

Chapter 1: The Forgotten Lobby

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When a classified government document appeared in the *Washington Post* on July 25, 1944, a sensational fervor took hold of Washington, DC—who had betrayed their country? The confidential report addressed Indian independence—a sensitive issue for the United States and wartime ally Great Britain. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s personal representative to India, noted diplomat William Phillips had written a devastating report that was intended for the president’s eyes only. Instead, readers of Drew Pearson’s nationally syndicated political column, “Washington Merry-Go-Round,” now knew that Phillips sympathized with the Indian nationalist cause, criticized British resistance toward Indian independence, and believed that the ongoing colonial tension throughout India was impairing the U.S. ability to fight Axis powers in Asia.¹ Who was responsible for the disclosure of this information? President Roosevelt speculated that Sumner Welles, the former Undersecretary of State, had leaked the report. Welles was both a personal friend of Pearson’s and a known supporter of Indian independence.² The president was wrong, however. Robert Crane, a junior desk officer on South Asia in the State Department Division of Cultural Relations, was the one who risked prison to advance the cause of Indian independence, though his role in the affair remained undiscovered for more than four decades.³

Crane had joined the State Department at the end of 1943. Fresh from his graduate studies on the history of U.S.-Indian relations at American University, the youthful diplomat supported the Indian National Congress and opposed British imperialism in South Asia. He recognized the potential effect if the explosive Phillips report was made public. In a public opinion poll conducted one month before Phillips wrote his report, 62 percent of the respondents

¹ Phillips to Roosevelt, May 14, 1943, *FRUS, 1943*, 4:221-222.

² M.S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, *Roosevelt, Gandhi, Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India’s Freedom Struggle* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1983), 212.

³ Robert I. Crane, “U.S.-India Relations: The Early Phase, 1941-1945,” *Asian Affairs* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1988/1989): 191.

believed Britain should establish Indian independence, with an additional 7 percent in support of independence if it would be granted after the war.⁴ Aware of this anti-colonial sentiment, Crane quietly passed a copy of the classified document to two Indian friends in Washington.⁵ By doing so, he violated U.S. legal code addressing wartime disclosure of classified information that had been established by the controversial 1917 Espionage Act. If convicted of this federal crime, Crane would have lost his position within the U.S. government, faced fines up to \$10,000, and/or imprisonment for up to twenty years.⁶ Crane risked all of this to help promote Indian independence.

Yet Crane was just one link of a coordinated chain of individuals who managed to move a high-security document from within the U.S. State Department to one of America's most prominent political journalists. After Crane stole the Phillips Report, conflicting first-hand testimony places the report in the hands of K.A.D. Naoroji, an Indian member the Government of India Supply Mission to the United States, K.C. Mahendra, an owner of a Bombay import-export company, or Obaidur Rahman, a press officer at the Indian High Commission.⁷ Additionally, Dr. Anup Singh, a leading figure in two of the organizations then lobbying for Indian independence in the United States—the India League of America and the National Committee for India's Independence—, has since claimed to be the go-between who actually helped get the report from Crane to Drew Pearson.⁸ Meanwhile, British Intelligence accused Major Altaf Qadir, a staff member of the Indian Agent General stationed in Washington, and

⁴ National Opinion Research Center, April 6, 1943, Qtd. in Gary R. Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 129.

⁵ Crane, 189-193.

⁶ Geoffrey R. Stone, "Judge Learned Hand and the Espionage Act of 1917: A Mystery Unraveled." *University of Chicago Law Review* 70 (Winter 2003).

⁷ Harold Gould *Sikhs, Swamis, Students, and Spies: The India Lobby in the United States, 1900-1946* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 373-374.

⁸ Venkataramani, 213.

Indian journalist Chamal Lal of leaking the Phillips Report to Pearson. While the British acted decisively by reassigning Qadir to the warfront in Burma and returning Lal to India, the impact of the leak was more ambiguous than the British actions suggested.

Crane had initiated an effort to shape US diplomatic policy by mobilizing American public opinion. The elusive path of the leaked report, however, highlights the inherent complexity of investigating the nature of any group attempting to influence U.S. foreign policy. These lobbying efforts are often controversial and almost always conducted out of the public eye. The term “ethnic lobby” inspires particularly negative associations marked by dual loyalties. The word “lobby” itself originally referred to a large meeting hall in the British House of Commons where the public could meet with their legislators.⁹ Yet Americans have always appeared ambivalent about such interactions. In *Federalist* 10, James Madison warned against the “mischiefs of faction,” and the possibility that a small minority group could exert their interests over that of the democratic majority through corrupt influence-peddling.¹⁰ Political scientist Thomas Ambrosio uses the term “ethnic interest group” to refer to organizations based on a “shared sense of cultural distinctiveness” that promote the policy concerns of their community.¹¹ Alexander DeConde, a leading scholar in the study of ethnicity, also focuses on the sense of “ethnoracial solidarity” that drives the cohesive nature of foreign lobbies, while suggesting that a rigid organization is not necessary for such a group to identify its shared

⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. “lobby,” online version September 2011, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109495>.

¹⁰ Quoted in Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: 2000), 6-7.

¹¹ Thomas Ambrosio, ed., *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 1.

interests.¹² The diverse American network advocating for Indian independence during World War II formed through their shared identification with India, though members of the India Lobby were not exclusively Indian. I use this term “India Lobby” to place this often overlooked group within the context of the more well-known lobbies of the period, the China Lobby and Israel Lobby, which also had a strong nationalist aspirations.

While the Phillips leak provides a snapshot of the India Lobby in action, the episode also raises larger issues. Who comprised the India Lobby and how did they attempt to mobilize American opinion in favor of India’s fight for independence? How does the development of an India Lobby fit into the context of the history of ethnic lobbies in the United States? Was the India Lobby successful? These questions highlight two distinct areas of scholarship, U.S.-India relations during WWII and the history of American ethnic lobbies, which this project will draw together in a focused case study. By analyzing specific members of the Lobby through several underutilized letters, published journals and reflections, this project will demonstrate how the developing Lobby utilized tactics necessary to a successful ethnic lobby. The subsequent historiographies of both U.S.-India relations during WWII and American ethnic lobbies reveal significant gaps in the treatment of the India Lobby, and little intersection between the two. The India Lobby has essentially become a forgotten lobby. An examination of its central figures and their tactics will demonstrate how the story deserves a larger place within the history of Allied diplomacy in South Asia and for understanding the development of the modern ethnic lobby in the United States.

If, as sociologists Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan claim in their influential work *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (1975), “the immigration process is the single most

¹² Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 4, 11.

important determinant of American foreign policy,” then ethnic lobbies, as defined by the identities and issues of immigrant communities, should play an important role in the formation of American foreign policy.¹³ While Glazer and Moynihan’s enthusiasm in the 1970s for the impact of minority ethnic groups reflects the resurgence of pluralist political theory and emerging cultural pluralism during that period, the majority of scholarship on ethnic lobbies in the United States does seem to portray ethnic interest groups as having a uniquely significant role in a democratic nation built on immigration.¹⁴ William Slany, an historian for the State Department, links the emergence of ethnic lobbies to nineteenth-century waves of immigration, while arguing that they only gained real influence on U.S. foreign policy in the 1970s once Congress gained a more active role in foreign-policy decisions.¹⁵ Though Slany’s analysis illustrates the close correlation between the organization and tactics of a lobby to the shifting power structure within the U.S. government, his important reference essay underestimates the early impact of ethnic lobbies in the United States.

With the publication of *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy* in 1992, DeConde refocused the study of ethnic lobbies around America’s historical tendency to emphasize ethnic identity. Over the course of United States history, DeConde writes that immigrants have accounted for one half of America’s population.¹⁶ DeConde argues that by focusing on their distinct ties to England, early American colonists formed one of the first, and the most powerful

¹³ *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, ed. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 23.

¹⁴ Mohammed E. Ahari, ed., *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), xi; Ambrosio, 2-3; DeConde, 7; Melvin Small, *Democracy and Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), xvi; Smith, 1-2.

¹⁵ William Slany, “special interest lobby,” in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy* 2nd ed, vol. 3, ed. Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, Fredrick Logevall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2002): 483-493.

¹⁶ DeConde, 7.

American ethnic group, the Anglo-Americans. Later minority groups would have to confront and develop strategies to counter Anglo-American dominance.¹⁷ The diplomatic historian Melvin Small picks up on DeConde's focus on America's early tradition of ethnic identification, and labels the election of 1800 as the first in which the influence of an ethnic minority was felt—Irish-Americans in New York and Pennsylvania voted for the Anglophobe Thomas Jefferson over the Anglophile John Adams.¹⁸ Thus, unlike Slany, Small suggests that ethnic lobbies were making significant impact on foreign policy since America's founding. The vivacious Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth, for example, so inspired American popular support during his 1851 tour of the United States that presidential hopeful Daniel Webster publically endorsed Hungarian independence.¹⁹ Though Webster's statement was not a reflection of the official government position, later lobbies would generate support from within the administration itself. During World War I, the Polish-American ethnic lobby demonstrated the power of their vote. According to DeConde, after President Woodrow Wilson received Polish-American electoral support, he made a rare commitment to his ideal of self-determination by calling for Polish independence in the thirteenth of his Fourteen Points.²⁰

In the first half of the twentieth century, wartime conflict heightened ethnic identification as nationalist movements gained a new sense of importance. Chinese-Americans gained renewed energy during World War II, and saw visible results for their efforts—in December 1943 “well-placed white sinophiles” helped the China Lobby overturn the standing Chinese

¹⁷ DeConde, 11-13.

¹⁸ Small, 8.

¹⁹ Small, 18-19.

²⁰ DeConde, 89.

Exclusion Act.²¹ The India Lobby would in turn, adopt the practice the forming connections with powerful individuals to help advance their cause of Indian independence. Though the India Lobby was attempting to mobilize the American public to impact U.S. wartime policy around the same time as the China Lobby, the general ethnic lobby historiography does not mention the presence or influence of the India Lobby during World War II. DeConde does mention India in the context of the 1942-1943 Bengal Famine, where he analyzes the lack of U.S. aid as a reflection of U.S. foreign policy—refraining from applying significant pressure against British imperialism.²² Though the India Lobby did not have the benefit of the vote to influence policy, by publicizing their message and utilizing their connections to influential Americans and international figures, the India Lobby sought to directly alter a supposed inactive U.S. foreign policy. Instead, the Lobby attempted to demonstrate the mutually beneficial relationship that could exist between the United States and a free and independent India.

Prior to World War II, American popular culture portrayed India as a land of elephants and tigers, maharajas and swamis. In the political sphere, government officials treated India as the definitive imperial concern of the British. World War II changed that. Even before the United States entered the war, American officials had begun to weigh India's potential impact on the Allied war effort. After several months of negotiations, and in concert with the Lend-Lease policy, the United States and the British Government of India established a sanctioned diplomatic relationship in July 1941. Career diplomat Thomas M. Wilson became the new American "commissioner" in New Delhi (previously the British had only allowed the Americans

²¹ Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles created the Interdepartmental Committee on Foreign Nationality Problems in January, 1942 to address the possible effect, divided ethnic loyalties could have on the U.S. war effort (DeConde 117-122).

²² DeConde is the only scholar amongst the previously cited foreign lobby experts to mention India in the context of World War II. The growing Indian-American community in the 1990s receives occasional attention (DeConde 124).

to have a consular office in Calcutta) while Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, a member of the viceroy's Executive Council, filled the newly created post of "agent-general" in Washington.²³ Shortly thereafter, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met off the coast of Newfoundland to discuss military strategy. On August 14, 1941, the two leaders signed the Atlantic Charter, which would add another level of complexity to the emerging triangular relationship that defined the United States, Britain, and India. Article 3 of the Charter stated that the signatories, "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."²⁴ Though Indian nationalists and Americans alike were heartened by the apparent anti-colonial sentiment of this article, Churchill issued a statement on September 9 that claimed the significance of Article 3 only extended to territories conquered by the Axis powers, and therefore, not India.²⁵

By the summer of 1941 the United States had an official diplomatic relationship with India and expressed an ideological concern with the nationalist movement, but after Pearl Harbor, the U.S.-Indian relationship became focused on the Allies' immediate military interest in South Asia. As U.S. officials became increasingly concerned with India's internal instability and its potentially negative impact on Allied strategy in the Burma Theater, the British were also attempting to redefine their relationship with India. Labor Party member Sir Stafford Cripps

²³ Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies, 1941-1991* (1992), 7-8; Kenton J. Clymer, *Quest for Freedom: The United States and India's Independence* (New York: Columbia University, 1995), 32-35. While Kux presents early 1941 as the point when U.S. began showing interest in India, Clymer suggests that by the late 1930s, U.S. officials were conscious of nationalist rumblings in India, and that the British Government of India made this diplomatic arrangement to appease U.S. policy makers and prevent official American support of the Indian freedom movement.

²⁴ Qtd. in Kux, 9.

²⁵ Hess, 24-28.

arrived in New Delhi on March 22 to head a mission that was a British attempt to gain Indian support for the war effort by discussing the possibility of an India Union within the Empire after war. Only 11 days later, former US Assistant-Secretary of War Louis Johnson arrived in India as both the chairman of an American Technical Mission and as President Roosevelt's personal representative, an appointment which displayed the highest level of active U.S. involvement in India up to that point. Johnson became closely involved in the negotiations between Cripps and Indian nationalists leaders, although both Cripps and Johnson returned home without anything to show for their effort.²⁶ On August 8, the All-India committee adopted a civil disobedience movement, "Quit India," to demonstrate their disappointment with what they considered feigned gestures of compromise from the British. In response the British imprisoned leaders of the Congress Party, generating an indignant American outcry.²⁷ By December, Roosevelt had appointed a new personal representative to India, the career diplomat William Phillips, whose critical conclusions became the source of the dramatic leak in Washington in July 1944. Phillips was the last official American representative sent to India during the war. As the military threat diminished, Indian independence began to appear imminent and the organization of the United Nations solidified during 1945, this particular chapter of official U.S.-Indian relations during World War II came to a close.²⁸

During World War II, the India Lobby developed from a handful of concerned Indian-Americans into a network capable of harnessing mass media, attracting high-profile supporters, and utilizing trends of internationalism to advance their cause. The 1940 census reported that 2,405 Indians resided within the United States, and most of these immigrants worked as farm

²⁶ Kux, 13-18; Hess, 33-48; Clymer 59-64.

²⁷ Over the course of World War II, the British Government of India imprisoned over 100,000 Indians for expressing nationalist sentiments (Kux, 23).

²⁸ Kux, 35-38.

laborers in California.²⁹ The early members of the India Lobby, therefore, had to address how to generate support within the United States without a large constituency or the legitimacy of representing an established government. In 1937, Indian-Americans founded three organizations to promote different concerns facing the Indian population in the United States. Headquartered in New York, Indian businessmen established the Indian Chamber of Commerce to promote the American market to Indian businesses. Mubarak Ali Khan established the India Welfare League to provide aid to Indian immigrants by securing citizenship rights, which Congress revoked in the previous decade's wave of tightening immigration laws, citing a February 19, 1923 U.S. Supreme Court decision.³⁰ Based in New York, the third organization, The India League of America, was founded to "interpret India and America to each other," though one contemporary described the League's meetings as somber evenings, "reverently devoted to a reading of the works of Rabindranath Tagore or some other poet, author or philosopher."³¹ Though the late 1930s marked the first widespread organized effort to address issues of the Indian-American community, these organizations failed to register their causes on a larger scale of American consciousness. Under the leadership of Sirdat Jagjit "J.J." Singh, however, the India League of

²⁹ Sanjeev Khagram, "Seen, Rich, but Unheard?" in *Asian American and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, and Prospects*, Gordon Chang, ed., (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 267.

³⁰ In the opinion delivered by Justice Sutherland in *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (261 U.S. 204), naturalized Indian-Americans were denied their previously held citizenship rights on the basis that: "the physical group characteristics of the Hindus render them readily distinguishable from the various groups of persons in this country commonly recognized as white.... It cannot be doubted that the children born in this country of Hindu parents would retain indefinitely the clear evidence of their ancestry. It is very far from our thought to suggest the slightest question of racial superiority or inferiority. What we suggest is merely racial difference, and it is of such character and extent that the great body of our people instinctively recognize it and reject the thought of assimilation" (<http://laws.findlaw.com/us/261/204.html>); Hess, 5-16.

³¹ *India Today* 1, no. 8 (November, 1940): 1; Malti Singh, "J.J. Singh: India's Man in the United States; An Indian American's campaign to 'influence the influencers'" *India Abroad*, August 1, 1997.

America would evolve from one of these early academic groups into the leading organization within the India Lobby.

J.J. Singh moved to the United States in 1926 and opened “India Arts and Crafts,” an import shop at 14 East 56th Street in Manhattan. Singh began attending India League of America meetings in 1939. At the time, 12 members actively came to meetings.³² When the League elected Singh as its president in 1941, the organization had held 22 meetings over the course of the year for its 26 members, seven of which were part of the executive board.³³ Under Singh’s direction, however, the League began to transform. The organization developed from a small group of Indian-Americans who meet occasionally and advised the subscribers of its monthly periodical on the latest literature about India into an unofficial mouthpiece of the India National Congress that shaped American politicians, authors, journalists, and fellow civil rights advocates’ awareness of the movement for Indian independence. Haridas Muzumdar, the League’s first secretary, reflected that J.J. Singh “brought new blood into the organization,” and that by inviting prominent Americans to serve of the board of directors, Singh added “prestige to the organization and made it more effective.”³⁴ In July 1944, as the Phillips report was appearing in the *Washington Post*, the India League of America’s National Advisory Board included 36 high-profile Indians and Americans including New York Congressman Emanuel Celler, sculptor Jo Davidson, renowned physicist Albert Einstein, the wife of leading conservationist Gifford Pinchot, and Walter White, the executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P.³⁵ The evolution of the League over two short years exemplified the transformation of the India

³² Robert Shaplen, “Profiles: One-Man Lobby,” *New Yorker Magazine*, March 24, 1950, 35, 40.

³³ “India League’s Activities in 1941,” *India Today* 2, no. 9 (December 1941): 4.

³⁴ Haridas Muzumdar, *America’s Contributions to India’s Freedom* (Allahabad, India: Vanguard Press, 1962), 43.

³⁵ “League’s National Advisory Board,” *India Today* 5, no. 4 (July 1944): 4.

Lobby. What had begun as a pet-project of Indian intellectuals had been transformed into a coordinated organization recognized outside of the Indian-American community and composed of members of the U.S. Congress, journalists, leading civil rights activists and foreign dignitaries.

A relatively slim group of scholars includes a description of the India Lobby in their broader analyses of U.S.-Indian relations during World War II. Both the diplomatic relationship and the scholarship on the subject is relatively new—the noted Sanskrit scholar W. Norman Brown established the first graduate program in Indian history in the United States at the University of Pennsylvania in 1948.³⁶ Gary R. Hess, a professor of history Emeritus at Bowling Green State University, compiled one of the earliest and most comprehensive studies of the U.S.-Indian relationship during World War II in 1971 with *America Encounters India, 1941-1947*. Hess' research includes a careful study of both American and Indian newspapers as well as contemporary U.S. opinion polls on the subject of Indian independence, which allow Hess to discuss the India Lobby in his narrative. In contrast, though Dennis Kux summarizes the exchanges between American and Indian officials during World War II in “Roosevelt: The United States Meets India,” chapter 1 of *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies, 1941–1991* (1992), without mentioning the existence of an India Lobby. Both the chronological breadth of Kux's study as well as his position as a former member of the Foreign Service may explain his preoccupation with the official avenues of diplomacy.

In *Quest for Freedom: The United States and India's Independence* (1995), Kenton Clymer, a professor of history at Northern Illinois University, discusses the efforts of the India League of America, while also adding an important layer to the relationship between the League

³⁶ Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1-2.

and nationalists in India. Although Singh's idolization of Jawaharlal Nehru has been well documented, Clymer cites a 1940 letter from the Government of India archives in which Nehru commented: "unfortunately, the Indians in American are a very unsatisfactory lot. They shout a lot and do no work. Often they do injury to our cause."³⁷ Though Clymer believes Nehru's criticism of Singh was unwarranted, he overlooks the opportunity to analyze the comment as a broader characteristic of an ethnic lobby—the complicated relationship between the lobby and its homeland. Finally, the most recent and the only work to discuss U.S.-Indian relations from the perspective of the India Lobby is Harold Gould's 2006 *Sikhs, Swamis, Students, and Spies: The India Lobby in the United States, 1940-1946*. A professor of anthropology, Gould published the book himself while at the University of Virginia as a visiting scholar at the Center for South Asian Studies. Though an entertaining narrative, *Sikhs, Swamis, Students, and Spies* contains minimal citations and a significant number of factual errors and typos. Thus, the historiography of the India Lobby within scholarship of U.S.-Indian relations during World War II relies heavily on a few key studies and does not fully illuminate the nature of the Lobby itself.

None of these studies, for example, make extensive use of *India Today*, the monthly periodical published by the India League of America. An ever-present editorial column, "As We See It," delivered pointed assessments of British policy, emphasized the congruity between U.S. and Indian interests, and above all else, expounded a call for the freedom of India. Key members of the Lobby were frequent contributors to the monthly publication, including journalist Louis Fischer. Fischer, a foreign correspondent who worked in the Soviet Union for fourteen years, conducted extensive interviews with both the India National Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to disseminate their messages to Americans. The British Government

³⁷ Clymer, 23.

apparently feared the prejudicial impact of Fischer's writing and in the summer of 1943, the Home Member of the Government of India, Sir Reginald Maxwell, initiated a ban on Fischer's writing in India.³⁸ In 1950, Fischer would publish *The Life Mahatma Gandhi*, the inspiration for the 1982 Oscar-winning film. While some of Louis Fischer's work benefitted the Lobby by bringing the issue of Indian independence to a broader audience, his writings in *India Today* demonstrated his personal connection to the Lobby and its cause. Though not a widely circulating publication, *India Today* provides valuable insight into the mind of the Lobby—its members, focus, and development.³⁹

Articles in *India Today* also demonstrate the Lobby's crucial understanding of the shifting nature of the U.S. government within the State Department, Capitol Hill and the White House. Because the Lobby was ultimately attempting to influence U.S. foreign policy, the rapid expansion of departments and agencies within the executive branch was particularly important to an ethnic lobby during World War II. To address the increasing importance and complexity of military and foreign policy, President Roosevelt established a range of organizations including the Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services, and a new pentagonal military headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.⁴⁰ While the Lobby had to navigate this shifting power system, they recognized who retained ultimate authority in foreign policy by targeting their activities at President Roosevelt. Immediately upon U.S. entry into World War II, the India League of America wrote a telegram to the President, which implied that America should make a

³⁸ "Louis Fischer's Writing Banned in India," *India Today* 4, no. 5 (August 1943): 1.

³⁹ Thanks to the library staff at both Dickinson and at Bucknell University, I've had the opportunity to examine the complete series of *India Today* periodicals from December 1940 through December 1945. This will be an important body of evidence informing my project.

⁴⁰ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 541-544; William Phillips, in fact, provided the persistence necessary to get the Government of India to agree to allow an OSS office in New Delhi (Clymer, 174).

stand in support of Indian independence: “we are confident that whatever the trials and tribulations that may confront America at this stage, she will emerge triumphant to play her great role in the shaping of the free world to come.”⁴¹ Whether or not Roosevelt was receptive to the Lobby’s entreaties is a question to be explored through both official documents such as the *FRUS* series and the president’s personal reflections. In contrast, Capitol Hill provides a more concrete and traditional example of the Lobby’s efforts. After gaining the support of Congressman Emanuel Celler and Congresswoman Clare Luce Boothe, they would go on to sponsor H.R. 3517, the Indian naturalization and immigration bill that granted Indians the right to immigrate to, and become citizens of, the United States on June 27, 1946.⁴² While the India Lobby’s relationship with the different branches of the U.S. government was key to their mission to affect U.S. policy, it may be legitimate to question whether policy results are to the only measure of an ethnic lobby’s success.

One example of an India Lobby action that did not produce an immediate policy reaction occurred on the two-year anniversary of the British crackdown on the Quit India movement—127 prominent Americans petitioned the British Ambassador Lord Halifax to release the imprisoned nationalist leaders, who included Jawaharlal Nehru. Sponsored by the India League of America, was this August 9, 1944 letter an example of Lobby success? Nehru was not released from prison until June 15, 1945, so the petition did not directly inspire the British government to change their policy.⁴³ In this case, however, Lobby leaders may not have expected a direct policy response. The significant show of support from individuals outside of

⁴¹ “India League Telegram to President Roosevelt,” *India Today* 2, no. 9 (December 1941): 1.

⁴² Gould, 432.

⁴³ “127 Prominent Americans Appeal to Lord Halifax for the Release of Nehru and Other Indian Leaders,” August 9, 1944, courtesy of Bucknell University; “Jawaharlal Nehru - a chronological account,” *Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund*, <http://www.jnmf.in/chrono.html>.

the Lobby, nevertheless demonstrated the mobilizing capabilities of the Lobby and the breadth of their network. Several signatories were high-profile members of both the India Lobby as well as other, more widely recognized, ethnic lobbies. Lobby members including the Nobel Prize-winning author Pearl S. Buck and leading civil rights activist Walter White not only strengthened the make-up of the Lobby, but also placed the struggle for Indian independence within the larger fight against the oppression of other ethnic and racial minorities. As executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., White conducted an information-gathering trip on the conditions of African-American soldiers in England, North Africa, the Middle East and Italy from January to March 1944. While in London, White brought the conversation of a dinner party to a halt when he commented on the connection between “the American attitude toward Negroes whose skins were black or brown and the British attitude towards Indians whose skins were brown.”⁴⁴ White interpreted British imperialism in India as an expression of the same racial discrimination blacks faced in the United States. White’s correspondence with India League president J.J. Singh documents the India Lobby’s place in an international movement to advance the civil rights of all suppressed ethnic and racial groups.⁴⁵

The Lobby’s embrace of Madame Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit’s visit to the United States at the end of 1944, further demonstrated the Lobby’s consciousness of the era’s growing focus on internationalism. Madame Pandit had an impressive resume. The younger sister of Jawharlal Nehru, Pandit was first imprisoned for her participation in nationalist activities in 1932. She

⁴⁴ Walter White, *A Rising Wind* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Dorian and Company, Inc., 1945), 31.

⁴⁵ White’s correspondence with J.J. Singh is recorded on microfilm in *Papers of the NAACP: Part 14. Race Relations in the International Arena, 1940-1955* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America). After weeks of failed attempts to borrow the film from the Library of Congress, I plan to take a research trip to the LOC to view these documents, which previously have not been used in a study of U.S.-India relations.

then held office as a minister of the Upper Providence to the Congress Party from 1937-1939. After India gained its independence, Pandit would become India's first ambassador to the Soviet Union, the Indian ambassador to the United States from 1949 to 1951, and the first female president of the United Nations General Assembly in 1953.⁴⁶ Madame Pandit arrived in New York with the approval of the U.S. State Department, on a flight coordinated by U.S. air force commander Lt. General George Stratemeyer, to visit her two daughters at Wellesley College on December 8, 1944. Over the course of her visit, Pandit would dine with Eleanor Roosevelt in the White House, conduct a cross-country lecture tour, and become India's "unofficial" delegate to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in 1945.⁴⁷

The UN Conference was the real reason for Madame Pandit's trip to the U.S. The official Indian delegation to the conference included representatives whom Indian nationalists felt were merely "stooges of the imperial regime."⁴⁸ Singh and other India Lobby leaders thus followed Pandit's movements exhaustively, and praised her eloquence and charisma profusely. Beginning in November 1944, *India Today* published a least one full article on Madame Pandit's contributions to the fight for Indian independence in America. By May, the publication had devoted the first half of the issue to a section, "India at San Francisco," which was peppered by Pandit's vivid statements emphasizing the connection between the ideals of the emerging U.N. Charter and an independent India: "we are here to remind the delegates... [of] the necessity of building their structure of peace organization on foundations of principle and international justice

⁴⁶ David Taylor, "Pandit, Vijayalakshmi (1900–1990)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47741>.

⁴⁷ Kux, 36-37.

⁴⁸ Hess, 151-153.

rather than on compromise, opportunism and political expediency.”⁴⁹ The India Lobby’s quick recognition of the emerging international platform of the United Nations was captured in Pandit’s memorable presence at the San Francisco Conference. As an international institution, the United Nations could become an important channel for the inherently international ethnic lobby.

The India Lobby is a forgotten lobby, receiving little attention in either the scholarship of U.S.-India relations or of the development of the ethnic lobby in the United States. Its omission, however, provides an opportunity to study a concrete example of a difficult question—how to measure the impact of public opinion on wartime foreign policy. In a telegram to Winston Churchill on April 11, 1942, President Roosevelt addressed the probable public opinion fallout if the Cripps mission failed to establish a reasonable plan for Indian independence:

If the present negotiations are allowed to collapse because of the issues as presented to the American people and India should subsequently be successfully invaded by Japan...the prejudicial reaction on American public opinion can hardly be over-estimated.⁵⁰

Early in the war, the American president warned the British prime minister about the “prejudicial” effects British policy in *India* could have on the Anglo-American wartime relationship. It is possible that Roosevelt was merely invoking public opinion as a tactic for his own purposes. Roosevelt, however, fully suggests that the United States played a role in the future of India and the question of its independence. The India Lobby promoted exactly this type of active American role in the U.S.-India relationship, a correlation that deserves attention in the historiography of U.S.-India relations. Roosevelt’s sentiment in this warning also reflects a

⁴⁹ “India at San Francisco,” *India Today* vol. 6, no. 2 (May, 1945): 1.

⁵⁰ *FRUS, 1942*, vol. 1, 633-634.

current emphasis on the role of public opinion in foreign policy. The Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu recently stated: “If your foreign policy...doesn’t have a ground in public opinion, then that foreign policy is not sustainable.”⁵¹ Roosevelt’s claim may have therefore illustrated the beginning of a shift towards the modern-day recognition of public opinion’s influence on foreign policy. This trend would suggest that the rise of the modern ethnic lobby as a vehicle for mobilizing public opinion, occurred earlier than many scholars suggest, which would make the development of the India Lobby a key to understanding the evolution of ethnic lobbies in the United States.

⁵¹ Anthony Shadid, “A Successful Diplomat Tries His Hand at Politics,” *New York Times*, June 11, 2011, A7.