

# JOHN HINNELLS' VIEWS CONTRADICTING LUHRMAN'S

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It does no justice to the Parsis that even when the role of M. Bhownagree, M.P. in the U.K., as so staunchfully pro-British is completely changed by a closer review of his work, Tanya's research shows little signs of such a closer look in her work, thus remaining in unidirection and excluding opposite views.

In view of Prof. John McLeod's "more thorough (and standard) scholarship than anyone has previously deployed on this subject", John Hinnells "significantly changed "his earlier views of Mancherjee Bhownagree, who became a Member of Parliament in Britain (1895-1905) from being cravenly pro-British to quite pro-India. (The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, 2005). Hinnells' well-researched findings about him deserve to be detailed here so that the future generations would not be misled by what unsubstantiated impressions of Bhownagree have been generated by subjective, truncated or partisan observations of his life and achievements. The Zoroastrian ideas of honesty, fairness and hard work required to bring about Frashokerete (Renovation, Resurrection) in this world were so deeply imbibed in Bhownagree's generation of Parsis that it will be difficult for an outsider to look below the surface to find their real depth, especially when they had a burning desire to develop India in whatever way they could and bring it on a par with other nations, a mission they could not accomplish it by openly defying the British but could do it by emulating them and penetrating their ranks whenever they could. This is what the Parsi M.P.'s did in English Parliament and used every opportunity available to draw the attention of the English people to the plight of India. All the accounts and biographies of these three M.P.'s including Hinnells', uniformly conclude that they were not re-elected because they devoted much more attention to Indian problems than to the needs of their British constituents. These three M.P.'s were so radically different in their party affiliations but all these differences melted away when they met and acted as Parsis. Saklatvalla was even threatened with disciplinary action by his Communist party when he had the Navjote of his children performed since it denounced all religious beliefs and practices. See Hinnells (2005) for more details. In the eyes of a Parsi they were not so different from each other but the Parsis took any avenue available to them to secure an entry into the British Parliament and utilized it to draw attention of the British people in whose fairness they had abiding faith after being exposed to them

since at least 1699 A.D. All three M.P.'s took great pride in being Indian and hoped to pave the way for other Indians to aspire for higher offices. Other Parsis also did the same. For instance, Naoroji Ferdoonji complained of "the ignorance" of the English people "regarding the condition of India" while speaking in London in 1874 and protested that Indians were treated as "a conquered and inferior race...This feeling of superiority and race antagonism, which pervades all classes of Europeans in India, is the chief cause of a great and growing evil. (Indians) are often treated with incivility, harshness and even contempt and personal violence. They are frequently stigmatized as niggers, a nation of liars, perjurers, forgers, devoid of gratitude, trust and good nature...On many occasions the subject race is treated as if they were rude barbarians and inhuman savages.... A considerable number of European officers and others belonging to the dominant race are often so reckless in their demeanor in the interior of the country that they have no hesitation in shooting, killing, assaulting and ill treating the Natives, and committing gross outrages."

It is not surprising that Bhownaggee would act any differently from other Parsi political leaders, even though he represented the interests of princely states and therefore was expected to support the British rule at least outwardly. But, as Hinnells now observed, the view that he was cravenly pro-British "cannot be sustained if a careful study is undertaken of his parliamentary message" (pp. 369-372).

Another Parsi, Shapurji Saklatwala, a nephew of J.N. Tata, fought for social justice and British imperialism as a communist member of Parliament in Britain (1922-1929). Hinnells (2005, p.376 and pp. 3823) observes: "Whereas Bhownaggee was until recently maligned, Saklatwala was until recently ignored." "He saw injustice at the center at the centre of British policy. He argued, for example, that Britain would not co-operate with Russian rule because of bloodshed during the revolution, yet the Empire was founded on bloodshed:

"This country has shed a hundred times more blood of people of all nations in the world. You have slaughtered Frenchmen, Spaniards, Dutch and Russians, you have slaughtered Turks, Persians and Afghans...You killed in their own homes the Punjabis, Bengalis and the Mahrattas, and the Ceylonese, the Burmese, the Malaysians and the Chinese. You murdered poor, primitive races, people who did not know the geography of where your country was situated such as the Sudanese, the Zulus, the Bantus and the Swazis and you had not the remotest excuse that they were going to attack and kill you. You have butchered them and murdered them in a wholesale manner. You have killed them in their own country. There is no nation in the world ... which has devoured more human lives and created more murders than the British nation and the British Parliament".

He attacked the principle of the Simon Commission in India, questioning the right of one nation to impose a constitution on another thousands of miles away, and pointing out that the British would not accept that for themselves from the Chinese. He further argues that Britain imposed one set of criteria on parts of the Empire run by Whites, and different ones for non-White countries. He protested that although Trade Unions were legal in Britain, they were not in India. British rule, notably in India, reduced people to serfdom: their industries were made to serve the interests of Britain while the Indian workers lived in such unsanitary conditions that their life expectancy was drastically reduced. Basically, Saklatvalla argued, class-ridden Britain gave justice neither to its own working classes, nor to those in nations where she ruled.”