

India at 75- The Global Roots of Independence

Transcript Begins:

Sanjay Kumar: Hello and welcome to today's webinar titled global roots of independence, which is first in our series India at 75. We'll be bringing some more interesting webinars around this theme. I'm Sanjay Kumar, the India Country Director of the LakshmiMittal and Family South Asia Institute at Harvard University, and also serving as the President of the Harvard Club of India. The mission of the Institute is to engage through interdisciplinary research to advance and deepen the understanding of critical issues relevant to South Asia and its relationship with the world. As part of this engagement, the Mittal Institute hosts a multitude of events covering topics in the arts, humanities, sciences, education, business, and more. We are so glad you joined us today and please consider joining us for our upcoming seminars. A couple of housekeeping items for today. Today's session will be recorded. During the question and answer session, you can submit questions directly to moderators via the Q&A function. Also, due to the large number of attendees at today's seminar, we unfortunately will not be able to cover all questions. Without further ado, I would like to invite Dinyar Patel, who is Assistant Professor of History at S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research and also research affiliate with the Mittal Institute. I would request Dinyar to introduce the topic and the speakers for today. I would also like to welcome and thank Carolien Stolte and Nico Slate for kindly agreeing to be part of this webinar today. Thank you for being with us today and over to Dinyar.

Dinyar Patel: Thank you, Sanjay. It's a pleasure to be here. Welcome, everyone. So today, myself, Carolien and Nico will be giving talks related to a rather broad theme, which, you know, we think is quite important to emphasize, as India approaches the 75th anniversary of its independence, which is, you know, we have a lot of discussion about how India achieved independence. And of course, people like Gandhi and Nehru are individuals who are known on quite a worldwide basis. But what is oftentimes less emphasized are these really important worldwide links, which sustained the nationalist movement really, pretty much from its first few years, and picked up pace as India approached independence. So all three of us have conducted research in that particular domain, examining the international aspects of various figures in the Indian nationalist movement. And what we will today be doing is giving a small snapshot of some of our research, in some cases, the research that we present to you today, as you know, from journal articles, and other cases from larger book projects, but they all fit into our larger research agenda of examining these complex links that spanned everywhere, you know, from India, around the world to include the United States, places like Japan, Europe, South Africa, East Africa, and further afield that it really kind of shows you just how, you know, broad minded, many of these individuals were who were fighting for Indian independence and not just broad minded, but also well-traveled. So I'm going to keep my own intro remarks relatively brief and quick. We will first hear from Nico Slate and let me introduce Professor Slate. He's a professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University joining us today from Pittsburgh, and his research examines struggles against racism and imperialism in

the United States in India and you know, particularly his first book called *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, you know, took a really in depth look into how many of the ties between African American activists and Indian independence leaders were intertwined and how after independence, those ties continued and kind of, you know, the complexity of these relations over time. He's also authored several other books, his most recent work is *Lord Cornwallis is Dead*, the struggle for democracy in the United States and India, which was published by Harvard University Press in 2019. So I'll let Nico begin, and after that, we'll hear from Carolien and I'll present at the very end.

Nico Slate: Wonderful, thank you so much, Dinyar. I want to thank Sanjay and I want to thank everyone that has made this event possible. It's a real honor and a privilege to be speaking with you all today. I'm going to go ahead and if my technical skills allow, share my slides with you all. All right. Dinyar, can you see it on your end? Very good. Excellent.

Dinyar Patel: Yes.

Nico Slate: All right, I think we're set then friends. I'm going to be speaking today about the experiences of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay in the United States in the early 1940s. But I'm going to use that as a springboard to look more broadly at the global and transnational dimensions of the Indian independence struggle. Let me start with an story. In the spring of 1941, Kamaladevi sat down in the whites only section of a segregated train traveling across the American South. Just across the Louisiana border, the train conductor ordered her to move. And she asked him, "Why?" And he said, "That is the rule and you better obey it, or else." She did not move. He went away, studied her for a while started to realize, oh, wait, maybe she's not African American, and came back and asked her, "Where are you from?" And she replied evasively she said, "I'm coming from New York." And he said, "No, no, no. I mean, which land do you hail from?" At this point, Kamaladevi might have said, "Look, buddy, I'm a famous Indian dignitary friends with Mahatma Gandhi. I just met with the President of the United States and his wife in the White House, I spoke before the United States Congress. I'm obviously a famous person, get out of my face." Instead, when she's pressed on what land she hails from Kamaladevi says, "I am a colored woman, obviously, and I refuse to leave my seat." Now by defining herself as colored Kamaladevi tapped into a long history in which many different peoples in different parts of the world connected their own racial and national identities with a larger transnational conception of color. One of the key figures in this history is the African American intellectual and activist W.E.B. Du Bois, who goes a long way towards popularizing these conceptions of colored solidarity, or what I call colored cosmopolitanism. Now, Kamaladevi doesn't just happen to mention that idea of color once, it's actually a deep part of herself identity at this moment in time. And you can see that in many of her writings, let me just give you one example. This is from a text that she publishes about the United States a few years after coming back from her world tour. The key thing about this text and let me let me read it to you briefly. The key thing about this text is the way that she uses ideas of color as a bridge between many different forms of injustice and struggles against injustice. She says,

"Soon Africa too will come back and come into her own and the dark ones will cease to be the untouchables of the world. The international color line has been challenged and stormed by Asia. No more the colonials will allow themselves to be jim-crowded the world over." So she takes ideas like Jim Crow, that are usually associated only with the United States. She takes conceptions of untouchability that are usually only associated with caste in the subcontinent. And she links them all to a global conception of anti-colonial struggle against white supremacy. That kind of global conception was crucial to Kamaladevi's travels, actually, throughout her life. This is an image of her she's on the far left on my screen here in Berlin in 1929, at an international Suffrage Association meeting. And I actually think this image is telling, most of the folks in this image are waving flags, and they're joyfully celebrating. Kamaladevi was actually very critical of many European based international women's organizations and events for not more firmly criticizing imperialism. From Europe, she ends up traveling to many other parts of the world. This is her in Ceylon, contemporary Sri Lanka in the 1930s, where she spoke to massive crowds. After her time in the United States, she actually travels through much of Asia, she spends time in Japan, and then goes to China writes a book about her experiences, actually one about Japan, one about China that we're seeing the cover of here. And that kind of global conception of her identity remains very important to her. This is her at the inauguration of the India International Center, an institution that I expect some of you on the call are actually quite familiar with. She plays a very important role in founding and maintaining that institution. And she continues in her conception of the international to have a special emphasis on what we might call today the global south. So in 1966, for example, she's invited to attend the First World Conference of Negro Arts in Senegal. And she goes out of her way actually to routinely visit different countries in Africa, Asia, and what we often call the Middle East in an effort to create a conception of what was at times called the Third World earlier what was called the colored world. Let's return to that conception of color and return to the early 1940s in the run up to Indian independence. This is an image of Kamaladevi with her son Ram. She comes to the United States, ostensibly to help settle Ram in a technical education course. But in fact, her real purpose is to try to influence American opinion of India pull the United States away from its relationship to Colonial Britain and towards supporting Indian independence. And she does that in a variety of ways by giving many speeches traveling all around the country and influencing many different people. What I want to do is suggest that by looking at Kamaladevi's experiences in the United States, we can actually see, at least three, I think there's more, but at least three global dimensions of the Indian independence struggle. The first I've already mentioned, call it cosmopolitanism. And I'll touch in again on that very briefly. The second is the relationship of the Indian diaspora to the Indian independence movement. And the third is the importance of nonviolence. And these three, as I said, it's not an exclusive list, and they all intersect in very interesting ways. But let me start by returning to this conception of color and colored solidarity. This is an image from an African American newspaper just after the launch of the Quit India Movement. You see a lot in this image. The figure labeled Britain egged on by a figure label prejudices, wielding an axe labeled Gandhi's arrest, attacking the spinning wheel, and at the base of the spinning wheel, this is the key thing I want to draw your attention to, we

see freedom for colored people. So this African American cartoonist is suggesting that Gandhi's cause and more broadly the cause of Indian independence, is tied up with the broader struggle of colored peoples for independence throughout the world. Let me be cautious here, friends, these sorts of solidarities weren't always naturally played out in all contexts. This I find it incredibly telling image. What we're seeing here is African American soldiers in Kolkata during the Second World War. And what we see here is that even within the colored world, there are hierarchies of class or caste, if you will. And those hierarchies play out in different contexts and really rich and complicated in fascinating ways. I'm happy to talk more about that as we move forward. I don't want to romanticize these conceptions of colored solidarity or other forms of transnational linkage, because in fact, there's always those that are left out those that are kept down even within these forms of solidarity. And let me give you another example of that actually, transitioning from colored solidarity into the diaspora. And you'll see there's a linkage here by looking at the long history of Indian American claims upon whiteness. This is a history some of you will be familiar with, and I'll be very brief. But just to remind us, many South Asian figures in the United States in the first few decades of the 20th century, aim to claim the legal status of whiteness in order to gain citizenship, citizenship at that time was limited to those born in the US, but then also those that could either be of African descent or who could claim that they were white. So many Indians including Akhaya Kumar Mozumdar, made a claim on whiteness and did so often by appealing to conceptions of caste and relationship between caste and race. Mozumdar says, "The high-caste Hindus always consider themselves to be members of the Aryan race." The most famous figure that makes this claim is Bhagat Singh Thind, who in his efforts to gain US citizenship through the medium of whiteness, argues, "The high class Hindu regards the Aboriginal Indian Mongoloid in the same manner as the American regards the Negro speaking from the matrimonial standpoint." As many of you will know, Thind's efforts to gain citizenship, although at first successful, ultimately are rejected by the Supreme Court and a very important Supreme Court case that sets back actually the entire Indian American community in its quest for civil rights, but also starts to push many Indian American leaders away from claiming whiteness, towards claiming solidarity with others that are being discriminated against based on race. So what we see with the Thind case as a kind of break, at which notions of color and colored solidarity become increasingly salient even within the Indian diaspora. Here's a remarkable image. This is from a book that aimed to convince Americans that racial segregation in Washington DC was a foreign policy liability. And what we're seeing is a variety of different examples in which important diplomats or foreign figures of various times are discriminated against within Washington DC. The only figure in this list that gets an asterisk in order to explain why it's relevant, is the so called Hindu woman who's refused service at a soda fountain and at the bottom, we see dark skinned foreigners are often embarrassed. That asterisk is there precisely because Indians remained an in between case in terms of race within the American context. That's why a figure like Kamaladevi, if she had chosen to could have actually escaped American racism by distinguishing herself as an Indian foreign or an Indian diplomat. In this case, in fact, the Hindu woman who has refused service explains that she's from India and she gets an apology and she's actually allowed to have service. But there were

many figures like Kamaladevi, who were choosing not to identify in those ways. And let me just point out, this is an image actually from Kamaladevi's time in the United States, that she actually often speaks not just on the Indian struggle for independence, but the relationship between that struggle, and the so called colored or darker races. Here we see her, this is an advertisement for a talk she's going to give in New York. And that subject is culture and the future of the darker races. This is a choice that Kamaladevi is making friends to locate the Indian independence struggle within a broader struggle against racism in the United States and throughout the world. It's a choice that has become increasingly popular within the Indian diaspora in the United States because of the Thindcase, but it's still a choice many Indian Americans continue to hew towards claims of whiteness, trying to avoid American racism. But Kamaladevi is one of the most outspoken figures suggesting, no, we need to confront racism head on only to align ourselves with the struggles of all those that are fighting against imperialism and racism. There are African American figures at the same time, who are fighting in the other direction to link black struggles with the struggles in India and elsewhere. I'll just touch briefly on the remarkable case of Pauli Murray, who one year before Kamaladevi is harassed on that train in New Orleans, Pauli Murray is harassed on a bus in Virginia. She's arrested and produces this remarkable document from March of 1940, where she carefully compares the struggle of the African American community for freedom within the United States to the struggle of Indians against British colonialism. And you'll see that she underlines up at the top war without violence. This is an important text in the history of nonviolent struggles. We actually don't have any evidence I haven't found any yet that Pauli Murray and Kamaladevi directly connected. I would love it if anyone could find me such a document. But we do know that Kamaladevi linked up with many other important advocates of bridging nonviolence between the Indian struggle and the African American struggle, including the author of war without violence Krishnalal Shridharani, who as a veteran of Gandhi Salt March comes to the US becomes one of the most important intellectual figures encouraging African Americans to take up Gandhian nonviolence. Many of you I'm sure are familiar with the ways in which Dr. Martin Luther King draws upon Gandhi's legacy. But what the history of Kamaladevi, Krishnalal Shridharani, Pauli Murray many other figures makes clear is that the long history of the transmission of Gandhian nonviolence involve many different figures, many of them women, and that it was bound up with other key ideas that linked the Indian struggle with global dimensions, including, as I've argued, notions of colored solidarity, and also conceptions of the Indian diaspora throughout the world. And those three pillars nonviolence, diaspora and colored cosmopolitanism are bound up with other ways in which the Indian struggle is global. And all of those ideas actually are still at play in the world and just all end by suggesting something I can come back to later, but I was suggesting that actually the career of Kamala Harris, whose full name some of you will know is Kamala Devi Harris. And I think I can argue there was perhaps some influence there that Kamala Harris's mother was influenced by the history of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay in choosing the name. But that's I don't have any solid evidence to that, we could talk more if there's time. What is clear to me is that we see even in our world today, the promise and the potential of bridges that link freedom struggles in India

past and present, with freedom struggles in the United States and throughout the world. With that, friends, I will close and say again, thank you so much for this opportunity to share. I'm very excited to learn from the other panelists, and also from your questions. Thank you so much.

Dinyar Patel: Thank you very much, Nico for that fascinating presentation. So I'll now turn it over to Carolien Stolte. She is a senior lecturer and history at Leiden University. She's joining us today from the Netherlands. And her research looks at the long trajectory of Afro Asian connections. And in this case, the really interesting thing about her research is she's looking at them before Indian independence and also after. So her current work at least is examining all the period after 1947 and how those connections continued. So with that, let me turn it over to Carolien.

Carolien Stolte: Thank you so much for that introduction, Dinyar. I'm just going to share my screen hoping that this works. Oh, here we go. Is this visible to everyone? Wonderful. And please let me know if you can't hear me there's an absolutely raging storm outside my window. So I'm hoping this connection holds. So depending on where everyone is, good morning, afternoon or evening, and thank you to everyone for being here today. So, those who know me know that I've long been fascinated by the absolutely extraordinary life of Mahendra Pratap. And in terms of his ideas, he was very sort of quixotic outlier in the independence movement, fiercely anti-British but also staunchly rolled federation list rather than nationalist, and nevertheless in contact with everyone from Gandhi and Nehru to [indiscernible], M.N. Roy, Har Dayal, Maulana Barkatullah, and basically, everyone else. So, who was Pratap? Born in Aligarh to Raja of Mursan and adopted by the Raja of Hathras and later married into the willing family of Jinds. Pratap's identity as a Raja, as such was always a complex one. But it served him well, especially in pre and interwar Europe in terms of making connections. So Pratap perhaps best known for the events I've outlined here, he gave away five of his villages in trust to establish a fully Indian-run Technical College in 1909 in Brindaban, which actually still exists today. He's also known for his lead role in a German Turkish mission to Afghanistan and other independent Asian states to convince them to declare war on the British during the First World War. But also as one of the fathers of the INA, so his concept of an Asian army while staying in Second World War, Japan, and it was a precursor to the INA, even though the INA ended up with a leadership structure with a governance structure that he couldn't get behind, which kind of ended his involvement prior to the actual campaigns. And then finally, after his return to India as an MP for Mathura, beating out the future Prime Minister Vajpayee as an independent candidate. So all of these elements of his life are absolutely fascinating, but not what I will talk about today, because Pratap actually spent over three decades more than 30 years in exile in service of anti-British action even though his vision of a post imperial world was a typical even amongst the rather wide range of post imperial visions of other Indian exiles. And this is what that visions look like, first thought out by Pratap in Japan and data published in his own periodical, which was also called World Federation. He called this his geography of tomorrow. And I could spend my entire 20 minutes talking just about this map. But for now, I would like to draw your attention to a few key elements. This map shows a federated world state comprised of five

main administrative divisions, which roughly coincide with continents, and the map itself, quite obviously is centered on Asia. So his main vision pertain to kind of the future shape of Asia, which was to be renamed being renamed the province of Buddha itself divided into five districts, Gold Land, Aryan, Golden Aryan, which is Southeast Asia, Turan and Arab. Now each of these five districts was to have its own capital and here things gets a little wilder, if they haven't already, as Pratap tries to reconcile cultural and historical significance with physical accessibility. He is after all, a traveler. For instance, he wants the capital of this Aryan to be at Karachi but he wants to rename it Dwarka, and the original Dwarka was to be renamed Dwarka Purani. Now similarly, the capital of Arab was to be Srinagar, but Srinagar was in turn to be renamed Lhasa. And Lhasa the actual Lhasa in Tibet then also was to become old Lhasa. I'll talk more about the ways in which these get mixed a little bit later. So the province of Turan, meanwhile was actually an acronym. So it's a T for Turkey, the U for Ukraine, the R for Russia, the A for Siberia, and the N for Turkistan. So this was to be a union of Turkish and Russian speaking peoples with Tashkent as its capital renamed as Tur. Now further afield, and you'll find California kind of carved out of the North American map, and this was to be given special status as a Capital District as well and help special significance for Pratap and I'll talk about that in a moment, too. And then finally, the circled islands in the Pacific marked as heaven would be the seat of the New World Government in this federated world state. So this is Hawaii, and Honolulu was to be that world's capital. Now, for reasons you can probably well imagine, this map has been the source of somewhat bewildered fascination for historians. But it has never been taken very seriously, even though Pratap actually continued to consistently advocate for United Asia as a step towards a federated world until the day he died in 1979. So I actually propose an alternative explanation for the existence of this map. I would argue that this map is actually a fairly accurate representation of Pratap's own revolutionary exile. So we should read it really as a balanced test, a layered record of his travel experiences, both good and bad, and the companionship he found in South Asian diasporic communities worldwide. So it is really about the interstitial spaces I want to talk today. It's the travel between these key moments that Pratap's view of a first Imperial World Order was created. And it's not for nothing that we see Pratap here in this picture in his turban, dressed in Buddha silks, with around his neck the order of the Red Eagle, which he received from Kaiser Wilhelm during the First World War. So having been on the move for 3 years, Pratap was literally the sum of his travels. So limiting myself to the aspects of the map I just highlighted, let's move to Central Asia, with apologies for the contemporary borders here. The area that you see here actually explains a lot about Pratap's vision of world order, as he was not a big fan of sea voyages. Plus, ships were also kind of floating spaces of surveillance, often calling it British help ports and Pratap had active arrest warrants against him for most of his years in exile. So he actually traveled the breadth of Eurasia overland many times. And this is how we should sort of physically imagine this. In the top left, Pratap is the figure with the head, on top of the roof of the of the barge, here crossing the river Euphrates in 1915. And the other photos are from the desert in Iran, soon after on the way to Afghanistan. Now, I show these here to kind of provide a sense of the immensity of the terrain, the logistics, the hardships involved, but also the danger. Over the years Pratap was

both attacked and rescued by everything ranging from state armies to robbers and warlords, he got typhoid and dysentery, he saw comrades lose limbs and horses collapse, and all without actually ever having a home to return to, right? So this was his world. This is also why I argue that kind of the roadmap of his exile was also the driver of his politics. The other driver really was diaspora. So though Pratap never settled anywhere for very long, he saw Indian diaspora communities as well as individual Indians choosing a home elsewhere, right anywhere outside South Asia, as proof of the connectedness of Asia and of the world. So a few examples from Afghanistan and surrounding areas, a pandit or Brahman priest who was expected as an English spy and whose life it could save by pleading for him with an African governor was too glad to remain behind in the Chinese territory. A Gorkha soldier who had escaped to the African side and was anxious to return home was also left. A Hindu treasurer and a Sikh friend who had their relations at Cabul took leave to return there. So in his writings, there's always this really strong emphasis on connection and solidarity across communities and religions. In the heart of Asia, despite sort of the vagaries of travel, also recurs in his writing as an oasis. So the second quote on the slide here, gradually, however, luck returned to us again. Beautiful Badakhshan began to sing a lullaby. We found rest delicious apples appeased our taste. Nightingales sang songs, flowers danced in the air to the air of Badakhshan. Our companion Abdul Hadi Khan got married in the adjoining Russian territory. Now there's another story in this wedding, but the idea that one could travel to Badakhshan and find a familiar community was very romantic notion to Pratap as he notes many of our readers might have heard the name of Sir Agha Khan. Many Indians know him as Muslim leader. Many Europeans know him as a racing expert. But the fact may not be known generally that he has a big following out here in the Valley of Oxus. My companion Mr. Abdul Hadi Khan found his wife among these people at [indiscernible]. So as will be evidence, the third element that plays into his geography of tomorrow really is religion. So the province of Buddha was purposefully named, right? Same as Pratap's I'm not sure if you saw that on the map earlier but Pratap's conflation of Europe with Christ, with at its capital, Geneva renamed His Holy Ghost, which is all sorts of ironic as that the home of Calvin, but that as an aside. Pratap was a strong believer in the fundamental unity of all religions, much like the unity of the world itself. And his idea of a super unified religion of love actually predated his world federalism. So for him the principles of renunciation and serve as central to Buddhism would become the basis for a sort of global religious harmony and a lasting world peace. And he actually often signs his correspondence as world servant. So Tibet and the Dalai Lama at Lhasa, therefore occupied an important place in his mind and his mission to actually reach Lhasa in 1925, 1926 marks a turning point in his exile, as well as sort of his international fame. He had raised the money for this mission among the South Asian community in California, who had also supplied him with volunteers for the trip. And to give you a sense of how sort of farfetched this project was in its conception, the volunteers were all young Sikhs from California, one of whom was actually UC students, none of whom have passports, and literally the only ship that would take them was the steamer bound for Yokohama. And they actually traveled overland from East Asia in their attempt to reach Tibet. And they met the Bunchie Lama in Beijing, who tried to make them understand that they're about to do

something very foolish. First of all, they'll never be allowed into Lhasa but also it's really late in the year, right? And there's going to be snow. So the first two quotes here give a sense of how right the Bunchie llama actually was. And I quote here, "It was bitterly cold. Winter had set in it was the month of November. We had taken leave of the last shelter. Now we could not expect a roof to cover us. Nights were passed on the frozen ground. Blue sky was our only canopy. Biting winds raged all around us. Dressed in our armor of heavy sheepskins we were setting the forces of winter at naught. We were riding forth as knight errands in a full stately array. It was a terrible night. To escape the range of robbers who were tearing the land, we marched all night up to 3am. We were going through snow marching over ice. It was so cold that the toes of a companion got frostbitten. It was however, over. The day gave us enormous inestimable joy when after 8 days of hard marches, we saw for the first time Tibetan black tents. Barking of the dogs proved more exhilarating than any band of welcome. So here's this idea again of reaching an oasis that's going to return a little bit later as well. So Lhasa and Chamdo at this point were Tibet controlled with the buffered territory with Chinese controlled Tibet and a border with British India obviously. And after all of the hardship of a Tibetan winter in the mountains completely stuck waiting for permission to proceed, the Dalai Lama actually would not proceed them to go to Lhasa to meet him, partly in fear of antagonizing the British. So Lhasa remains is absolutely unattainable place. And I think we can't see this as separate from the fact that this becomes old Lhasa in Pratap's map with a more connected place Srinagar as the new Lhasa. So Pratap actually fairly nonchalant in the end about not reaching the real Lhasa, he emphasizes all of the contacts he made with important llamas outside Lhasa the year they managed to spend in the land of the Buddha, etc., and kind of reconfirms the centrality of Tibet to his geography, where he says, "For us, Tibet is part of a golden land extending from Tibet to Japan and from Mongolia to Canton. Tibet is the heart of the province of Buddha or the continent of Asia. It's the roof of the world. Pamir is its extension a tower in the west from Tibet rivers flow out in all directions. Mighty rivers Indus Ganges, Brahmaputra, Yangtse Kiang, Hwang Hoare all born in this land. The highest mountains in the world, the Himalayas themselves are rooted in Tibet. Then Tibet guards the treasures of living Buddhism. But you will remember that it was actually the community, the Indian community in California that had funded this trip. And it is to this community that he must also justify both the expense and the very limited results. So here it does help that the mission was publicized as a volunteer peace mission, and even earned Pratap a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize by a Swedish peace organization. So armed with this, Pratap returns to San Francisco. And it is the gutter headquarters in San Francisco that is actually one of the few places in the world in which Pratap ever felt truly welcome even though at times they were highly critical of his political exploits. The gutter network, sort of in and through San Francisco was also helped Pratap receive intel on the general state of the anti-imperialist movements, other initiatives that were going on, but also where he informed much of his ideas on diaspora place making. So in fact, all of his mentions of visiting Gurudwaras are from San Francisco, and a few from Vancouver. As shown by the first quote here on the screen. Sorry, there we go. San Francisco was also where Pratap lost one of the comrades closest to him, which was Maulana Barkatullah. Another committed [indiscernible] even though their

respective politics were actually rooted in very different traditions had accompanied him to quite literally, all continents. And the final quote here on the slide shows how in Barkatullah's funeral kind of the best and the worst of diaspora placemaking, and in terms of emotional significance, come together. But Maulana Barkatullah was ticking quick. Diabetes was taking him down and he passed away in September. I acted as his closest relative. In his funeral Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs equally took part and prayed according to their respective religions. It was a memorable day. Dr. Syed Hussein, Dr. Rahmath Ali Khan, Mr. Pawan Singh, Mr. [indiscernible] of the Sikh temple, hundreds of our Indian friends all expressed our hearty regards to the parting revolutionary leader. I could not now do much in California, I had no heart to stay there any longer. So this is a bit of a breaking point. Pratap left California after Barkatullah's funeral and indeed did not return there for a very long time. So he spent some time reflecting on the life of Indian revolutionary exiles, and he recalls an earlier meeting that he had with Mohan Roy, where he tells us how Mohan Roy actually advised him to go back to India. And Mohan Roy told Pratap and this was a couple of years before this happened, that they can't hang you, the worst they can do is throw you in jail for a few years, but then you would be free to serve the people. And on the contrary Pratap tells us Barkatullah actually advised him never to return to a captive India and telling him it's better to die abroad. Then Pratap writes shortly after a bug to the past way. It's interesting to reflect today that both these gentlemen followed themselves what they told me, Mr. Mohan Roy is now free in India after his term in prison of 6 years. And Maulana Barkatullah is laying in the bosom of Mother Earth in California. So as was, Pratap's custom, his circumnavigation of the globe are invariably in a westward direction, he left California on a steamer bound for Japan. Which kind of brings me to my final point about the significance of travel to Pratap's ideas, and that is the oasis. So as someone who really dislikes long sea voyages stop overs in Hawaii where, indeed Pratap's very own idea of heaven. And as he noted, people who haven't traveled through a desert cannot understand the joy of arriving at an oasis. It's perhaps deprivation which makes the plenty sweet and sweeter. So this was it's true to Pratap for a Central Asian desert as it was for the Pacific. And he describes first laying eyes on Hawaii, as it appeared to us as an oasis in a great desert. Then heaven on earth revealed to us. I enjoyed the drive up and down the beautiful island. So Pratap also loved kind of sharing the significance of Hawaii to him so on his way to Tibet on his Tibet mission, he also shows all of the young seek of volunteers from California around in Honolulu and accompanied them all around the island. So I know these are really but a few examples, but other stopovers on Pratap's journeys of exile actually map onto this World Federation map in similar ways. But for now it suffice to say that Pratap left California free Oklahoma, contacted [indiscernible] and spent the next couple of years in East Asia alternating between China and Japan. He found publishers willing to distribute his World Federation periodical, and basically turned for a while to propagating his ideas in writing rather than living them. And this is how it will return to the map. So I think it's important that a neater version of the map than this was never published, right? This is literally how it appeared in print in World Federation. And I actually think it's quite fitting that we change the look of a set of Field Notes

made on the go as a testament to the importance of the active traveling and the companionship that Pratap found on the road. And I'll close there. Thank you very much.

Dinyar Patel: Thank you, Carolien for that presentation. It's really quite incredible to see just how his ideas developed from traveling. And again, you know, it really elucidates that theme of how travel in many ways really shaped a lot of the political ideas that we're developing amongst it, no matter where they were. As a native California, I particularly like the sketch, sketched out California around 7+. So let me go ahead and use both Nico and Carolien's presentations to talk to you about kind of the last big figure in our series today. Just give me a second to load up my presentation. Can everyone see? Oh, okay. So, as Sanjay mentioned, I'm a professor at the S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research at Mumbai. It is also thundering and lightning right now. So hopefully, connection will be maintained. But, you know, I'm going to look at an aspect of the of the India Nationalist Movement in America, particularly a moment in time that coincided with the Second World War, and how Indian nationals abroad, really fit into a lot of the teams that both Carolien and Nico talked about travel, the diaspora, and how, you know, these teams will go for supporting the Indian independence movement. And let me take you into the archives, if you will, to look at some images that, you know, I came across while doing some research at the New York Public Library. And you know, so I was sitting in the research room of the New York Public Library and I came across this material like this, in some files I was looking at. This is a sheet from 1942, which provides you with instructions on how to make the Gandhi cap right, you know, the Gandhi topi that people would wear in, you know the '20s,'30s and '40s to denote the following the International Congress. This was a sheet that was distributed by a subject called the fellowship of reconciliation, a church based international pacifist organization. And it was meant to instruct people you know, in New York and really around the US how to make a Gandhi cap in order to celebrate Gandhi's birthday on October 2. And it encouraged members to do stuff like have a special dinner where you would invite family members and friends to celebrate Gandhi's birthday and it said specifically, you know that the dinner should be kept very simple only soup or fruit or milk to conform to Gandhi's dietary details. And, you know, students, especially were encouraged to wear these Gandhi caps while going to school. So presumably you have a few schoolchildren in places like Manhattan or even elsewhere in the US wearing these caps, you know, around October 1943. Here's another document from the New York Public Library, a flyer that was distributed, you know, kind of encouraging people to come out and support Indian independence and specifically telling President Roosevelt to support the American independence and you'll see that the highlighted phrase over here, an explicit comparison is made between Indian independence and American independence. [indiscernible] says in 1776 Great Britain did not think of 13 colonies could govern themselves and in a similar manner, you know, the British are being obstructionist in order to allow India to get its Indian independence. Now, this particular you know, attempt to kind of you know, publicize Indian independence took place around 1942 1943, this was significant years because the Indian National Congress leadership had been put behind bars after the quit India movement post August 1942. So the communist leadership was

effectively muscle, right? So a lot of activism took place outside of, you know, the traditional mechanisms for nationalist organization, including in places like the United Kingdom or indeed the United States. So documents like this show the evidence of nationalist activities abroad in the United States and in the diaspora in general, but also show you how Americans were brought into this process as well. I mean, there were Americans who go and protest outside the, the British consulates in places like Chicago outside the British Embassy. So there's a very, you know, complex story of American involvement during the Second World War in places like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, etc., campaigning for Indian independence. And a lot of this activity was coordinated by a man called J.J. Singh, who I'll be talking more about in the course of my presentation. So as you know, the two presentations performed have shown Mahatma Gandhi was far from being the only individual who used the Indian diaspora and travel and extraterritorial links to work for Indian nationalist activities. And Singh was, again, a classic example. He built on decades of Indian involvement with American political networks, I mean, stretching back to really the 1890s to build up support amongst various different constituencies for Indian independence. So you know, unlike many earlier activists in America, who built up links, specifically within say, you know, a leftist, progressive elite in places like New York, Singh went further, he brought in African Americans who brought in farmers he brought in progressive college students in places like Ohio, he brought in people who are, you know, in the south, people in California, Indians, as well as, you know, regular Americans, people of all different ethnic backgrounds. And, you know, this was particularly important after the 1942 when again, Singh felt that since people like Nehru and Gandhi were now behind bars, it was up to people like him, who were free and at liberty to really take the activism of the Congress movement forward and campaign for Indian independence. So, from 1942 onwards, Singh really becomes very prominent in orchestrating you know, a nationalist movement activity that you know, was connected not just with activities going on in India, but also in places like the United Kingdom where the Hare Krishna men were campaigning for an independence over there. So there's really kind of a global linkage that is created through people such as Singh. Now, who wants to smack, you know, J.J. Singh, or Jaswant Singh. He was born into a relatively wealthy and successful Punjabi family. His father was an official in the British Indian Government. He joined Congress activities around the 1920s in line with the beginning of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, but he soon decides to go abroad. By 1927, he had relocated to the United States, and he moved to New York, where he set up a very successful clothing business. So somewhere on Fifth Avenue in the 1920s and 1930s, there was this man who was selling Indian textile goods, you know, as fashion items to you know, high profile, gentlemen and gentlewomen, if you will, in New York. And at the same time, he developed you know, a pronounced love for aspects of American and particularly in New York or Manhattan centric culture, he loves swing dancing, he was a fan of nightlife in Manhattan and he liked Broadway plays, he enjoyed playing tennis. So he was really in many ways, kind of the prototypical example of, you know, your modern day Indian American, you know, someone who was at home, both equally in the United States and in India, you know, as this particular profile of the New York Post pointed out, in 1943, he preferred steaks to, you know, the Indian

food found in New York. And you know, we can imagine the Indian food in New York was pretty terrible at this time. But, you know, he was someone who was quite willing to engage in all aspects of Indian culture of sorry of American culture, but at the same time, he retained very strong links with the Indian political establishment in India. And when you look at his papers, which are really scattered around the world, kind of like his activities, I mean, some of his papers are in London, some in Delhi and some are in New York, Washington DC, you get a flavor of what it was like to be an Indian in America at this time. We know that in Manhattan, there were at least two Indian restaurants in the 1940. And here's you know, a lateral head of one such Indian restaurant called The Rajah. And it was located on, I think somewhere in Midtown at this time. There were about 5,000 Indians living in America, perhaps a few 100 in New York and especially in Manhattan. And these individuals really ran the gamut of all different socio economic classes. Some of them were, you know, quite well off, like J.J. Singh, but many of them were relatively poor farmers in places like the Central Valley or the Imperial Valley in California. So within New York, the Indian population was known for being extremely fractious and argumentative. And oftentimes, they you know, they fought furiously over their political activities. And this was a problem because you know, in 1937, a group of them formed something called the Indian League of America. And what they do for the first, you know, 2 years or so is just fight amongst each other. So much so that Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, when she comes to New York in around 1939 1940 or so she actually sits them down and says, "Look, stop fighting. You need to all cooperate if you want to coordinate political activity. And this is really what happens from you know, '39'40 onward. J.J. Singh emerges as the main leader of this organization, and he really kind of takes the organization which up until this time, what had been mostly composed of diasporic Indian leaders, people like Krishna Laos, Rita Rani, another Punjabi exile called Anoop Singh, who J.J. Singh had a lot of arguments with people like [indiscernible] who've been in the US for many decades, he took this organization, and he really expanded its scope and formin many ways. He brought in, you know, again, people like African Americans, Chinese American representatives, representatives of freedom movements from other countries like Indonesia or Vietnam. You know, he expanded kind of this pool of individuals who are campaigning for liberation in their own homelands. And this allowed people like J.J. Singh to establish really broad ranging international linkages whenever they put together activities. So as you can see, in this particular flyer celebrating Gandhi's birthday, you not only have prominent Indians like saying Shridharani, you also have you know, pretty well known Americans. But you also have a Chinese American Mai Mai Sze, who was the daughter of a Chinese diplomat, an accomplished Chinese artist and writer, you know, in our own regard. So there were again, these transnational links that were on the ground in places like New York, that buttressed Indian nationalist activities. So what Singh is able to do by the mid-1940s, while campaigning for some measure of Indian independence, albeit while being abroad in New York, was really bring on board these heavy weights that gave him links to all these other constituents. So you had people like Walter White, a member of the NAACP, you had representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union, you had union workers, like Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers, famous authors and writers Pearl S. Buck the Nobel

laureate, Henry Luce, his wife, Claire Booth Luce who was a representative at the Congress, and also representatives from the Democratic Party, people like Emmanuel Celler was a representative from Brooklyn. And then again, you had these other international next people like Lin Yutang who had ties with the Kuomintang government, the nationalist government in China. So these really broad ranging ties are developed and with these ties seem really concentrates on two methodologies to get the message out to Americans about the need for India to get its independence and not just get its independence eventually, but during the war. Singh felt very strongly that you know, immediate independence for India would not only help the war effort, but it would really kind of solidify a lot of the activities which the Allies were supposed to be fighting for democracy, you know, anti-fascism, equality, you know, reducing, you know, the pop of the color line around the world. And he did this through two classically American tactics. One was publicity, a certain master the art of American Public Relations. You know, this is something that he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru just after the war once Nehru had been released from prison, but this country in particular lives on publicity. And when you have lived here as long as I have, you learn the full value of probabilistic so he was skilled in the arts of advertisement and you know, getting your message out through the print and radio and such. And, you know, the Indian League actually brought on board publicity experts, a man called Sidney Hotspur, who had been involved in publicity in the New York Socialist Party and also other organizations really built up the, you know, the public relations engine of the organization through the 1940s. And the Indian League published its own newsletters of default India Today, it participated in radio broadcasts that got its message well, you know, beyond the borders of Manhattan, and the other classically American thing that same strategy to engage in was lobbying, going to Capitol Hill, talking to senators and congressmen spending long hours in their offices, and getting them to support his programs. So not only were people like Claire [indiscernible], a manual seller involved in this program of lobbying, so people far afield from, you know, the eastern seaboard. So one of [indiscernible] closest allies was a man called Karl Earl Mundt, and Mundt was the Republican congressman from South Dakota. So here, you have a South Dakotan representative, you know, who's brought on board, and really helps cultivate a lot of ties with Indian nationalist leaders in the United States, and brings that support to the floor of, you know, the house of representatives in Washington, DC. So through these methodologies, Singh is able to, you know, kind of put the agenda of the Indian National Congress before different American platforms. And the way that he characterizes Indian nationalist demands is very unique, you know, up until this time, you know, when people talked about Gandhi, they talked about him as being kind of, you know, representing something, you know, opposing Western civilization, opposing, you know, particular aspects of Western culture, and Singh completely dispenses with the strategy. He instead, you know, really regards Gandhi and Nehru and he portrays Gandhi and Nehru as leaders equivalent to people like Abraham Lincoln, or George Washington, or even Thomas Paine. So when he describes people like, you know, the Indian nationalist leadership to American audiences, he makes these equations to people who Americans understand. When Americans asked him about communalism in India, he says, "Well, you know, here in the United States, we of course, have

the same problem with regard to the way that African Americans are treated and you know, look at the civil war that happened the United States and yet people were able to patch up the relations and in a similar way, Hindus and Muslims will be able to kind of carry out you know, their own agenda and resolve the differences and he really puts a lot of you know, Indian nationalist ideas in an American political vocabulary." So, he celebrates Indian Independence Day, you know, January 26, was regarded as Indian Independence Day well before India actually achieved independence. So, but before there was something called Republic Day, because on the 26th of January 1949, the so called Purna Swaraj resolution had been, you know, passed which declared that India was to achieve full independence and a declaration of Indian independence was written up, and Singh would present the declaration of Indian independence side by side with the American Declaration of Independence in publicity programs, and he, you know, include commentary like, you know, this, that he says in a, you know, a newsletter from the 1943 are in her Declaration of Independence, India seeks the same opportunities that the original 13 United States took to build a nation dedicated to justice, and equal representation for all. Now, at the same time, seeing very clearly wanted to portray India as, you know, a potential arsenal for democracy in the fight against fascism. So he, you know, put together a clear message saying that, if India is granted independence during the war, it would gladly join the Allied war effort and, you know, put its fighting potential, you know, to the forefront. And he was very clear in warning Americans that if America, you know, does not support Indian independent aspirations and if Britain continues to put India in colonial bondage throughout the war, you know, in the off chance that Japan would succeed in conquering India, well then it might take anywhere from three to four million American lives to liberate India. So here's a very clear declaration of why it was important for Americans to be concerned about Indian independence you know, potentially the mothers and fathers of three to four you know, million American sons, you know, put risk you know the you know the children's lives are being sacrificed in a war effort that could be avoided if only Britain would allow India to fight on its own terms on behalf of the Allies. So you know, this is pretty potent and heavy stuff. And Singh and his colleagues put this out in the public through advertisements in places like the Washington Post, encouraging people to write to FDR in the White House in order to, you know, campaign for Indian independence. Singh took the battle against British wartime propaganda, you know, to the front pages of, you know, dailies and through the radio broadcasts in America, so, you know, there were times when Singh would engage in debates with people like Henry S.L. Polak. Polak was, you know, a friend of Gandhi from his South African days but you know, it is most recent avatar he was you know, propagandist for the British government in America campaigning for, you know, against, you know, the argument that India should get its independence during the war time and Singh engaged in you know, furious radio debate with Polak on American airwaves. So you know, British propagandists, who are trying to spread their own message about why India should not achieve independence, immediately thought of themselves a little threatened by this band of, you know, small band of Indian immigrants. And they tried their best to hit back against this organization. They did so by trying to infiltrate this organization by trying to get the American government to investigate it

by trying to get the FBI and the Department of Justice to potentially investigate this organization and shut it down, but also through some quite underhanded tactics. You know, they tried to import a lot of Indian communalist organizations to American soil. So, you know, there are some passages in British intelligence documents which say that, you know, just like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League have tried to challenge the Congress line in India, let's try to do something similar the United States, let's actively support bringing Sabha or Muslim League propagandists to America to present an alternative line to the Congress and kind of compete against the Indian League to present an alternative vision and thereby show that the Indian League or the Congress, which was completed in the eyes of the American public at this time, do not represent the only political agenda that Indians would support. So again, quite a stock example of how communalist tactics were used abroad by the British government. All of this shows you that the British government was scared by the capabilities of this small little organization that ran its offices out of, you know, some small, you know, office space on East 49th Street in Midtown Manhattan. And there were a few places where, you know, the British government in and his representatives in America and the Indian League came head to head and the Indian League won some pretty clear victories, one was during the Bengal famine. Starting in early 1943, news starts to make out of the occurrence of famine in Bengal, and it reaches places like the United States, and the India League plays a role in publicizing what was going on in India and spreading messages, you know, to political leaders and, you know, getting people to sign letters to people like FDR. At the same time, it succeeds in getting the United States Congress to pass legislation that would allow Bengal to be put under the ambit of the United Nations in famine relief. This was done against the opposition of both the British government and the British Indian representative [indiscernible] in Washington DC. Its campaign for Famine Relief continued well after the Bengal famine. So you know, up through Indian independence, there was always the lingering fear of Indian famine, and the Indian League organized efforts to promote famine, relief and publicize the need for famine relief that was carried in American newspapers and journals. You see another such pamphlet over here. And you know, really, perhaps its most spectacular victory happened again around this time around 1943 1944 when it helps leak a series of documents that show that an American diplomat was stationed in New Delhi, William Phillips, who was quite [indiscernible], you know, he was quite pro-British, had you've been so disillusioned with the state of, you know, British Indian administration, that he had come to the conclusion that America must champion for immediate independence for India. You know, FDR had to put pressure on people like Churchill and others to give India independence. That was the only way that India would be able to be kept in the war effort in a really positive and productive way. So once the members of the India League learn about this document, they do their best to get it leaked. They had contacts within the British Embassy on Connecticut Avenue in Washington DC and other contacts in you know, British allegations in places like New York, this document is leaked to the Washington Post and poses a complete diplomatic furor, which really kind of coalesces a lot of American opinion around the idea that the British handling of India was so bad, that was actually putting the war effort. So let me conclude by talking about what the Indian League does, you know, after the

war. It really transitions into an organization that helps, you know, improve the conditions of Indian Americans. So there's something called the Luce-Celler Act, which was passed in 1946, which is really the first, you know, legislation to allow a small stream of Indians into America as immigrants. And, you know, one of the main figures behind the Luce-Celler Act was again J.J. Singh. He campaigned, you know, absolutely, you know, tirelessly in Capitol Hill for this legislation to be passed against people like W.B. Du Bois and Walter Reuther and African Americans to support this legislation. And it reverses you know what Nico Slater talked about earlier this decision from the Supreme Court, *US versus Bhagat Singh Thind* from 1943, sorry, from 1923. And it sets the stage for further immigration reform, namely the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, there's also the function of introducing Indian leadership to American audiences. So the Indian League introduces people like Kamaladevi or Nehru and others, to American leaders and the American public at large. And it also sets the ground for future US India relations. Before America is home to an Indian Embassy, the Indian League really functions as you know, the embassy of the or the headquarters of Indian Nationalist Leadership, Congress, and eventually, you know, what becomes, you know, transitions into becoming, you know, the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC and its consulate in New York, there's a lot of overlap between these organizations. And lastly, what it does is it really takes these broader global roles that India had chopped out for itself in global anti-colonialism, and champions it further. So, you know, after the war is over, once Indian independence is in sight, people like J.J. Singh campaign for the rights of Indians in places like South Africa, or do things like this send telegrams to Clement Attlee, the prime minister in London, talking about how they protested how Indians were being used to kind of buttress French colonialism or Dutch colonialism in places like Vietnam, or Indonesia. So once Indian independence had been secured in 1947, people like Singh transition to campaigning for Indonesian independence, Vietnamese independence, and the rights of Indians as well as Africans in places like South Africa. So once again, bringing these kind of global orientations of Indian nationalism to the fore. So with that, I will end my presentation. Thank you very much to patiently listening to all of us, I see that we have a few questions, or at least one or two questions already. So let me just read out the first question that I think, you know, it's probably directed to Nico. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay turned down every offer Nehru made to her to be ambassador and Cabinet Minister, amongst others. How do you assess her reluctance for any high profile position in India and for India, and instead to focus more on handling workers and grassroots workers?

Nico Slate: That's an excellent question. And it's one that allows us to reflect on the relationship between Kamaladevi's life, pre Indian independence and post Indian independence, the relationship between the anti-colonial struggle and struggles against other forms of oppression and inequity after India gains independence. I think the short answer is that Kamaladevi is not entirely opposed to engaging with Indian politics after independence. Indeed, she runs for parliament as a socialist and it's actually some really remarkable and interesting letters between Nehru and local Congress officials in Bombay where Kamaladevi is running. When Nehru basically says, "I don't think we should run anyone against her because

she's too important to figure from the independence struggle, even though she's not running as a congress figure. It doesn't behoove us to run anyone against her." And the local officials end up sort of rejecting that advice. They do run someone against her and she loses. Kamaladevi loses. So she tries to get involved in electoral politics. And she is open to taking on government positions, including, as the question mentions in regards to art and craft, she wears many different government or government related hats in the all India handicrafts board and the various academies that are set up to promote the arts and independent India. But she does become very concerned about the direction of politics after Indian independence. And I find it actually, one of the most beautiful parts about her life arc is that in many ways, she becomes increasingly Gandhian. You know, in the 1930s, and 1940s, there are lots of tensions between Gandhi and Kamaladevi. They focus on his views of women and the role of women in the movement, they focus on his own personal views of the fact that she opts to be divorced at a time when that's a very rare thing. So the two figures that, you know, they butt heads at various junctures, but they also profoundly respect each other. And over time, Kamaladevi becomes more and more committed to certain Gandhian philosophies and principles, including the importance of making things with one's hands, and having an economy in India that is decentralized, that creates opportunities for people in the villages at the local level, to earn income, through their own manual labor in a way that is dignified. And it respects them as producers and as artists. So there's a deep Gandhian dimension to her turn towards arts and crafts. But it is also in part a rejection of what she sees as the increasingly corrupt and broken nature of Indian bureaucracy. And so it's, I see there's at least three strands here, there's that she finds her own efforts to get into politics, frustrated, she has this increasing respect for Gandhian emphasis on handmade products and creating things with the hands and she becomes increasingly critical of the failures of the Indian state in the post-independence period. That's my short answer. It's a beautifully big question. And I'd love to talk more, but I want to pause to give space for other questions.

Dinyar Patel: So I'd like to encourage our audience members to ask questions, you can write your questions in the Q&A box. While we don't have a question right now, let me ask a question, perhaps to both of you, which is, you know, for both my Mahendra Pratap and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, what was the, you know, what was the sense of the idea that both individuals had about India's role in the world post-independence? What role would India play? Any of you want to?

Nico Slate: I'll let you go first, Carolien.

Carolien Stolte: Oh, that is actually when it comes to Pratap. That's an intensely complex question, because Pratap actually spends much of his time in a way decentering, India a little bit, he really wants this, this united age, I think to get off the ground. And interestingly, when he returns to India, so this might actually if you will, allow me be really good opportunity to talk a little bit about kind of the afterlife of Pratap's politics here. So I mentioned he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. He's in 1945, he's actually interned by the Americans, because he's still

in Japan, by that time, on suspicion of war crimes, and possibly one of the only people I can think of who kind of had both of those things, right, the Nobel Peace Prize nomination and being interned in the space of a few decades. So he becomes an intensely difficult case for the Nehru government because you have this person who spent the Second World War in Japan, and is interned by the Americans. And then the question is raised, do we bring him back? Do we actually put in the effort to, you know, bring back this person with them in the eyes of many highly suspect ideas and spend a lot of political capital at a time where that is very precious and rare in bringing him back? Or do we kind of turn him a martyr by making his exile, indefinite? And it's really sort of a choice between two very difficult options. And the Nehru government actually decides to spend a lot of effort and political capital in bringing Pratap back. And what Pratap ends up doing is organizing something he calls them the freedom fighters conference. And in Delhi, he actually tries to create a sort of retroactive unity in the independence movement by bringing revolutionaries from all sorts of different directions together in kind of a single advisory organ and they try to sort of give foreign policy advice to the Nehru government. And this is successful in varying degrees. But they're actually kind of well wired into them to Nehruvian politics in the early era. So in that sense, Pratap does kind of continue to put a stamp on, yeah, the plays of India and the world in that way. But he continues to advocate for kind of, eventually dissolving the Indian nation into a pan Asian union. And obviously, that there's no Venn diagram in which that coincides with post-independence politics. As in that sense, he kind of recedes from view.

Nico Slate: I can build on that briefly. Although, I wonder did Pratap and Kamaladevi cross paths? Do you know of any examples of that?

Carolien Stolte: Yes, but not in a very significant way. So Pratap actually spend some time working with Ranganath Chattopadhyay, right? And they all cross paths in Europe, shortly after the first conference of the league against imperialism in Brussels. So this is late '30s, in Europe.

Nico Slate: Okay.

Carolien Stolte: Yeah.

Nico Slate: Okay. All right, we'll have to talk more about that.

Carolien Stolte: He's closer to "Chatto" as in the common Chatto than to Kamaladevi.

Nico Slate: Yeah, that makes sense, okay. Well, in regards to coming to Kamaladevi, she remains a very fiery Indian nationalist all the way through, and certainly has a strong conception of India's unity and of the importance of India on the world stage. But she nests it in a variety of larger conceptions of solidarity. So first, within Asia, she has a strong conception of an Asian identity. And then within what was it called, at various points, that colored world, the dark world, the third world, the global south, she's very committed to that as well. And then also she has conceptions of World Government, she participates in this organization that's set up, I can't remember the exact title, but something about World Federation, she, you know,

buys into an idea of, she's very critical of the UN. Although she does serve briefly for one year in an organization, the Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, but she's critical of the UN, but she still has hope for some form of World Government, but in a way that wouldn't trample upon the sovereignty of independent nation. So she tries to balance her Indian nationalism with a conception of trans nationalism that operates on multiple scales.

Dinyar Patel: Can I just ask, can you hear me? Sorry, I'm having some connection issues here. Good.

Nico Slate: Yes.

Dinyar Patel: So let me just add to that by talking a bit about what J.J. Singh's views, I mean, Singh remained in the United States through 1959. So he stayed in New York, and then moved after 1959 back to India, where he lived in Delhi, actually passed away in the 1970s. I think about 2 or 3 years ago, I was able to meet one of his sons. So you know, the family still lives there, and his wife actually be passed away, perhaps maybe about 4 or 5 years ago. So you know, there's a lot of stuff within living memory about his life. But the sense I got, you know, from studying, you know, his life, and, you know, talking to his children is that, you know, since he had these kind of dual American Indian identities, he had a lot of interest in what the future of US India relations would be like, he wanted them to be good. And obviously, as we know, the '50s definitely there after the '60s and '70s, there were very rocky moments. And Singh really tried to kind of intervene and kind of help smooth out relations. So things like, you know, the specter of communism in South Asia, when other people like John Foster Dulles are such what you know, raise their hands and say, you know, what is going on in India? Why, you know, why, you know, why is Nehru sounding so socialist, you know, why is there such a person and communist movement in certain places, so, you kind of tapped on things and say, no, actually we're committed to a democracy. And, you know, this is only one particular aspect of the Democratic spectrum India, as we really tried to play a mediating role that kind of smoothing out US, India relations. But he did also say, you know, a much broader role for India beyond just the United States as well. And you develop ties [indiscernible] in London, you know, he took several world tours where, you know, of course before and after Indian independence you will kind of talk about India's relations with different parts of the world's places like China, maybe in the Soviet Union or you know, parts of Europe. So, you know, like I think Chattopadhyay and Mahendra Pratap Singh, he will use well-traveled and that ability to travel and see different perspectives I think really helped kind of broaden his mind about you know, what India wants in the greater scheme of things.

Dinyar Patel: So, I see, we still do not have any other questions from the audience. So, actually let me ask Nico and Carolien, were there any questions which came to mind about the other presentations or anything else?

Nico Slate: I have one I can throw out and then just maybe because we're so close to Gandhi Jayanti, I'd be curious to hear you both talk about how Gandhi figures into these stories. You

know, what does Pratap make of Gandhi and what does J.J. Singh make of Gandhi? And you know, the Gandhi as a figure looms so large in these years I'd be curious to know how he plays into these other histories.

Carolien Stolte: That's a wonderful question actually. And there's some, just I don't want to throw it right back to you. But something that struck me in both of your talks was actually [indiscernible] coming up and his books on sort of peace in Gandhism because I feel like he's kind of a hidden fourth person that we're circling around, right? Because for so many Americans and indeed, you know, Europeans, Quakers, Pacifists, sort of peace lovers as they were known at the time the world over he was kind of their introduction to Gandhism, right? And I feel like he's really one of those kind of under recognized characters in terms of the importance of his publications for everyone from [indiscernible] into, you know, the Quakers who end up singing [indiscernible] in 1960s and kind of joining the Cold War era peace movement that way. So I really, yeah, I was struck by the fact that he made an appearance in both your papers in that sense. But for Pratap, he had an intensely complex relationship with Gandhi. And this had much to do with the fact that Gandhi doesn't much like Pratap. I think it's very safe to say that there's correspondence between the two, the letters between them are preserved by the National Archives of India in Delhi and Gandhi feels that Pratap's journey of exile and the way in which he kind of publicizes his travels and its exploits his way to self-aggrandizing, right? He doesn't believe Pratap is the world servant, he kind of makes himself out to be he feels it's the whole project is too self-serving. So Gandhi actually sends his beautiful letter to Pratap which I really think is absolutely fascinating, in which he kind of asks Pratap to direct all of this time and effort and the fact that Pratap has kind of renounced everything and devoted his life to the service of the people to stop traveling and settle in one place and just be a servant. I don't care what you do, like start shining people's shoes, you know what fits I don't. But yeah, do some actual service. So Gandhi doesn't quite believe in Pratap's projects and is not afraid to say that.

Dinyar Patel: Yeah, so with regard to J.J. Singh, again, the relations with Gandhi were a little fraught. I have a sense that J.J. Singh one of the reasons why he left Congress politics in the first place in the 1920s is because of his disillusionment with Gandhi's calling off of non-cooperation movement in '22, and thereafter, you know, Singh was someone who identified much more with Nehru. You know, he almost worshipped Nehru quite frankly, I mean, he wrote letters to Nehru that pretty much said that. And you know, he fiercely defended Nehru and it's a lot of work on his behalf in the United States. So he helped get Nehru's autobiography published in the United States by John Lane. That was one of the first big little things that he does. So he's much closer to Nehru than Gandhi. What at the same time you know Gandhi and Singh do seem to have some correspondence? I mean I found at least one letter where Gandhi congratulates Singh for his work in getting the Luce-Celler Act passed, you know, helping it get passed in 1946. And Gandhi as a good lawyer asked for a copy of the legislation. He wants to read it. So you know, that in a nutshell gives you a sense of the relationship that the two men had not as extensive [distorted audio] relations with Nehru. So we do have two questions now.

One is to Nico. Can you elaborate on how, by claiming whiteness, some Indians in the diaspora were able to avoid racism?

Nico Slate: Sure, I will be brief given our time. It's a very good question. As I mentioned passingly, earlier, the naturalization law at that point in the United States history, said that there were really only two paths for people who were not born in the US to become citizens. One was to demonstrate that they were of African descent, that's the legacy of the Civil War. And the other was to demonstrate that they were white. And that was actually the term that was used, it goes way back in US legal history. But how does one define whiteness? That was a very complex question that involves a lot of the pseudoscience of the day. And it often involved claims on the word Aryan, or the word Caucasian. These are both keywords that come into play. And many Indians were able to deploy what were quite popular ideas at that point about the fundamental area and identity of particularly northern Indian higher caste people, right? So there was a regional dimension to this, and there was a caste dimension to this. So if I'm from the north, and I'm higher caste, then I can claim I am Aryan, and thus that makes me Caucasian, and thus that makes me white. That was the argument that people like Mahendra deployed quite successfully. So there are dozens of Indian Americans who are naturalized on the basis of successful claims to whiteness. Often in quite remarkable legal proceedings, you know, judges asked people to roll up their shirt sleeves to show their skin where it hadn't been darkened by the sun. In one legal case, a particular figure successfully gains whiteness by demonstrating that he had been allowed to purchase a plot in a whites only cemetery. So there's all sorts of different ways in which figures claim their whiteness, but it's successful in tell Bhagat Singh Thind case where the Supreme Court says no, actually, the common man would not see Indian migrants as white and thus they are not white. And that then becomes retroactively used to take away the citizenship of many Indian Americans. And that has catastrophic consequences. Because in many states, including California, the law does not allow people to own land who are not able to become citizens. So it has huge, both political and economic consequences for many Indian Americans.

Dinyar Patel: Thank you. So we have one last question. And this might allow us to talk a little bit more about our work we do so briefly, how do we access these papers or books if they are in book form? So I'll just very quickly just say for my part, the paper that I've written on J.J. Singh is to be published in the Journal of [indiscernible] and Commonwealth Studies. So you know, if you have an academic connection, it's available through there. I've written a book on [indiscernible], it's another very globe spanning Indian leader. So both Carolien and Nico if you want to talk about where your work is published?

Carolien Stolte: Yes, that's a very kind question, actually. So I have one paper out on Pratap that I wrote many years ago in Modern Asian Studies. Pratap's writings are prolific as well, but less so in the public domain, those kind of must be pieced together from various libraries. So what I'm actually working on right now is a biography of K.M. Panikkar, who was also a very well-traveled, wide ranging Indian leader, but sort of using his various identities as a diplomat as an

academic as a politician to shed light on his geographies of Asia and the Indian Ocean. My post 47 book, which I wrote together with Su Lin Lewis of Bristol University is coming out next year, but Leiden University Press which is called The Lives of Cold War [indiscernible].

Nico Slate: I am really excited to read that book. And in terms of my work, I've written about Kamaladevi both in the two books that Dinyar mentioned earlier, Lord Cornwallis is Dead and in Color Cosmopolitanism, and then now at work on a biography of her that I hope will emerge in a year or so.

Dinyar Patel: Great. So we are out of time right on time in fact. So I want to thank both Carolien and Nico for being a part of this panel. It's really wonderful to hear about both of your work and we hope through the Mittal Institute to highlight some more work on history in this upcoming year. Thanks also to Sanjay, to Salman and Amitabh for helping organize this event, all the technical details. And with that, we'll close today's presentation thanks to everyone for listening in.