbers of students becoming distressed.[62]

Just as the state was increasingly interested in sailors, so to was it interested in monitoring the activity and presence of Indian students. In 1907, the Lee Warner Committee was spearheaded by Sir William Lee Warner to look into the potentially harmful or dangerous

[58] Cited in Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, 67.
[59] Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, 68. Reference to IOR: L/PJ/6/76 No.1065, 24 June 1882.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid. Three of the students stopped receiving funds because they had been disowned for marrying an English woman. It would seem then that racial distinctions went both ways: Indian parents could be equally distraught at the idea or fact of a son marrying an English woman.
[62] Not all students were strictly university-goers. George Small, the Strangers' Home missionary, included in his definition of "ambitious students" those he deemed "professed 'Enquirers,' wishing to adopt our faith, and also those who, having already done so in their own country, and suffered—or dreaded—persecution in consequence, have sought for an asylum in this free and Protestant land." An example of a "professed enquirer" is Abdul Khan who arrived in February of 1885 from Calcutta to convert from Islam to Christianity. Another man from Ceylon who was educated and belonged to a good family, simply wanted a change he ventured to Europe where he became destitute. Small wrote that "his story was a very sad one, like to that of the prodigal son, and as he had never been to sea before, there seemed to be little hope of getting him a chance to work his passage home." A captain of a ship took him on as a personal servant and Small eventually learned that the young man had returned to his family: "The news of this "'prodigal's' return and reception by his parents and family, arrived in due time at the Home, and it may be hoped that his future life will be as that of the younger son in the parable, 'who had been lost and was found.'" See George Small, in TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886*, 14.

activity of Indian students who were "becoming increasingly politically aware and active."[63] Lee Warner's committee interviewed thirty-five Indians at British universities and consulted sixty-five British university persons.[64] The committee estimated there were approximately 700 students in Britain and "out of these 700 students, over half (380) were found in London, 150 at Edinburgh, 85 at Cambridge, 32 at Oxford."[65] While in Britain, "the education they received highlighted the obvious contradiction between theories of democracy, equality and civil rights, and the realities of imperialism in India, not to mention their exposure to negative representations of India and Indians in the British press."[66] The Lee Warner Committee's findings were quite negative to the point that the government feared offending Indian students and so the report was never formally published.[67] The report was, however, included as an appendix to a later committee (the Lytton Committee) that would renew inquiries into Indian students in 1922. Although nothing came of the Lee Warner Committee, it does show racial prejudice against Indian students, fears (real or imagined) that they would necessarily be antagonistic towards Britons, and state concern on how best to deal mitigate potential radicalization of students. It is no wonder that Indians were increasingly looking towards nationalism and a national identity separate from Britain in this period. At the same time, this nationalism became a source of British anxiety, which was one of the reasons the decision was made not to publically publish and adopt the findings of the Lee Warner Committee.

On the whole, Indian petitioners, students, and African sailors prompted another official inquiry into the treatment of distressed colonial and Indian subjects. What precisely instigated

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[63] Sumita Mukherjee, *Nationalism, Education and Migrant Identities: The England-Returned* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 20.
[64] Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 128; Lahiri, "Divided Loyalties," *History Today* (May 2007): 55; Sumita Mukherjee, *Nationalism, Education and Migrant Identities*, 17. See also, Nicholas Owen, "The Soft Heart of the British Empire: Indian Radicals in Edwardian London," *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 143-184.
[65] Mukherjee, *Nationalism, Education, and Migrant Identities*, 17.
[66] Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 129.
[67] Lahiri, "Indian Victorians," 128-9; Mukherjee, *Nationalism, Education, and Migrant Identities*, 17.

the inquiry in 1909 has remained disputed among scholars. The scholarship diverges as to whether African sailors or Indian students were the instigators, though it was likely a combination of the two in addition to the challenges that petitioners posed.[68] As a result, the committee came to be commissioned by the Colonial Office and not solely by the India Office as the focus was no longer on distressed, working-class Indians. The main cause for concern was the absence of clear legal and political mechanisms for handling cases of destitution, especially with petitioners and students causing the India Office to stray more frequently from their typical stance on doing nothing. Although the India Office was increasingly providing aid to destitute Indians when necessary during this period, there was no cohesive plan for the type of aid provided. Their financial assistance was also complicated by their more ready acceptance of Indian petitioners and students. The lack of uniformity between the India Office, the Strangers' Home, the Poor Laws and other charitable societies did not help matters any. The increased presence of African sailors may also have heightened mounting pressures between the Colonial Office and India Office that began in the 1880s.

1910: A Government Inquiry and Official Reports

In June 1909, the Earl of Crewe formed the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects. In 1883, Crewe was "appointed assistant private secretary to Lord Granville, foreign

[68] A news article printed in both the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* (1910) and *The Evening Telegraph and Post* (1910) titled "Distressed Indian and Colonial Subjects" does suggest as much. It is curious that news of this committee was being reported in Scotland. Though conclusive evidence is lacking, it is likely that the proximity to the sea in Aberdeen and Dundee meant foreign sailors were passing through and residing across Scotland's port cities in greater numbers. See, "Distressed Indian and Colonial Subjects," *Aberdeen Daily Journal* 13 May 1910; "Destitute Indians in Britain," *Evening Telegraph and Post* 13 May 1910. For more on imperial subjects in Scotland, see John M. MacKenzie, "'The Second City of the Empire': Glasgow-Imperial Municipality," in Felix Driver and David Gilbert, eds., *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 215-237.

secretary in Gladstone's second ministry."[69] Crewe shared "his father's view that England was responsible for Ireland's misfortune, and his loyalty to his party during the Irish home-rule crisis left him one of the few Gladstonian peers after 1886, ensuring his subsequent political influence."[70] In 1905, "Crewe was credited with devising 'step-by-step' Irish policy which would limit the liability represented by the Liberals' commitment to home rule, and he became lord president of the council in the government formed by Campbell-Bannerman in December 1905."[71] By 1908, Crewe had become the Secretary of State of the Colonies and was known as "the principal defender of Liberal policy in a Unionist upper house."[72] It was, perhaps, his invested interest in liberal policies and involvement in colonial governance, beginning with Ireland and Irish Home Rule, that led to his interest in distressed imperial subjects. The Committee he assembled was specifically designed "to inquire as to the best means of relieving, repatriating, or otherwise disposing of, Seamen belonging to India or to any Crown Colony, and Natives of India or any of the Crown Colonies."[73]

Crewe's Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Francis S. Hopwood, wrote to the Under-Secretary of State for India on 2 March 1909 with regards to forming a small committee. Hopwood writes that the Earl of Crewe wanted "to enquire into the case of distressed British seamen, and distressed Indian and Colonial subjects who are left by some misfortune in this country without the means of existence or of returning to their native countries."[74] By this point, Crewe had already invited M.P. Owen Philipps to be the Chairman of the proposed

[69] John Davis, "Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes, Marquess of Crewe (1858-1945)," *ODNB* (online ed., 2008, accessed 3 August 2017).
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] IOR: L/PJ/6/925 No.830, "Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects," (April 1910), 1; *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*, CD 5133 (April 1910); "Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects," *Times*, 13 May 1910.
[74] IOR: L/PJ/6/925 No.830, Letter from Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office to Undersecretary of State, India Office, 2 March 1909.

committee. He was also inviting the Board of Trade, the Shipwrecked Fishermens' and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society and the Strangers' Home for Asiatics to nominate representatives, and, of course, the India Office was asked to provide a representative. According to Hopwood, the Charity Organization Society too had asked to serve on the Committee.[75] Given those who were initially asked and desiring of being on the proposed committee, it is evident that there was a convergence of social and political interests as regards to destitute imperial subjects in Britain at this time. The concern over distressed colonial subjects, then, was infiltrating several institutions and aspects of British society.

The final form of the committee was reminiscent of the joint committee of 1886, but with the addition of representatives from the Colonial Office and the Strangers' Home for Asiatics. Crewe's committee was made-up of the following: Owen Philips as chairman; Edward J. Harding from the Colonial Office as secretary; Francis Fleming representing the Colonial Office; F.E.A. Chamier representing the Strangers' Home; Theodore Morison representing the India Office; Geo. S. Fry for the Board of Trade; and, Howel Thomas for the Local Government Board.[76] Aside from Thomas and Chamier, each member was involved in imperial administration for the British colonies or India. Chamier, though, played an important role in providing relief and repatriation to imperial subjects as secretary of the Strangers' Home. Thomas was not immediately linked to the empire, but he was the secretary to Joseph Chamberlain, the former President of the Local Government Board, who had served as Secretary for the Colonies from 1895-1903.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] IOR: L/PJ/6/925 No.830, "Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects," (1910). Curzon Wyllie was supposed to be the India Office's representative but he passed away prior to the committee's first meeting. For more on Wyllie, see Brown, "Sir (William Hutt) Curzon Wyllie (1848-1909)" *ODNB*. Theodore Morison joined the Strangers' Home Board of Directors in July 1910 (IOR: L/PJ/6/1482 No.1552, *Annual Report for the Year 1915*).

Over the course of nine separate days, between 16 July and 19 November 1909, the committee members interviewed twenty-nine individuals and collected information provided from various institutions to determine how cases of destitute persons were handled. These institutions included the various departments of the Colonial Office, the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, the India Office, the British Indian Seamen's Institute, and the Charity Organisation Society. The main topics of concern were repatriation, sailors contracts, and proposals for reform, which was nothing new in terms of the types of issues the India Office had been dealing with since its establishment in 1858. What was new was the extensive inquiry with employers of social institutions, which added a new depth to the process of inquiry.

Repatriation as a viable solution was often brought up and contested among the interviewers. R.E. Stubbs of the Eastern Department of the Colonial Office argued that repatriation was not very effective, as the repatriated men were known to return within a year or two.[77] Similarly, R. Geikie of the West African Department of the Colonial Office (Niger half of it), considered repatriating individuals potentially useful, but state that "these people are generally wasters who come round to see us; they are probably people who would not stay in the workhouse, but simply go out into the streets to sponge upon anybody they can."[78] Others felt repatriation should only happen after a few months in Britain, so the individuals are first "allowed to suffer some amount of hardship" as this will allow them to learn something from their experience, and in turn help deter others.[79] W.G. Martley (Secretary, Charity Organisation Society), though, felt the same about white colonials, believing that "letting them fall hard is not

[77] "Interview with R.E. Stubbs," in *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*: *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134 (April 1910).
[78] "Interview with R. Geikie," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[79] "Interview with W.G. Martley," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.

a bad thing if you do not leave them there."[80] A distinction was also drawn between repatriation and deportation. Martley was asked the difference between the two and he said, "The result, I suppose, is the same. The thing is rather different: the one is with honour, the other is with dishonour."[81]

Sailors, of course, fell under the Merchant Shipping Act, but interviewers highlighted how captains did not always abide by the rules. Indeed, one interviewer found that captains were the main culprits for destitution of sailors. As Major Chesney explained, "Captains want a man, and they pick up a man there who is really not a sailor at all; he is better than nothing, I suppose, and he is brought to England and discharged in England, and it is extremely hard to get him out of England again."[82] Chesney favoured a stricter enforcement of the Merchant Shipping Act, seeing lax laws as contributing to ship captains' inability to hire ill-trained sailors and inability to follow-through with repatriation; the problem, Chesney argued, was the law and not ship owners or captains themselves. W.G. Martley, in his interview, expressed similar sentiments towards regulating discharged sailors, but he wanted the terms of agreement revised to encourage and enforce repatriation as a responsibility of ship owners.[83] Part of the issue with repatriation was the difference in the contracts provided to sailors. Though the details regarding when a European versus a Lascar or Indian agreement would be chosen seems to have been left to the discretion of the ship owners, European contracts were preferred when possible as they absolved owners of all repatriation requirements. European contracts, generally, were made in Britain and provided for all Britons whereas a Lascar agreement did the same for lascars, but was drawn up in India. Lascar agreements, Morris asserted, made it "compulsory on the part of the master or owner

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] "Interview with Major Chesney," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[83] "Interview with W.G. Martley," Secretary of the South West Ham Committee, Charity Organization Society, in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.

engaging a crew in India to return them to the port at which they are engaged within a certain period" (a long-standing practice of contracts with Indians).[84]

Some "coloured" sailors came to Britain on European agreements as opposed to Lascar agreements, which caused problems when it came to the issue of repatriation. J.A. Morris, the assistant superintendent of the Strangers' Home, explained that if the men being recruited had European parents or simply said they had European parents, had some education and could write their own names, then they could be signed on to the European agreements. Unlike the Indian agreements, the European ones terminated once at a British port where sailors were discharged indefinitely. The legal status of contracts signed by African, or other coloured sailors, is less clear, as African sailors were not lascars by definition and yet European agreements would not have allowed for repatriation within their contracts. Morris claimed that non-Indian sailors were more burdensome than Indians. He says, "West Indian and African seamen have rightfully or wrongfully acquired the reputation of being disorderly and exceedingly troublesome, so much so, that no shipmaster will carry them twice."[85] His reference to the difficulty of managing these colonial seamen may be a reflection of the poor or inadequate contracts that they were forced to sign. There were certainly enough West Indian seamen in Britain that W.G. Martley, member of the Charity Organization Society, expressed interest in an establishment to be made for them specifically, and even suggested that the Strangers' Home should open a second branch.[86] Overall, the difficulty with "coloured" sailors' contracts regarding repatriation or new work out of British ports may explain why there was an increase in destitute African sailors in Britain at the turn of the century.

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[84] "Interview with J.A. Morris," assistant superintend of the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, in in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[85] Ibid.
[86] "Interview with Martley," Secretary of the South West Ham Committee, Charity Organization Society, 5 November 1909, in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.

With regards to the cost of repatriation, it was generally agreed among the interviewees that Britain needed to make a decision as to who would be held responsible. As Stubbs put it, "Great Britain cannot have it both ways." Stubbs looked to the policy of destitute Britons in India and argued that "if they repatriate white people at the expense of the colony, anybody repatriated to the colony should be repatriated at somebody else's cost."[87] He further asked of the committee, "why should the colony pay for the repatriation of their own natives and for the repatriation of Englishmen who become destitute?"[88] This argument echoes Duleep Singh's from 1884, and here, decades later, numerous individuals amongst British social institutions were taking up the same line of inquiry. The general consensus, however, remained that workhouses were the solution when repatriation was not possible. If there was nowhere else to go, there was always the workhouse. "Some of these people we cannot get rid of we have to send over to the Union and they object strongly," said R. Geikie of the Western African Department of the Colonial Office in his interview. Chamier chimed in and added that colonial subjects did not generally get repatriated by the poor law unions, and so "they either make their own arrangements or die here; they gradually get shrivelled up and die;" a rather telling statement regarding the fate of Indians distressed in Britain.[89]

Yet if repatriation was to be a standard policy, then it remained to be determined who would be responsible for the cost. The Committee discussed the idea of a fixed sum in their interview with R.E. Stubbs, a member of the Eastern Department of the Colonial Office. Stubbs

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[87] "Interview with R.E. Stubbs," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[88] Ibid. An interview with G.E. Shepherd, a representative of the Public Department of the India Office clarified for the committee that Europeans in India fell under the European Vagrancy Act (1874), which does not actually give any rights for repatriation. Repatriation does happen anyway. The numbers are relatively small at 136 repatriations over the course of 10 years, but that makes sense, as Britons travelling to India are generally better-off financially and travel there as either "adventurers" or in an official capacity ("Interview with G.E. Shepherd," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134).
[89] Chamier, in "Interview with R. Geikie," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134. See also, "Interview with R.E. Stubbs."

turned down the idea of a fixed sum being dedicated to repatriation as he saw a danger with having a fund to draw from for that exclusive purpose. He proclaimed, "I think there is a danger, if there is money in hand, of sending home cases which do not really deserve repatriation. It is the obvious thing to do. You want to get rid of these men."[90] G.E. Shepherd, the representative of the Judicial and Public Department of the India Office, had a similar conversation with the committee. Howel Thomas asked Shepherd whether he had "considered the question whether if there was a fund to repatriate these people, that would encourage them to come across." Shepherd's response was that "the Secretary of State [India Office] has always taken that view" and so a fund was undesirable to discourage people from getting the impression that they would be able to obtain free passages from the India Office.

Nevertheless, there was a consensus that either some sort of assistance or legal mechanisms needed to be properly established for better efficiency. Martley, ever the optimist, advocated for a system of identity papers or other markers that would clearly state where the men's point of origin was so as to track people's movement more efficiently. That being said, Martley also advocated for homes to be opened up throughout British ports: "These homes should not be free in the first instance, but a guarantee should be given to the managers so that (a) they should not turn out men whose resources are exhausted, a thing which is constantly happening now, and (b) they should not turn away penniless men."[91] The conversation among the committee and its interviewees perpetually ended up in a circular pattern. Their discussions always came to the resolution that resources and repatriation were needed to prevent sailors and non-sailors from being destitute in Britain, but no one was willing to provide the necessary funds. Worse yet, putting in place a system to establish or garner funds for the purpose of

[90] "Interview with Stubbs," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[91] "Interview with Martley," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.

repatriation was actively resisted for fear of further encouraging the number of imperial subjects who came to and would become distressed in the country. There certainly seemed to be a genuine desire among some of the interviewees to provide meaningful aid to the distressed, but the Committee's questions and inquiries led to answers by interviewees that merely echoed existing government attitudes on the subject.

K. Chowdhury, the assistant secretary of the British Indian Seamen's Institute, was the only person of colour interviewed by the committee. Chowdhury's interaction with distressed subjects began in 1904 when "as secretary of the Manchester Indian Association, I was occasionally approached to help a few cases of my destitute country-men who found their way to Manchester from Liverpool and Hull."[92] In London, he stumbled across other distressed persons from Ceylon, the West Indies, and Mauritius, and he found that very few of them spoke English. In his interview, Chowdhury proclaims that,

> It is hard to believe that in a country like England, which is rightly called the home of charities, and which affords protection to every form of human suffering, there is hardly any organisation to take up the cause of the distressed Indians and the coloured colonials, much less to help in their distress which, as in the case of the lascars, is not of their own making.[93]

Chowdhury knew that the Strangers' Home provided charitable aid and general support in London, but he felt these measures were insufficient. In fact, the Indian Seamen's Institute (established 1908) that he helped found had been "established as a non-residential club to supplement the work of the Asiatic Home for Strangers."[94] He was also critical of the cost of paying for lodgings at the Home as "the average pay of Asiatic sailors is only 8s to 9s a week,

[92] "Interview with K. Chowdhury, assistant secretary of the British Indian Seamen's Institute," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[93] Ibid.
[94] *Indian Magazine and Review*, No. 477 (September 1910): 248.

and for every month he stays at the Home he has to spend 48s., which is equivalent to his wages for six weeks."[95]

Chowdhury also understood the social pressures of finding work outside of India, noting "they would rather starve than force the social ostracism that would follow were they to return and find themselves in no better position than most of their stay-at-home friends."[96] This notion of societal implications is the first time that a sense of personal, social hardships is presented in the records. The implications of distress aside from the immediate problem of poverty had never before been addressed, which only emphasizes the lack of discussion with the distressed Indians themselves. Being more attuned to the needs of distressed Indians, Chowdhury recommended the formation of a permanent committee of men from the Colonial and India Offices, and any other committees who dealt with distressed colonial subjects. Regardless of how numerous or not the numbers of distress may have been, he had advocated for having in place some system or method of reviewing and handling these types of cases. Chowdhury was thus getting to the heart of the problem: the India Office (in particular) had absolutely no office, department, or permanent committee designated to managing labouring colonial subjects in Britain. He also suggested that warnings should be posted at all Indian ports to try to spread the message that falling into destitution in Britain was a serious problem.

Decisions on the best solutions were reviewed after the conclusion of the interviews in November 1909. The committee compiled all the information they gathered and decided on the following:

> That the problem to be solved has not arisen from the number of cases involved. On the contrary the number is, comparatively speaking, small. But it is made up of cases form almost every part of the globe. These cases are brought about by a variety of causes. They have been referred to different institutions and treated in a variety of ways. In fact almost

[95] "Interview with Chowdhury," in *Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, CD 5134.
[96] Ibid.

> every case constitutes a separate problem in itself, and it is this diversity, which has proved the main source of difficulty.[97]

Accordingly, the committee's report concentrated on the best procedures for dealing with both seamen and non-seamen. Seamen, as has been mentioned, were largely protected by sections 184 & 185 of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, which stated that the Secretary of State in Council of India would repay the board of guardians who might help relieve or maintain the destitute person.[98] Specifically, section 184 stipulated that owners could be fined for leaving seamen in the United Kingdom in a state of distress.[99] The policy was a bit different for India sailors. According to section 185, "It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State in Council of India to take charge of and send home or otherwise provide for all lascars or other natives of India who are found destitute in the United Kingdom."[100] If a poor law union's Board of Guardians provided relief, then the Secretary of State in Council would repay the board out of India revenues in accordance with the regulations.[101] Sailors were also to be received by the Strangers' Home while they waited for further employment.[102]

As regards non-seamen, four distinct groups were recognized: disappointed litigants from India, domestic servants, natives brought to Britain "for spectacular or similar purposes" (performances), and students from India and the Crown Colonies.[103] For the first group, the Committee found that no changes were deemed necessary for disappointed litigants. The committee argued "that complete ignorance of the conditions under which an appeal can take

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[97] *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*, 3.
[98] Ibid., 3-8.
[99] Merchant Shipping Act 1894 c.60 (57&58 Vic), Part II, "Destitute Seamen," Sec. 184 (1), accessed: 11 January 2017, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1894/60/pdfs/ukpga_18940060_en.pdf.
[100] Merchant Shipping Act 1894 c.60 (57&58 Vic), Part II, "Destitute Seamen," Sec. 185 (1), accessed: 11 January 2017, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1894/60/pdfs/ukpga_18940060_en.pdf.
[101] Merchant Shipping Act 1894 c.60 (57&58 Vic), Part II, "Destitute Seamen," Sec. 185 (2&3), accessed: 11 January 2017, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1894/60/pdfs/ukpga_18940060_en.pdf.
[102] *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*, 3.
[103] Ibid., 14.

place must be the cause of such cases." For this reason, it was felt that the cases would diminish as "the principles of legal administration are better understood."[104] Of more pressing concern to the committee was Indian students. They estimated between 1,000 and 1,200 students were in the country and that students "constitute a problem of considerable importance, which we believe will increase in magnitude and complexity."[105] Though students were typically supported by their families, "cases of destitution occasionally arise," such as with death or sickness and without financial support students would be brought to the verge of destitution. The committee felt "such cases are sufficiently frequent to justify us in recommending remedial measures." Yet, the overall recommendation from the committee was to not depart from the India Office's 1887 policy of not using the revenues of India to provide relief to destitute Indians. Instead, the committee felt the best course of action was to widely disseminate warnings that students should not travel to England without sufficient funds.[106]

After initial review, the committee contemplated how distressed subjects had been treated and just as before, it was found that the Board of Guardians' "power to incur expenditure on emigration" should be "extended, if necessary, to include repatriation." And yet again, it was expressed that the guardians might "have themselves considered the expediency of arranging for the repatriation of the man or men concerned."[107] The committee also wanted charitable institutions, such as the Strangers' Home, the Sailors' Home, and the Charity Organisation Society, to continue to provide financial support to destitute Indians to the best of their abilities.[108] As for the government, the committee wrote, "the method at present adopted by the Government Departments for dealing with distressed Indians or Colonials is admittedly

[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 16.
[106] Ibid., 17. See also, Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, 66-71.
[107] Ibid., 18-19.
[108] Ibid., 19.

unsatisfactory." And yet, the report also said that neither the India Office nor the Colonial Office "have funds at their disposal properly applicable for the relief or repatriation of distressed persons, although the India Office has found means for doing this in some exceptional cases."[109] As a result, the committee found that these departments "should not deal direct with the individual cases, but should refer them, in the first instance, to the charitable bodies, or to the Poor Law authority, or to associations specially founded to meet the requirements of Indians in England."[110] Social organizations, and not government institutions, were first and foremost to be the point of contact for destitute imperial subjects.

Despite the obvious need for funds, the committee refused to endorse a fund for charitable organizations to help provide relief or repatriation to Indians. As they put it, "It appears to us that even if India, the Dominions, and the Colonies were prepared favourably to consider this suggestion, its adoption would have the effect of perpetuating and increasing, rather than diminishing, the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs."[111] Furthermore, they argued "the applicants would consider that they had some sort of right to assistance from what they would probably regard as their natural protectors."[112] Here again, providing financial assistance was seen as potentially perpetuating rather than aiding the problem of destitute persons. Even more strikingly, the committee wanted to discourage applicants from falsely seeing the India and Colonial Offices as providers of that support. With these decisions, the committee disbanded and no further conclusions were drawn. By once again not providing a tangible, centralized or more systematic approach to the treatment of distressed imperial subjects, the very purpose of the

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., 20.
[111] Ibid., 21. See also Fitzgerald's response in 1899, IOR: L/PJ/6/518 No. 1676, letter dated 2 Sept. 1899.
[112] *Report of the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects*, 21.

committee became questionable. Distressed imperial subjects may have been subjects of the crown, but, evidently, they were not subjects of concern.

Conclusion: Reinforcing an Ambiguous Status Quo

In the coming decades, Indians became more visible and scrutinized by the state. Though passports were not systematically or cohesively implemented, they were increasingly used in the early-twentieth century to give legal permission to Indians to travel to Britain. State regulation of migration, especially given the heightened colonial atmosphere after the 1880s made colonial subjects visible to Britons.[113] Global politics and the importance of shipping and empire coupled with new questions of visas and work papers especially influenced government discussions of both Asian and African sailors in the changing world order. Meanwhile, Indians themselves were starting to break from the colonial dynamic by asserting their own desires for national independence, such as with the India League. These changes at the turn of the century contributed to renewed and more in-depth discussions of how to treat and manage the presence of destitute colonial subjects in the metropole.

Meanwhile, imperial subjects had varying expectations of the state. Zemindars who brought their petitions to the island were clearly hoping and expecting to see the monarch and achieve some results. They would not, though, have anticipated running out of finances while waiting on an audience with a monarch they would never actually see. Whether they anticipated it or not, the India Office was more amenable to securing a non-working passage for them to return to India once distressed. This offer of repatriation was influenced by their status as land owners, though the smaller numbers of litigants in contrast to servants would have helped in this

[113] Radhika Viyas Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport," in Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 198.

regard. Zemindars would also have been men of more influence and given the growing climate of Indian unrest regarding imperialism and nationalism, it makes sense that officials would want to make themselves appear more favourably to these particular subjects. Likewise, students posed more influence and means that could have further shaken the already tenuous relationship between Britain and India. Concessions to litigants and students, though, further destabilized India Office policy with regards to Indian repatriation, which the Colonial Office and Home Government had been critiquing since the mid-1880s. Paired with mounting cases of distress among African sailors, which would have fallen to the Colonial Office to handle, it is not surprising that an official state inquiry was made to re-examine how distressed imperial subjects were treated in Britain. What is a bit more surprising is how after numerous interviews and meetings, the Committee on Distressed Colonial and India Subjects only came to reinforce the existing status-quo of ambiguity.

Writing in 1893, Indian politician Surendranath Banerjea wrote that Indians were British subjects who "live under the protecting shadows of one of the noblest constitutions the world has ever seen. The rights of Englishmen are ours, their privileges are ours, their constitution is ours. But we are excluded from them."[114] Banerjea believed in British imperial power, and this criticism of his demonstrates how Indians were British subjects more in theory than in practice.[115] Indeed, the central component of the India Office's decisions regarding the treatment of Indian paupers was to avoid establishing a precedent and thus to leave the law ambiguous. Even with the involvement of the Colonial Office in 1910, the overall façade of refusing help and being unable to legally make concessions remained in tact. All of this in spite of the fact that

[114] Banerjea, 14 January 1893, quoted in Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the late-Victorian Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
[115] Mackenzie Brown, *The Nationalist Movement: Indian Political Thought from Ranade to Bhave* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 15.

zemindars and students often "lucked out" and were, in fact, provided aid. In describing each of these cases as "exceptional," the government continued to utilize a policy, or rather lack thereof, which allowed officials to consistently exclude Indians from the legal system. Unsurprisingly, not once were imperial subjects consulted regarding their status and how they had become distressed in a land so far from their homes. The answer, were it asked, would have pointed the finger at British negligence and disregard when it came to the subjects of its vast and distant empire.

CONCLUSION

Although this dissertation ends in 1914, distressed Indians remained in Britain well into the twentieth century. During the First World War, thousands of Indian and colonial troops were called upon to fight for the British across the various fronts. In addition to troops from the Indian Army, British-born Asians, such as Dadabhai Noroji's grandson, Kershap Naoroji, enlisted with the British forces.[1] Lascars were also recruited in large numbers during the war. After the war, many of these Indians ended up across the United Kingdom, largely in London's East End, but also as far as Scotland. Some sailors intentionally abandoned their ships and took up work in factories, "where wages were higher," while others "were actually encouraged to do so."[2] The position of these new Indian migrants, though, was not much different than before the war. In 1921, the *Evening Telegraph and Post* printed an article, titled "Destitute Indians' Plight," which stated that, "during and subsequent to the war, hundreds of Lascars and Indian labourers found employment in the large iron and steel works throughout Lanarkshire." It goes on to say that "it transpires now that many of the foreigners are practically destitute."[3]

Even before the war, the London City Mission (LCM) had found it challenging to accommodate and address the needs of all lascars arriving in and passing through London. In an attempt to solve the problem of distress, the Lascar Institute was founded in 1907 as yet another institute to cater to the physical needs of lascars. Within the institute could be found men from all over the globe: "most of the men are Muhammedans from India, viz. from the Punjab and

[1] Rozina Visram, "Kamal A. Chunchie of the Coloured Men's Institute: the Man and the Legend," *Immigrants & Minorities* 18, no. 1 (2010): 30.
[2] Rozina Visram, "The Peopling of London: Fifteen Thousand Years of Settlement from Overseas," Museum of London: Reaktion Books, 1993.
[3] "Destitute Indians' Plight," *Evening Telegraph and Post* (Dundee, Scotland), 26 January 1921.

borders of Afghanistan, from the Western coast of India, the Bombay Provinces, and Goozerate; also from Bengal. Zanzibar, Egypt, and the Persian Gulf also supply large numbers of men for work in the engine-rooms [sic]." The Lascar Institute accommodated eighty to one-hundred people, and was a place where "swarthy visitors [found] their own religious and other books awaiting them, newspapers from India in their own languages, and correct information about the arrival and departure of ships from London and other ports."[4] In this way, the Lascar Institute's purpose and scope was a cross between the Asiatic Rest and the Strangers' Home; it was both a missionary and migratory space geared towards South Asian sailors.[5]

Prior to the war, the Lascar Institute was seen as a safe refuge for reading, writing, resting, and finding spiritual direction "against those vices and moral dangers to which the Oriental so easily becomes a victim."[6] The missionary employed by the institute helped those who could not read by offering translation services. The institute also became a place for consuming and discussing the news: "The weekly budget of the Bombay daily newspaper is an unfailing attraction. The important events taking place in their country are followed very intelligently by many of the Lascars, both sailors and firemen."[7] After the war, however, the LCM missionary, Abraham Challis, wrote "of men, stranded and without hope, who are brought to him, often by the police."[8] Sometimes the men were brought to the missionary in a state of destitution, with barely any clothes. Clothing was then purchased for them, and food and lodgings were provided, "or a railway fare to London or wherever I can get them cared for."[9] Challis also writes that, "before the war they were poor, but they usually managed to make ends

[4] "Orientals," *LCMM*, 1907, 133-134. See also, "The Society's Work Amongst Lascars," *LCMM*, 1909, 204.
[5] The institute was also referred to as the "Mission Institute" and the "Institute for Orientals."
[6] "Orientals," *LCMM*, 1913, 144.
[7] "The Society's Work Amongst Lascars," *LCMM*, 1909, 202.
[8] "The World at our Doors," *LCMM*, 1924, 16.
[9] Ibid.

meet; now, before they can provide themselves with things necessary for life aboardship [sic], they are often obliged to go to the money-lenders, the wives and families of many of them being left dependent upon relatives."[10] Despite the work they were able to find within Britain, high costs of living after the war made life difficult for them. Adding to their difficulties were heightened racial tensions, and even violence, as with the Race Riots in 1919.[11]

Although Indians' participation in protecting, defending, and fighting for Britain was desired and even necessary during the war, they became less desirable when their labour was no longer need. Unlike in the nineteenth century, Indians were able to find work within Britain in the 1920s, often filling labour shortages in factories. Their legal status, however, continued to remain unclear. As per *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, some Parish Councils found that "Indians, being British subjects, should be supported in the present industrial crisis from the local rates, or, alternatively, that the Government should take the situation in hand and permit of their participating in any schemes for the amelioration of distress among the workless."[12] Did Indian migrants actually have access to the workhouse? Should the government intervene? The same questions that had governed the plight of Indians throughout the nineteenth century continued to be applicable in twentieth century Britain. Despite decades of debates within the India Office over the responsibility to distressed Indian subjects, who should be responsible for them, and possible preventative means to prevent their destitution continued to pose the same problem for social, political, and legal institutions. Indian labour was important; their contributions to imperial trade and the war effort proved that Britons had a need for Indians. Unfortunately, the need to provide for the welfare of Indians continuously remained a low priority. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 had codified "the common status throughout the

[10] Abraham Challis, "The Lascar Problem," *LCMM*, 1922, 123.
[11] Visram, "The Peopling of London," 171.
[12] "Destitute Indians' Plight," *Evening Telegraph and Post*, 26 January 1921.

empire of all subjects of the Crown," and to bring some sense of clarity to the status of Indians, yet, when in a state of distress, Indians continued to legally be neither Indian nor British.

Meanwhile, the institution that arguably did the most to protect and provide for distressed Indians had fallen on hard times. At some point in the early 1920s, the Strangers' Home became recognized by the India Office as one of two official lodging houses for lascars; the second official lodging house was the Glasgow Sailors' Home.[13] By 1924, all lascars were to be sent to either the Strangers' Home for Asiatics or the Glasgow Sailors' Home. If they were both full, then "their Superintendents will arrange for the provision of other accommodation."[14] The Strangers' Home, which had initially begun as a place to rescue lascars in the 1850s, returned to this more exclusive focus of lascar housing after the war.

The "Asiatic and Overseas Home," as it came to be known, had lost the financial ability to provide for destitute Indians. From 1930 to 1934, the Home had run at a loss of £2000, "and the Board's assets, apart from the building and the site value have dwindled to about £700."[15] Consequently, in 1935, the Board of Directors planned to close the establishment "owing to [the] lack of patronage and support over a period of years."[16] The planned closure of the Home met with dismay by the Muslim Association. Syed Fazal Shah, a member of the Association, wrote to the Home Office, and expressing concern at "the consequent disappearance of a place of refuge for the peoples of Asia in London, and earnestly ask[ed] to provide the said refuge for the people of Asia as before."[17] The Strangers' Home had opened nearly a century before as a refuge, and

[13] IOR: L/E/7/1152 No. 727, Correspondences from May 1924. There was also a Sailors' Home in Liverpool, but there were not many lascars there, and so the Secretary of State for India did not feel it necessary to recognize the Liverpool lodging house as an official establishment for lascars.
[14] Ibid.
[15] IOR: L/E/9/967 No. 141/15, Letter to the Government of India, Department of Commerce, 28 February 1935.
[16] IOR: L/E/9/967 No. 141/15, F.J. Adams to the Muslim Association, 9 May 1935.
[17] IOR: L/E/9/967 No. 141/15, Syed Fazal Shah to the Home Office, Whitehall, 26 April 1935.

despite an increase of Indians in Britain in the 1920s and 30s, the Home was unable to sustain itself financially. In 1937, it closed its doors forever.

* * *

This study of destitute Indians in Britain has shown how an imperial policy within the domestic context remained stagnant from the early nineteenth into the twentieth century. Destitute Indians represented a corporeal manifestation of the British Empire on British soil, and their presence was not something with which existing imperial policy was able to effectively manage. Regardless of any Merchant Shipping or Emigration Acts, once destitute in Britain, there were no mechanisms for repatriation or deportation. Every so often the Secretary of State for the India Office would repatriate an Indian using Indian revenues, but these were always exceptional cases and never led to the establishment of official policies. Most troubling about these actions is what the lack of policies meant in practice. If distressed Indians, such as servants and sailors, found themselves unintentionally stranded in Britain and were unable to receive aid from the India Office, Home Government, or the Government of India, then it was most likely that they were stuck living out the remainder of their lives in Britain. Social institutions did help by offering financial relief and finding employment for those in need. Yet places like the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders was only able to help find working passages to aid these individuals in returning to India when Indians were actually aware of its existence. Moreover, the Home was a social organization that tried to help through philanthropy when at least one governmental body should have put forth some tangible effort to grapple with the issue of Indians being abandoned, or even litigants feeling like they had claims to justice in the United Kingdom.

Moreover, numerous correspondences and missionary records show that Indians and non-government persons and organizations held the India Office accountable time and again for preventing Indians from falling into a state of destitution. Unfortunately, the Government in India, wanted nothing to do with destitute Indians, and the India Office, the organization created to deal with the governance of the Indian Empire, did not want anything to do with them either. The Strangers' Home organizers tried to rectify the neglect of Indians by first the East India Company and later the India Office, by creating a space where people from the East and from Africa could, and even should, congregate. It was, simultaneously, a physical space established in the East End that encouraged the containment of Britain's non-white population into one, centralized space. It was a controlled space where the movement of people into and out of the Home was closely monitored. Though espousing a rhetoric of protection for destitute Indians, the Home also, inevitably, functioned as an exclusionary space, as destitute Indians were explicitly brought in with the intention of removing them from Britain. There was, thus, an isolationist dynamic that formed around the institute that went hand-in-hand with what can otherwise be seen as a humanitarian initiative. In addition, wrapped up in creating a sense of qualified safety was the work of missionaries who worked for both the Home and mission societies in an effort to both convert and remove Indians from Britain.

To what extent, then, can the Strangers' Home be seen as a space of belonging for Indians? What about the Asiatic Rest? Both the provision of help and the lack of it had negative consequences for Indians on the ground. Destitute Indians were technically subjects of the Raj and a part of Britain's colonial population, but they found no assistance in their capacity as subjects of India or Britain. In many ways, however, they were treated similarly to Britain's domestic poor, and as a result desolate Indians found themselves unintentionally trapped in

Britain where they wished to be neither migrants nor permanent settlers. As this dissertation has shown, distressed Indians occupied and existed in a transient, gray-zone where they often could be neither Indian nor British. Issues surrounding the need to repatriate or not, though, did lead to questions of moral responsibility that this dissertation has explored in some detail. Given Britons' preoccupation with empire, liberalism, respectability, and civilization, the debates over whether or not the nation had a moral responsibility to protect destitute Indians highlights how violence was not always physical. The role of repatriation within questions of moral responsibility further shows the duality of British actions. Some Britons certainly intended to help Indians find employment and return them to their homes and families, but these intentions also tended to have an underlining duplicity to them that complicate the narrative of help and charity to the impoverished.

Then there is the experience of Indians themselves. Though not much is known of working-class Indians' lives in the nineteenth century from their own perspectives, this dissertation has been able to draw some conclusions and raise pertinent questions regarding what a life in Britain may or may not have entailed. J.J. Gazdar, an elite Indian present at the 1886 annual meeting of the Strangers' Home, remarked that "I myself have repeatedly felt lonely as I have stood near the Bank of England among a crowd of people belonging to a different nation from my own…How much more lonely, then, must be the position of unfortunate strangers…?"[18] What would it have been like for the non-elite Indian to walk around in a place where one's language and culture were unfamiliar? What difficulties were faced by those trapped in a country where language barriers made finding safe places of refuge and a way back home challenging and possibly even discouraging? What would it have been like to start a new life, and even new family in a foreign country only to have missionaries knock on your door to not

[18] TNA: MT 9/362 M.4861, *Annual Report for the Year 1886* (20 April 1887), 21.

only convert you, but to also tell you about the resources that exist at a lodging house where employment would remove you from Britain? This dissertation has addressed elements of these questions, but complete answers, as understood from Indians themselves, has eluded its scholar. That being said, loneliness, fear, frustration, hope, and even excitement would almost certainly have been among the emotions experienced by most if not all Indians in the metropole. At the very least, it is clear that some destitute Indians, who did not succumb to the perils of poverty, became Britain's unintended immigrants.

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