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Chapter 8

SOUTH ASIANS

Asian Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis

This history of peoples from South Asia in the United States may most readily be divided into two parts. A relatively small number came during the period when most of South Asia was a part of the British Empire. Up until independence in 1947 perhaps 10,000 or so came, mostly in the years around 1900. Many more have come since then, and by 2000 there were well over a million South Asians in the United States, most of them from India, with a considerably smaller number from Pakistan, and much smaller numbers from Bangladesh and other nations of the region.[1]

BACKGROUND

Although there were a few Indian seamen reported in New England in the late eighteenth century and tiny communities of Indian merchants were established in the eastern United States from the mid-nineteenth century on, statistically significant migration of Indians began just after 1900. Like most other Asian immigrants at that time, they came on trans-Pacific ships, usually via Hong Kong, as there was no direct passenger service between India and the West Coast. Although the first sizable group of Indian immigrants—a few hundred—came to the Pacific Northwest after landing at Vancouver, British Columbia, California became the goal of most of the early Indian immigrants.

India is a huge country with dozens of distinct and diverse ethnic groups, but, as was the case with immigrants from China, most early Indian immigrants came from just one region, the Punjab, a prosperous fertile region of North India. The Punjab, unlike most of the areas from which other Asians immigrated, is not a coastal region. Because of the advanced railroad network—one of the few positive achievements of the British rule in India—Punjabi immigrants could get to seaports quickly, cheaply, and safely.

The overwhelming majority of these Indians were Sikhs, although some Hindus and a few Muslims immigrated as well. Sikhism, which developed in the Punjab early in the sixteenth century, was an attempt to reconcile Muslim and Hindu in a region that was then and still is multiethnic. By the eighteenth century, the Sikhs had become implacable enemies of the Muslims and had become a largely military caste in which all members took the name Singh (Lion). At that time the still-current practices that give the Sikhs high visibility were adopted: wearing turbans, wearing a dagger and an iron bracelet at all times, and never cutting the hair or beard. Modern Sikh life is dominated by the Akali Dal (Army of God) movement, which demands the creation of a Sikh state in the Punjab.

ON THE WEST COAST

The early Sikh migrants to California, perhaps 5,000 strong, were first employed in lumbering and railroad work but soon turned to agriculture, initially as laborers and later as proprietors and tenants. In two areas of the state, the Imperial Valley in the south and the Sacramento Valley in the north, they became a numerically significant minority. They experienced the same kinds of legal and extralegal discriminations as did other Asians. The alien land laws, for example, were used against them. While a few racist Californians saw the East Indians, as they were usually called, as superior to other Asians, others saw them as "the least desirable race of immigrants thus far admitted to the United States." Immigration records showed some 5,800 East Indian immigrants entering between 1901 and 1911, only 109 of them female.

Despite the very small number of women, large numbers of the Asian Indian migrants appear to have been married. One Immigration Commission survey—the only one we have for this period—questioned 474 laborers working on the West Coast. Slightly more than half said that they were married, but in every instance reported that the wife was "abroad." This was a pattern common to all Asian working men on this continent, a condition sociologists have called "mutilated marriage." Large numbers of these men planned to be sojourners, that is, work here for a time, save some money, and send it home to buy land. According to H. A. Millis, the first scholar to study East Indians in America, $2,000 was the goal of many. Since agricultural laborers could expect to save, at best, between $15 and $25 a month, and since, even assuming continuous employment, it would take seven to eleven years to amass such a sum, most sojourners were bound to be frustrated. Yet savings did occur, and money was remitted to India. The Marysville, California, post office, for example, in an area in which many Indians worked, reported that in one eight-month period ending in mid-1908, $34,000 in postal remittances were sent to India. How many immigrants sent money home? No one knows. The Immigration Commission interviewed seventy-nine millhands in Washington and California in early 1909. Thirty-one of them—about 40 percent—said that in the previous year they had sent a total of $4,320 to India, an average of nearly $140 for each of those who sent but only about $55 for the whole group.[2]

MANGOO RAM (1886–1980)

Many immigrants who were not Sikhs were, like the Sikhs, Punjabis. It is very difficult to imagine what life was like for these toilers, rural proletarians in California's factories in the field, but thanks to Mark Juergensmeyer, we do know a great deal about one of them, a man named Mangoo Ram, who was born a Hindu on January 14, 1886, in the Punjab. His father had left the traditional Chamar caste occupation of tanning hides and had become a hide merchant. First taught in his village, Mangoo Ram later attended a number of district schools. As the only scheduled caste student in most of his schools, he had to sit in the back of the classroom or sometimes in a separate room listening through an open door. When he attended high school, he had to stay outside of the building and listen through an open window.

Mangoo Ram left school in 1905, married, and worked for his father for three years. In 1909 in the Punjab, as Juergensmeyer puts it, "America was in the air." Scores of upper-caste farmers from Mangoo Ram's part of the Punjab had gone there. It was arranged for him to go, too. There was a tight network. The labor contractor for whom Mangoo Ram first worked in the orchards of central California was the brother of a local landlord in the Punjab. Part of Mangoo Ram's passage was paid by the contractor, who took it, plus interest, out of the young man's wages. This was quite similar to the credit-ticket system pioneered by the Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century. In California, Mangoo Ram picked fruit in orchards up and down the central valley and worked in a sugar mill.

Mangoo Ram's life was very much like other sojourners until 1913, when he became someone special. In that year he joined the revolutionary Gadar movement in San Francisco, and from then until his death in 1980 at age 94 he was a figure in Indian history. For his activities during World War I as what we would now call a freedom fighter—the British called him

a terrorist—he was sentenced to death. He escaped from prison and, after a sojourn in the Philippines, made his way back to the Punjab only in 1925. There he helped form the Ad Dharm movement of untouchables in 1926.

Unlike most early Indian immigrants, Mangoo Ram was not an anonymous individual. As Juergensmeyer indicates, his sixteen years abroad helped transform him, as, of course, did his education. While abroad he was treated as an individual, not as a Chamar. The hostility to all East Indians in America tended to blur differences within the immigrant community; in addition, as Ram himself puts it, within the Gadar movement "we were treated as equals."[3]

THE GADAR MOVEMENT

The tragic and quixotic story of the Gadar movement, often referred to by American historians as the Hindu Conspiracy, must be considered briefly here. While Gadar was special and violent in its aims and involved only a small minority of the Indian immigrants in America, almost all of them were, in one way or another, involved in or at least sympathetic to the Indian freedom movement. Gadar—the name may be translated as "revolution" or "mutiny"—was nothing less than an attempt to overthrow the Raj from a base in San Francisco. It was founded in San Francisco in 1911 by Har Dayal, a brilliant young Indian scholar who had resigned a British government scholarship at Oxford University to undertake revolutionary activity in the United States. He was a radical who had been an officer of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. Gadar was primarily an organization of young intellectuals and students. These Indian students—by 1913 there were thirty-seven at the University of California at Berkeley alone—formed the backbone of the freedom organization here, although later this role was taken over by merchants and established farmers and ranchers.

With the outbreak of World War I, the Gadarites, who used both romantic and socialist rhetoric, citing Mazzini and Marx, began to receive financial support from the German government. Almost from the beginning, the movement had been penetrated by British moles and agents provocateurs; in the final analysis, the conspiracy here had no chance even to strike a blow, much less topple the Raj. The San Francisco Gadarites managed to charter two vessels in California and tried to get them loaded with arms purchased in Mexico, intending to sail to India to start an armed revolt, another mutiny. In addition, perhaps as many as 400 Asian Indians left North America and, by various routes, returned to India to foment revolution. Almost all were apprehended; many were executed. One vessel, without arms aboard, got as far as Java.

There were also less radical groups of Asian Indians working for freedom here in those years. One such peaceful organization, formed in New York in 1918, was the India Home Rule League. For the next three decades—until Indian independence was achieved—one or more patriotic organizations existed in the Indo-American community. It must be recognized that in those days the United States was not thought of as a bastion of suppressive regimes throughout the world and that only the United States had an established revolutionary tradition. Many Asian revolutionaries of that era, including Sun Yat-sen and two of the leading Asian members of the Communist International, Japan's Sen Katayama and India's M. N. Roy, spent some time in the United States as either agitators or settlers.[4]

THE STRUGGLE FOR CITIZENSHIP

World War I all but stopped Indian immigration, and in 1917 the U.S. Congress, as part of an immigration act whose most heralded feature was a largely ineffective literacy test, excluded almost all Asians and all East Indians by means of a so-called barred zone, expressed in degrees of latitude and longitude. That exclusion was not total; skilled professionals, ministers, religious teachers, students, and travelers for pleasure were largely exempt from its provisions. In any event, from 1914 to 1946 there was no sizable immigration of East Indians.

As we have seen, the U.S. naturalization statutes had made Asians "aliens ineligible for citizenship." In the *Ozawa* case of 1922, the Supreme Court had ruled unanimously that "white persons" in the 1870 statute meant persons of the Caucasian race. In 1923 a case brought by Bhagat Singh Thind came before the Court. Thind, a Sikh who had been granted citizenship by a federal court in Oregon, was denied citizenship by the Supreme Court even though, as a Caucasian, he passed the test set up by *Ozawa*. The Court, speaking through Justice George Sutherland, now held that the word "white" in the 1870 statute meant "white" in the "understanding of the common man." Whatever we may think of the result, it is clear that in *Thind* the Court was adhering to the intent of Congress.

The *Thind* decision meant that Indian farmers were still subject to the provisions of alien land laws in California and other western states. As one Indian immigrant, who nevertheless became a very successful California rancher, remembered it years later:

> It was made quite evident that people from Asia—the Japanese, Chinese and Hindus—were not wanted. . . . A friend of mine, a property owner in the Imperial County, helped me by holding my lease contracts in his name. . . . I had also leased some property in my wife's name since she was an American citizen. However some landowners didn't like to take a chance on leasing land even to an Asiatic's wife for fear of violating the Alien Land Act.[5]

Thus for a variety of reasons, the Asian Indian population of California—and of the nation as a whole—declined precipitously from its pre-World War I high of perhaps 10,000. The census, notoriously inaccurate for minority populations generally, could find only 1,873 persons born in India in California in 1930 and 1,476 in 1940. Since hardly any of the agricultural laborers and entrepreneurs who dominated this small population had come with wives, the majority of those who stayed were "bachelors." Yet, as Bruce La Brack and Karen Leonard have demonstrated, a significant number of these California agriculturalists did get married, and these small communities demonstrate patterns of acculturation worth noting.

La Brack and Leonard have tracked and reconstituted almost 400 Asian Indian families in California before 1946, mostly in the Imperial and Sacramento valleys. Of these marriages only nine—fewer than 2.5 percent—seem to have been with Asian Indian women. The overwhelming majority, some 80 percent, were with Hispanic women, most of whom were from Mexican and Mexican American migratory worker families. Frequently, the Hispanic marriage partners had picked cotton or had done other work on the men's farms. Such a bride often moved into an established male household consisting of her husband and several Punjabi immigrants. Surviving wives often speak of the men's "single-minded concentration" on putting their resources into farming. Often immigrant—and perhaps bigamous—husbands were simultaneously sending remittances to a family in India. There was a tendency for sisters to marry partners, so many households contained related women.

Not surprisingly, these marriages were conflict ridden. In Imperial County, for example, at least a fifth of them ended in formal divorce, with husbands and wives filing in roughly equal proportions. The men's petitions stress neglect of duty, refusal to cook and clean for the husband's friends, verbal disobedience, too much visiting of mothers and sisters, shopping in town, using makeup, and dancing with other men. The women complained that their husbands drank, beat them, committed adultery, and demanded unreasonable services. Leonard also investigated 220 marriages of children resulting from Asian Indian–Mexican marriages; only eleven of them involved two "Mexican-Hindu" partners.[6]

It is necessary to contrast these Asian Indian–Mexican American marriages with the kinds of marriage patterns that tended to develop in other contemporaneous American immigrant communities. Very large numbers of these latter immigrants lived in ethnic enclaves; although men greatly outnumbered women in these enclaves, there were usually enough women that a majority—often a very large majority—of marriages were intraethnic. Among most other immigrants from Asia, but particularly among those from Japan, enough women were able to immigrate, and a pattern of intraethnic marriage prevailed in those communities as well. The only other group of Asian immigrants of this era for whom a pattern of extraethnic marriage has been reported is the Filipinos. As noted in Chapter 7, Barbara Posadas described with great sensitivity the marriages of Chicago Filipino immigrants with first- and second-generation daughters of eastern European immigrants.[7]

IN THE EAST AND THE MIDWEST

Smaller Asian Indian communities were developing in New York and other eastern and midwestern cities. Most of the few hundred members of these communities were merchants and middle-class professionals; ethnically most were Hindu, with a sprinkling of Sikhs and Muslims. Almost all were involved, in one way or another, in the struggle for freedom in India. They founded a surprisingly large number of organizations, which were generally peaceful and legal. The most spectacularly successful was the India League of America, whose leading figure was J. J. Singh, a Sikh merchant with a talent for public relations and lobbying. Singh was able to exploit two very different streams of sympathy for India that existed in the minds of many Americans and were wholly unrelated to immigration. One stream was religious and cultural; the other, political.

Although it is traditional to begin discussions of American perceptions of Hinduism with the Swami Vivekananda's dramatic appearance at the World Parliament of Religions held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, Carl Jackson has shown that the roots of sympathy can be traced back, however tenuously, to the seventeenth century. And it is important to note that sympathy was a two-way current. If Emerson, and through him Thoreau, were influenced by Eastern thought—however misperceived—Thoreau, in particular, was a strong influence on Gandhi, who in turn provided much of the inspiration for Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy of nonviolent change.[8]

Vivekananda and a small group of successors, the most important of whom was the Swami Yoganandada, who first came in 1920, established small but influential Western outposts of Hindu religious thought in America through organizations like the former's Vedanta Society and the latter's Self-Realization Fellowship. Unlike the contemporary Hare Krishna movement, membership in these societies did not involve public begging or other "outlandish" behavior. Most of their members, who probably numbered in the low thousands, were drawn from middle- and upper-middle-class Protestants. In addition, many secular movers and shakers from India also visited the United States, although a much-discussed visit by Gandhi never materialized. Of particular importance were the several visits by the Bengali poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who first came here in 1916. On a later visit he had some celebrated difficulties with American immigration officials, who treated him as if he were attempting to come in as a la-

borer. Tagore was an important influence on many moderate Indian reformers here, as marked by the establishment of Tagore Societies on both coasts.[9]

The political sympathy was largely an outgrowth of the American tradition of anticolonialism and was often abetted by strong anti-British feelings on the part of American ethnocultural groups, particularly Irish and German Americans. During the years between the two world wars, many American "progressives" adopted an isolationist stance and used anticolonial rhetoric as one argument against an Anglo-American alliance. But some internationalists were anticolonialists, too. As William Roger Louis has demonstrated, few issues so divided Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill as the future of India.[10]

Singh and other pro-Indian lobbysists utilized both these streams of sympathy. The Sikh import merchant had been born into an elite family in Rawalpindi in 1897 and came to the United States in 1926. In a perhaps overadmiring profile of him in *The New Yorker* in 1951, Robert Shaplen wrote:

> Sirdar Jagjit Singh, the president of the India League of America, a privately sponsored organization that seeks to interpret India to, and to further Indian causes in, this country, is, at fifty-three, a handsome six-foot Sikh who by means of persistent salesmanship, urbane manners, and undeviating enthusiasm, has established himself as the principal link between numberless Americans and the vast mysterious Eastern subcontinent where he was born.[11]

By the time Shaplen wrote, Singh had already engineered his greatest triumph, the passage through Congress of the Act of July 2, 1946, which gave the right of naturalization and a small immigration quota to "persons of races indigenous to India." This act followed by less than three years the repeal of Chinese exclusion (see Chapter 4) and was accompanied by a similar dispensation for Filipinos, but not for other Asians, who remained until 1952 "aliens ineligible for citizenship."

THE 1946 ACT

Had not the 1946 act—and the even more important 1952 and 1965 acts—drastically changed the patterns of immigration from Asia, the "circuitous assimilation" of Asian Indian immigrants and their children would probably have continued. But the renewed postwar immigration rejuvenated established communities. La Brack has carefully documented these changes for the northern Sacramento Valley. There, a population of 400 aging Punjabi Sikhs in 1950 swelled, by immigration of persons of both sexes and by natural increase, to more than 6,200 by 1981.[12]

Obviously, the 1946 law did not, as some of its opponents had predicted, result in a "flood" of immigrants from India. The immigration data

show that fewer than 7,000 "East Indians" entered the United States in the seventeen years between 1948 and 1965. Almost 6,000 were nonquota immigrants, mostly close relatives of persons who were or became American citizens. Since the Asian Indian population base was so small in the United States, the rights of naturalization and immigration did not have the numerical impact as did the granting of similar rights to Japanese Americans in 1952. With its much larger population base, that community attracted, as we have seen, more than 40,000 new immigrants between 1952 and 1960.

The most spectacular individual Asian Indian beneficiary of the 1946 act was Dalip Singh Saund. Born in 1899 just outside Amritsar, the holy Sikh city in the Punjab, into a family headed by an illiterate but well-to-do contractor, Saund graduated with a degree in mathematics from Punjab University. Shocked by the Amritsar massacre (1919) in which British troops fired repeatedly into a crowd of peaceful protesters, killing hundreds and wounding thousands, and attracted by what he had read about America, Saund resisted his parents' wishes that he enter government service and came to the United States, via England, in 1920. He entered the University of California, living, rent free, in a "clubhouse" just off the Berkeley campus that had been established and maintained for Indian students by the Sikh Temple of Stockton, California. Saund eventually earned three degrees: an M.A. and a Ph.D. in mathematics and, more practically, an M.S. in agricultural science, specializing in food preservation. He was offered professorships by two Indian universities, but he decided to make America his home.

Despite his education, Saund soon concluded that "the only way that Indians in California could make a living" was to join with compatriots who were successful in farming. So he settled in California's Imperial Valley, working first as a foreman on a cotton ranch operated by Indian friends—surely the only agricultural straw boss ever with a Ph.D. in math!—and then became a rancher and a businessman. He was determined to acculturate—he had begun shaving and stopped wearing a turban shortly after he came here—and in 1928 he married a woman from an upper-middle-class Czech American family. Well established in the farming center of Westmoreland, he and his wife became involved in a whole panoply of civic activities, including the twin causes of Indian independence and citizenship for Asian Indians in the United States.

Shortly after he was able to become a citizen, Saund was elected to a local judgeship, and in 1956 he was elected to Congress as a Democrat in a race that attracted national attention not only because of Saund's origin but also because his opponent was a famous aviator, Jacqueline Cochran Odum. Taking office in January 1957, Saund became the first Asian American congressperson. Saund's election caused a small sensation and was exploited by the United States Information Agency, which soon sent him on a tour of Asia as evidence of the growth of ethnic democracy in the United States. He

was twice reelected but was defeated in 1962 after a stroke confined him to a hospital bed.[13]

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASIAN INDIAN COMMUNITY

The great changes in the Asian Indian community have come since 1965. Rather than reinforce old communities or increase the status of members of the immigrant elite, that migration has created a new community, one that has few connections in ethnicity, class, occupation, or location with the majority of its early twentieth-century predecessors. These new immigrants have *not* been predominantly Sikhs, have *not* entered agriculture, and are *not* concentrated in the Far West.

By 1970 there were perhaps 75,000 Asian Indians in the United States, of whom fewer than a third represented the older communities and their natural expansion. At the first scholarly conference examining the new Asian Indian immigration, held in Chicago in 1976, it was predicted that the 1980 census might show as many as 250,000 persons of Indian origin.[14] That census—the first specifically to ask about Indian nationality and ethnicity and the first to denominate them "Asian Indians"—in fact found nearly 390,000. As noted, the 1990 census reported more than 815,000 Asian Indians, a growth of more than 1,000 percent in twenty years. To put the figures for 1990 into perspective, about every ninth Asian American was either an immigrant from India or the offspring of such a person.

Statistically, these Asian Indians present a profile somewhat different from that of Asian Americans generally. In 1990, when nearly 52 percent of Asian Americans lived in the Far West, only 21 percent of Asian Indians did. Part of this disparity was due to the fact that there is no significant Asian Indian community in Hawaii, but it was also because Asian Indians were more evenly distributed throughout the nation. A third of Asian Indians lived in the Northeast, and almost a quarter each lived in the South and Midwest. In age, Asian Indians were above the national median—34.8 years as opposed to the national 33.0—whereas all other Asian American groups except Japanese Americans were younger (from Chinese at 32.3 years to Hmong at 12.4 years). In terms of sex ratio, the once predominantly male Asian Indian migration has become more balanced, and there were 116.7 males per 100 females in 1990.

Asian Indian women, like almost all other Asian American women, have demonstrated significantly lower fertility than American women generally. In 1980 age-standardized rates for Asian Indian women, for example, showed 1,224 children per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44, compared to 1,358 for white women, a national figure of 1,429, and black and Hispanic figures of 1,806 and 1,817, respectively.[15] What these data reflect, as far as Asian Indian women are concerned, is class rather than ethnicity, education rather

than national origin. The overwhelming number of Asian Indian women of childbearing age were foreign born.

The 1990 census indicated that of adult Asian Indians in this country, a startling 58 percent were college graduates, compared to 37 percent of all Asian Americans age 25 and older. The figure for all Americans of that age group was 20 percent.

An occupational profile of the Asian Indian population shows that 47 percent of foreign-born workers in the group were managers, professionals, and executives, as opposed to about half that—24 percent—for the white population. Even though many of these were not particularly well-compensated proprietors, the median income of full-time Asian Indian workers was reported as $18,079 in 1979, higher than the figure for whites or for any other Asian American group. The next most prosperous individuals, Japanese Americans, earned $2,000 less. Asian Indian family income, however, while ahead of that of whites, was close to the Asian American norm and lower than that for Japanese Americans because a significantly smaller percentage of Asian Indian women were in the labor force. For the group that the census calls "female family householders," only 58.2 percent of Asian Indian women were in the labor force, as opposed to 72.5 percent of such Japanese American women.

At the other end of the economic spectrum, Asian Indian families were very unlikely to receive public assistance; only 4.5 percent of these families received assistance in 1979. Only they among recent Asian immigrant groups had a figure below that for whites, which was 5.9 percent. Public assistance was received by 6.2 percent of Korean families, 6.6 percent of Chinese families, 10 percent of Filipino families, and 28.1 percent of Vietnamese families. (The last figure was higher than that for Hispanics, 15.9 percent, and blacks, 22.3 percent.) Incomplete data indicate that welfare dependence for immigrant groups goes down sharply with extended residence in the United States.

Data on Asian Indian families below the federal poverty line indicate this quite clearly. For all Asian Indian families with foreign-born wage earners (the vast majority of all Asian Indian families) only 5 percent were below the poverty line, a figure lower than that for the foreign-born of any other Asian American group. For those who emigrated before 1970, the Asian Indian poverty rate was 2.2 percent of all families; for those who came between 1970 and 1975, the figure was 3.2 percent; and for those arriving between 1975 and 1980, the poverty rate was 10.7 percent.

Asian Indian families seem remarkably stable. In 1980, for example, 92.7 percent of all Asian Indian children under 18 years of age lived in a two-parent household, a figure higher than that for any other Asian American group and significantly higher than that for white Americans, which was 82.9 percent. Asian Indian households tended to be small—2.9 persons on average—but, not surprisingly, households of recent immigrants were larger. In 1980, Asian Indian households composed of post-1975 immigrants

had an average of 3.5 persons. Forty-five percent of the persons in these households were not members of one nuclear family; for all Asian Indian households such persons amounted to only 9 percent of the members.

Nathan Glazer has characterized the Asian Indian population as being "marked off by a high level of education, by concentration in the professions, by a strong commitment to maintaining family connections, both here in the United States and between the United States and India."[16] Parmatma Saran, on the basis of a 1977–1978 survey of 345 Asian Indian residents in the New York metropolitan area, has written, perhaps too sweepingly, about the Asian Indian experience in the United States. However, since New York had the largest single concentration of Asian Indians—68,000 persons (17.5 percent in 1980), with another 31,000 (7.9 percent) in New Jersey—that region is certainly not unrepresentative of the whole.

In Saran's sample, 73 percent of the men in the labor force could be classified as technical or professional. Among Asian Indian women in his sample, the profile was similarly high; nearly half—47 percent—were professional and technical.[17] The overwhelming majority of these people were recent immigrants who received all or most of their training in India, and thus they were part of what is often called the brain drain. The brain drain reflects the fact that many underdeveloped countries, as part of their modernization, train more professionals than can be employed profitably in those countries. A study in the early 1970s indicated that nearly 10 percent of doctors trained in India were practicing abroad, mainly in the United States and Great Britain.[18] (Large numbers today are also employed in the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf.) Those with a Marxist bent fulminate about a "gift of labor to the imperialist countries,"[19] and those with a free-market bias talk about individuals making choices based on their perceptions of economic opportunity. What is all too often ignored is that settler societies—the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—have from their inception drained talent and enterprise from the countries that nurtured them.[20] To cite an important but little-noted example, the extraordinary number of college graduates, largely from Cambridge, who helped settle New England in the early seventeenth century made persons with university educations more prevalent in the colony than in the metropolis.[21]

More recent students of patterns of Indian migration to New York have suggested that the flow in the 1980s was of persons less well trained. One of the more obvious phenomena in New York is the degree to which Asian Indians have begun to predominate in the newsstand industry. Many, if not most, of the thousands of kiosks in New York subways are owned and staffed by Asian Indians. Those who put in ten-hour, twelve-hour, and sometimes longer days below ground in the subway stands are often recently arrived and less-educated relatives of better-educated persons who came earlier and put their savings into profitable enterprises.[22]

In California's fabulous Silicon Valley, Asian Indian entrepreneurs, largely graduates of Indian Institutes of Technology, made important contributions during the 1990s. One study, by AnnaLee Saxenian, a professor of regional development at the University of California, Berkeley, showed that in 1998 774 high-tech firms with Asian Indian chief executive officers had $3.6 million in annual sales and employed 16,598 persons. Nativists who speak of immigrants as an economic drain must ignore such persons.[23]

On a national basis—where there are no systematic studies—one of the most startling occupational niches that Asian Indians have come to occupy has been hotel and motel operation, particularly the latter. One newspaper story estimated that two-fifths of all the motels in the Interstate 75 association—Interstate 75 runs between Detroit and Atlanta—are owned and operated by Asian Indians, often as a part of national franchises. Again, in many instances, these establishments are often owned by persons whose relatives run them. A very large percentage of the motels are run by one ethnic group, the Gujarati (persons from the northern Indian state of Gujarat), many of whom share the surname Patel. One joke prevalent in southern California talks about "hotel, motel, Patel." Other businesses in which Indians tend to cluster are restaurants and small clothing operations (the so-called sari shops), some of which cater to the ethnic community and some of which appeal to the fashion-conscious in the general community.

National occupational data, while not as impressive as that in Saran's New York sample, still show a profile of occupational achievement. According to the 1980 census, nearly half—47 percent—of all foreign-born Asian Indian workers were in the category of "managers, professionals, executives," nearly twice the rate for white Americans (24 percent) and significantly higher than that of any other segment of an Asian American group. (The next highest such segment was 33 percent for native-born Chinese Americans; foreign-born Chinese came in at 30 percent.)

This elite socioeconomic profile must not be thought of as an ethnic characteristic. India is the home of some of the most heart-wrenching poverty, and Indian immigrants to Great Britain have a very different profile. Compare Saran's New York sample with Arthur Helweg's Punjabi Jats in the small British city of Gravesend. The "vast majority" of the approximately 7,000 Asian Indians there in 1978 were in unskilled jobs. That was also probably true of most of the approximately 900,000 Asian Indians who then lived in the United Kingdom.[24]

THE BIRTH OF PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

The bloody partition of India in August 1947 created two new and independent nations, India and Pakistan, in place of the unified British colony of India. Both were multicultural, but most Pakistanis were Muslims and most

Indians Hindus. The communal strife that accompanied independence killed more than half a million persons; 7.5 million Muslim refugees fled to Pakistan from India, and 10 million Hindus left Pakistan for India. Further territorial division occurred in 1972 when, in the course of a brief war between India and Pakistan, what had been East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh. Recent demographic data shows India with 984 million people, 80 percent Hindu and 14 percent Muslim; Pakistan with 135 million people, 97 percent Muslim, and Bangladesh with 127 million people, 88 percent Muslim and 11 percent Hindu.

PAKISTANIS AND BANGLADESHIS IN AMERICA

Before late 1947, the relatively few immigrants from what are now Pakistan and Bangladesh are listed in American records as Asian Indians, and Bangladeshi who came to America between 1947 and 1972 are recorded as Pakistanis. In the 1990 census, about 100,000 persons reported that they were of Pakistani origin, and some 12,000 said that their origin was Bangladesh. Between 1990 and 1997, an additional 93,000 immigrants came from Pakistan and nearly 50,000 from Bangladesh in the same period. This group of perhaps 250,000 persons comprises a tiny fraction of the more than 5 million Muslims in the United States but represents the vast majority of Muslim immigrants from the nations treated in this volume. Very few Muslims have come to the United States from the largest nation in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, where nearly 200 million Muslims live.

There have been no systematic studies of the Pakistani and Bangladesh communities in America: Even in Leonard's detailed treatment of South Asian Americans there are only passing mentions. One place where a sizable Pakistani community has developed is in Chicago, where Asian Indians and Pakistanis share a business district along Devon Avenue; diplomatically, the city authorities have put up signs designating one segment of the district Jinnah Road and another Gandhi Marg, thus honoring a founding father of each nation.[25]

THE FUTURE

The future of the Asian Indian community in the United States is probably a bright one. In the 1990s, two movies, *Gandhi* and *A Passage to India*, and the television series *The Jewel in the Crown* generated interest in India, but in an India that no longer exists. Despite what one writer called "a rage for the Raj," most Americans are unaware of the Asian Indians in their midst. Their broad geographic distribution and the absence of ethnic neighborhoods have kept their social visibility low. But their rapid growth continues. The

1990 census recorded more than 800,000 Asians Indians, more than three times the 250,000 found ten years previously. At some midwestern universities, such as Ohio State, Asian Indians are the largest single group of Asian American students. All the evidence indicates that the Asian Indian population will grow faster than the Asian American population generally.

Indisputably, the Asian Indian community is putting down roots. In Cincinnati, for example, some 400 largely well-to-do, middle-class Indian families raised $700,000 to build a temple to serve as a community center as well as a place for religious observances. In Artesia, a suburb of Los Angeles, there is a four-block stretch that some residents now call Little India.[26] Enterprising Indian merchants have given a different flavor to this small, middle-class community, with stores selling Indian sweets, clothing, groceries, and jewelry. Only Jackson Heights in Queens and Chicago's Devon Avenue have more ethnic Indian stores and restaurants, according to a spokesperson at the Indian embassy in Washington.

Many of the merchants are relatives of the professionals who moved here earlier. Not as well-educated and lacking the professional qualifications, they have moved into the small-business sector, just as other Asians in previous eras made similar moves. They do not mind working long hours and are ardent advocates of the free-enterprise system. Some established merchants have complained about the growing competition—Indian stores are said to be taking away customers from the regular businesses—but others ask who would rent the stores if the Indians were not there.

Despite such evidence of continuing ties to India and Indian culture, evidence of increasing acculturation is also strong. Many observers, including a number of Asian Indian community leaders, have argued that Indians here have been particularly reluctant to make the crucial break with their past and become American citizens. Yet one sophisticated study suggests exactly the opposite. Elliott Barkan examined American naturalization patterns between 1951 and 1978. His results showed that not only have Asians in general been more likely to become citizens than most other resident aliens who arrived during those years, but also that Asian Indians were more likely to do so than members of other major Asian ethnic groups. Barkan calculated for the period from 1969 to 1978 the percentage of aliens who were naturalized during the fifth to eighth year of their permanent residence in the United States. Dividing all such persons into a simple Asian/non-Asian dichotomy, he reported that almost 65 percent of Asians became naturalized, as opposed to only 45 percent of non-Asians. The same data, when broken down into five main Asian ethnic groups, showed Indians with by far the highest naturalization rate, more than 80 percent. The next highest rate is that of the Filipinos, just over 60 percent.[27]

We should recognize that such rates do not necessarily represent a transfer of loyalties. As we have seen, current immigration law provides a strong incentive to acquire citizenship for newcomers wishing to practice

chain migration, as both Asian Indians and Filipinos are currently doing. However, whatever the reasons, Asian Indian immigrants to the United States seem to have been extraordinarily eager to become American citizens. There is no reason not to believe that their patterns of acculturation will be similar to those of other modern ethnic groups, although their unique religious heritage may provide some new variations.

NOTES

1. For general historical surveys of Asian Indians, see Gary R. Hess, "The Forgotten Asian Americans: The East Indian Community in the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (1974): 576–596; H. Brett Melendy, *Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans and East Indians* (Boston: Twayne, 1977); S. Chandrasekhar, ed., *From India to America* (La Jolla, CA: Population Institute, 1982); and Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

2. U.S. Immigration Commission, *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, pt. 25: *Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States*, vol. 1: *Japanese and East Indians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911).

3. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in the 20th Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 30–31, 383–389.

4. The literature on Gadar is extensive. We have used chiefly L. P. Mather, *Indian Revolutionary Movement in the United States of America* (Delhi: Chand, 1970); Arun Comer Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905–1922* (Patna, India: Bhavati Bhawan, 1971); Emily C. Brown, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975); Don Dignan, *The Indian Revolutionary Problem in British Diplomacy, 1914–1919* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1983); and Joan M. Jensen, "The 'Hindu Conspiracy': A Reassessment," *Pacific Historical Review* 48 (1979): 65–83.

5. D. S. Saund, *Congressman from India* (New York: Dutton, 1960).

6. Bruce La Brack and Karen Leonard, "Conflict and Compatibility in Punjabi-Mexican Immigrant Marriages in Rural California, 1915–1965," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46 (1984): 527–537; Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

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9. Wendell Thomas, *Hinduism Invades America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1930).

10. William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

11. Robert Shaplen, "One-Man Lobby," *The New Yorker*, Mar. 24, 1951, pp. 35–55. See also R. Narayanan, "Indian Immigration and the India League of America," *Indian Journal of American Studies* 2, no. I (1972): 1–30.

12. Bruce La Brack, "The Sikhs of Northern California: A Socio-historical Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1980); Bruce La Brack, "Immigration Law and the Revitalization Process: The Case of the California Sikhs," *Population Review* 25 (1982): 59–66.

13. Saund, *Congressman from India*.

14. Hekmet Elkhanialy and Ralph W. Nicholas, eds., *Immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent in the U.S.A.* (Chicago: India League of America, 1976).

15. Robert W. Gardner, Bryant Robey, and Peter C. Smith, *Asian Americans: Growth, Change and Diversity* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 1985). This booklet is the source for all further unattributed population data.

16. Nathan Glazer, foreword, in Parmatma Saran and E. Eames, eds., *The New Ethnics: Asian Indians in the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1976), pp. vi–viii.

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25. Karen Isaksen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997).

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