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“But hating, my boy, is an art”: Sir Francis Mudie and the Role of Colonialism in Creating Hindu/Muslim Rivalry between India and Pakistan

Abstract

“Go to Pakistan”, is a very common slur in present-day India if someone speaks against the current Indian government or their statements are misconstrued as anti-Hindu and by extension anti-India. The rivalry between India and Pakistan is nothing new. But the recent rise of the Hindu right wing in India has added a new dimension to the conflict. There are no more grey areas or spaces for any discussion. It’s a new era of hate, bigotry, and parochialism. Since their creation, India has been relatively more secure in their identity, but Pakistan had to keep finding ways to balance religion and democracy, as a result has always stayed in a situational flux. However, India’s recent quest for a Hindu identity has created unique crises in the region, namely a push towards Hindu pride that is equated Indian nationalism, as a result, Indian Muslims are being rapidly pushed into marginalized, relegated spaces where their voices are being drowned by the noise of Hindu extremism. This article first closely looks at the life of Sir Francis Mudie (1890-1976), the prominent civil servant of British India who served as the first Governor of West Punjab, Pakistan. By tracing Mudie’s career in India, and later in Pakistan the article shows the role of active colonial intervention in creating serious animosities between Hindus and Muslims. Further, the article also argues that colonization indeed pushed both India and Pakistan to a “hauntological” zone where their failed futures¹ are holding on to a nostalgic mirage that is not only severely altering their political underpinnings but damaging their economies too. The narrative of decolonization has been recently hijacked by the right-wing movements. It has become very crucial to examine the ebb and flow of shifting goalposts, where decolonization in South Asia has been directly linked with casteism, anti-science stance, quack medicine, and intensification of gender inequalities.

Introduction

It would be both unfair and simplistic to blame colonialism as the sole reason for Hindu/Muslim antagonism. The British indeed took advantage of pre-existing cracks and deepened them. Therefore, it becomes very crucial to examine a few critical things before beginning the discussion on Sir Francis Mudie. The bulk of the article will focus on discussing Mudie’s role in Punjab, a brief analysis of his career in United Provinces will help establish the larger context of the piece. In

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many ways, Mudie mutates into a symbol of both colonial opportunism and naivety thereby helping one understand the scars that plagues India and Pakistan today.

The article first looks at the life of Sir Francis Mudie and important events that shaped his views about Indians, especially Hindus. After that, some specific aspects of Hindu Nationalism is discussed highlighting how they were directly responsible for shaping Mudie's views on Hinduism. Finally, the article looks into British perception of Indians, particularly, their deeply polarized understanding of Hindus and Muslims, and how their views caused long-term harm to both India and Pakistan/

Sir Francis Mudie

Sir Robert Francis Mudie was born in Broughty Ferry, a wealthy suburb near the city of Dundee in Scotland, United Kingdom. At the time of Mudie's childhood and youth Broughty Ferry was referred to as the "richest square mile in Europe." He received excellent schooling when he attended Seafield House, where he made friends with George Cunningham and Rob Lockhardt, both of whom served with him later in India. Mudie excelled at academics and won a scholarship to attend Fettes College in Edinburgh. He was a remarkable mathematician and won a mathematical scholarship to King's College in Cambridge. In 1911, he graduated from King's College as a wrangler (someone who obtained a first class, a rare achievement indeed).

After his graduation, he spent a term as assistant master at Clifton College. After that, he joined as an assistant master at Eton College. Both these appointments were highly prestigious and only a candidate who demonstrated academic excellence would get it. However, after four terms Mudie realized being a school master was not his calling, he decided to take a break and prepare for the Indian Civil Service (ICS). As fate would have it, ICS examinations started on 2nd August, 1914, two days before the First World War broke out.

Mudie had previously been a sergeant in the Officer Training Corps at Cambridge, and immediately applied to be commissioned. He was gazetted on 26 August first to the 6th battalion (in the city of London), then later to The London Regiment (Rifles), and was given permission to join two weeks later giving him time to complete his ICS entrance examinations. This was not an exceptional situation since many successful ICS candidates had served in the army before the exam results were declared. In fact, the British War Office had decided that successful ICS candidates should be sent to India as soldiers and could eventually join the service provided that within one year, they had passed health, riding and language examinations. After all, getting into the ICS was not just limited to academic training, but there were many hurdles that were required to cross. Mudie was a successful candidate and the requirements of ICS demanded knowing an Indian language. Mudie was asked to learn Bengali.

Mudie had a fairly intense army career in India. He was first transferred first to the Royal Welch Fusiliers, then to a territorial division before joining the 2/4th battalion Somerset Light Infantry and under this infantry he was sent to India. The battalion sailed on the troop ship called *Saturnia*, arriving in Bombay in January

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1915. From Bombay the battalion was posted to Bangalore, where Mudie's company was detached off and sent to Malappuram. From there Mudie was sent with a platoon to Calicut, under the command of Robert McDougall.

Since knowing an Indian language was key to obtaining a position in ICS, Mudie simply had to learn Bengali, and with that goal in mind, after two months he was reassigned to the 1/10th battalion Middlesex regiment in Calcutta. However, he failed to assimilate with the regiment and soon requested a transfer. Four months later he was assigned to 10th Gurkha Rifles in Maymyo (modern day Myanmar).

Later, he was reassigned to the 16th Rajputs (The Lucknow Regiment) again in Calcutta. After a temporary assignment to the 89th Punjabis he returned to Calcutta to join the 127th Baluchis. In 1917 he was sent for musketry training at [Satara](#) where he remained on the musketry staff until the end of the war. The war had not only given Mudie a solid understanding of the Indian landscape but he also gained invaluable field experience during this period.

Although Mudie showed competence during the war years, ICS also required passing a medical exam and gaining proficiency in a native language. Mudie failed the medical exam and couldn't learn Bengali. Instead, he studied Urdu, a language he picked up during his years in the army and gained proficiency in it. Further, the failure in medical exams did not deter him. He requested for another one, and he passed his second medical exam. He then requested a transfer from Bengal to United Provinces (UP). His request for a transfer from Bengal to United Provinces was initially turned down as impossible. But Rudman, Additional Under-Secretary in the Home Department of the Government of India, and his batchmate from King's college, decided to help him out. He introduced Mudie to Sir Tennant Sloan, Under Secretary in the Home Department, who in turn took him to meet the Deputy Secretary, Mackworth Young. Two weeks later, Mudie was transferred to United Provinces where he started his ICS career.

Between 1919 and 1930 he served in various positions and dealt with a wide variety of responsibilities. In Jhansi he served as the Assistant Magistrate. In Benares as the Joint Magistrate. In Dehra Dun he served as an Income Tax Officer, after that in Agra as Assistant District Magistrate and Collector. After Agra he worked in Sultanpur as Deputy Commissioner, and from there he went to Pratapgarh to work as a Settlement Officer. In 1926, he became the Collector of Farrukhabad. That same year he also became the Settlement Officer in Agra, a position he held till 1929.²

Understanding Hindu Nationalism

It is very likely that during his career in United Provinces his anti-Hindu sentiments first developed. Although, a brief look at Mudie's career will help one understand some of his biases and how they played out during the partition. He was clearly an elite with excellent education and experience in India. His background matters because it helps us understand why Muhammad Ali Jinnah chose him as the first governor of Punjab. But before one explores Mudie's encounter with Hindu extremism a comparative explanation of the right-wing Hinduism will add context to the discussion.

Since April 2022 onwards, the United States has witnessed plenty of anti-grooming protests by the conservative right wings. This is happening also in Canada and parts of Europe; the hub of the anti-grooming discourse remains the US. In May 2022, the anti-grooming protesters at the entrance of Disney World in Orlando were joined by Neo Nazis who proudly donned their swastikas. They went as far as dressing up as Nazi soldiers and blended it with MAGA (Make America Great Again) flags. One may wonder how the present day largely western protests against alleged grooming is linked to pre-independent India in any way. The answer is complex and lies in understanding crowd paranoia and its impact on individuals.³

But before one makes the link, it is important to understand what anti-grooming means. The present-day idea of grooming is targeted against the LGBTQ community, as the right wing White nationalists fear that they will lose their “traditional” lifestyle. They fear teaching children about same-sex relations and transgendered identities will make them want to become like them. The idea of “grooming” a child is mostly within a sexual context where the conservatives fear that a more liberal society will both morally and sexually damage their children.⁴ This fear is not based on any evidence but conspiracy theories and stereotypes. As a result, the gay communities, transgendered population are singled out and attacked regularly in these conservative spaces. This rarely happens on large scales in big cities where the population is diverse, but in small places where they are anyway lower in number. They are easy targets.⁵

Further, these groups have a network of conspiracy theories, and these theories have a very powerful impact on politics. Had it not been for fake news and conspiracists Donald Trump would have never become the president of the US. However, the roots of anti-grooming laws and the myriad of conspiracy theories that attack more liberal world are rooted in the Nazi ideology. It’s not a coincidence that Neo-Nazis routinely show up in these protests. The Nazis associated Jews as being responsible for homosexuality. Accusations like this don’t need evidence but fueling hate and rumors. The horror stories of Nazi “pink hell” is well-documented by numerous sources.⁶ Although, it’s important to point out here, that I am not challenging their sexual orientation here but the falsehood that they spread the infection of “homosexuality” to others. The idea that somehow their orientation was a contagious disease and the fact that Jews carried that disease. That’s the utter falsehood which was propagated by the Nazis. It is untruth like this that has dangerous impacts on minorities who don’t have a voice to counteract these baseless accusations.

Now it is important to link this to the Indian landscape. The Nazis had a massive impact on right wing Hindus. Firstly, it is very important to understand that the Hindutva movement is not home-grown but grew in Colonial India and got sustained through Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany who in turn engaged with Hindutva to further their own ideology. Hindutva is a bastardized product of western right-wing nationalism that only became mainstream after the election of Narendra Modi in 2014.⁷ The Hindus in India did not have any sense of common spirit, and that makes sense. First, there is caste hierarchy, then there are known

rivalries between different groups of “Hindus”. Finally, the religion itself lacks any cohesive text or structure to find a basis of unity. There is no way a sense of common spirit can come to Hindus.⁸ And until colonization, Hindus did not even bother to find a commonality, Muslims were a part of their existence. Indeed, they had their differences, bitter rivalries but none of this led to conceiving a singular Hindu identity.

The populist ideology of Germany and Italy deeply appealed to a certain section of upper caste Hindus. It boded beautifully to their dislike of the lower castes and Muslims. Their policy of divide and rule had entered the very fabric of Indian socio-political structure in 1857 after the sepoy mutiny where the Hindus and Muslims had fought together. In 1909, the British had accepted Muslim’s demand of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims. Local Hindu elites had formed “*Hindu Sabhas*”, these organizations eventually formed the Hindu Mahasabha in 1914. They actively sought to create a Hindu identity that was based on being an antithesis to Muslims. It was not an identity based on finding attributes to be united, but an organization defined by negatives. Their very inception was based on being hostile to Muslims, and the British but to a much lesser extent.⁹

The Rashtriya Sawamsevak Sangh (RSS) was founded in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Today, the RSS plays a huge role in shaping Indian politics and Mr. Narendra Modi was a member of this organization in his youth. In its early days, the organization did indeed help in relief during famines but that was always a secondary goal. Their primary goal was to create a language of Hindu pride and construct the idea of Hindu India that is very close to the Fascist ideology. I want to reiterate that I am not using the term fascist here in a figurative sense. Hedgewar’s mentor B.S Moonje had met Mussolini in 1930 and spend time learning about the physical exercises and drills performed by the fascist youths. Moonje later helped design the RSS drill that was exactly based on the Italian one. The links between western fascism and Hindu Mahasabha are direct and literal. The Hindu Mahasabha openly supported The Third Reich, made links between German Aryans and Hindu Brahmins, and V.D. Savarkar who was one of the most prominent voices of Hindutva actively propagated that what the Nazis have done to Jews, Hindus should do the same to Muslims.¹⁰

In 1939, Golwalkar (popularly known as Masterji), wrote his controversial book *We or our Nationhood Defined*. His book urged Hindus to adopt Hindu language, culture and be the beacon for Hindu race. He further added that the goal of Hindu race should be to annihilate other races or merge them into the Hindu race. So racist was his work that the British banned it, and since he was the head of the RSS at that time, the RSS gained a terrible reputation. However, what stands out here is the concept of Hindu race. Hinduism is not a racial or ethnic identity, it’s a very diverse group of people who were incorrectly identified and brought under an umbrella for administrative convenience. There can’t be any Hindu language or one Hindu culture. While people in southern Indian states definitely see themselves as Hindus, they have absolutely nothing in common with Hindus from UP. Their language, food, rituals all differ widely. The entire idea of Hindu race can’t have any basis since it’s a completely artificial construct that Golwalkar had copied from the Nazi manifesto. It is extremely important to recognize that

Hindu extremism was fringe for a long time, primarily because of its zero relatability beyond a small group of elites. It is a variant of western nationalism. Yet, resurgence of populist movements are not uncommon in history. But it is important to also remember that the current Indian brand of Hindu extremism, while insidious and violent, is utterly hollow and insecure since there is no Hindu race.

Mudie's career in United Provinces (currently known as Uttar Pradesh) is marked by rapid growth of Hindu extremism and anti-Islamic propaganda. The most notable one being the rise of cow vigilantism.¹¹ Mudie witnessed all these movements closely. He saw the blatant anti-Islamic propaganda that was carried out by the Hindu extremist groups.

In 1866, the Hindi poet Hitnarayan Singh wrote a poem requesting all Kshatriyas (Hindu warrior caste) to rally against cow slaughter.¹² By the 1870s riots over cow slaughter had spread in Bihar, and by 1880s spilled into United Provinces. The Christian rulers too, were targets of this vitriol. The cow vigilante groups accused anyone killing cows as murderers. At this point, it is important to note that cow vigilantism was not pan-Indian, and strictly limited to few states. Mudie had generalized his opinion about Hindus at large based on what he witnessed in Bihar and UP. Unfortunately, the intelligentsia of Bihar supported cow protection. Between 1880s-90s, many literatures were produced that justified cattle as an essential economic asset. Albeit partly true, the cattle's holy status was highlighted above its economic benefits. The Bihari intellectuals even appealed to the Queen for cow protection. There was a whole movement called "Cry of the Cow" and many western educated voices also got involved. In some ways, this changed the direction of cow protection and the later literature tried to involve the Muslims too in cow protection. The goal was to acknowledge cows as nationally significant, abstinence from beef as a secular goal and overall economic growth of the country.¹³

The British had largely dismissed them. By the 1890s, riots took place over cow slaughter and only then did the British take some minor action against the very active cow vigilante group called Gau Rakshini Sabha. In 1893, the government punished the group by selling cows from cow asylums in the Dadari animal fair. The Allahabad high court allowed Muslims to kill cows but not do it openly on the streets. These losses further infuriated the cow protection groups which resulted in numerous incidents of violence. There were rumor mills all over the country that gave eclectic information on cow slaughter and protection. It is important to note that in many states, like Bengal, the cow vigilante groups were publicly condemned. The culmination of all this was finally the Shahabad riots in 1917 that resulted in 80 deaths and 2,457 arrests. Rumour mills played a major role in these riots. There were chain letters that called out for Muslim blood and that had snowballed into a complete chaos. Congress had not actively condemned these riots and stayed indifferent during the entire event.¹⁴ Mudie began his career in 1919, and served in both Bihar and UP, the hub of Hindu extremism. It was at its peak when Mudie served there. Riots are often followed by periods of intense animosity, and the pop culture in the two states were steeped in anti-Islamic propaganda. It was only natural that Mudie would develop a rather monochromatic view of Hindus.

One important reason to discuss cow vigilantism while discussing Mudie is to reiterate the fact that history is dynamic, and the past is often a reflection of the present. Cow vigilantism that was dismissed as marginal has become the strength of the ruling party (Bharatiya Janata Party) in UP today. There have been many instances of lynching Muslims over cattle slaughter all over India, but UP still remains the hub of it. It is critical to point out that the rise of Hindu extremism is not new, but active mainstream political support has changed the entire socio-cultural dynamics in India.¹⁵

Entering Punjab:

Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins, popularly known as Evan Jenkins, was the last Governor of undivided Punjab under the British Empire. Born on 2 February 1896 in a middle class British family, he had successfully completed his education from Eton College, and later joined the Indian Civil Service in 1920. Prior to his appointment in Punjab, he was also appointed as the Chief Commissioner of Delhi in the year 1937. Later he became the Secretary of the Department for Supply in 1940 and served the position until 1943. Evan Jenkins also acted as the Private Secretary to the Viceroy and Private Secretary to the Governor from the year 1943 to 1946. Eventually, he was appointed as the Governor of the Punjab in British India in 1946. He served in office from 8 April 1946 to 15th August 1947. Sir Jenkins not only received knighthood but was also made the Order of the Star of India. He was deeply respected by his colleagues and people who worked under him. Sir Jenkins passed away in 1985.¹⁶

This brief biography of Sir Jenkins that appears on popular websites, does not tell us about the layers of complexities that plagued his day-to-day life as the governor. Yet it is important to see what one typically remembers in a short biography. Short biographies are both detached and clinical and outdated. For a long time, simplistic biographies have created laudatory accounts of British officials. In order to disentangle British voices from their colonial matrix, it is important to analyze the relationship between Jenkins and Mudie.

The reason behind this is to look at narratives that effectively demonstrate Mudie's political decisions and help us understand the long-term impact it continues to etch on the very fabric of India and Pakistan. In order to do that, one needs to take the help of an old adage. Begin the story from the beginning. A look at Mudie's career in Sindh and then Jenkins' concluding years in Punjab will help establish the backdrop of Mudie's disastrous political decisions in Punjab. It is impossible to understand Mudie's actions without looking at Jenkins' legacy and how it fueled Mudie's existing prejudices. Further, one also needs to look into events that allowed Mudie to champion the causes of Muslims, not as an activist but as a white saviour. It will not be out of place to mention how his beliefs and ethos affected his decisions in Sindh. The Congress had accused Mudie of favouring the Muslim League when he had dissolved the Sindh Legislative Assembly. Mudie had showed strong support for the League, expressed his concern over Congress' attempt to silence Muslim voices and strongly felt that Hindus would harm Muslims.¹⁷ His support for Muslims was public knowledge

and he did not trust the secular platform of the Congress. He felt (wrongly) Congress would always favour Hindus.

It is important to point out that colonial overreach indeed problematized the existing Indian political situation. It needs to be reiterated that native visions were not allowed autonomous expressions, instead, repeatedly thwarted by colonial overseers who made it akin to a project of managing unruly children. The term, ‘unruly children’ does not come from a space of sarcasm. In fact, infantilizing natives was always an integral part of colonial project.¹⁸

For example, a letter written by Mudie to Governor General Lord Wavell provides a good starting point to the discussion.

“I enclose a copy of McElhinny's report for the second half of February. I was afraid at one time that the action taken by the provincial government might make the ministry's position more difficult, but I think that the reverse has been the case. Their fate is in the hands of the three European members and they, of course, approve neither of mutiny nor of riots. What was far more dangerous was the attack on government over the commutation of the death sentence of Allan Khan as reported in my letter No. 79/68 of 13th February. The Hindu press took this up on the lines that it was political jobbery of the worst type, and as such Europeans could not support it. As far as I know, however, the European members, though they disapprove the commutation, are not prepared on the ground to put G.M. Sayed into power. Actually I do not think that it was an act of political jobbery. It was said.... the ministry wanted to commute the sentence because Allan Khan has a cousin whom was opposing Sayed in the election. But before the matter came up in council he had withdrawn in Sayed's favour and the ministry owed him nothing. It is now said that it was Sayed who wanted the sentence commuted. Personally I think it was merely an act of gross stupidity by Ghulam Ali the Home Minister, who persuaded the others. He is a good-hearted but stupid and obstinate little man. Whatever happens, it has a good lesson to them.”¹⁹

Let us look at the language and inherent bias in the letter. The letter is not just a reminder of the political context where the British are trying to micromanage elections, but more than anything else it's Mudie's attitude towards the natives. There is both dismissal and demonization of Hindus, swiftly dismissing Syed's political claims, and then follows it by affectionately admonishing an errant child by calling him “obstinate stupid little man”. This is how he chooses to talk about the Home Minister in official correspondence and not over tea and sandwiches at the club. These were formal records sent to the governor general.

It is crucial to unpack a few ideas here. First, Mudie offered simplistic solutions to complicated problems, and second, he convoluted simplified situations. One needs to distinguish between simplistic and simple here. Simplistic ideas are akin to black and white thinking. Categorizing every problem is a binary and there are only two problems. Simple on the other hand is a solution that benefits people the most. Simplifying any issue needs a lot of deep understanding, and the colonial government almost never chose to take any decision that would benefit all native demands.

Mudie had a definitive (and extremely erratic) concept of ideal Muslim behaviour. That notion was eventually completely dismantled. One doesn't need any data to establish that homogeneity in any human group is not just a myth but a massive blunder. Even kindergarten children display a wide range of diverse behavior, even when one is discussing about children from similar socio-cultural backgrounds. Further, the illusion of homogeneity makes people overlook gigantic behavioral discrepancies, take disastrous decisions and make many pay for their errors. Colonialism was a gigantic blunder that often stemmed from us versus them mentality, and it continues to haunt the South Asian psyche even today.

Mudie played a huge role in expelling Sayed. Mudie saw Sayed as an outlier to Islam and disturbed his ideas about Muslims. So, in what way did he differ from his predecessor Jenkins? Each British leader played out their own biases over Indian subjects. That's why the two nations have inherited such broken nations with fractured identities.

Mudie and Jenkins were both colonialists playing a card game of their favorites over the fate of India. My analogy may seem dramatic but if we view this from a native postcolonial lens, the analogy will seem apt. Mudie and Jenkins sat across a card table. One preferred Muslims, the other preferred Hindus. Mudie snatched away the autonomy from Sindh and Jenkins did the same to Punjab. Their game ended in a stalemate, since the only losers were the Indians whose autonomous voices were completely smothered. The irony today is that the natives still hold on to these binaries and forget how their autonomy was silenced by the British.

The “grateful slave” trope may help clarify how native autonomy was silenced. As George Boulukos argues that while the British abolitionists admitted that slavery was abhorrent, they repeatedly sold the narrative of the kind master whose humane treatment satisfied the slaves. While “grateful slave” is a literary trope, it encapsulates the widely accepted moral idea about slavery. The British felt discomfort at the idea of slavery. To soothe that, there were plenty of stories with a very popular trope. The usual theme was slaves under brutal master who severely tortured them. As the slaves were ready to revolt, the master died suddenly and his young and kind relative inherited the plantation. The new master treated their slaves with kindness and dignity. They decided to stay on and not revolt blown away by his kindness. These were grateful slaves.

Boulukos maintains that in order to justify slavery to themselves the British felt treating your slaves with kindness and providing them with basics solved the problem of “slavery”. They didn't acknowledge that treating someone who works for you with kindness and caring for them is a basic requirement. At no point did they honor the slaves with complete agency. This denial of agency resulted in white savior syndrome, a trait the colonizers carried within them. Even though the Indians were not their slaves, they could never comprehend ideas of complete agency and retained infantilization of the natives till the very end.²⁰ The fact that indentured labours from India continued to work in British plantations in the Caribbean bears witness to this mentality. Mudie is no exception, he regularly and routinely infantilized Indians. As did many other British officers, only Mudie was very vocal about it.

Jenkins too held racist views but did not express them like Mudie did. Jenkins had taken the effort to learn more about Punjab and tried to understand the crux of *Punjabiyyat* or the essence of being a Punjabi. In his defence, Jenkins' homogeneity had few more boxes than Mudie's good versus evil mindset. Sure, Jenkins' preferred Hindus and unfairly prevented the Muslim League from forming a government. His actions had a lasting impact on the fate of Punjab, he like any colonial ruler had robbed the natives, particularly the Muslims, of autonomy.

Yet in his own convoluted way, Jenkins had a better understanding of Punjab. He had spent a long time there and took effort to study Punjabi culture and understood few nuances about the province as Farha Baqai quotes,

“Jenkins' forte was his knowledge of the Punjab. He knew the Punjabis both for their virtues and vices. Sir Jenkins made no secret of the fact that he did not believe in the partition of India, and particularly that of the Punjab. He repeatedly pointed out to the politicians of the province including the Muslims, Hindus and the Sikhs alike that division of their land would end its importance for India...”²¹

Mudie had made up his mind in UP about all of India, and refused to budge from that view.

His entire career in India was spent looking for evidence to support that view, and ultimately, that skewed view resulted in his humiliating departure from West-Punjab. Also, Mudie was a soft target. The Congress leaders had realized that he could be easily incited and they kept egging him, sometimes just for pure amusement. This is not meant as a moment of jocularity. Mudie was largely blamed for the failure of Simla Conference. While he was very loyal to the cause of Pakistan, his remarks are full of appalling racism and show callousness about discussing the fate of India. “I have explained in my note my present views regarding the approach to “Pakistan”. The idea that Pakistan will be solved by an election is, I agree, absurd and also dangerous. It is one of the “short cuts” to which I referred in my last letter. I apologize for turning down “short cuts” while recommending “by pass”! what I meant was that we should examine the problem of which the League's solution is Pakistan in order to find out whether there is not some other solution. There may be none. I am inclined to think so. None other was found in Ireland.”²²

Mudie also excelled at drawing false parallels. He later compared the Simla Conference as the ongoing England and Ireland relations. Ireland was a completely different ballgame. For starters, their demand for autonomy was purely driven by economic needs. The potato famine in 1845-52 had shown them how their basics were squandered and the English had not cared at all about their lives. The English made it a practice to economically drain out Ireland and normalized the Irish immigrants' lives in workhouses. The Hindus and Muslims in India had united to fight against the British. There is zero evidence of Hindu rulers forcing large Muslim population into starvation or vice versa. This kind of systemic oppression existed in India, but not along religious lines, but purely as economic classes. Plus, they were not specific to large regions. If India experienced artificial famines, they only had to thank the British for it. Hence Mudie's very foundation of India/Pakistan logic was grossly incorrect. The only similarity was that both

Ireland and India wanted the British gone. Needless to say, Mudie never made that connection. It was not out of character for Mudie to distort the data, embellish facts and sometimes fabricate something completely original. In a nutshell, he lied. Throughout his career fudged the data when it came to Hindus. Later, he did it for Sikhs too. His motivation was to prove his white saviour status, and not once did he question his self-imposed role when he knew that he was offering false or cherry picked data.

One may wonder why Jinnah chose Mudie as the governor of Punjab after partition. While speculation on this point is not a worthy perusal, it is very likely because of his loyalty to Jinnah and his belief in the idea of Pakistan. Unfortunately, Mudie’s very short term in post-partition Punjab was a disaster. His behaviour had become increasingly erratic and showed paranoia against Hindus and India. His very first letter to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan is an indication of a paranoid man making note of all the Hindu evil misdoings. Mudie, in fact does nothing else. He keeps warning the Muslims against Hindus and reassuring them that only he can protect them against them. In a letter he writes,

“My fears may be exaggerated. I hope so. But, to understand all that has been happening for the last, say, 25 years in India, I go back to the battle of Punjab in 1761. The Afghans won but retreated to Kabul, the Hindus’ return was checked by British and now that the British are going, the Hindus have established themselves over the greater part of India and the Afghan want to come back. It seems essential that, if Pakistan is to weather these storms (if they come) it must develop at the start in close connection with Great Britain and that the British officers whom you employ must feel that their cooperation in building up a new dominion is welcomed...”²³

Soon, his letters begin to compare Vallabhai Patel to Hitler and expressed baseless fears that did not make any coherent logic. Sadly, his problematic views affected the Sikhs too during the partition. Mudie blatantly lied about Sikhs instigating violence in the refugee resettlement in a place called Lyallpur in West Punjab. The resettlement process was peaceful. Yet Mudie in his report added, “One day a stream of Muslim refugees, who had been driven from their homes, who had to flee for their lives, just managed to struggle across Pakistan border, where between 1500 to 2000 of them lay down by the roadside and died of starvation and exhaustion.” In the very same paragraph he also added, “And there is absolutely no further information on where this event had occurred.”²⁴ He then dismisses the reports on Hindus and Sikhs being killed in Pakistan and says, there is no way we can have the details. The reason one knows Mudie is lying is primarily because every other report pointed out to peaceful resettlement.²⁵

Conclusion:

Today, it is common knowledge that India is under right-wing Hindu government. The recent construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya and complete wiping out of the violent past²⁶ shows how radicalized India has become. In a way, India is rapidly fulfilling Mudie’s vision of angry Hindu mobs whose only goal is

to destroy Muslims. Pakistan too has shown extreme anti-Hindu sentiments in the past and destroyed Hindu temples, the most recent being the Mari Mata temple²⁷.

The scars that both nations bear today are spectres of colonization that haunts them. Repeated gaslighting, infantilization, and oppression has finally convoluted the future of both nations. As Mark Fisher so profoundly points out, "...the disappearance of the future meant the deterioration of a whole mode of social imagination: the capacity to conceive a world radically different from the one we currently live."²⁸ (pp 16). India and Pakistan can't get out of institutions and systems that the British imposed on them. One may argue that India had inherent inequalities like the caste system and the British maintained it since it worked to their advantage. The question however is not about existing inequalities or if South Asia would still have the same hostilities and problems. India and Pakistan never had a chance to find out what their future would be. They are now extensions of their past ghosts that manifests in form of religion and destroys all possibilities of a different future.

The article uses Mudie as a case study to show how colonial anxiety and their need to simplify native behaviour caused irreparable damages to both India and Pakistan. It shows how religion can be effectively used to manipulate existing fault lines that may be economic or political, but weaponizing religion is an easy task. Mudie (and by extension the British empire) did it all. Generated false news, cherry picked data, misinterpreted information, polarized populations, and helped them radicalize because it served the Empire well. Hindu right-wing and Muslim extremism in South Asia are not organic outcomes of hate, but an artificial construct that was created by the British.

Notes & References

¹ Fisher, Mark. “What Is Hauntology?” *Film quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2012): 16–24.

² There are many sources that discuss Mudie’s life in details. One major source is Chattha, Ilyas. “Faction-Building in Pakistan: Sir Francis Mudie and Punjab Politics, 1947–1949.” *Contemporary South Asia* 22, no. 3 (2014): 225–39. Also see, Jawad Khizar Chawla Muhammad Iqbal, “Partition, Migration and Refugee Settlement in Punjab: Refocusing on the Ethos of Sir Francis Mudie’s Governance.” *PAKISTAN SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW* 4, no.3(2020): 288-301. This article from Dawn also discusses his life <https://www.dawn.com/news/1351245>.

³ For details see <https://www.vice.com/en/article/k7wxdm/disney-neo-nazis-anti-grooming-protests>. Also, MAGA flags are a hallmark of conservatism and support for Donald Trump.

⁴ To understand current US idea of grooming see the anti-grooming laws <https://www.smartgensociety.org/anti-grooming-laws>. For more understanding of its implication see: <https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2022/04/thats-not-what-grooming-means/629501/>

⁵ One may not consider Orlando a “small town”, but it is known for its radical right-wing politics. The selection of Disney is significant here because they believe Disney’s attempts to be inclusive and diverse is harming children. Disney has been a battleground for conservatives for a very long time. Conservatives believe Disney plays a big role in shaping the morality of their children. Even though Disney is a gigantic organization, conservatives know that they are unlikely to use any form of violence against them. Disney is a safe space for them to protest, and this is often the case for protests like this. Their choice of protest spaces are in “safe” zones. For details see <https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/04/18/disney-boycott-theme-parks-lgbtq/>. See also <https://www.salon.com/2022/04/18/right-wing-attempt-disney-world-blockade-in-support-of-dont-say-gay-law/>

⁶ The holocaust museum has a detailed documentation of this. See <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/gays-and-lesbians>. Also, Auschwitz a camp that was had gained notoriety as one of the most horrific camps, had detailed records of what was done to homosexuals <https://www.auschwitz.org/en/history/categories-of-prisoners/homosexuals-a-separate-category-of-prisoners/robert-biedron-nazisms-pink-hell/>

⁷ See Eviane Leidig, “Hindutva as a Variant of Right-Wing Extremism,” *Patterns of prejudice* 54, no. 3 (2020): 215–237. Also see, Satadru Sen, “Fascism Without Fascists? A Comparative Look at Hindutva and Zionism,” *South Asia* 38, no. 4 (2015): 690–711. The most definitive work that shows direct link between Hindutva ideology and Neo Nazi is studying the life-story of Savitri Devi or Maxmiani Portas who moved to India and helped writing the Hindu Mahasabha manifesto that was worded very closely to Neo-Nazi ideology. She later founded Neo Nazi organizations in Canada and Germany. Even today, she is clandestinely worshipped by Neo-Nazis. For details see Nicholas. Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler’s Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

⁸ There are numerous examples of clashes between different groups of “Hindus”. For a basic record of some prominent rivalries see D.N. Jha. “Brahmanical Intolerance in Early India,” *Social Scientist* (New Delhi) 44, no. 5/6 (2016): 3–10.

⁹ Leidig, Eviane. “Hindutva as a Variant of Right-Wing Extremism,” 215–237. Also see Prabhu Bapu, *Hindu Mahasabha in Colonial North India, 1915-1930: Constructing Nation and History* (London: Routledge, 2013). This book traces the entire link between the wordings of Hindu Mahasabha manifesto that was copied from the Nazi manifesto.

¹⁰ Ian Copland, “Crucibles of Hindutva? V.D. Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Indian Princely States,” *South Asia* 25, no. 3 (2002): 211–234.

¹¹ John R. McLane, “Cow Protection Riots and Their Aftermath”, *In Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, ed. John R. McLane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹² Hitendra K. Patel, Aspects of the Cow Protection Movement and the Intelligentsia in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 69 (2008): 790-808.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ John R. McLane, “Cow Protection Riots and Their Aftermath”, *In Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, ed. John R. McLane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x1cv8.16>

¹⁵ For details see <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/19/india-vigilante-cow-protection-groups-attack-minorities>. Also see <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/24/muslim-ambushed-by-cow-vigilantes-in-india-missing-for-two-years>

¹⁶ To borrow an idea from Gul Baqai’s book, “Jenkins and the Partition of Punjab 1947,” which mentions the observations of prominent Pakistani historian, Dr. Razia Sultana who admits that the book depicts the crucial role of Jenkins as the last governor of Punjab who till the very last day of his job solely dedicated himself into furthering British cause. This irreversibly hurt the Muslims. For details see, Farah Gul Baqai, *Jenkins and the Partition of Punjab 1947* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 2018). Baqai’s book on Jenkins is not a biographical account. Also see, Nicholas Lloyd, “The Last Governor: Sir Evan Jenkins in the Punjab 1946-47”, in *The Independence of India and Pakistan: New Approaches and Reflections*, ed. Ian Talbot (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2013), 208-242.

¹⁷ [Muhammad Iqbal](#) Chawla, Re-contextualizing the Mountbatten’s Viceroyalty-Accession of Sindh to Pakistan: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. 66, Iss. 1/2, (Jan-Jun 2018): 85-120. v

¹⁸ There are numerous examples. A lot of research has been done on indigenous populations in Americas. For some Indian examples see Robb, Peter. “The Colonial State and Constructions of Indian Identity: An Example on the Northeast Frontier in the 1880s.” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 2 (1997): 245–83. Also see Chandra, Uday. “Liberalism and Its Other: The Politics of Primitivism in Colonial and Postcolonial Indian Law.” *Law & Society Review* 47, no. 1 (2013): 135–68.

¹⁹ Governor’s Fortnightly Letters to Viceroy (Lord Wavell) and Viceroy’s replies; copies of Chief Secretary’s Fortnightly Reports enclosed, Mudie Collection, Mudie to Lord Wavell, 07 March 1946 (MSS, EUR F. 164/41, 1946-47). See also, Letter by Mudie to Wavell, Khadim Hussain Soomro, *The Path Not Taken: G.M. Sayed Vision and Valour in Politics* (Karachi: Sain Publishers Sehwan Sharif, 2004), 119.

²⁰ George Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth-Century British and American Culture* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²¹ Farah Gul Baqai, “Jenkins and the Partition of Punjab 1947”, *Pakistan Journal of History & Culture*, Vol. XXVII/1 (2006): 77-79. For more information on Jenkins and Mudie also see, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).

²² Papers and Correspondence on the Constitutional Situation Following the Failure of the Simla Conference, Mudie Collection, Mudie to Maurice, 28 July 1945 (MSS, EUR F. 164/10, 1945-47).

²³ Correspondence file of Sir Francis Mudie as Governor of West Punjab including correspondence with Liaquat Ali Khan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mudie Collection, Mudie to Liaquat, 11 July 1947 (MSS, EUR F. 164/15, 1947-48).

²⁴ Notes and correspondence on relations between India and Pakistan, Mudie Collection, (MSS, EUR F. 164/12, 1946-50).

²⁵ Kumar, Radha. *Making Peace With Partition*. India: Penguin Books Limited, 2005. The book studies Lyallpur case in details and shows how everything was organized well and done efficiently.

²⁶ See <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/25/711412924/nearly-27-years-after-hindu-mob-destroyed-a-mosque-the-scars-in-india-remain-dee>

²⁷ See <https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/revered-hindu-temple-demolished-in-pakistan-another-destroyed-for-building-coffee-house-report-662609>

²⁸ Fisher, Mark. “What Is Hauntology?” *Film quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2012): 16–24.