CHAPTER–II

THE PARTITION QUESTION

Historicity of the partition of India defies conclusion. Each attempt tends to unfold its reality. As we move closer, the curiosity increases. India’s independence on 15th August 1947 was the culmination of a prolonged and sustained movement. The birth of neighbouring Pakistan, on the other hand, would seem to be an aberration, a historical accident caused by configuration of forces at a particular historical juncture.¹ The partition brought socio-political upheavals in both the East and West Punjab. It is, therefore, very important to understand the genesis of the partition of the Punjab.² The partition was defining event of modern, Independent India and Pakistan, and it is hardly any exaggeration to say that partition continues to be the defining event of modern India and Pakistan.³ Pluralism, the bedrock of secular nationalism, could no longer contain hatred, religious intolerance, and other forms of bigotry. Some of the anxieties Indians faced while formulating strategies for political survival reappeared with a force that could not have been anticipated at the turn of the 20th century. They came up into sharp focus only a decade or so before the actual transfer of power. The outcome was a cataclysmic event – the bloody vivisection of India.⁴ That this would happen on the midnight of 14 August, 1947 was unthinkable a decade before that date. If Pakistan was still a pipe-dream, the Muslim League was little more than a paper organization.⁵ The factors which formed the feelings of separatedness among the Muslims from the Hindus and the Sikhs existed for a long time but never had the separatedness been demanded

³ Gerald James Larson, India’s Agony Over Religion, OUP, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 182-3.
⁴ Mushirul Hasan (ed.), Partition Omnibus, OUP, New Delhi, 2002, pp.xi,xii.
⁵ Mushirul Hasan (ed.), India’s Partition, pp.6, 7.
politically and geographically. Malcolm Darling, a keen observer and a top colonial mandarin, commented during his tour of the Punjab in 1946: “If only propaganda had not poisoned the air with hatred and distrust, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs could have continued to live happily together in the village, as they had done for over a hundred years”. Within a year, this region was divided in half and many of the people Malcolm Darling met along the way in these ‘mixed up’ populations were wrenched out of their homes, made destitute or murdered.

I

The idea of separate Muslim state had been in the air for quite some time. M.A. Jinnah, the high priest and the ‘sole spokesman’ of the All India Muslim League, pointed out that idea of dividing India was not new, for it had occurred to John Bright in 1877. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, cultivating the imperial imminence, had told the Muslims after the partition of Bengal in 1905: “I am giving you a Muslim province”. M.A. Jinnah lambasted that Pakistan has been there for centuries and will remain till the end of the world. The Muslim League was not alone to flog the hobby horse of division of the Punjab. After the Kohat riots in 1923 and 1924, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote a number of articles on communal riots and suggested remedial measures. One of these was the division of the Punjab into East Punjab and West Punjab. He argued that if the democracy was to work successfully and effectively

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7 M.L. Darling further commented: “Without neighbourliness there can be no comfort in village life, but, alas, propaganda with its ghastly brood - mutilation massacre, and rape -- has turned Jinnah’s Two Nation creed in the village from a theory into a bloody fact”: *At Freedom’s Door*, OUP, London, 1949, pp. 302-3.
under the system of communal electorates, the partition of the Punjab was essential. Lala Lajpat Rai introduced the idea of reorganisation of the Punjab on communal considerations. The idea of Islamic state in the north-west had floated in an amorphous form in a few minds in the general ferment of 1919 and was later espoused by Sir Mohammad Iqbal, the poet of Pan-Islamism. Under the pressure of communal tension, it was worked out in a few pamphlets and at last in the programme of the Muslim League in March 1940. However, Mohammad Iqbal’s blueprint did not envisage a separate Muslim state. He merely made out a case for provincial autonomy in the Punjab, the N.W.F.P., Sindh and Baluchistan within the body politic of India for much the same reason that prompted the Motilal Nehru Committee of August 1928 to recommend the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and to constitute the North-West Frontier Province into an ‘independent’ administrative unit. Mohammad Iqbal, in his Presidential Address at the Annual Session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad, had given a hint for a separate state for Muslims. In his speech, Mohammad Iqbal said, “the Muslim demand for the creation of Muslim state within India is, therefore, perfectly justified. I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire, or without British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India”. According to M.A. Jinnah, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal played a very conspicuous part though it was not revealed at that time in consolidating the Muslim League influence in the Punjab. Not only he convinced M.A. Jinnah of a separate


14 Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India’s Partition*, p.6.


federation of Muslim provinces as early as 1937, but he also took effective steps to realize this objective. Iqbal’s ideas were ignored by most Muslim politicians, but gained some momentum in the informal arenas of politics through the medium of popular press. After Mohammad Iqbal, Rahmat Ali, a Cambridge University student, published a pamphlet *Now or Never* in 1933 in which the idea of Pakistan was explained. In this pamphlet, he advocated a complete breakaway of the Muslims of North-Western zone of India from the rest of Indian Union. Pakistan - etymologically meant the ‘land of pure’, ‘P’ stood for Punjab, ‘A’ for Afghan (North-West Frontier Province), ‘K’ for Kashmir, ‘S’ for Sindh and ‘tan’ for Baluchistan. Unlike Iqbal’s Scheme, which was placed strictly within the context of All-India, Rahmat Ali envisaged a confederation of Muslim states in the sub-continent linked to the original Pakistan including all Muslim countries in West and Central Asia up to the Bosphorus. In 1940 again, he published a pamphlet entitled *The Milat of Islam and Menace of Indianism* in which he formulated the demand for Pakistan. Rehmat Ali’s Scheme nurtured in Cambridge was an illustration of obscurantist political eccentricity. It caused much embarrassment back home and was dismissed as ‘chimerical’ and ‘impracticable’. Despite differences in emphasis, most of the schemes were predicated on Muslims being a nation and not a minority. A veritable revolt against Hindu majoritarian rule under the Congress banner, Muslim assertions of nationhood were put to the test by the outbreak of the World War II in 1939 in Europe. In the same year, M.A. Jinnah also called for a separate
state for Muslims. It was a turning point in the history of India. It was the culmination and clear manifestation of the idea which was envisaged in the Lahore Resolution of 1940. M.A. Jinnah raised the war cry at Lahore, the city with a glorious history of cultural synthesis and integration. The mild, moderate statesman, tutored in the liberal traditions of Dadabhai Naraoji, spoke angrily and defiantly sending out alarm signals all around.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940 has been characterized as ‘the Magna Carta of Pakistan’. The Hindu and Non-Muslim League press immediately grasped the significance of this decision and called it the ‘Pakistan Resolution’. The historic resolution was passed in the 27th Annual Session of All India Muslim League on March 22nd, 1940. The President of the session, M.A. Jinnah pointed out that “the Lahore session is going to be a landmark in the future history of Muslim India”. It happened to be true in the coming years and the Resolution turned out to be a landmark in the foundation of Pakistan. Just after the passage of the Resolution, a heated controversy started between those who liked it and those who disliked it. The debate assumed many phases and much was said and observed for and against the Resolution. M.A. Jinnah, in his Presidential Address, proposed autonomous national

27 Much to the consternation of the Congress Muslims, including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who had only just set out the political agenda for his co-religionists at Ramgarh, Jinnah talked of ‘two nations, of Muslims having their homelands, their territory and their state’: Mushirul Hasan (ed.), India's Partition, p. 26.
30 The Tribune, March, 23, 1940. As a matter of fact, the Resolution was passed on March 24, 1940. It was introduced and debated on March, 23, 1940. On March 22, 1940, the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League met at the residence of Nawab Sir Mohammad of Mamdot. The Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. M.A. Jinnah after long and careful deliberations drafted the Resolution: Shafique Ali Khan, The Pakistan Resolution : Arguments For and Against, Royal Book Company, Karachi, 1988, p.1.
31 The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, March 22, 1940, p.6.
The Partition Question

states to give major nations separate homelands and that appeared to him to be the only solution of the problem of country’s constitutional future. Mr. M.A. Jinnah argued: “The fundamental differences between Hindus and Muslims were so wide as to make them separate nations. Any hope of uniting them under a democratic system such as that envisaged in the Government of India Act of 1935 was only a dream. The only solution for India was the establishment of two nation states, each autonomous but bound together by international agreements.” Proposed by Fazlul Haq, a Bengali statesman and seconded by Chaudhary Khaliquzzaman, a prominent Leaguer from the United Provinces, the Resolution read: “It is the considered view of this session of All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle viz: that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which Muslims are numerically in majority as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute ‘independent states’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.” M.A. Jinnah said that the problem of India was not of an inter-communal but manifestly of international character and it must be treated as such. As long as that fundamental tenet was not realized any constitutional plan would result in disaster and prove destructive and harmful not only to the Muslims but also to the British and Hindus. He asserted that the Muslims were a nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state. However, the word

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33 *Ibid.*, p. 53. M.A. Jinnah said that it was only a dream that Hindus and Muslims could ever evolve a common nationality: *The Civil and Military Gazette*, March 24, 1940.

34 *The Civil and Military Gazette*, March 24, 1940.

35 *The Tribune*, Lahore, March 23, 1940.

‘Pakistan’ did not occur in the Resolution, although it has come to be known as ‘Pakistan Resolution’. M.A. Jinnah made it clear in his Presidential Address in the Delhi Session of the Muslim League in 1943 that it was not the Muslim League or Quaid-i-Azam who had coined it. He further said, “you know perfectly well that Pakistan is a word which is really foisted upon us and fathered upon us by the section of the Hindu press and also by the British Press. Now I say to my Hindu and British friends: we thank you for giving us one word.” The Two Nation Theory propounded by M.A. Jinnah marked a new orientation in the policy of the Muslim League. Undoubtedly, the Lahore Resolution stirred up imageries in all political circles.

M.A. Jinnah refuted the theory of a plural, composite nationhood, which was advocated by such tenacity by Ajmal Khan, M.A. Ansari and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He said that Hindus and Muslims belong to two different civilizations which are based on conflicting ideas and competition. To yoke together two such ‘nations’ under a single state would lead to growing discontent, and the final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state. As M.A. Jinnah noted in his address, the term nationalist had become a ‘conjurer’s trick’ in politics. The time had come for Muslims to reject the derogatory label of communalism, once and for all, and advance a vision of nationalism which was no less valid than that of the Congress. These were ominous remarks; yet they did not lower the final curtain on the prospect for a united India. The crusade against ‘Hindu India’ had been launched amid cries of ‘Allah-ho-Akbar’, but the syntax and import of phrases used in the ‘Pakistan

37 Damodar P. Singhal, Pakistan, p. 63.
39 The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, March 24, 1940.
41 Rising from the ashes of the 1937 electoral debacle, this was Jinnah and the League’s attempt to formally register their claim to speak for all Indian Muslims. As astonishingly bold stance for a vanquished party to take, it drew strength from the rising tide of Muslim antipathy to the prospect of Congress rule at the all India center: Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia, p. 144.
Resolution’ were obscure. M.A. Jinnah had taken care to draft the Resolution in such way that textual ambiguities would not foreclose the alternative outcomes. The silver lining was that M.A. Jinnah had, albeit consciously, refused to define his ‘nation’ and had thereby left his ‘scheme’ open to diverse interpretations.

The Lahore Resolution created a lot of heat and met a nation-wide criticism. The national and vernacular press widely reported on the Resolution and discussed its political ramifications. If the Muslim League applauded this Resolution, it was widely criticized from almost every political quarter in the Punjab as well at national level. The Congress, the Akalis and the nationalist Muslims condemned the move. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, while criticizing the Resolution, observed that it was indefinite and pointed out the difficulties which might have obstructed its translation into practice. Pandit Jawaharlal Nahiru characterized ‘the Pakistan scheme’ as foolish one. He said that it was highly anti-national and pro-imperialist to which no freedom-loving man would agree. Mahatma Gandhi argued, “The Two Nation Theory is an untruth, as the Hindus and the Muslims are not two nations”. Sir Chhotu Ram, the prominent Hindu leader of the Punjab Unionist Party, pointed out that the Two Nation Theory propounded by the Muslim League was absurd proposition based on a wholly anti-national outlook and was thoroughly impracticable.

Meanwhile, the Punjab formed the lynchpin of the Pakistan Scheme. Though Muslims were only a little more half the population of the Punjab, and were largely concentrated in its western districts, the Muslim League demanded the inclusion of...
The Sikhs strongly reacted to this scheme as they were directly affected by the scheme. “Its political ramifications on the provincial as well as all India level ensured that ‘Pakistan’ Resolution cannot be ignored. It stirred up the politics of the Punjab partly because it gave Jinnah, a foothold in the province and partly because of uncertain future it held out for the Sikhs, who were in a minority in every district of the province which was their homeland”. The Sikh opposition to the Lahore Resolution was quite natural as their interests were jeopardised by the Scheme endorsed by the Resolution. Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Giani Sher Singh declared that ‘Pakistan’ would be formed on ‘their dead bodies’. If, as the Raja of Mahmudabad had suggested at Lahore, Pakistan was to be an Islamic state based on Sharia, the Sikhs had reasons to be alarmed.

Even a large section of the Muslims criticized this Resolution in unequivocal terms. The independent Muslim Conference held at New Delhi from April 27 to 30, 1940 passed the resolution on the ‘Pakistan’ scheme characterizing it as ‘impractical and harmful’ to the country’s interests generally and of Muslims in particular. The Khaksars, Ahrars and Jamait-i-Ulema denounced M.A. Jinnah as a Kafir and an agent of the British. Sikandar Hayat Khan, Premier of the Punjab and President of the Unionist Party, said that the Pakistan scheme had sown the seeds of communal hatred and it was the duty of every nationalist to condemn it. He irreverently

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52 Anita Inder Singh, The Origins of the Partition of India, p. 60
55 The Tribune, June 8, 1940. Much the same sentiment was expressed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his presidential address at the Indian National Congress in 1940: “I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam’s glorious traditions of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of
The Partition Question

called it ‘Jinnistan’. He had more than once publicly declared that if a Pakistan meant a Muslim Raj here and a Hindu Raj elsewhere, he would have nothing to do with it.\(^{56}\)

The Lahore Resolution was a ‘shrewd game’ of political chess in India.\(^{57}\) The Lahore Resolution, until now the dream of theorists, was put forward by an important political organization as a serious aim, and it altered the complexion of Indian politics.\(^{58}\) With the demand of Pakistan, many other counter schemes came into existence.\(^{59}\) In this critical situation, C. Rajagopalcharya, an eminent Congressman, acknowledged the Muslim League’s claim for separation and came out with his ‘sporting offer’ on August 23, 1940 to persuade his compatriots to accept a Muslim Leaguer as Prime Minister with a right to nominate the persons of his own choice in the national government.\(^{60}\) But this ‘sporting offer’ created the impression that the Congress was willing to go to any length for reaching an agreement with the Muslim League.\(^{61}\) The Shiromani Akali Dal strongly criticized the ‘sporting offer’ of C. Rajagopalcharya that accommodated the League at the cost of the legacy. As a Muslim I have a special identity within the field of religion and culture and I cannot tolerate any undue interference with it. But, with all these feelings, I have another equally deep realization, born out of my life’s experience, which is strengthened and not hindered by the spirit of Islam. I am equally proud of the fact that I am Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total make-up without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete. I can never give up this sincere claim”: quoted in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and Partition of India, OUP, New Delhi, 2002, p. 11.


\(^{59}\) Harpreet Kaur, The Press and the Partition of the Punjab, p. 28. Dr. V.S. Bhatti of Ludhiana published a pamphlet demanding ‘buffer state’ called Khalistan between India and Pakistan: The Tribune, April 14, 1940; Rajendra Prasad, India Divided, p. 254.

\(^{60}\) The Tribune, August 24, 1940.

of other parties. However, the All India Congress Committee rejected the ‘Rajagopalcharya offer’ with a majority vote.62

After the ‘Pakistan’ Resolution, as it came to be known, 1940 onwards M.A. Jinnah argued that as there were at least two identifiable nations in India, a transfer of power would have to involve the dissolution of the unitary center which was an artifact of British colonialism. Any reconstitution of that centre would require the agreement of the Muslim-majority provinces as well as the princely states.63 However, the nationalist writers in the 1940s and thereafter were wedded to the concept of composite nationality, a quintessential feature of India’s liberation struggle, and laid stress on cultural assimilation and social intermingling between Hindus and Muslims. Still, the essential thrust of their argument - that the followers of different religious creeds had co-existed peacefully even in turbulent times - was profoundly valid.64 But when the dust settled after the Lahore meet in March 1940, Pakistan was no longer an elusive goal, the League no longer a benign organization. Having refurbished its image, the League reorganized its structure at various levels and formulated a strategy to deepen its popular base.65 The League had conquered the bulk of the Muslim middle class as well as the lower middle class.66 By 1942, M.A. Jinnah actually assumed a position like Gandhiji as far as Muslims were concerned. He was a sword of Islam resting in a secular scabbed.67 Mr. M.A. Jinnah had enormous influence which he had built up as the leader of the Muslim community but the League had no other reason de’itre than a negative Hindu feeling.68

64 Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India’s Partition*, pp. 35-36.
67 Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India Partitioned* pp. 15-16.
The Partition Question

II

The increasing difficulties of the World War II and the exigencies created by it led the British Government to adopt a fresh approach in solving the Indian political deadlock. Accordingly in March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India with a set of proposals.\footnote{C.H. Phillips and M.D. Wainwright (eds.), \textit{The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives (1935-47)}, p. 264.} To secure the help of Indians in the war efforts, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made an announcement in the House of Commons that Stafford Cripps was proceeding to India as a special mission. He was volunteered to tackle one of the knottiest problems of world history in momentous days.\footnote{Harpreet Kaur, \textit{Press and the Partition of the Punjab}, p. 30.} Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at Delhi on March 22, 1942.\footnote{V.P. Menon, \textit{The Transfer of Power in India (1942-47)}, p. 105.} Sir Cripps issued a draft declaration which promised India the status of dominion and setting up a constitution making body to frame a single constitution for the Indian Union. To please the Muslims, he gave an option to any province to refuse to join the proposed Indian Union with complete self-government.\footnote{Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, \textit{India Wins Freedom}, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1987, pp.228-29.} Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, met Sir Stafford Cripps in Delhi. He was of the opinion that the Cripps Offer was the best possible solution to the communal problem. He was convinced that if the matter was put to vote in the Punjab Legislative Assembly its decision would be on national and not on the communal lines.\footnote{Baljit Singh, \textit{The Elections and Politicisation in the Punjab (1945-47)}, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, G.N.D. University, Amritsar, 2008, p. 34.} The Cripps Proposals envisaged setting up of a constitution making body at the end of the War and the creation of a new Indian Union as a dominion. Provision was made for the participation of Indian states and constitution so framed was to be accepted by the Britain, subject to a treaty for protection of social and religious minorities and subject also to the right of any province to stay out of the Union.\footnote{Durga Das, \textit{India From Curzon to Nehru and After}, Rupa, New Delhi, 2001 (First Published 1969), p.201.} Stafford Cripps
made it clear that the Scheme would go through as a whole or would be rejected as a whole. It would not be possible to retain only the part relating to immediate arrangements at the centre and discard the rest of the draft scheme.\textsuperscript{75}

However, the Congress leaders denounced the Cripps Proposals because they demanded that India be immediately declared independent.\textsuperscript{76} The Proposals were loaded with the dangerous implications of Pakistan. So, it was rejected by every single party or group in India as well as in the Punjab.\textsuperscript{77} Mahatma Gandhi said that the Cripps Proposals had all the bad points of federation plan of the Reforms Act 1935 and had further introduced the evil principle of partition of India to be decided by people chosen on a very limited franchise. He had told Sir Stafford Cripps that his Proposals at best offered “an undated cheque on a crashing bank”.\textsuperscript{78} The Cripps Mission, offering provinces and not communities the right to opt out of the Indian Union, nearly succeeded in bringing out the basic contradiction in Jinnah’s demands. Some Muslim politicians in the Punjab and Bengal could see that the provincial option was incompatible with following the lead of Muslim League at the all India level.\textsuperscript{79} M.A. Jinnah objected strongly that the Muslims felt deeply disappointed that the entity and integrity of the Muslim nation had not been expressly recognized.\textsuperscript{80} In Punjab, the Sikhs were relieved at the failure of the Cripps Mission.\textsuperscript{81} The Sikhs opposed this offer which would make them minorities under the Muslim rule.\textsuperscript{82} A ‘Pakistan’ that might mean the division of the Punjab and Bengal remained a distant thunder.\textsuperscript{83} But the British feared internal unrest, as Muslims and Sikhs became

\textsuperscript{75} Harpreet Kaur, \textit{The Press and the Partition of the Punjab (1947)}, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{76} Penderal Moon (ed.) \textit{Wavell: The Viceroy’s Journal}, OUP, New Delhi, 1977, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{77} Harpreet Kaur, \textit{Press and the Partition of the Punjab}, p.32.


\textsuperscript{79} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{80} He added that the document was a bare skeleton of the proposals and obviously, such a framework would require a lot of fitting in and adjusting, before it could be made acceptable: Harpreet Kaur, \textit{The Press and the Partition of the Punjab}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{81} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 78.


\textsuperscript{83} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Modern South Asia}, p. 147.
increasingly suspicious of one another.\textsuperscript{84} It was not realized at the time that the Cripps Offer of 1942 was perhaps the last opportunity for a united and free India. If the Congress had accepted the Offer doubtlessly, the League would have followed and if a composite government had been formed in 1942 and worked to defend India against the invasion, it is more than probable that many of the differences between the Congress and the League would have been toned down if not eradicated.\textsuperscript{85}

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) on 8 August, 1942 passed the resolution to start Quit India Movement. Mahatma Gandhi gave a new slogan of ‘do or die’.\textsuperscript{86} The Provincial Congress Committees were declared unlawful and many of their leaders were arrested. Mahatma Gandhi had suspended the non-Cooperation Movement in 1922 on the eruption of violence, but in 1942 he took the risk of break out of violence.\textsuperscript{87} The Muslims, except for a small number of unrepresentative individuals, had no sympathy for Mahatma Gandhi and his ‘non-violent’ outbreak of fanaticism.\textsuperscript{88} M.A. Jinnah described it as a most dangerous mass movement and appealed the Muslims to keep completely aloof from the movement.\textsuperscript{89}

However, Sikandar Hayat Khan’s death in December 1942 shifted the political equilibrium in the Punjab in Muslim League’s favour and fear was that “the immediate future may be worse than the past.”\textsuperscript{90} Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana became the new Premier of the Punjab. But his inexperience in politics clashed with other groups in his party as well as his struggle with M.A. Jinnah who created many difficulties for him. He tried to appease his rivals in the party and reappointed the earlier ministers in Sikandar Hayat’s cabinet.\textsuperscript{91} M.A. Jinnah tried to bring the young inexperienced Premier in his fold but Khizr Hayat Khan was not a man to easily line

\textsuperscript{84} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{86} Bipan Chandra, \textit{India’s Struggle for Independence}, Penguin, New Delhi, 1989,p. 459.
\textsuperscript{87} Baljit Singh, \textit{The Elections and Politicisation in the Punjab (1945-47)}, pp. 34-35.
\textsuperscript{89} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India} (1936-47), p. 87.
\textsuperscript{90} Narinder Iqbal Singh, \textit{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947)}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{91} Stanley Wolpart, \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan}, OUP, New Delhi, 1984,p.222.
The Partition Question

up with the Muslim League. It was thought that Khizr’s support would have obviously made it easy for the Muslim League to realize its goal of Pakistan. Many Muslim members of the Unionist Party representing agricultural interests were opposed to the idea of Pakistan. Khizr Hayat Khan said that his government was a coalition government with Hindu and Sikh members and not a League Government.

The Sikh and Hindu colleagues of Sir Khizr Hayat Khan offered to cooperate with the Muslim League primarily on the condition that “the idea of Pakistan is abandoned for the period of War.” M.A. Jinnah rejected this saying that the minorities had no right to urge Muslim League for compromise on issues of all India character. M.A. Jinnah adopted a very firm attitude towards the Unionist Party and intimated his terms to be followed which were rejected by Sir Khizr Hayat Khan. The leader of the Unionist Party could not agree to such terms as it would have dealt a death blow to his party. Obviously, he was conscious of losing the support of his Hindu and Sikh supporters. He refuted the claim of M.A. Jinnah that the Unionist Party’s objective and creed was different from the League so far the cultural protection and economic betterment of the Muslims was concerned. Consequently, the Muslim League members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, whose strength had risen from 1 to 22, crossed over to the opposition. After a long interchange of letters between the Committee of Action and the Premier, ultimately the Action

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94 Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab*, p. 22
The Partition Question

Committee of the Muslim League expelled Khizr Hayat Khan from the membership of All India Muslim League on May 27, 1944.101

The Muslim League’s prospects in the Punjab, always a matter of concern to M.A. Jinnah and his lieutenants improved vastly after the collapse of Sikander-Jinnah Pact in April 1944. Its political strategy, coupled with an extensive propaganda campaign along religious lines, paid off.102 The Governor of the Punjab, B.J. Glancy reported that “the Pakistan slogan is gaining momentum”.103 It was also noticed that a number of minor pirs and landowners were moving into its ranks.104 The landlords and pirs, whose directives were widely disseminated by all means of small leaflets and wall-posters, deserted the Unionist Party. Their overwhelming support enabled M.A. Jinnah to raise his party’s flag in the ‘cornerstone’ of Pakistan.105 M. A. Jinnah returned to Lahore in April 1944. He was preaching Pakistan as panacea for all ills, but avoided any reasoned explanation of where it begins and ended and what benefits it would confer. He might make “an ideal leader of a demolition squad”, mused B.J. Glancy, “but anything in the way of constructive suggestion seems foreign to his nature”.106 By 1945, M.A. Jinnah’s influence in the Punjab in the key province so far as Pakistan was concerned was very much greater than it had been five years earlier when the ‘Pakistan Resolution’ was passed. He had not destroyed the Unionists but he had made a breach in their ranks.107

101 Chaudhary Khaliquzzaman, Pathway to Pakistan, p. 325. See also, Ian Talbot, Punjab and the Raj (1849-1947), Manohar, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 172-73.
102 Mushirul Hasan, Indian Partitioned, Vol. 1, p. 16.
105 Mushirul Hasan, Indian Partitioned, Vol. 1, p. 16.
107 Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit, p. 40.
In 1944, C.R. Rajagopalcharya, a veteran Congress politician from Madras, offered M.A. Jinnah a Pakistan carved out of the Muslim majority districts of the Punjab and Bengal. Although Pakistan’s geographical boundaries had been visualized by Rajagopalcharya, M.A. Jinnah dismissed the scheme as ‘offering a shadow and a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan, and thus trying to pass off having met Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand.\textsuperscript{108} M.A. Jinnah described these proposals as contrary to the Lahore Resolution and rejected because a plebiscite of all inhabitants would have gone against Pakistan.\textsuperscript{109} But it helped to restore Jinnah’s prestige on all India level by political initiatives which conceded the principle of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{110} Moreover, during the Congress leaders’ incarceration between 1942 and 1945, the Muslim League had increased greatly in numbers. Majority of the educated Muslims followed the Muslim League.\textsuperscript{111}

Sir Cripps and C. Rajagopalcharya had in different ways put their finger on a festering sore. ‘Pakistan’ was anathema for most non-Muslims in the Muslim-majority provinces.\textsuperscript{112} The Sikhs violently reacted and speeches were made strongly criticizing Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership. Master Tara Singh stated for the first time that “the Sikhs were a separate nation”.\textsuperscript{113} Master Tara Singh asked: “If you can not force a majority to stay in India, how can you force another minority to go out of India?”\textsuperscript{114} There were repeated warnings from the Governors of the Punjab, Bengal and also Assam. But neither New Delhi nor London cared to expose the flaw in Jinnah’s and the League’s strategy, namely that ‘Pakistan’ could entail partitioning the Punjab and Bengal.\textsuperscript{115} By February 1944, M.A. Jinnah was back in Bombay. He

\textsuperscript{108} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{109} Ian Talbot, \textit{Punjab and the Raj}, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{110} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{111} Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), \textit{The Transfer of Power}, Vol. VI, p. 776.
\textsuperscript{112} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{115} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 147.
urged the Muslim Students Federation to erect pillars of a hard work, industry and perseverance upon which the edifice of Pakistan could be built.\textsuperscript{116}

The All Indian Muslim League made significant move to consolidate its position in the Punjab. An appeal was made to enormously contribute for the funds because finances were necessary to carry out the Muslim League’s programme.\textsuperscript{117} M.A. Jinnah’s relentless determination to eliminate all independent Muslim parties and to marshal all Muslims under his own leadership was well illustrated in the summer of 1945, when the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, on the termination of the War with Germany, made a fresh attempt to break the political deadlock.\textsuperscript{118} The strategy for exploiting wartime discontent became even more popular from the summer of 1945 onwards, when large number of demobilized soldiers began to return to the province only to face massive unemployment.\textsuperscript{119} To consolidate the Muslim League’s position in the Punjab, about sixty thousand rupees were spent on propaganda.\textsuperscript{120} Posters, pamphlets and meetings were the means to convey the message to the Muslim masses.\textsuperscript{121}

Lord Wavell went to England at the end of the month of March, 1945. On his return he announced to call the political conference at Shimla to be represented by all parties.\textsuperscript{122} The Indian National Congress was authorized to select the Hindu representatives whereas Sikhs were represented by the Akalis. However, M. A. Jinnah pressed the claim for the Muslim League’s right to nominate all the Muslim

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\textsuperscript{116} Stanley Wolpart, \textit{Jinnah of Pakistan}, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{117} Narinder Iqbal Singh, \textit{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947)}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{118} Penderal Moon, \textit{Divide and Quit}, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{119} Mushirul Hasan, \textit{India’s Partition}, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{120} H. N. Mitra and N.N. Mitra(eds.), \textit{Indian Annual Register}, Vol. 1., 1944, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{121} They were convinced that Pakistan was the only solution to get rid of their economic and cultural backwardness. The Muslim League activity strengthened the communal politics in the Punjab: K.B. Sayeed, \textit{Pakistan : The Formative Phase}, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{122} H. V. Hodson, \textit{The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan}, Hutchison, London, 1969, p. 120.
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The Shimla Conference opened on June 25, 1945, but on July 11, to the amazement and disappointment of all who had set great store by these proposals to end the political deadlock, Lord Wavell announced that his private confabulations with M.A. Jinnah had failed. The Conference failed because the Congress refused to concede M.A. Jinnah’s point that the League be allowed to select all Muslim members to the Viceroy’s Executive Council. However, this raised Jinnah’s status in the Muslim politics. While neither the British nor the Congress were willing to take the ‘Pakistan’ demand too seriously, many Muslims thought that their best security lay in backing a party strongly advocating the Muslim case in negotiations to settle all important questions of how power was to be shared after the British quit India. However, the British were wrong in their assessments that the failure of the Conference would reduce the image of M. A. Jinnah’s importance. He now came more close to the concept of Pakistan and fought the next election on this issue.

III

The period between the end of the World War II and the attainment of independence by India was the climatic stage in which the logic of anti-imperialist movement and colonial rule revealed itself. Meanwhile, the Labour Party had formed the government in England in July 1945. Lord Wavell noted that the Labour Party

\[\text{V. P. Menon, } \text{The Transfer of Power in India, p. 206. See also, Penderal Moon (ed.), Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal, pp. 146-147.}\]

\[\text{Durga Das, } \text{India from Curzon to Nehru and After, p. 215.}\]

\[\text{Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, } \text{Modern South Asia, p. 147. See also, Durga Das, } \text{India from Curzon to Nehru and After, p. 215; Ayesha Jalal, } \text{Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850, OUP, New Delhi, 2001, p. 450.}\]

\[\text{Ayesha Jalal, } \text{Self and Sovereignty, p. 450.}\]

\[\text{Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, } \text{Modern South Asia, p. 148.}\]

\[\text{Narinder Iqbal Singh, } \text{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947), pp. 29, 30.}\]

\[\text{Sucheta Mahajan, } \text{Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India, Sage, New Delhi, 2000, p. 24.}\]

\[\text{Sho Khwajima, } \text{Muslims, Nationalism and the Partition: 1946 Provincial Elections in India, Manohar, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 30-31.}\]
would be more sympathetic towards India. Sir B. J. Glancy, the Governor of the Punjab, was not in the favour of early elections in the Punjab. He argued, “until the absurdity of crude form of Pakistan was exposed, the Punjab Muslims would vote simply on what appeared to them to be a religious issue.” He also warned of ‘a civil war’ in the Punjab. He argued that if Pakistan ‘becomes an imminent reality, there shall be bloodshed on a wide scale’. However, the elections were announced in the winter of 1945-46 and the elections were contested on communal issue.

Before the World War II, Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs lived, for the most part, as neighbours in rural Punjab. With the intensive propaganda which accompanied the elections of 1945-1946, communal politics burst into the villages, setting Muslims against non-Muslims, and giving both a new and exciting word -- freedom. M.A. Jinnah now became adamantly that there must be a single state of Pakistan and the League fought the elections of 1945-46 on that platform. During the War period, the economic conditions in the Punjab further deteriorated which alienated the masses from the Unionist Party. The Unionist leaders had assured the Governor, Sir Henry Craik that they would join the war efforts. Even the Governor reported to the Viceroy that expenditures on a fairly generous scale be fully justified in the war time. Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader, declared that war was as golden chance for the Sikhs to regain and consolidate their position. The Unionist Party, unlike the Congress and the Muslim League unconditionally supported the British war.

135 Mushirul Hasan, India Partitioned, Vol. 1, p. 16.
136 Mushirul Hasan, India’s Partition, p. 189.
139 A.S. Narang, Storm Over the Sutlej: The Akali Politics, Gitanjali Publicaiton House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 64.
efforts. At the local level, the landowners actively encouraged army recruitment. Initially, there was great enthusiasm for the British cause.\footnote{Ian Talbot, \textit{Punjab and the Raj (1849-1947)}, p. 143.}

The World War II turned out to be ‘enormously destructive’. In fact, it was a larger edition of the World War I; indeed, a ‘total war’. It led to ‘total mobilization of manpower and economic resources’.\footnote{Shelly Sharma, \textit{Economic Conditions in the Punjab (1945-47)}, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, G.N.D. University, 2009, p.22.} Economic conditions in the Punjab continued to deteriorate during the final years of the War. By 1944, even countryside suffered economic dislocation as badly as the towns from shortages of consumer goods and inflation.\footnote{Ian Talbot, \textit{Punjab and the Raj}, p. 152.} After the summer of 1945, large number of demobilized soldiers began to return to the province causing massive unemployment. The post-war reconstruction schemes had done nothing for the demobilised soldiers whose number stood at 2,47,000.\footnote{Baljit Singh, \textit{The Elections and the Politicisation in the Punjab (1945-47)}, p. 260.} The end of the war entailed large scale demobilization of men from the armed forces, factory workers and clerks.\footnote{Sucheta Mahajan, \textit{Independence and Partition}, p. 50.} Furthermore, the Unionist Party’s political interests were sacrificed to the requirements of raising army recruits and exporting food grains from the Punjab.\footnote{Ian Talbot, \textit{Punjab and the Raj}, pp. 238-39.} This created widespread dissent against the Unionist Party in the province. The students, politicians and ulema carried out religious propaganda for the Muslim League. The Aligarh Muslim University started a special election training camp for students in August 1945. More than one thousand students worked for the League in the Punjab and Sindh alone.\footnote{Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 132.} A few months before the elections of 1946 in the Punjab, a journalist had observed that their results would determine ‘not only the future course of politics in the province, but also to a large extent the future of India’.\footnote{J. S. Grewal, “Punjab Muslims and Partition”, Amrik Singh (ed.), \textit{The Partition in Retrospect}, Anamika Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, p. 138.} The Muslim masses in the rural Punjab were aroused and inspired by the
message of Pakistan. Though some areas were untouched by and beyond the League’s sphere of influence, responsible and influential leaders toured the province, educated the masses, established League branches and enlisted primary members.\textsuperscript{148} The election campaign of the Muslim League was one sustained and uncompromising attack on everything and everyone that did not fall in line with the League ideology. It was not a political fight but a fight in which the sole attempt of the Muslim League was to arouse communal passions and work up religious frenzy of ignorant and superstitious masses.\textsuperscript{149} Thousands of young volunteers offered their services to carry the message of Pakistan to the length and breadth of India. Women of noble parentage went from door to door preaching their fellow-women to cast their own votes, as well as to persuade their husbands, brothers, sisters and other relatives to vote for Jinnah and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{150} The election propaganda of the Muslim League in the Punjab had taken the line that “these elections will decide whether there is to be Pakistan or not, and that if the League wins in the Pakistan provinces no further vote by the legislature or plebiscite will be needed.”\textsuperscript{151} Within five years of passing of the Lahore Resolution, the centuries old peace among the three communities had come to an end. In such a short period, the political structure of peaceful relations was eroded to such a ruinous extent by the League that no compromise could be conceived of in any foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{152} The elections of 1946 proved a turning point in the history of the Punjab. The Muslim League secured 73 seats in the Punjab Legislative Assembly out of 85 contested whereas the Unionist Party won only 19 out of 99 seats.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{148} An additional bonus was that \textit{pirs} and religious men were cultivated, drawn into the political arena, catapulted into public prominence, reassured that their interests would be firmly secured under a League-led government and paid thousands of rupees in offerings to take part in the canvassing: Mushirul Hasan, \textit{Indian Partitioned}, Vol. 1, pp. 16, 17.


\textsuperscript{151} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{152} Harpreet Kaur, \textit{The Press and the Partition of the Punjab (1947)} pp. 63, 64.

\textsuperscript{153} Kirpal Singh, \textit{The Partition of the Punjab}, p. 23.
The Muslim League emerged like a Sphinx. It captured 73 seats out of 85 Muslim seats. The Muslim League emerged as the largest party in the Punjab.\textsuperscript{154} It’s only failure was in the NWFP, but this was of small significance compared with its smashing success in the Punjab. The cry of Pakistan, with its vague but alluring connotation for the Muslim masses, had proved irresistible. M.A. Jinnah’s claim to speak for the Muslims had been triumphantly vindicated.\textsuperscript{155} The League had presented the elections as plebiscite for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{156} Obviously, the prospects of avoiding partition had considerably worsened.\textsuperscript{157} The League was exultant and victory celebrations were held throughout India.\textsuperscript{158} The elections provided to the Muslim League the first opportunity for a trial, a trial of its strength in the Punjab.\textsuperscript{159} The question whether ‘the Muslim League saved Islam is not worth asking, but it was clear that Islam did save the Muslim League’.\textsuperscript{160} A remarkable recovery considering their performance in the 1937 elections, it was nearly as foolproof a step to achieving the substance of the League’s demand as might appear at first sight. It was very well for M.A. Jinnah to depict his party’s resounding electoral victory as a mandate for ‘Pakistan’ built around an undivided Punjab and Bengal.\textsuperscript{161}

With the election results out, there appeared the question of formation of ministry in the Punjab. The Muslim League leaders expected invitation for forming the ministry. However, other political parties did not support them.\textsuperscript{162} On March 7, 1946, the Congress, the Akalis and the Unionists formed the Ministry under the leadership of Khizr Hayat Khan, despite the contention of Muslim League leaders

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\textsuperscript{154} Baljit Singh, \textit{The Elections and the Politicisation in the Punjab, (1945-47)}, p. 200.  \\
\textsuperscript{155} Penderal Moon, \textit{Divide and Quit}, p. 43.  \\
\textsuperscript{156} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 136.  \\
\textsuperscript{157} Penderal Moon, \textit{Divide and Quit}, p. 43.  \\
\textsuperscript{158} G.D. Khosla, \textit{Stern Reckoning}, p. 31.  \\
\textsuperscript{159} Baljit Singh, \textit{The Elections and the Politicisation in the Punjab, (1945-47)}, pp.200-201.  \\
\textsuperscript{160} Narinder Iqbal Singh, \textit{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947)}, p. 32.  \\
\textsuperscript{161} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 148.  \\
\end{flushright}
that they represented the largest individual party.\textsuperscript{163} Deprived of constitutional power, the Muslim League organized demonstrations against the Khizr Ministry. A coalition which included so small percentage of Muslims was a strange anomaly in the province, especially when the party which commanded a majority of the Muslim votes found no place in the government. It did not augur well for the future.\textsuperscript{164} For the first time, the largest party of the Muslims found itself totally excluded by an undreamt combination of the Congress, the Unionist Party and the Akali Party.\textsuperscript{165} The move infuriated the Muslim League leadership as they had lost the battle even in their victory.\textsuperscript{166} It is possible that if the League leaders had been left free to form a coalition, they would have been compelled, just in order to gain power, to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the minorities.\textsuperscript{167} In that case, they would have been less tempted to stir up the strife. The allies forming the coalition government the Congress, the Akalis and the rump of the Unionists-must all share the blame for the situation that arose.\textsuperscript{168} The Muslim League leaders were indignant and they started a bitter campaign against the Ministry. The Punjabis ceased to be Punjabis and became Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.\textsuperscript{169}

On February 19, 1946, the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee had announced that, “three Cabinet Ministers are going to India to discuss with leaders of Indian opinion the framing of an Indian Constitution.”\textsuperscript{170} The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 14 March 1946, its aim, as described by Clement Attlee was to get machinery set up for framing the constitutional structure in which Indians will have ‘full control of their own destiny and the formation of new interim

\textsuperscript{163} Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{165} Kirpal Singh, \textit{The Partition of the Punjab}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{166} Harpreet Kaur, \textit{The Press and the Partition of the Punjab}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{167} Kirpal Singh, \textit{The Partition of the Punjab}, pp. 23-24
\textsuperscript{168} Kirpal Singh, \textit{The Sikhs and the Transfer of Power (1942-47)}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{169} Narinder Iqbal Singh, \textit{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947)}, p. 34.
government”. The Constitution to be drawn up by a constituent assembly was to provide each province, with the right to call for a reconsideration of the constitution after ten yearly intervals. Briefly, the Scheme was rooted in the unity and indivisibility of the country. To M.A. Jinnah, therefore, its labours were anathema. The Cabinet Mission broadcast its Plan worldwide from New Delhi on May 16, 1946. It was the last hope for a single Indian Union to emerge peacefully in the wake up of British Raj. The Mission could only give Jinnah the choice between an undivided India with a weak federal centre and compulsory grouping of Muslim and Hindu provinces but without a guarantee of Muslim share at centre, or a sovereign Pakistan stripped of eastern Punjab and Western Bengal. M.A. Jinnah roundly charged the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission with breach of trust and cuttily observed ‘statesmen should not eat their words’.

M.A. Jinnah now began to search for a weapon with which he could adequately take his revenge and assert his individuality and power. He had declared in March 1946 that there was a change of outlook in the Muslim League and that Muslims no longer talked of a mere constitutional fight. Cumulative, minor cracks were building all over the Indian urban landscape. Even more ominously, the loud, the omnipresent calls for Pakistan or for Swaraj had been taken up by militia and strongmen, middle class students and their urban supporters. By the second half of 1946, the British administration knew, after the failure of the Cabinet Mission’s attempt to forge a settlement, that the state was cracking. Lord Wavell’s personal diary, in which the Viceroy scribbled his musings, was verging on the

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175 So the Cabinet Mission ended in disappointment, tinged with resentment; for it was to the accompaniment of Jinnah’s taunts and reproaches that three Cabinet Ministers took their departure: Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 56.
apocalyptic. As soon as the Cabinet Mission failed, urban scraps and stabbings intensified in frequency.  

Within the fortnight of the Cabinet Mission’s departure all that remained of their precarious card house had collapsed in irretrievable ruin. The activities of private armies had assumed dangerous proportions. The number of Muslim League National Guards rose to 1500 in December 1946. Similarly, the strength of the RSS volunteers increased 14,000 to 16,000 during 1945-46. From 1946 onwards, the riots were no longer viewed ‘business as usual’ mainly because issues changed from protection of religious places and symbols to that of state formation: The location of violence was not just limited to urban areas but engulfed the rural areas as well.

In a desperate bid to achieve Pakistan, the Muslim League called for a Direct Action Day to be observed on August 16, 1946. The decision was made and the die was cast. The League leaders announced in no uncertain terms that the two resolutions passed at the Bombay session of the Council on July 29, 1946, were intended to be a clarion call to their followers and a challenge to their enemies. M.A. Jinnah announced, “This day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods”. He was dissatisfied of constitutional negotiations and felt that the Muslim League had no other course. He said, “Today we have taken a historic decision. Never before in the whole history of the Muslim League we did anything except by constitutional methods and talks.” He further said, “We have forged a pistol and

178 Ibid., p. 61
179 Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit, p. 56.
182 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia, p. 150.
183 G.D. Khosla, Stern Reckoning, p. 41.
184 Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit, p. 57.
are in a position to use it”.

What ‘direct action’ meant, though, was wide open to speculation and distortion. During the build up, handbills and fly posters using religious language urged the Muslims to act and linked the earliest Muslims with the contemporary situation, announcing that, “in this holy month of Ramzan, Mecca was conquered from the infidels and in this month again a Jihad for the establishment of Pakistan has been declared.”

The ‘great Calcutta killing’, which began that day and continued until 20th August, left a few thousand Hindus and Muslims dead. Violence going out of control at the social base narrowed the options of those negotiations at the centre even further. The ‘Direct Action Day’ passed off peacefully in other provinces. M.A.K. Azad characterized August 16th as ‘a black day’ in the history of India. These convulsions left the tranquility of the Punjab undisturbed. News of the events in Calcutta, Noakhali and Bihar horrified the people and gave rise to a feeling of insecurity but produced no repercussions. It was not until March 4, 1947 that the storm of lawlessness broke over the province, but, when it came, it continued unabated for several months and attained a degree of horror and destruction unequalled anywhere else.

Intense feelings had been aroused around the notions of freedom and oppression, independence and tyranny but nobody had come any closer to envisaging the final shape of a settlement or spell out emphatically what either Swaraj or Pakistan would mean to the Indian people in reality. Situation started worsening. Poisonous propaganda had already been made during the election

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188 Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition, p. 64.
189 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia, p.150.
192 G.D. Khosla, Stern Reckoning, p. 89.
193 Pakistan, then, meant myriad things to different people. The call for Pakistan could be equated with all manner of ambiguous hopes and dreams: Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition, p. 67.
Boycott of non-Muslim goods and trade was declared. Militant organizations were formed by the three communities. In Lahore, exaggerated accounts of events of West Bengal were being circulated in the press and political leaders called for ‘blood for blood’. Regarding the general political situation at the provincial level, the Governor B.J. Glancy’s analysis was, that “Khizr Ministry has lost all respect and it has failed to control the bitterly communal press, turned a blind eye on private armies and permitted speeches advocating revolution and murder.” The communal riots spread like a chain reaction from Calcutta to East Bengal, from East Bengal to Bihar and from Bihar to West Punjab. In the Punjab, the Muslim Leaguers provoked the masses to do anything for the achievement of Pakistan. Communalism had increased to such an extent that the non-Muslims began to suspend the intention of even the nationalist Muslims. Paranoia and intense fearfulness had become part of the fabric of everyday life by 1946 in Punjab and larger parts of North India. Polarization depended upon a linear and totalizing experience of complete isolation and faith only in one dimensional form of political activity – ‘if you are not with us you are against us’.

Meanwhile, the colonial government, the ‘third party-nursed its wounds. Bruised and battered by the impact of the World War II, it had little or no interest in curbing violence. As the sun finally set on the empire, the imperial dream was over. It was time to dismantle the imperial structures and move to the safety of the British Isles. Between November 1946 and February 1947, the Muslim League’s attitude to the Interim Government, its attempt to overthrow by force the Unionist Ministry

196 Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition*, p. 73.
in the Punjab, its refusal to enter the Constituent Assembly and to accept the Cabinet Proposals of 16 May 1946-all signified its intent to achieve Pakistan. The intentions of the League were now made clear in the Punjab. The communal situation had been worsening in the Punjab since October 1946, so that by 29 November, Evans Jenkins, the Governor of the Punjab had to use his discretionary powers. Evans Jenkins expressed his concern over the communal situation, which he described as “very bad indeed” and restated his desire to ban the private armies. It was emphasized that tension could easily rise and that the communal damage done during 1946 was unlikely to be repaired.

It had all raised the fears and suspicions in the eyes of the rival groups after the new situation had risen. Moreover, on November 20, 1946, M.A. Jinnah had openly recommended an exchange of population. By January, 1947 the situation was unfortunately devoid of genuine improvements and continued to be serious with communal ill-feeling as deep-seated and bitter as ever. Khizr Hayat Khan ordered the police to crackdown on the active League National Guards in the province. More than a thousand steel helmets were found in the National Guards headquarters at Lahore, and the general commanders of the Guards were all arrested. The Provincial Government decided to ban the Muslim National Guards and the RSS on January 24, 1947. The League responded with ‘direct action’ protests in streets, demanding and end of Khizr’s coalition government and thus finally bringing the Punjab’s Muslim ‘sword arm’ into violent operation. Khizr Hayat Khan had to withdraw the ban, fearing he could not hope to restore provincial peace otherwise.

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204 Ibid., p. 209.
His position became precarious and had soon to lift the ban on January 28, 1947.\textsuperscript{211} It was ‘an ignominious retreat ending in abject surrender’.\textsuperscript{212} In Viceroy Lord Wavell’s opinion, Premier Khizr Hayat Khan had totally miscalculated the strength of the Muslim League. The Viceroy observed, “the League leaders in the Punjab now think they have got him on the run and will try to secure the downfall of his government. We may perhaps be in far serious trouble in the Punjab, to add to our other difficulties”.\textsuperscript{213} By early 1947, the problems of administration had multiplied as the Punjab descended towards instability. As the demand for Pakistan became irresistible, Lord Wavell’s approach became more practical. He began thinking in terms of demarcating genuine Muslim areas containing Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore divisions minus Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. The partition of the Punjab, he saw, could not be based upon the divisional boundaries.\textsuperscript{214} The communal situation was steadily deteriorating in the Punjab from January 1947.\textsuperscript{215} On February 3, 1947 after the League had refused to enter the Constituent Assembly, the Viceroy’s final fling was to send home his plan for a phased transfer of authority, a variant of his earlier scheme for a phased transfer of authority.\textsuperscript{216} The League victory (of withdrawal of the ban) over the Unionist-led ministry further fuelled the Muslim agitation, while enhancing the Sikh and Hindu fear. The possibility of searching a political agreement in the Punjab by early 1947 had almost disappeared.\textsuperscript{217} By February, 1947, the Muslim League’s campaign against the Coalition Ministry, particularly against the Unionist members was at its peak.\textsuperscript{218}

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\textsuperscript{213} Anders Bjorn Hansen, \textit{Partition and Genocide}, p. 101
\textsuperscript{215} Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{216} Ayesha Jalal, \textit{The Sole Spokesman}, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{217} Anders Bjorn Hansen, \textit{Partition and Genocide}, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{218} Narinder Iqbal Singh, \textit{Communal Violence in the Punjab (1947)}, p. 36.
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On 20 February, 1947, British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee announced on the first and penultimate occasion the date for a final transfer of authority to Indians. The statement expressed the hope that the Indian parties would work out a constitution by then. Clement Attlee announced that His Majesty’s Government intended to transfer power by a date not later than June 1948, and that Lord Louis Mountbatten would take over from Lord Wavell in March 1947. Above all, Clement Attlee made it clear that if by June 1948, constitution making was not taking place in a fully representative Assembly, then His Majesty’s Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over. M.A. Jinnah had now a little more than a year to consolidate his position in Western Pakistan and efforts to reach a settlement in the Punjab and NWFP were started. 

Lord Clement Attlee’s statement left M.A. Jinnah hoping that the British might yet make an award giving him the whole of the Punjab and Bengal. However, the Statement of February 20, 1947 in the context of Indian politics was an open license for Pakistan in some form or other. This announcement meant partition, and partition within the next seventeen months. By fixing the date of transfer of power, the British had done no more than intensifying the ‘war of succession’. They had encouraged the Indians to take the decision into their own hands, but those hands now held knives. During the last week of February 1947, the Punjab erupted with intensified violence in a half dozen major cities, including

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223 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, p. 200
Lahore and Amritsar. Khizr Hayat Khan felt that he had lost the support of the Muslim masses and the agitation against him was gathering force and venom. By the end of February, 1947, the Khizr Ministry was practically tottering on its last legs. Shaukat Hayat Khan had already declared that “the Khizr Ministry must be made to go, no matter what cost to the Muslim League”.228

On February 24, 1947 huge clashes between the police and the Muslim League were reported at three places Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ambala. The police were forced to shoot at unruly crowds and there were serious casualties on both sides. The violence was becoming difficult to contain. The political uncertainties further confounded the nature of discussions among the political leaders.230 In these circumstances, Khizr Hayat Khan could not look forward to continued support of his Hindu and Sikh colleagues as the course of events in the Punjab was widening the gulf between the Muslims and non-Muslims. The ties that bound various elements in the Unionist Party were extremely tenuous.231 It gradually dawned on the Congress leaders, especially after their experience of attitude of the League representatives in the Interim Government, that the price which the League would extract for preserving the unity would be too high.232 The labours of nine months were not, therefore, wholly in vain. They had at any rate brought home to everyone, except perhaps Gandhi, the necessity of partition. But partition was a major operation which even if agreed to by the party leaders, was bound to entail much shedding of blood.233

229 Anders Bjorn Hansen, Partition and Genocide, p.108.
231 G.D. Khosla, Stern Reckoning, p. 98.
232 Panderal Moon, Divide and Quit, p. 64
233 Ibid., p. 64
In the Punjab, the Muslim League started a new direct action movement, stopping trains, hauling down Congress flags and the Union Jack from public buildings and using violence in some towns, including Amritsar, Lahore, Multan and Jalandhar. Seeking to end the agitation as he believed that the Statement of 20\textsuperscript{th} February had made the Unionist ministry politically irrelevant, Khizr Hayat Khan tried to reach an agreement with provincial Leaguers. But the League made no attempt to assuage the fears of the Hindus and Sikhs about the nature of Pakistan, presumably because it intended to use force.\footnote{Anita Inder Singh, \textit{The Origins of the Partition of India}, pp. 214-215.}

On March 1, 1947, the Punjab Legislative Assembly passed the Punjab Goondas Act (1947) with a view to deal with \textit{goonda} elements in disturbed times.\footnote{Sukhdev Singh Sohal, “A Nightmare of Two Cities: Amritsar and Lahore in 1947”, Reeta Grewal and Sheena Pall (eds.), \textit{Pre-Colonial and Colonial Punjab: Society, Economy, Politics and Culture}, Manohar, New Delhi, 2005, p. 415.} But M.A. Jinnah had put all his strength into smashing the Unionist party.\footnote{Hugh Tinker, “Pressure, Persuasion and Decision: Facts in the Partition of the Punjab August 1947”, \textit{Journal of Asian Studies}, Vol. 36, No. 4, 1977, p. 697.} Finally, realizing that whether he were in office or not he could exercise no influence on the future affairs of the Punjab, Khizr Hayat Khan decided to quit. On March 2, 1947, Khizr Hayat Khan tendered his resignation.\footnote{He justified his action by saying that the declaration of His Majesty’s Government of February 20, had completely changed the position and that he must resign in order to let the Muslim League to seek the cooperation of other parties and form a government: G.D. Khosla, \textit{Stern Reckoning}, 99.} With Khizr’s resignation, the pent up excitement of the past weeks broke loose.\footnote{Penderal Moon, \textit{Divide and Quit}, p.77.} The resignation of Khizr Hayat as Premier of the Punjab on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March and the collapse of his ill-fated Ministry was the final straw that marked the Punjab’s descent into civil war.\footnote{Yasmin Khan, \textit{The Great Partition}, p. 83.} This marked the end of Punjabi unity: the political demise of land of five rivers.\footnote{S.M. Rai, \textit{Partition of the Punjab}, p. 41.} The minorities led demonstrations against the proposed imposition of a communal majority rule on the Punjab. During the police firing, 125 persons were injured and
10 were killed.\textsuperscript{241} By the end of the first week of March, within days of collapse of the Ministry, quarters of most of the cities in the Punjab were burning: Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Rawalpindi, Multan and Sialkot all had sections gutted.\textsuperscript{242} On 5\textsuperscript{th} March, rioting had spread to almost all parts of the city of Lahore.\textsuperscript{243} In Rawalpindi, 25 persons were dead and 100 injured.\textsuperscript{244} Upto 5\textsuperscript{th} March, the known victims of the strife numbered 36 and 1100 were injured.\textsuperscript{245} None of the political party of the major communities could escape the blame for what had happened.\textsuperscript{246} What took place during the 1946-47 can be described as ‘a general massacre’.\textsuperscript{247} The communities settled down to do the maximum amount of damage to one another while exposing the minimum expanse of surface to the troops and police.\textsuperscript{248} By March 5, 1947, it was clear that the Muslim League would not be capable of mustering a majority in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. The Governor decided to proclaim that all powers were to shift to his office. This enraged the Muslim League leaders as for the second time they were left without political power and worse riots took place from 6\textsuperscript{th} March onwards.\textsuperscript{249} Gangs roamed the streets, some wearing steel or tin helmets, setting shops and houses on fire, firing weapons and throwing heavy rocks and glass soda bottles. Fierce battles took place between rival groups and whole streets were set ablaze by fire raisers in the principal towns of the Punjab. Professional gangsters, of course, were doing their best and reaping the profit.\textsuperscript{250} These riots vitiated the political atmosphere. Jawaharlal Nehru said in a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} Baljit Singh, \textit{Elections and the Politicisation in the Punjab (1945-47)}, p. 353.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Ysamin Khan, \textit{The Great Partition}, p. 83.
\item \textsuperscript{243} G.D. Khosla, \textit{Stern Reckoning}, pp. 101-102.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Kirpal Singh (ed.), \textit{Select Documents on Partition of the Punjab (1947)}, National Book Shop, Delhi, 2006, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Baljit Singh, \textit{Elections and the Politicisation in the Punjab (1945-47)}, p. 353.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Khushwant Singh, \textit{A History of the Sikhs}, Vol. II, p. 266
\item \textsuperscript{248} Anders Bjorn Hansen, \textit{Partition and Genocide}, p. 110.
\item \textsuperscript{249} Yasmin Khan, \textit{The Great Partition}, p. 83.
\item \textsuperscript{250} Michael Edwardes, \textit{The Last Years of the British in India}, p. 141.
\end{itemize}
press conference at Lahore, after visiting the riot affected areas, “Obviously, all that has happened is intimately connected with political affairs. I propose to say nothing about the aspect, except this that if politics is to be conducted in this way, then it ceases to be politics and becomes some kind of jungle warfare which reduces the human habitation to the state of desert”. Depressing features of the partition in other parts of the subcontinent were taken to new extremes in the Punjab. The violence did not emerge from spontaneous actions of ‘the mob’ but was instead conducted in an orderly and rational manner. The Punjab massacres of March 1947 acted as the last straw that broke the camel’s back. Lahore became a city of murders and fires. Out of the 8200 houses in the Lahore Corporation area, 6,000 houses were burnt down during these disturbances. Four thousand Muslim shops and houses were destroyed in the walled city of Amritsar during a single week in March 1947. By mid-April, official estimates put 3500 dead in little more than a month. Mayhem counted approximately six Hindus and Sikhs for every Muslim murdered. The largest number of victims of the March riots were Sikhs. The murderous game of stealthily creeping up, quickly stabbing the victim, running away could best be played against the easily identifiable Sikh rather than the Hindu or Muslim, who, unless attired in his special dress, had to be stripped naked to see whether or not he was circumcised before his fate could be decided. Politicized elites stoked stereotypes. Moreover, the lulls in the epidemic violence were

251  Kirpal Singh, The Partition of the Punjab, p. 41.
252  Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition, p. 84.
253  Anders Bjorn Hansen, Partition and Genocide, p. 112
frequently illusory as at these precise moments plans were being laid while
defensive organizations honed their techniques.259

On March 8, 1947, the Congress called for the partition of the Punjab and
suggested that principle of partition might have to be extended to Bengal as well.260
The Congress passed the following resolution: “These tragic events (the communal
riots in the Punjab) have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the
problem of the Punjab by violence and coercion and no arrangement based on
coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the
division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominately Muslim parts
may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim parts.”261 The heinous crimes
of the preceding year forced the politicians to rush forward the decision to partition.
Few were thinking about the line as a real or permanent fixture and precise
meanings of a partition were still inconsistent and unclear.262

On March 22, 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten took over as the Viceroy from
Lord Wavell. His brief was to arrange the transfer of power from the British to
Indian hands as expeditiously as possible.263 The retiring Viceroy, Lord Wavell,
spoke in his farewell message to Indians, ‘You have hard, dangerous and difficult
years ahead”.264 The new Viceroy lost little time in reassuring the Indian opinion
that there would be no going back on Britain’s promise of freedom.265 M.A. Jinnah,
Lord Louis Mountbatten had been warned, would be his ‘toughest customer’.266
Lord Louis Mountbatten started his work by meeting leaders of the different parties
and ascertaining their views on the alternatives-united India or Pakistan. He

260 Ayesha Jalal, The Sole Spokesman, p. 150. See also, Anita Inder Singh, The Origins of
the Partition of India, p.231.
261 Kirpal Singh, The Partition of the Punjab, p. 41. . See also, Durga Das, Indian From
Curzon to Nehru and After, p.239.
262 Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition, p. 86.
265 Durga Das, India from Curzon to Nehru and After, p. 238.
consulted the Governors of the provinces. Sir Evans Jenkins warned him that partition of the Punjab would be disastrous because in every district the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs were inextricably mixed.  

The seeds had been sown too deep by the communal elements aided and abetted by the alien government. Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalists fought vainly against communal prejudices and passions. On May 18, 1947, less than two months after being sworn in as the Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten departed for London clutching the papers which sketched the Partition Plan, ready to persuade the Cabinet that it was workable scheme and hopeful of finishing the job on his return to the sub-continent. He suggested to Sir Clement Attlee, the British Premier that the date for transfer of the power be advanced from June 1948 to 15th August, 1947. Clement Attlee approved that and a vastly pleased Lord Mountbatten returned to New Delhi. Lord Mountbatten came back to India and placed the Plan for voting on the partition before the Indian leaders. Henceforth, Lord Mountbatten publicly announced the Plan on June 3, 1947. He took decisions under what Jawaharlal Nehru enquired and the former later on flaunted as ‘plenipotentiary powers’. The June 3, 1947, the date on which Britain’s final plan for transfer of power to India was to be announced by the last Viceroy, bade fair to become the ‘D Day’ for launching of anarchy in the Punjab. Lord Mountbatten’s diplomatic skill and military precautions, however, seemed to have averted the catastrophe by a hair’s breadth. The Mountbatten Plan was tragically unconcerned with human safety and popular protection. It did not even begin to examine the fear

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270 Lord Mountbatten chose 15th August because the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies on this date in 1945 : Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru and After*, p.247.  
and apprehension of Indians, or to build in suitable safeguards to assuage these fears of domination.  

Lord Mountbatten asserted that the British decision of the partition was based on the will of the Indian people, as expressed by their representatives in the legislatures of the Muslim majority provinces. Lord Ismay said that the Mountbatten Plan was of ‘Hobson’s Choice’. No one in India thought it was perfect. Lord Mountbatten himself admitted this in a radio broadcast on the day of its announcement. The charade of ascertaining ‘the will of the people’ in late June 1947 has left historians with a small advantage. It has put on record that the majority of legislators in both provinces rejected partition: the decisive votes in favour of partition were cast by East Punjab and West Bengal legislators. The Plan like most things in politics, was essentially a compromise. The Congress achieved its goal of independence but its dream of unity was shattered. The Muslim League won its Pakistan but much against its wishes the Punjab and Bengal were partitioned leaving the Pakistan ‘truncated’. The Muslim League was to get moth-eaten Pakistan. The Mountbatten Plan was broadcast to a nervous and expectant population. Imagining the transition from empire to free nations was complex and uncertain even for those in the imperial circle.

However, this was signal for the bloody war and the choice was Pakistan or chaos. The partition represented the triumph of communalism. The die was cast and the high politics of India’s partition set on towards culmination with the onset of communal violence leading to human misery on a colossal scale. The League had won its Pakistan. But there was no line between winners and losers. Endemic

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276 Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India*, p.236
282 Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p.20.
confusion and disorientation followed the announcement, which sliced horizontally through all communities. One does not have to look far to find signs of utter confusion which greeted the 3 June Plan. The June 3rd Plan broke the deadlock which had gripped Indian politics for nearly eight years. Its acceptance by the principal parties was an event, which in the light of recent failures, seemed too good to be true. Mr. Clement Attlee’s Cabinet had cause for satisfaction at the triumphant conclusion to which its Indian policy had drifted.

This was the first occasion on which the different warring elements in the country had attained some measure of unanimity, and it was hoped that with the implementation of this scheme, sanity would return to the land. The Muslim League accepted the 3rd June Plan by passing a resolution on June 9, 1947. Six days later, the AICC accepted the partition plan as a final settlement. After the agreement of the different communities of India to the Plan, the British Government passed the Indian Independence Act on 18th July 1947 to make provision for the setting up in India of two independent dominions and 15th August, 1947 was fixed as the last date for setting up these dominions.

The decision to partition the Punjab received its ‘democratic’ blueprint on 23rd June when the voting took place. While the Muslim members of the Assembly voted against the partition, the non-Muslim members voted in favour. In accordance to the 3rd June Plan, it was decided to put up two Boundary Commissions, one to deal with the partition of Bengal and the other to deal with the partition of Punjab. On June 30, 1947, the Punjab Boundary Commission was

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appointed and instituted to demarcate the boundaries of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. The Commission was constituted with Sir Cyril Redcliffe as the Chairman and Mr. Justice Din Muhammad, Mr. Justice Muhammad Munir, Mr. Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan and Mr. Justice Teja Singh as the members. Sir Cyril Redcliffe, who was without having any connection to India or Indian politics, was given the crucial task of partitioning India in the Bengal and Punjab provinces. His only guidelines were to draw the boundary according to the religious affiliation even though other factors could be taken into consideration. All of this involved psychological adjustment. The nationalist map of India-with territory reaching as far north as Afghanistan and as far south as Sri Lanka was lodged firmly in the middle class. This was a vast, sweeping picture of India as a continent rather than a country. The Boundary Commission and its terms of reference were subjected to bitter criticism in many quarters. It was said that the whole thing was a farce and only silly people could expect a fair and just decision from a tribunal whose Chairman did not attend a single hearing, though it was he and he alone in whose hands rested the ultimate decision.

While the Boundary Commission was holding its deliberations, law and order in the Punjab continued to deteriorate. Ever since the flare up of in March (1947), militant organizations had been busy recruiting and procuring weapons. A Partition Council was set up to handle the problem and the Punjab Boundary Force under Brig-General T.W. Rees assisted by Brigadier Digambar Singh Brar and Colonel

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296 He did not attend the hearings personally but verbatim reports of the proceedings were sent to him every day by air. After hearings were concluded he held discussions with the members of the Commission and then communicated his decision or award to the Viceroy : G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 118.
Ayub Khan was constituted to control the situation. The second half of the month of July, 1947 was overshadowed by speculations with regard to the Boundary Commission’s Award. Conditions in the Punjab showed little improvement as the attitude of the Muslim League was hardening. Everything had to be rushed through at breakneck speed, for it was hoped that, with transference of power and the establishment of Pakistan, the feeling of frustration among the Muslim masses would disappear and their anger would be appeased. Power hungry politicians were hatching diabolical plots in their self-interest which involved the disruption of lives of millions of innocent, helpless people. Numerous unambiguous warnings arrived in Delhi and London of the turbulent state of affairs in the countryside, particularly the increasingly urgent and insistent warnings of the Governor Evan Jenkins in the Punjab. The poison infected the unlettered and ignorant masses as well as the educated middle class: it spread to the officials upon whom rested the duty of maintaining law and order; it antagonized the friends and neighbours until they turned upon each other with murderous frenzy. In London, politicians washed their hands of responsibility and showed vague, but uncommitted, concern. In a private conversation, Lord Clement Attlee somberly said that “he was hopeful that there would be no bloodshed but feared that there would be”. On August 11, 1947, M.A. Jinnah addressed the Pakistan Constituent Assembly and said, “…You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all

298 The Award announced on August 17, 1947 allocated to the East Punjab thirteen districts comprising the whole of Jallandhar and Ambala divisions. In addition, the East Punjab had the whole of Amritsar district, three tehsils of Gurdasur district and a portion of the Lahore district from Lahore Division. The Award granted to the West Punjab sixteen districts whole of Multan and Rawalpindi division and a major portion of Lahore Division : Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab*, p. 108.
300 Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru and After*, p. 249.
citizens and equal citizens of one state”. 304 But that was too late and he was trying to put into bottle the genie he had released himself.

Finally, the destined day came. The Constituent Assembly, as the Provisional Parliament, assumed sovereign power at the midnight of 14th and 15th August. Jawaharlal Nehru said, “We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again”. On the morning of Independence day, Jawaharlal Nehru unfurled the tricolour at Red Fort, Delhi watched by nearly a million people.305 India’s joyful Independence Day was indeed a day of horror for the Punjab. The predominant colour of the dawn of freedom breaking over its ancient vistas was not purple and gold but crimson.306 On August 15, 1947 as India celebrated its Independence, nearly ten million Punjabis were at each other’s throats.307 While most of the people in India and Pakistan celebrated the Independence, the Punjab groaned under the fury of fire and sword amidst blood and tears.

The dismemberment of the Union of India on 14-15 August 1947 was accompanied by the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of innocent Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as millions stumbled fearfully across the ‘shadow lines’ separating two post-colonial nation-states. Lord Louis Mountbatten, who never missed an opportunity for self-congratulation, patted himself on the back for having ‘carried out one of the greatest administrative operations in history’.308 Lord Dufferin’s warning of 1887 that British attempts to ‘divide and rule’ would recoil on them rang true in 1947. India paid a heavy price for Independence, a consequence of the fact that communal forces were not defeated, nor unity totally achieved.309 As now, Delhi took on a festive air before being plunged into a communal carnage.

304 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia, p.160.
305 Durga Das, Indian From Curzon to Nehru and After, pp 255, 256.
306 Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, Freedom at Midnight, p.341.
308 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia, p. 155.
Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation—mourned quietly by himself in Calcutta.\footnote{Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Modern South Asia}, p. 155.} He decided not to take part in the celebrations of Independence. Disillusioned by the partition and massive violence, Mahatma Gandhi stayed out of Delhi: instead he went to Calcutta to appeal the Hindus and Muslims to live in peace.\footnote{Anders Bjorn Hansen, \textit{Partition and Genocide}, p. 155.} However, nobody went to the Punjab where millions were on the move as refugees while thousands were already killed, abducted or raped. The newly partitioned province had completely surrendered to violence and chaos.\footnote{Ibid., p.155.} By August 15, 1947, all the ingredients were in place for ethnic cleansing in the Punjab: a feeble and polarized police force, the steady withdrawal of British forces and their substitution with limited and under-manned Punjab Boundary Force, and a petrified, well armed population. The violence which preceded partition was grave, widespread and lethal. After August 15, 1947, it took a new ferocity, intensity and callousness.\footnote{Yasmin Khan, \textit{The Great Partition}, p.128.} Ferocity and intensity of the violence put a slew of questions to be probed and answered.

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Historiography is a terrain of contest, reflective of different conceptions of society and ways of realizing them.\footnote{K.N. Panikkar, “History as a Site of Struggle”, \textit{The Hindu}, August 15, 2007, p.12.} Historiography literally means the act of writing history. It is the history of history, or the history of historical writings. Historiography tells the story of the successive stages of the evolution or development of historical writings.\footnote{E. Sreedharan, \textit{A Textbook of Historiography (500 B.C. to A.D. 2000)}, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2004, p.2.} In other words, it is ‘the history of historical thought’. It is an independent branch of history in its own right.\footnote{B. Sheik Ali, \textit{History : Its Theory and Method}, MacMillan, Madras, 1990, p.179.} Historiography is writing of history, especially which based on the critical examination of sources and the synthesis of chosen particulars from those sources into a narrative that will stand
the test of critical methods.\textsuperscript{317} It has come to include the evolution of ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history and the changing attitude towards the nature of history itself. Ultimately, it comprises the study of development of man’s sense for the past.\textsuperscript{318} Historiography is and always has been critical. It does not take the opinions of witnesses at their face value, but selects from them in order to distinguish the authentic from inauthentic. Different historians of different times have opted for different general principles of selection.\textsuperscript{319} It encompasses the study of ideas, which prompted a historian to adopt a particular line of thought.\textsuperscript{320} Historiography is not considered as an extra to the study of history but actually constituting it. The past is the object of historians’ attention and historiography as the way historians attend to it.\textsuperscript{321} Historiography has provided instances of deep structural enquiry which has brought to the surface important aspects of a particular writer or school of historical writing.\textsuperscript{322}

The two defining features of modern Indian history can be defined in two interrelated processes: the making of India as a nation and the evolution of modernity. All historiographies be it the Colonial, Nationalist, Marxist or Postmodernist in some way or the other, either implicitly or explicitly address these two issues, although their reasons for doing so are vastly different.\textsuperscript{323} Their differences reflect the ideological struggles within the discipline, rooted in different intellectual persuasions, theoretical assumptions, political perspectives and social commitments.\textsuperscript{324} In fact, inherent in the development of historiography in any

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\textsuperscript{318} E. Sreedharan, \textit{A Textbook of Historiography}, p.2. \\
\textsuperscript{319} Agnes Heller, \textit{A Theory of History}, pp.79-81. \\
\textsuperscript{323} K.N. Panikkar, “History as the Site for Struggle”, p.12. \\
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid.,p.12.
\end{flushright}
society is a continuous struggle between contending ideologies, which seek to establish their hegemony over the discipline. It is primarily, yet not exclusively, an intellectual and academic project, as historical writings are inevitably imbued with the quest for social and political power.\(^325\)

Anniversary provides an opportunity to scholars and historians. Similarly, the 50\(^{th}\) anniversary of Indian Independence provided an appropriate occasion for re-appraisal.\(^326\) The transfer of power was the end of an endgame played between the British authorities and the Congress and League leadership with power running down and time running out throughout.\(^327\) Historiography of the partition has remained for a long time primarily focused on the political aspect. The nature of negotiations between the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League leadership to the transfer of power have remained the major scholarly concern of the high politics of partition. The historical experience of the partition is reflected through different historiographical perspectives.\(^328\) Scholarship on the partition of India has provided more conflicting arguments than can be synthesized neatly. The intellectuals who have sought to transcend the limiting constraints of their nation-states are constantly reminded of their national origins in the critiques and counter-critiques that have characterized partition historiography.\(^329\) The historiographical shifts in the study of Indian history during the last hundred years or so have emerged out of the struggles, involving the colonial, the nationalists, the communal, the Marxist and post-modern interpretations.\(^330\) Francis Rabinson has rightly

\(^{325}\) K.N. Panikkar, “Culture as a Site for Struggle”, *Social Scientist* Vol.37, Nos. 5-6, 2009, p.22.


\(^{330}\) K.N. Panikkar, “Culture as a Site for Struggle”, p.22.
remarked that in the context of partition, historiographical positions are likely to be hard fought.\textsuperscript{331}

The partition which may be taken as a symbol of failure of nationalists and success of communalists, of course, with colonial consent, has been attracting the intellectuals on global basis.\textsuperscript{332} Imperialist historiography was an organic part of imperialism itself. It was not just a historical practice. In essence, it was a political practice.\textsuperscript{333} The vivisection of Indian subcontinent found its earliest echoes in the writings of the historians having imperial affiliation. Generally speaking, they have been presenting the theme in a way that could justify deliberate and / or unconscious fallacies of the colonial regime.\textsuperscript{334} The most important characteristic of Imperialist historiography on India was the dominance of political element. The British prejudice, the tendency to moralize intense bias and value-loaded statements found free play. Short descriptions of Indian manners and customs were included to emphasize their diversity and reiterate their decadence.\textsuperscript{335} The scholars of the Imperialist school highlight the plurality and diversity of the Indian society. In their view, Indian society was divided and fragmented and stressing the complexes of socio-cultural division they argue that partition was inevitable.\textsuperscript{336} Broadly speaking, scholars with imperial affiliations tended to focus on continued divisions within Indian society, the limited and sharply fluctuating appeal of even the Gandhian Congress, the Muslim breakaway and the partition.\textsuperscript{337} In the Imperialist


\textsuperscript{332} Bishwa Mohan Pandey, \textit{Historiography of India’s Partition : Analysis of Imperial Writings}, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi,2003, pp.2-3.


\textsuperscript{334} Bishwa Mohan Pandey, \textit{Historiography of India's Partition}, p.4.

\textsuperscript{335} E. Sreedharan, \textit{A Textbook of Historiography}, p.424.


\textsuperscript{337} Sumit Sarkar, \textit{Modern India} (1885-1947), Macmillan, New Delhi, 1999, p.5.
The Partition Question

Historiography, the partition is considered inevitable. There is an attempt to absolve Lord Mountbatten of any responsibility in the partition. Thus, the Imperialist perspective highlights the communal divide inherent within Indian society culminating in the vivisection of its body politic. For them, Indian leaders appear as social climbers, petty lawyers and British officials possessed higher values of duty and rectitude, promoting India’s advance towards self-government.

Liberal Imperialist historiography represents the liberal version of Imperialist British historiography. Its early proponents were Reginald Coupland and Percival Spear. In the Liberal Imperial historiography, religious diversity and communalism are re-examined keeping in mind the history and the British imperial praxis. The inevitability of Pakistan is an acknowledged fact in the Liberal Imperialist historiography. R Coupled dwells upon Hindu-Muslim antagonism, its history being long and tragic. Percival Spear admits the fact that the two cultures as well as two religions existed side by side in India, was overlooked. The fear of dominance by one community over the other after 1935 created the atmosphere which made the partition inevitable. Then, there is R.J. Moore who most liberally represents the new trend in historiographical tradition. He has utilized almost whole gamut of primary and secondary sources related with partition and above all he is methodologically more sound and less biased and more objective.

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340 Bipan Chandra, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, p.17.
The Cambridge historiography represents the updated conservative version of British Imperialist historiography refurbished and developed after 1968. They deny that Indian national movement was anti-imperialist. They see the Indian struggle as a mock battle and mimic warfare.\textsuperscript{344} Anil Seal, the doyen of Cambridge School, questioned the common assumption, which marred historical narratives of previous decades, that the Indian Muslim community formed a block of people whose conditions were generally equal, whose interests were generally the same and whose solidarity was generally firm.\textsuperscript{345} Ayesha Jalal’s *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* can be considered the best representative work of Cambridge School on the partition historiography. Ayesha Jalal condemns the secular historiography for privileging nation over community and marginalizing the problem of cultural difference by denigrating it as communalism. The binary mode of perceiving secular nationalism and religious communalism is believed to be responsible for this.\textsuperscript{346} Ayesha Jalal considers the Lahore Resolution as a ‘tactical move’ a ‘bargaining counter’ to get the claim of separate Muslim nationhood accepted by the Congress and the British.\textsuperscript{347} She represents Hindu communalism as the original sinner in her analysis of the role of Punjab in the partition of India. She traces the genealogy of demand for the partition of the Punjab to Lajpat Rai’s scheme of 1924.\textsuperscript{348} According to Ayesha Jalal, it was not the League but the Congress who chose, at the end of the day, to run a knife across Mother India’s body.\textsuperscript{349} She absolves not only Jinnah, but by implication, the British, of responsibility for the partition.\textsuperscript{350}

\textsuperscript{344} Bipan Chandra, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, p.17.  
\textsuperscript{345} Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India’s Partition*, p.36.  
\textsuperscript{346} Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition*, p.20.  
\textsuperscript{347} Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, p.57.  
\textsuperscript{350} Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition*, p.33.
The nationalist historians have contested the imperialist view to underline the imperialistic machinations to keep Indians divided with a view to prolonging the imperial presence. The communal divide was trumpeted and common traits were minimized by the British. The nationalist historiographical formulation considers that the partition was the culmination of the colonial policy of divide and rule. The nationalist historians totally refute the mutual antagonism between the two communities and try to establish the inextricable intermingling of the two communities. The nationalist historiography projects the partition as the tragic finale of the heroic struggle of Indians against sinister forces out to destroy their sacred India. The nationalist scholars further argue that “two-nation theory is grounded in the mistaken belief that Hindus and Muslims constitute exclusive, autonomous entities, with no common points of contact and association, and that religious loyalty takes precedence over ties and bonds of relationship based on tangible inter-social connections, cross-cultural exchanges and shared material interests”. They recognize the communalism as the outcome of economic and political inequality and conflict, and as the handiwork of a handful of self-interested elite groups(colonial and native), with the mass of the people remaining largely unaffected.

The Marxist historiography is ‘a fine analytical tool and highly sophisticated method of evaluation and interpretation’. It provides a hypothesis, a probability

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354 Mushirul Hasan (ed.) India’s Partition, p.33.
355 Gyanendra Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, OUP, New Delhi, 2006 (First Published, 1990), p.11.
The Partition Question

which might help a step or more forward toward a rational generalization.\textsuperscript{356} The foundations of the Marxist historiography were laid down by R. Palme Dutt and A.R. Desai and later on others also contributed over the years. Marxism which reached India in the 1920s and particularly the 1930s appears pretty ‘crude’ and ‘elementary’. However, it helped to bring about a qualitative deepening of understanding of the colonial situation.\textsuperscript{357} Unlike the Imperialist School, the Marxist historians clearly see the primary contradiction, as well as the process of the nation – in – the - making, and unlike the nationalists, they take full note of the inner contradictions of the Indian society.\textsuperscript{358} According to the leftist historiography, the partition is considered to be long term failure of the Congress to incorporate the Muslim masses into the national movement. The partition was accepted as an unavoidable necessity in the given circumstances.\textsuperscript{359} Sucheta Mahajan argues that no options were left for the Congress except partition.\textsuperscript{360} Sumit Sarkar also comes to same conclusion. Communal riots, combined with the evident unworkability of the Congress - League coalition at the Centre compelled many by early 1947 to think in terms of accepting what had been unthinkable, a partition and these soon included Nehru as well as Patel. Now the only concern was the partition of Punjab and Bengal in a fair manner.\textsuperscript{361}

The Subaltern historiography has attempted to unfold the subterranean concerns of the partition violence; its history has been relegated to a ‘subordinate’ and ‘inconsequential motif in the drama of India’s struggle for freedom.’\textsuperscript{362} The Subaltern historiography dismisses all previous historical writings including that


\textsuperscript{358} Bipan Chandra, \textit{India’s Struggle for Independence}, pp.21-22.

\textsuperscript{359} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 500-504.

\textsuperscript{360} Sucheta Mahajan, \textit{Independence and Partition}, p.358-60.

\textsuperscript{361} Sumit Sarkar, \textit{Modern India (1885-1947)}, pp. 436-37.

based on Marxist perspective, as elite historiography, and claims to replace this old ‘blinkeréd’ historiography with what it claims is a new people’s or subaltern approach.\textsuperscript{363} The ‘subaltern classes’, however, often appear to be not true classes but merely castes, tribes and communities, where zamindars and peasants are seen and accepted as undifferentiated.\textsuperscript{364} The ‘subaltern studies’ included conflicting trends.\textsuperscript{365} The Subaltern historiography represents the ‘underside of the history’. There are certain voices of ordinary people, voices of non-players of history which need to be recovered. The Subaltern historiography has recovered the experiences of common people or more accurately the marginalized people: women, children and the lower sections of the society. It tries to conceptualize the individual memories, rememberings which represent the personal experiences of the people and reflect the inhumanity and absurdity of the partition.\textsuperscript{366}

Gyanendra Pandey argues that ‘disciplinary history’ has been incapable of dealing with violence and suffering. Moreover, the historical methodology and historical discourse do not permit the discourse of ordinary people who lived through traumatic event of the partition, to be recognized. Pandey looks at the partition, not merely as an event but as a category of understanding a happening. He argues that there is greater need to understand how partition played out itself.\textsuperscript{367} Feminist historiography, working under the large paradigm of Subaltern School, 

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\textsuperscript{363} Bipan Chandra \textit{et al., India’s Struggle for Independence}, 20.
\textsuperscript{364} Irfan Habib, \textit{Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception}, Tulika, New Delhi, 1997, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{367} Gyanendra Pandey, \textit{Remembering Partition}, p.66.
\end{flushleft}
argues that “representative history can only be written if the experience and status of one half of the mankind is integral part of the story”. Subalterns attempt to unravel how the violence is ‘conceptualized and remembered by those who lived through partition as victims, aggressors or onlookers’. In the historical narrative, violence has been contextualised to large extent. Yet, the pangs of partition, trauma, loss, sufferings need to be contextualized. Literature hosts lot of such an experience through novels, short stories and poems. Now, it is time to move to this facet of historical experience.

VI

The partition of India has been one of the most contested issues in Indian historiography, social science and imaginative literature. There is no dearth of historical evidence to substantiate the colossal anarchy, insensitivity and inhumanity in prevalence at this historical juncture. The creative writer has been working and re-working the partition in fiction. The partition did not merely mean two new geographical dominions, as the examination of creative literature proves, it gave birth to a new psychic dominion as well. The creative writers who have written about the partition especially those who lived through its days of terror, take their stand besides those who suffered, in order to bear witness or to offer solace to call down damnation on those who were responsible for it. Volumes of literature in different languages have been written on the subject and it has come to be known as partition literature. Scores of writers of the sub-continent recorded their emotional experiences, but the authors belonging to the linguistic areas which were directly

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371 S.P. Kumar, “On Narrativizing Partition”, p. 228
affected by the partition have delved deep into the event. It has provided enough source material for the reconstruction of the partition. The gravity, the uncertainty and jagged edges of violence that was partition has, over last few years received the attention of growing number of scholars and become the subject of some debate. The creative writers, unlike historians have fully addressed the human agonies which accompanied the partition. Historians of modern India have been much more reluctant than their colleagues in other fields to utilize such creative outpouring as source materials. In fact, the creative writings focusing on the theme of the partition present the underside of history. Mushirul Hasan argues that partition literature has the potential to create an alternate discourse which can be a vehicle for most honest reconciliation than political discourses without drawing religion or a particular community as the principal reference point. In literature, individual and collective discourses melt to create a transformed narrative that has the power to heal rather than hurt. The literature as a whole seeds pathos for the suffering and inhumanity of the partition and related instances of cultural chauvinism, but not merely so. It also sprouts a countervailing protest, a voice of justice that must be the surging of our humanity itself, something greater than our bestiality-within us. The partition literature seeks to capture the ‘fractured’ and ‘wounded’ voice of those

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373 S.R. Chakravarty and Mazhar Hussain (eds.), *Partition of India: Literary Responses*, p. 16.
who became victims of circumstances without having contributed to the event.\textsuperscript{379}

The intellectual resources made available to us by such creative writings provide a foundation for developing an alternative discourse to current expositions of a general theory on inter-community relations.\textsuperscript{380} What figured prominently in the literary construction of the event is the break-up of an organic society and the resultant dislocation causing numerous cracks in both intra and inter-communal relationships. Critical in these narratives was not so much of the event or partition, but the impingement of its consequences on consciousness of the individual.\textsuperscript{381} Only the literature truly evokes the suffering of the innocent, whose pain is more universal. The literary work on the partition affirms that the subject of the partition was first the human being not the Hindu human being, nor the Muslim, nor the Sikh.\textsuperscript{382} The established historiography has been loathe to examine the massive violence that accompanied (constituted) the partition, and the experiences and emotions of the people involved in or affected by it.\textsuperscript{383} The ‘high politics’ of the partition has, in fact, long been a staple for historians. The drama of partition has focused on the tragic story of a few men deciding the fate of voiceless millions. But the scholarship on the ‘high politics’ of partition has nevertheless tended to posit a realm of political negotiations relatively uninfluenced by the everyday politics of local life.\textsuperscript{384} The issues like how the friends became enemies, how the ancestral places became strange places overnight, how the families broke up, how the pious land was clouded by communal bloodshed and how the common people experienced the trauma of the partition, do not find a place in the written history. It is only in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{379} Bidyut Chakrvarty, “History of Partition or Partition of History? Fractured and Wounded Voice of the People”, \textit{Indian Historical Review}, Vol. 31, No. 1,2, 2004, p. 223.
\item \textsuperscript{380} Mushirul Hasan, “Memories of a Fragmented a Nation”, p. 2662.
\item \textsuperscript{381} Bidyut Chakravarty, “History of Partition or Partition of History”, p.222.
\item \textsuperscript{382} Jason Francisco, “In the Heat of Fractricide”, p. 392.
\item \textsuperscript{383} Gyanendra Pandey, “The Prose of Otherness”, \textit{Subaltern Studies}, Vol. VIII, OUP, New Delhi, p. 205.
\item \textsuperscript{384} David Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative”, \textit{The Journal of Asian Studies}, Vol. 57, No. 4, 1998, p. 1069.
\end{itemize}
partition literature that we come to know what the partition actually meant.\textsuperscript{385} The historian’s enterprise needs to go beyond providing a statement of genesis of Hindu-Muslim antagonisms and hence of the Pakistan movement and hence of the violence that occurred as it neared its end. It surely needs to explore the meaning of the partition in terms of the new social arrangements, new consciousness and new subjectivities to which it gave rise.\textsuperscript{386} Fiction has provided an intense window on the personal experience of 1947, dramatizing graphically the impact of partition on everyday lives. It has, ironically, proved far more powerful vehicle for describing the influence of the partition on the common people than describing the influence of common people on the partition.\textsuperscript{387}

The creative writers treat the tragedy of partition with passion, concern and genuineness and establish that impact of the holocaust of partition was so great on the minds of the affected populace that even after settling down, they could not forget those unfortunate and bad days.\textsuperscript{388} In the world of the fiction, the experiences of each community distinctly mirror one another, indeed reach out to and clutch at one another. No crime, no despair, no grief in exile belongs uniquely to anyone.\textsuperscript{389} Whatever the formal or stylistic blemishes, the partition literature ably seeks to negotiate the complexity and liminality of experiences of people caught in the violent vehemence and competitive savagery of the partition.\textsuperscript{390} A critical examination of this literature can give meaningful and practical insights into the rash of communalism.\textsuperscript{391} Historians have neglected the sense of loss and

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\item Gyanendra Pandey, \textit{Remembering Partition}, p. 50.
\item David Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History”, p.1069.
\item Jason Francisco, “In the Heat of Fratricide”, p. 250.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
uprootedness brought about by the partition. Such emotions cut across community identity. They lie at the very heart of human impact of the partition. To omit this dimension is not only to distort the historical discourse, but to lose an important key to understand social and political developments in the decades which have followed North Indian Independence.392 Since as the historian’s craft has never been particularly comfortable with such matters, the horror of the partition, the anguish and sorrow, the pain and brutality of the riots has been left almost entirely to creative writers.393 The established historiography ignored the emotive history of human relations that were present before, during and after the partition. The emotive history provides insights through personal accounts of trying times, the pain of living in a transformed environment or about victimization and suffering. It provides us accounts of violence and trauma people had experienced and structures of perception about the severed and/or connected past structured through everyday life and daily routine performances by the victims.394 Though it has been a long accepted fact in history writings that the partition was a period of enormous turmoil, severe dislocation and readjustment, yet historical work on the bitter experiences of the people has only barely got under way. It has been largely a history of blame with focus on causation and a elite politics.395 It was on the register of imaginary that the question of what could constitute the passion of those who occupied this unspeakable and unbearable zone was given shape.396 The importance of literary, autobiographical, oral historical and fragmentary material for an understanding of the partition has now been acknowledged by historians and others, concerned especially with the study of ethnic conflict and violence and by extension, for the

395 Anjali Bhardwaj, “Partition of India and Women’s Experiences”, p. 70.
writing of history itself. The creative writings, which are powerful portrayals of a fragmented and wounded society, act as complementary sources to piece together the relatively unknown dimension of those tumultuous days when religious description of the community appeared to have been privileged. The aftermath of the partition is what constituted the backdrop of most of the stories underlining the impact of displacement, uprootedness, and alienation of the inner self and the renegotiation of identity within a radically altered milieu. The creative writers have written about grim and ugly reality of the event, the absurdity of the partition. A number of creative writers have contributed. The most prominent are Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Bapsi Sidhwa, H.S.Gill, Manohar Malgonkar, Balachandran Rajan, Sohan Singh Seetal, Nanak Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Kulwant Singh Virk, Sant Singh Sekhon, Amrita Pritam, Niranjan Tasneem, Swaran Chandan, Santokh Singh Dhir, Sujan Singh, Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni, Kamleshwar, Krishna Sobti, Saadat Hasan Manto, Intizar Hussain, Fakhar Zaman and Abdulla Hussain.

Writing about the Holocaust, William Cutter says, “The uniqueness of the Holocaust makes special claims upon all who write about it, whether the writer is historian, artist, or literary critic. Some would suggest that the nature of this uniqueness demands silence; others insist on speaking from a distance; and still others would require that words mean something only if they are written by the survivors. The claims, it seems, nearly outnumber the genres devoted to the Holocaust. Although the story of the Holocaust cannot be adequately by any literary or scholarly means, the event is the stimulus for a startling variety of articles, plays, novels and critical tropes and the output seems to be expanding geometrically. We can be grateful for the literature and the criticism even when it fails to satisfy, because such work gives hope for new perspectives and meaningful limits.”

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Same is true about the literature written about the partition. Through the medium of characters and individual plots, the creative writer has compiled a huge dossier of the partitioned lives and partitioned selves. These fractured voices underline the most defining moment in South Asian history due to the circumstances beyond their control. The creative writer has worked to come to grips with the dynamic thrust of human consciousness struck by collective as well as individual tragedy. The partition literature gives the mental mappings of the partition. It portrays the human dimension of the partition and tries to address the issues largely glossed over by the historians in the grand narrative of the partition. Thus, it is imperative for the reconstruction of the partition through literature to recognize the marginalized voices to make history of the partition more nuanced and humanized.