

The Partition of Indian Britain
Communalist Violence and Politics among South Asian Religious Groups in the Modern
Day United Kingdom
By Aaron Kahn

In the weeks and months following the July 7, 2005 bombings of the London transport system, an interesting phenomenon began to spring up on the public rails and busses of England's capital. Young South Asians across the city began wearing shirts and stickers emblazoned with the message "Don't Freak, I'm a Sikh," in an effort to distance themselves from the backlash against the Islamic community. Ludicrous though it may seem, this trend has been, perhaps, the most blatant example of a deep shift within Britain's Asian community towards a definition of identity based specifically on religion and not simply sub-continental origin.¹ Recent years have seen a noticeable increase in communal tensions between British Asian communities that have been manifested in the forms of mass assertion of religious identity, gang violence, and a marked growth and shift in policies on the part of the South Asian religious right. Coming most strongly in the wake of the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, this communalism can be seen partially as a reactionary force on the part of England's Sikh and Hindu communities.²

As these tensions arose in the context of growing concerns internationally over the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, they could potentially be viewed as part of a larger western trend towards Islamophobia. This, however, is an over simplification that separates these tensions from the very specific sort of communalism that has been seen in South Asia since the colonial period. Examining the manifestations of the modern communal debate in Britain proves that despite coming as a reaction to issues of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamophobia, the rhetoric,

¹ *The Guardian* (London), "Mistaken Identity," September 5, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/comment/story/0,,1562863,00.html>.

² Arun Kundnani, "An Unholy Alliance? Racism, Religion and Communalism," *Race and Class* 44, no. 2 (2002): 72.

motivations, and underlining issues behind both communalist politics and violence in today's England have a clear connection to the legacies of the Indian Partition of 1947. These legacies can be seen in three major ways. The most obvious of these is the invoking of the Partition itself as a means to create or justify communalism. Secondly, we can find legacies in the revisiting of central themes and questions that were key in causing and shaping the events of 1947. The two best examples of this are the questions surrounding nationhood and identity, and the attention paid to female and familial honor. The last key legacy is to be found in the connections of present-day British Asian institutions to the communalist political environment of present-day India—an environment itself still tied to the effects of partition.

The central principle of the argument described above still rests on the idea that communalism arose as a reactionary force to Islamophobia. This work will primarily focus on the different aspects of the Hindu and Sikh diasporic groups, which have acted in ways that can be interpreted as communal. This is not done with the intention to paint either of the aforementioned communities as sole aggressors in the British Asian religious disputes, but is a simple result of the nature of the argument. This is not to say that Islamic communalism cannot be found within England³, but an in depth investigation into such a subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

To show that these issues have come as a reactionary force, it is first crucial to understand both the early history of the Indian Diaspora in the United Kingdom, as well as the progressive growth of British Islamophobia. Beginning in the 1950s and 60s, groups of South Asians began migrating to many parts of the western world for various, but typically economic, reasons. Unlike in Canada and the United States, however, the British Diaspora developed in a different social context due to the nation's position as a former colonial power of the Indian

³ For a brief overview of the ways that Islamic Fundamentalism has contributed to the British communal debate see Arun Kundnani, "An Unholy Alliance," 75-77.

subcontinent. The experience as colonizers meant that there was a long history of very specific, and often incorrect, perceptions about South Asians among the British people. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, England's post-war need for manual laborers along with the residency and citizenship rights afforded to all members of the British Commonwealth meant that a different migration took place than that in North America. While restrictive immigration laws meant that the United States mostly received Indians and Pakistanis who were middle and upper class professionals, the first to move to the UK were predominately individuals seeking work as unskilled manual laborers.⁴

These two factors led to increasing racism and hostility towards Asian immigrants on the part of the white British community—particularly after the end of the post-war economic boom, when immigrants of all types were viewed as taking jobs away from natural born citizens. Such public sentiment not only led to outbursts of racial riots and hate crimes in Britain, but also to the passing of legislation restricting the rights of Asian immigrants and their ability to bring more family members into the country.⁵ It was in this environment that the first generations of South Asian settlers in Britain of varying religions began to view one another within a context of shared identity, united by what they viewed as a common history and culture. Isolated within white society, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims organized together to fight against varying forms of racism, leading to the creation of such non-religious organizations as the Bradford Asian Youth Movement.⁶

⁴ John R. Hinnells, "South Asians in Britain," in *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*, eds. Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 77-80.

⁵ Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 113-120; J. Robert Wegs and Robert Ladrech, *Europe Since 1945: A concise History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1996), 166-168; Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason, "The resistible rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001," *Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2007): 64-65.

⁶ *The Guardian*, "Mistaken Identity.,"; Rifat Malik, "West Side Story—Asian Style," *The Evening Standard (London)*, May 22, 1997, 17.

So how did this sense of cooperation change? When did these groups begin to reject a shared “Asian” identity in favor of identities drawn along communal lines? As hinted at before, this shift has come largely as a result of British Sikhs and Hindus attempting to distance themselves from their Muslim counterparts in the wake of events tied to the growing Islamic fundamentalist movements. As Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason have noted, western Islamophobia did not suddenly begin on September 11, 2001, as is often depicted. In Britain, this trend was the result of “existing tendencies, which [had] been manifest in everyday racism” several years before the American terrorist attacks.⁷ Many scholars mark the start of British Islamophobia with the so-called “Rushdie Affair.” Upset over the depiction of the Prophet Mohammed in Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, Muslims throughout Britain protested by burning copies of the novel and effigies of its author. The resulting images of the protests, shown across the globe, led to outraged British citizens who viewed the event as an attack on freedoms akin to Nazism and the Inquisition. It was with this controversy that the country’s non-Muslim South Asians first began to attempt to distance themselves from the Islamic community.⁸

Anti-Islamic sentiment grew throughout British society with a number of controversial events over the course of the next decade, particularly following a series of riots in the towns of Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley in the spring of 2001. As has been noted by a number of scholars, these events were not of a religious nature, but rather the result of poor socio-economic conditions in these northern English areas—the hardest hit centers of the nation’s collapsed textile industry. Isolated in their communities by segregation and racism inflicted by both the local institutions and white residents, a generation of predominately Muslim Asian youths grew up resenting the second class status forced upon them. The closure of the area’s mills left these youths unemployed with very little hope for a bright economic future. Disenfranchised and

⁷ Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason, “The resistible rise of Islamophobia,” 81.

⁸ Ibid, 68-69. *The Guardian*, “Mistaken Identity.”

frustrated, these youths became more than willing to meet the attacks of racist whites with violence of their own.⁹

This is precisely what happened beginning in April of 2001 when a group of young whites went on a rampage through the mostly Asian Glodwick area of Oldham. As the Muslim youths responded to the attacks, police were called in wearing riot gear, and began to arrest the residents of the area rather than the groups that had set off the disturbances. The local youths reacted by throwing rocks, firing petrol bombs, and lighting cars on fire. The full scale rioting that resulted spread to the cities of Burnley and Bradford shortly thereafter. Violence continued to flare up throughout the region until the Bradford Riot of July 2001, in which some 200 police officers were injured. In the aftermath of these riots, condemnation of the young Muslims came from numerous segments of British society, while the blatant racism of the police officers went largely ignored.¹⁰ The period that followed saw no trace of the once-strong British Asian solidarity, as Hindu and Sikh organizations across the country were quick to denounce the rioters. That numerous media outlets throughout the country covered these events as “Asian” riots only gave further impetus to the non-Muslim segments of the Asian community to distance themselves from the Islamic population.¹¹

This trend only increased following the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks. Organizations such as the Sikh Federation and the Hindu Forum, each claiming to be the largest political and cultural representatives of their respective communities, actively began campaigns to put an end to the use of “Asian” as a catch-all category. These groups promoted the idea that members of their communities should be asserting their identities as Sikhs or Hindus, and not merely as “Asian.”

⁹ Ash Amin, “Unruly Strangers? The 2001 Urban Riots in Britain,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (2003): 460-463; Arun Kundnani, “From Oldham to Bradford: the Violence of the Violated,” *Race and Class* 43, no. 2 (2001): 105-109.

¹⁰ Arun Kundnani, “From Bradford to Oldham,” 105, 109-110.

¹¹ Ibid, 110; Konnie Huq, “Don’t Call me Asian,” *Asian Network Report*, BBC – Asian Network, October 09, 2006.

This effort gained wide support throughout Britain. A 2006 Runnymede Trust survey of Hindus across a variety of class and social lines found that roughly 80% of British Hindus wanted to be identified by their religious identity and not as “British Asians.”¹² Similarly, a number of British Hindu and Sikh citizens acknowledged working very hard to show they were not Muslim when out in the public sphere.¹³

These people and political institutions freely admitted that their concerns were, in part, due simply to the issue of safety. Following both terrorist attacks there was a spike in the amount of violent attacks against Muslim citizens, but frequently these attacks also saw Sikh and Hindu South Asians as the victims of mistaken identity. By asserting their identities in terms of religion, and attempting to make society more aware of the differences in the communities, groups like the Sikh Federation and the Hindu Forum hoped to put an end to such crimes.¹⁴

Yet, many feared that these assertions were simply the dressing up of anti-Islamic sentiment. Representatives from the Muslim Public Affairs Committee argued that rather than segregating themselves from one another, the different South Asians should work together to combat racism as a community. This view rested on the assertion of a common culture based on shared history, practices and languages. The representatives of the Hindu and Sikh communities disagreed with this point. They talked in great detail about the disconnect between the two communities. In this view the debate they began over identity is not anti-Islamic, but rather a positive assertion of their own identities.¹⁵ While framed in the language and context of the Diaspora, this debate is a clear reopening of the same question at the heart of the “two-nation

¹² Konnie Huq, “Don’t Call me Asian.”

¹³ Ibid.; *The Guardian*, “Mistaken Identity.”

¹⁴ Konnie Huq, “Don’t Call Me Asian.”; *The Guardian*, “Mistaken Identity.”

¹⁵ Konnie Huq, “Don’t Call me Asian.”

theory.” This debate is at the core of early-20th Century communalism and the partition itself. Can a culture—or nation—be defined on the basis of religion above all else?¹⁶

Beyond the realm of mainstream politics, such issues were seized upon by the political right as well. In January of 2002, Sunrise Radio—formerly known as Britain’s “leading Asian radio station”—banned the use of the word “Asian” following a campaign conducted by the UK branch of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).¹⁷ Indeed, as Arun Kundnani has argued, following the riots of 2001, the VHP UK represented one of the central Asian voices that “mixed class snobbery with communalism to publicly disown the Muslim rioters.”¹⁸ It is clear that the VHP has taken advantage of the political climates of Islamophobia and identity assertion to promote their agenda and recruit new members. However, their actions in the last several years by no means represent a shift in the ideology of a political organization whose origins are deeply connected to the pre and post-partition Hindu nationalist movements of India.¹⁹

Founded in India in 1964 by the leaders of a Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization known as the RSS, the VHP was created as global network to connect members of different Hindu Diaspora communities to Indian Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) causes.²⁰ The VHP UK has functioned primarily to create British Hindu cultural and social organization with a friendly public face, including festivals, youth movements, and even conducting welfare activities. As Parita Mukta has shown, however, such organization is always underlined with attempts to instill in the diasporic community a sense of intense Hindu pride rooted in a deep communalism in order to foster support for the Hindu nationalist efforts in India. Mukta argues that this has been

¹⁶ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History Culture and Political Economy*. (New York: Routledge, 2004),135-156.

¹⁷ Arun Kundnani, “An Unholy Alliance,” 72.

¹⁸ Arun Kundnani, “From Bradford to Oldham,” 110.

¹⁹ Arun Kundnani, “An Unholy Alliance,” 72, 77-78.

²⁰ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 472-485; Parita Mukta, “The Public Face of Hindu Nationalism,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 3 (2000): 443.

done by playing off notions of Hinduism as an outnumbered and isolated religion in England facing racism and oppression. This, in turn, has fomented support for, and silenced media criticism against, movements in India that violently targeted the Indian Islamic community. Thus, the VHP UK paradoxically has promoted an idea of British Hindus as a religious minority in order to legitimize Hindutva movements that oppressed minority religious communities within India itself.²¹

This has been done primarily through the dissemination of propaganda and the promotion of speaking tours by Hindu nationalist ideologues throughout Britain. The VHP UK has also been successful in using their status as representatives of a minority religious community to publish books used in the teaching of religion in multi-faith British primary schools, which promote an idea of Hinduism within a Hindutva context.²² As Mukta has shown, such efforts led to a Hindu right in Britain predicated on the “putting on [of] public theatre which only marginally masks its para-military character.”²³ Indeed, the organization is closely connected with the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS). Describing itself as a British Hindu cultural organization, the HSS is the British sister of India’s RSS and has regularly organized youth “training camps” and fundraising activities. In 2002, such funds collected by the VHP and HSS in the UK were proven to have been spent on weapons in India, which were used in state-sponsored violence against Muslims.²⁴

At a Hindu youth festival in March of 2002, speakers on the Hindu right encouraged their listeners to defend their religion and identities as Hindus, and to face down the intimidating threat of Muslims.²⁵ Though such rhetoric has increased in recent years, we can see from the

²¹ Ibid., 442-466.

²² Ibid., 442-445.

²³ Ibid., 453-454.

²⁴ Arun Kundnani, “An Unholy Alliance,” 72-73, 77-78.

²⁵ Ibid., 77.

facts above that the institutions and ideologies of Hindutva were well established and active in Britain for several decades prior. Similar trends can also be seen on the part of England's Sikh right. However, to fully examine the ways in which this aspect of British political society changed as a result of growing Islamophobia, we must first understand how the British nationalist movement responded to this same political and cultural trend. Seen as the main representative of this movement, the far-right British National Party (BNP) was formed in the early 1980s at the height of British xenophobia. For most of the party's history, it has been based on the idea of a need to protect British jobs and culture from the perceived threat of immigration. The key policies of this organization have been, as a result, a demand for the repatriation of immigrants and their families to their nations of origin.²⁶

This all changed drastically in the wake of the 2001 riots. In an effort to gain allies opposed to Islam, as well as counteract the racist portrayal of the party, BNP leader Nick Griffin began to court members of the Sikh and Hindu right to work together with the party. While this offer of collaboration was quickly rejected by the VHP, it proved incredibly enticing to Rajinder Singh, a leading figure in the organization known as Shere-e-Punjab. A fringe Sikh group active since the mid-1980s, Shere-e-Punjab has existed in Britain as a far right political voice in the Khalistani movement, which called for a separate Sikh homeland to be established in the Punjab. The organization has also been known to function as a defender of British Sikh communities when there have been perceived threats to these groups. Accordingly, the group has targeted much of its propaganda against Muslim men converting Sikh girls to Islam.²⁷

Working closely together, these factions of the British white and Sikh political communities have collaborated on the creation of numerous propaganda materials used to

²⁶ Ibid., 73.

²⁷ Ibid.; Nick Lowles, "Sleeping with the enemy: Griffin ponders black membership," *Searchlight*, February 2002, 33-34.

portray the Muslim population as the biggest threat to England. One example of this was a CD of speeches by Griffin, and Sikh and Hindu contributors released in the wake of the events of 2001 entitled *Islam—A threat to us all*. On this disc, the Sikh speaker warned of an extremist plot to “turn Britain into an Islamic republic like Libya, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan by 2025.”²⁸ Rajinder Singh has also been featured in several interviews in BNP publications and on the party’s website. In these pieces, Singh attempts to show that the Sikh and white causes were one in the same. He has done this, primarily, by invoking the Partition of India as a massive violent tragedy caused solely by “separatist, intolerant” Muslim aggressors. Singh has argued that the savagery of Partition and the destruction seen in the New York and London terrorist attacks are rooted in the inherently violent religion of Islam.²⁹ In a similar vein, Singh has stressed to his community the modern Pakistani location of historic Sikh holy lands, as a result of Partition, to again portray Muslims as the greatest enemy, and to call for Sikh support of the BNP as the only party willing to acknowledge this notion.³⁰

Thus far, we have examined communalism in Britain only at the levels of the rhetoric and policies of various political and cultural institutions. It is crucial to note, however, that the increase in tensions between these communities have not lacked a dimension of communally motivated violent outbursts. Perhaps, the most relevant example, for the purposes of our study, was the event that took place in Slough, outside of London in 1997. Tensions between the area’s Muslim gang, known as the Chalvey Boys, and Sikh youths from London’s Southall region had grown steadily for some time, resulting in a number of small skirmishes between the two religiously defined communities. The tensions culminated in April of that year when between 60

²⁸ Nick Lowles, “Sleeping with the enemy,” 33.

²⁹ British National Party, *Sikh implores Britons to stand strong against Islam*, http://www.bnp.org.uk/news_detail.php?newsId=814.

³⁰ Arun Kundnani, “An Unholy Alliance,” 73-74; *Eastern Eye*, “Just One of the Boys,” September 9, 2006, <http://www.easterneyeuk.co.uk>.

and 100 members of Shere-e-Punjab descended on Slough in a rampage that destroyed a vast amount the local residents' private property. A number of Muslims retaliated a few nights later by confronting a Sikh teenager in a local park, and nearly beat him to death. The violence finally came to a head a few weeks later when heavily armed Chavley Boys and Shere-e-Punjab members attempted to clash on the coinciding festivals of Eid and Visakhi. A large police presence prevented a second major outburst of violence, and nearly 90 arrests were made.³¹

At the time, the press and respective communities involved gave a number of reasons for what sparked this particular series of violent events. Some cited a maddening sense of idleness and despair brought on by an underemployed and poor youth community. Others pointed to a trend of growing fervent religious loyalty without a true understanding of religious tenets. Still others blamed a reaction to communalist tensions in India sparked by debates over Khalistan.³² While it is likely that all of these factors played some role in sparking the events in Slough in 1997, there can be little question that these events were characterized by blatant communalist tendencies. As many reported, the fighting between these two groups before, during, and after this set of events was marked by strong showings of religious and nationalist symbols. The members of Shere-e-Punjab came into Slough dressed in orange—the color often associated with India—to fight green-clad Muslim youths who proudly displayed the official color of Pakistan. Similarly, it was reported that the Sikhs drove into town waving the flag of Khalistan, while Muslim youths blocked the streets of Southall brandishing Pakistani flags.³³

³¹ Nick Lowles, "Sleeping with the enemy," 34; Rifat Malik, "West Side Story—Asian Style," 17; Palash Kumar, "Asian vs Asian as 'Khalistan' row strikes UK," *The Independent* (London), May 4, 1997, 9; *The Independent* (London), "Sikh teenager fighting for life after revenge attack," April 30, 1997, 2; Mark Rowe, "Southall Sikhs attack Muslims in feud," *The Independent* (London), April 28, 1997, 6; Vivek Chaudhary, "Poverty and Despair Behind War of Asian Gangs," *The Guardian* (London), May 3, 1997, 6; *Eastern Eye* "Chavley Boyz V Shere-E-Punjab," October 14, 2005, <http://www.easterneyeonline.co.uk>.

³² Rifat Malik, "West Side Story—Asian Style," 17; Vivek Chaudhary, "Poverty and Despair Behind War of Asian Gangs," 6; Palash Kumar, "Asian vs Asian as 'Khalistan' row strikes UK," 9.

³³ *Ibid.*

While these events occurred well before the 2001 riots and the later terrorist attacks, they still represented a large-scale youth trend in violently asserting one's communal identity. Many of the shocked members of the older generations that witnessed these events noted how such violence would have been unthinkable in the years of early immigration preceding the Rushdie Affair.³⁴ As of the time of this writing, the London area has not seen further large-scale communal gang violence of the sort that emerged in spring 1997. This has been largely due to the efforts of community organizations that strove to educate youths on religious differences and combated the rise of gangs.³⁵ Smaller skirmishes between the communities, however, have continued in the areas around London as well as the rest of Britain with a number of instances typically arising in the wake of events like the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks. Such was the case in Derby when a heated debate between school girls over the 9/11 attacks erupted into violence that left a teenage Hindu student with a fractured skull and spinal injuries.³⁶

Yet, while often tied to increased periods of Islamophobia, there is a further central theme common to both the 1997 events in Slough and Southall and the subsequent instances of communal violence. As we have already seen in the production of propaganda on the part of Shere-e-Punjab, these tensions have often been based on misconceptions within the Hindu and Sikh communities of Muslims attempting to date and convert South Asian girls of other faiths.³⁷ In some cases, this idea has been pushed a step further, with groups like Shere-e-Punjab claiming that Sikh girls have been regularly kidnapped, drugged, and forced into prostitution in Pakistan by British Muslims.³⁸ Such thinking was used in the rationalization of Shere-e-Punjab's rampage through Slough. This same notion has been seen more recently in pamphlets published in Derby

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Eastern Eye* "Chavley Boyz V Shere-E-Punjab."

³⁶ Arun Kundnani, "An Unholy Alliance," 71-72, 77-78.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Nick Lowles, "Sleeping with the enemy.," 34.

following September 11th, supposedly by an Islamic group calling itself “Real Khilafah,” which not only encouraged Muslim men to date Sikh girls, but provided instructions showing how easy it was to do so. Though the document and organization were shown to be falsified, they were still successful in increasing violent tensions at a moment when they were already running high.³⁹

Such methods have been useful in fomenting and rationalizing anti-Islamic policies and violence in the South Asian community, because of the cultural tendency, particularly in the Hindu and Sikh communities, to view women as the repositories of honor in society. Central to this notion is the idea of female purity. Thus, the taking of women into new communities not only tarnishes the honor of that women, but as a result her family, and indeed the entire community. It was this very same theme that used, albeit in a number of very different ways, to justify communal violence in the Partition. Attacking women of other communities was seen as a direct attack on the honor of that group, and similarly, violence inflicted on one’s own women was seen as the only means of protecting the community’s honor. The theme of women’s purity is thus something that can be seen time and again in scholarly and fictional partition literature.⁴⁰

This point was also reaffirmed in the fiction of the modern British South Asian community, as demonstrated by Gautam Malkani’s 2006 novel *Londonstani*. The book centers around the lives of a small group of gangster-esque Hindu and Sikh friends living in Southall in the period after the London bombings. When the book opens, the group’s leader, a muscular teenage Sikh who goes by Hardjit, has challenged one of the area’s Muslim youths to a fight due to rumors that he was dating several of the local Sikh and Hindu girls. Though not connected to these girls in any direct way, Hardjit feels it is his duty to seek physical revenge to protect the honor of his community. When the fight actually occurs, both sides come dressed to assert their

³⁹ Arun Kundnani, “An Unholy Alliance,” 72, 76.

⁴⁰ Farina Mir, Class Lectures, *The Partition of British India: 1947: History, Literature and Film*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 3, 2007.

nationalist and religious pride, with Hardjit decked out in all orange and wearing symbolic Sikh objects, while his opponent wears a Pakistani football jersey and green bandana. Hardjit beats his opponent mercilessly while the youth community looks on. This point is not lost on the story's narrator, Jas, a Hindu friend of Hardjit who later is forced to keep his relationship with a local Muslim girl secret. Once he is found out, he is immediately thrust into the danger of being beaten up by his former friends, or being harmed by the Muslim girl's brothers who wish to protect their family's honor. Though the actual plot of the book deals with a very different issue, much of the story's action is driven by the need to protect familial and communal honor.⁴¹

These combined stories show that as Islamophobia has grown in Britain, there was been an increased desire by the country's Hindu and Sikh South Asians to assert their separate communal identities in positive as well as violent ways. Yet, as we have also seen, this culturally tendency has been used by institutions on the far political right to gain public support, increased membership, media attention, and a chance to push separatist agendas. That the rhetoric, policies, and violence resulting from this has invoked the Partition, reawakened the central themes and questions of that event, and highlighted connections between these institutions and the modern communal issues in the subcontinent shows that the legacy of Partition is alive and well in the British communal debate. Yet, while the political moment of the 1940s primarily brought the agitation for separate religious identities from the Muslim Indians, today's context has forced this same notion from the British Hindus and Sikhs.

⁴¹ Gautam Malkani, *Londonstani*, (London: Fourth Estate, 2006), 9, 78-89, 198-227, 283-303.

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