

1946 : THE GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS
AND
NOAKHALI GENOCIDE

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NOAKHALI GENOCIDE

A HISTORICAL STUDY

DINESH CHANDRA SINHA : ASHOK DASGUPTA

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Dedication

In memory of those insatiate souls who had fallen victims to the swords and bullets of the protagonist of partition and Pakistan; and also those who had to undergo unparalleled brutality and humility and then forcibly uprooted from ancestral hearth and home.

PREFACE

What prompted us in writing this Book.

As the saying goes, truth is the first casualty of war; so is true history, the first casualty of India's struggle for independence.

We, the Hindus of Bengal happen to be one of the worst victims of Islamic intolerance in the world. Bengal, which had been under Islamic attack for centuries, beginning with the invasion of the Turkish marauder Bakhtiyar Khilji eight hundred years back. We had a respite from Islamic rule for about two hundred years after the English East India Company defeated the Muslim ruler of Bengal. Siraj-ud-daulah in 1757. But gradually, Bengal had been turned into a Muslim majority province. Freedom of India at the midnight, on 15th August 1947, came as a curse in our life. We lost our ancestral homeland, honour, identity, dignity and liberty. Moreover, it is because of the growing strength of such forces, which had led to this disaster and colossal human tragedy, that even sixty three years after the religion-based partition, our very existence is at stake now.

It was in the 1940s when the movement for the partition of India gained momentum, two serious developments occurred, which clearly exposed the vulnerable position of the Hindus in Bengal, Unprecedented cruelty and barbarity were committed on the Hindus of Bengal-first in Calcutta, and then in Noakhali (now in Bangladesh), and thereafter throughout eastern Bengal, which subsequently became East Pakistan, and then Bangladesh.

Anti-Hindu pogroms were organized by the Muslim League government and their fanatical supporters.

We, the Hindus of East Bengal, lost everything. Our fathers and brothers were butchered and converted to Islam; mothers, sisters and daughters raped, kidnapped and very often converted to Islam, and then forced into marriage with the Muslims. Our temples and idols were desecrated and destroyed. Many of our people were forced to eat beef, a taboo for us. Our shops and other establishments were burnt. Every form of humiliation, harassment and denial were tried on this hapless Hindus. Finally, millions of them were compelled to abandon their hearth and home and flee to India as destitute refugees. We were told that this ethno-religious cleansing was necessary to establish a "Pure" Islamic state of Pakistan.

But such a traumatic on-going human tragedy has been deliberately marginalised in all contemporary accounts. The post-partition literature, media, historians and the political class, exceptions apart, have pushed it under the carpet. Instead, they go on concocting false stories on of love and fraternity

between the two communities. Bengal, once famous for its capacity to tell the truth and lead the country, has no intellectual, worth his or her name who would dare to tell the grim story-the systematic elimination of the Hindus in Bangladesh.

Sixty four years have passed since the Great Calcutta Killings and the Noakhali carnage. Almost all authentic records, documents and materials regarding these carefully orchestrated Muslim attacks on an unprepared Hindu community had been destroyed and removed by the then Muslim League government in Bengal, and other interested parties. Consequently, there is no trace of thousands of memoranda, appeals and petitions from the Hindu victims of those genocidal attacks.

But an idea of the unprecedented loss sustained by the Hindus of Calcutta can be had from the statements, depositions and the records of cross-examinations of the police officers belonging to the Calcutta police force submitted before the Calcutta Disturbances Enquiry Commission, reminiscences of eminent persons, various appeals and petitions submitted before the Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha - many of which are still available in their records, museums and the archives in Calcutta and New Delhi.

As regards Noakhali, a host of political leaders of all-India fame, social workers, journalists and volunteers who accompanied Gandhiji in his peace mission following the pogrom, have recorded their observations of that devastation, murder, arson, abduction, conversion, forced marriages of Hindu women etc in their reports, diaries and memoirs.

But above all, thanks to late Prof. Nirmal Kumar Basu, who served as Gandhiji's Secretary during his stay in Noakhali, some of the petitions of the Hindus submitted to Gandhiji describing their heart-rending stories have been preserved.

These papers along with Prof Basil's diary covering that turbulent period, were under the custody of Sri Rabindra Kumar Basu, nephew of Prof Basu and were made available to Sri Abhik De for proper editing before publication, who has done his duty extremely well. Then Sri Sandip Nayak, proprietor of "Punascha" - renowned publisher of Calcutta, came forward and spared no pains to bring out the voluminous book under the caption 'Satchallisher Diary'. The Hindus of Bengal, specially erstwhile inhabitants of Noakhali and their posterity will remain ever grateful and indebted to Late Prof. Nirmal Kumar Basu, his nephew Sri Rabindra Kumar Basu, Sri Abhik De, the compiler and editor, as well as Sri Sandip Nayak of "Punascha" fame, for accomplishing a national duty by bringing out this historic publication.

Mention must also be made of Pyarela's Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase, wherein also some of the dastardly events were vividly recorded.

We, two friends, when we were in our boyhood in the late forties of the last century, all on a sudden came face to face with some unknown and unheard of

words and events, viz. ferocious riots, mass murders, forcible conversion to Islam, gang raping, abduction of women, looting, destruction of properties, burning of temples and breaking of idols worshipped by the Hindus.

These sorts of tortures and atrocities compelled our guardians to runaway from East Bengal and seek shelter as displaced and destitute persons in India, specially in Hindu-dominated West Bengal - which ultimately remained with India as a separate State after partition due to mass agitation launched by Dn Syamaprasad Mookerjee and the Hindu Mahasabha .

Coming at the fag-end of our life, we felt it an obligation to the posterity to bring to light the darkest period of History in the life of the Hindus of Bengal - 1946 to be specific - based on materials collected from libraries, archives, museums and other sources.

We started our work in right earnest. Fortunately some benevolent persons also took interest in the matter and inspired and encouraged us to finalise the plan. Mention must be made in this connection of Mr. Ronen Dam, Dr. Bijay Basu, Dr. Dipak Ray, Dr. Biswanath Das, Mr. Ambica Datta and Mr. & Mrs. Pradosh and Aruna Sen - all from London and Dr. Saradindu Mukherji, Associate Professor of History, Hansraj College, University of Delhi. Words are inadequate to express our heart-felt thanks and gratitude for their help and co-operation in bringing out the book.

Unstinted co-operation extended by Prof. Gobinda Baksi, Mr. Kaliprasad Mukherjee, eminent author and feature writer, Dr. Sanghamitra Dasgupta, Sri Somen Das and Sri Mainak Datta is also gratefully acknowledged. Our close relation with all of them prevents us from offering any formal thanks for the self-less service they have rendered towards completion of the book.

We also offer our sincere thanks to Sri Rabindranath Datta, Sri Loknath Bhowmik, Sri Badal Sen, Sri Basudeb Pal and Sri Shibu Ghosh for providing us with some rare photographs.

We must also thank Sri Himanshu Maity and his staff of the Mahamaya Press and Binding for undertaking the onerous task of this publication.

Kolkata,
26 January, 2011

Dinesh Chandra Sinha
Ashok Dasgupta

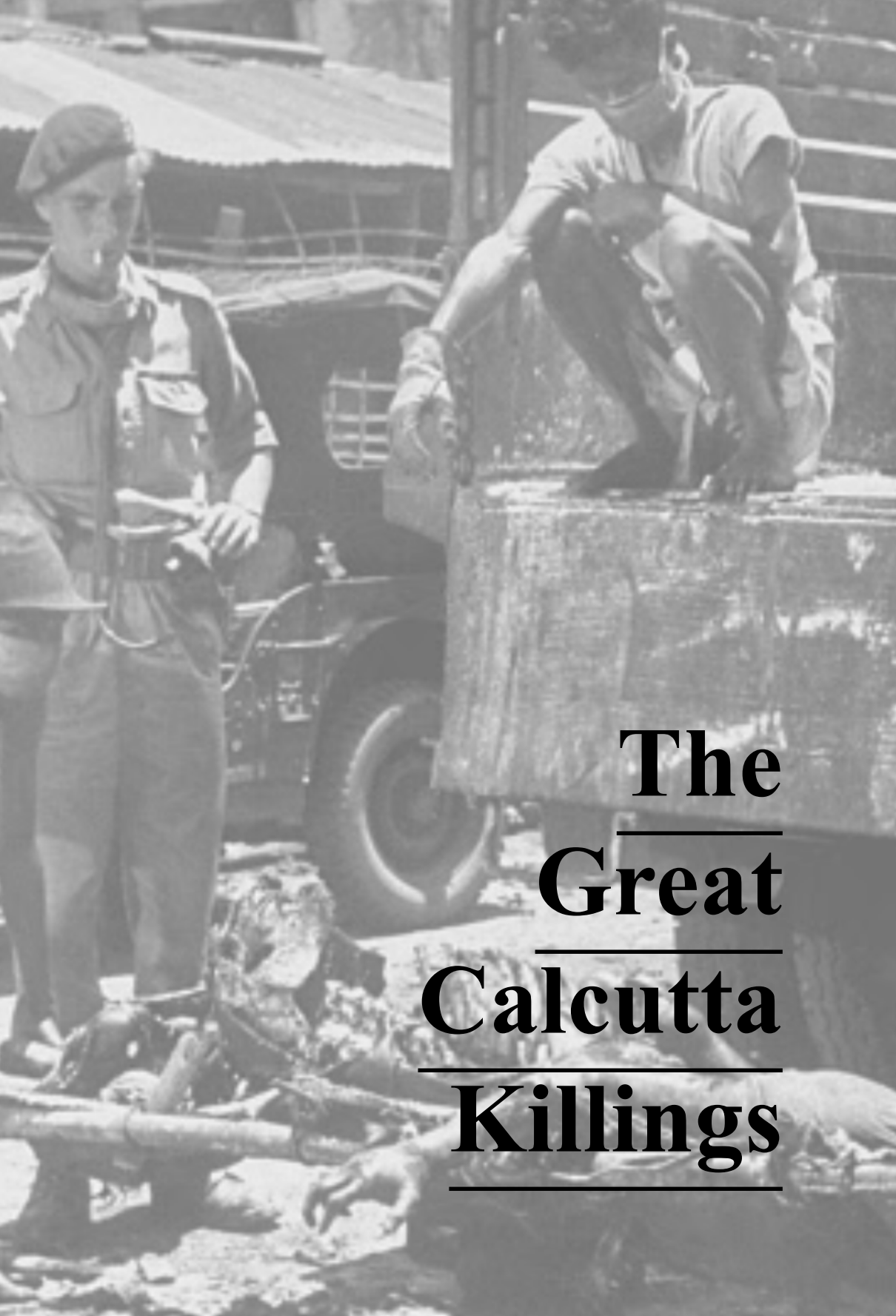
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The

Great

Calcutta

Killings



1946 : THE GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS AND NOAKHALI GENOCIDE

INTRODUCTION

This is not a book to deliver some exegetical notes on communalism. The object of this endeavour is to delineate, as far as practicable, what really had happened in 1946 Calcutta Killings and East Bengal – Noakhali Genocide with particular reference to Noakhali. It also calls to show how the diabolical, fiendish events could have happened when communalism, as a historical process, grabbed political space.

The community oriented distinct way of living was not new in India (as it is nowhere in the world) and British administration was not the first to have it introduced in India. It had been there, as in average it had to be, in those days of last few centuries. While alien invaders ushered in sultanates pursued spread of one major faith Islam by compulsive conversions, the other faith had to maintain itself by social customs, tenets and socio-cultural inheritance. That faith, Sanatan Hindu, that had to maintain itself, however, was very much engrossed in the regional principalities, zamindars and economically self sufficient Grihastas (rural gentry and peasants) of thousand hundred villages of robust agricultural peasant societies of those days. There also existed regional potent kingdoms of the Hindus in both orders, hereditary and newly founded, in the regional level.

This coming of storming alien people with unusual faith, distinct ways of living, unfamiliar languages to seize the Hindu Kingdoms and on the other hand, the continuous resistance to that design by the existing Hindu princes obviously inflicted social moral religious economic tensions all through those few centuries which are called Sultanate Period, Muslim Period, Mughal Period etc. by the Anglo-Saxon authoritarian historians of British Administration in India. Since then, the Oxford-Cambridge Schools of history writing interpret Indian history by their typical Anglican pattern, model, example, experience – in a word their paradigmatic forms. Indian history, as such, fails to be faithful to what India had happened to be and what really had happened in India.

Secondly, the terms and terminologies employed in Indian history writing are confusing. For instance, the term *Feudalism* employed indiscriminately in the Indian context, is grossly misinterpreted. England, France as a whole, never had a robust peasant society based on developed agriculture while India, China had robust, developed agriculture. The economic, social orders and relations were vibrant in India and China, hence the *Sanskars and Sanskriti were distinctly*, qualitatively different than what the Anglo-Saxons and European concepts mean by feudalism. In the same way, other terms and terminologies employed to understand India's social and economic history stand inappropriate confusing the corporeality and import of Indian history.

The pattern of history writing that suits overbearing Anglo-Saxon concepts expressed by those terminologies are imposed on India's very different and distinct realities and ways of living, *bouddhic* paradigms etc.

The Anglo-Saxon terms created, derived from specific western regional experiences of social and moral evolution are not homogeneous but heterogeneous to the experiences of Asia-African countries viz a viz India. Familiarity with such idea leads one to feel the inappropriate use of terms of occidental experience such as imperialism, communalism, casteism, fundamentalism etc. while dealing with India's history. The claim of universality for the Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Latin, Anglo-French terms while writing history has a germinal relation with the superiority complex of colonial imperialism which can not be extricated wholly from intellectual colonialism. The negative impact of cerebral subservience for innocently accepting the said universality of terminologies can best be found in some of the history writers in India who diligently follow Oxford-Cambridge schools.

Critically examined the best writings of Romila Thaper, R. S. Sharma, Bipan Chandra point to this aspect.

Irfan Habib while dealing with agrarian question during Mughal period employed the term, feudalism, in the same sense of the term as if the term was being used on agrarian questions of England during the reign of queen Elizabeth I. Akbar nor Abul Faz'l did ever know what was meant by feudalism in English terminology. Well, let this very serious subject rest here for now.¹ However, presently we will have to be with those terms, in general, for obvious reasons.

1. Many ideas, concepts are termed by *ism*. Idealism, modernism, humanism, capitalism, socialism, mercantilism, feudalism, communalism, fascism, nazism, and many more – all are bound by ism that point to a rigid framing of ideas corresponding the regimentation of thoughts. This is essentially Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-French and occidental approach imposed on Asian, African-Latin America mindset. These terms are applied in historical discourses as if recognised categories of bureaucratic officialdom.

The first point is, Hindu-Muslim divide and the clash emanating from this divide is not a simple communal affair. The term communal is misnomer here. British historians have used this term since 18th century. This is their term and it was erroneously accepted by their fellow travellers. Even the word *Sampradayikata*, following communalism was not discernible in Indian terms, by both Hindus and Muslims, before 19th century, though incessant struggle had been waged by the Hindus since the beginning of 8th Century resisting the inroads of alien Islamic invasions in India. The basic identity conundrum was that they were alien forces invading the land and people, secondly the invaders were of antagonistic reeti-neeti and mulyabodh ('Sense of Value' come to nearer expression) thirdly, they had a different religious faith and order which was inflexible, exclusive, vigorously expansionist and eager for reigning on others. Those were principally the Turkey flags on India though at the initial stage the Arab and then the Afghan flags had their shares. But those were not the flags for the majority of Muslims in India who, in subsequent period, had to enter into Islam as the breakaways from the Indian societies. Those Muslims were/are ex-Hindus and their number surged to be 98% of the Muslims in India. The Turks, Iranians, Afghans, Arabians etceteras that invaded India as alien races having Islamic faith and later on others of the same categories that entered into India as job seekers could not have formed more than 2% of Indian Muslims and the 98% of the Indian Muslims were exploited by the 2% of alien Muslims more severely than even the Hindus. Hindus were tortured, robbed of their fortunes and economic prosperity, their temples were desecrated but the Buddhists and Hindus converted to Islam were robbed of their innate culture, moral and ethical inheritance and way of living that nursed them through the generations.

Conversion was not merely a shift of faith, conversion is much more deep rooted, much more a question of society and civic life and it involves the whole inherent cultural and traditional world. Indian Buddhists and Hindus that had to be converted to Islam at various periods of history had to be deprived of their way of living, social customs, ethical senses and entire rich cultural world. Instead, being exclusive from their erstwhile vast root society they were put in a tight compartment as if the arrested people because of such conversion to Islam. They were brought into an unknown world wherein they found the new faith recognised nothing of their own land as positive and approving, instead systems and orders of the land and people wherefrom the new faith had originated and had been carried into this land were proclaimed as by far superior in all respects. Thus morally and culturally they lost their natural health and had to believe that they belonged to an inferior race and the victors owned them after the conversion. They, thus, entered into Islam as

refugees being evicted from their own society and cultural world. They were constantly tutored those ideas and those gradually grappled them within one or two generations. This de-culturing is the area for which the ex-Hindu Indian Muslims could have been severely exploited by the alien Turk-Afghans in both the ways - economically and socially. Economic world functions on different objective realities than mere shifting of faith. The economic conditions of poor Buddhists and Hindus converted mainly from the artisan classes did not improve at all as the Turk-Afghans were invading martial people, themselves fortune seekers in pressing ways and means. They wanted some people converted to their faith around them for menial, domestic and petty professional works and some protection around them. The theological aspects of their religion were not often comprehensive to the invaders themselves even.

Thus the Indian Muslims were the worst sufferers under Islamic Sultanate rules in India right down from the days of 712 A. D. to 1860 A. D. The 98% of the Indian Muslims, thus, rationally may be termed as Ajlab Muslims who had confronted four prongs : seclusion from their natural social habitate, loss of cultural identity, migration from traditional customs and academic attainment, and finally enslavement remaining in poor economic conditions under the alien invading rulers.

The Turk-Afghan invaders and others as a whole could entangle converted Indians Muslims more in severe colonialism than what they could have done to the Hindus, Thus Indian Muslims' suffering was more complicated and peculiar under the heels of invading Muslim rulers in India. The alien Muslim ruling hierarchy neither cared nor recognised them properly and the converted Muslims - the Ajlabs could not have enjoyed even a middle order official assignment. One research work,² 'while enlisting more than two hundred names of Amir, Umarah, Sepah-salar, Subahdars etc., as sample survey, during Sultanate and Mughal period, did find not a single name to belong to the converted Muslims. One converted Muslim occupied the throne of Delhi during the intriguing days of minor Khaljis and could hold on the throne for a very brief period as he was a converted one (Nasiruddin Khasru Shah, from 7th April 1320 to 6th September 1320). This is a single instance.

Indian Muslims enjoyed no recognition from the upper echelon of the ruling classes of the invader Muslims i.e. Ashraf Muslims and the converted Indian *During Sultanate and Mughal Period* Muslims were regarded as Ajlab Muslims. Such social, moral and class divisions existed all through the centuries and it degraded lives, in general, of the Ajlab Muslims more than the Hindus.

2. Bharate Islam (Islam in India), Ashoke Dasgupta, Subarna Prakashani, Kolkata, 1998,

Alien rulers known as Sultanates and Mughals (1194 -1800) divided the Indian people in two parts - exploited (the Hindus) and enslaved (the Ajlab Muslims). Hindus, however, never suffered psychologically - culturally as if they were destitutes in their own land whereas Ajlab Muslims, because of conversion, suffered psychologically from a nausea for this social destitution.

Communalism, a term widely employed by Western scholars and their Indian fellow travellers does not hold good while appreciating the Hindu-Indian Muslim relation or even the cleavage because the Hindu-Indian Muslim relation is not that one which the Western term *Communalism* suits to address. Communalism means something shared or done by all members of a community i.e. collective, common, general, joint, mutual, open, public, shared etc. A society of a people may have that, and each society have that, that is not reproachful. Marxists of various shades had and even to day do have at some places of various states their commune i.e. collective, common, mutual arrangement of daily routine living pertaining to their belief. Communalism, generally used, means a derogatory term. The term is used at free-range in India for quite a long time. Hindu-Ajlab Muslim (not Ashraf Muslims of alien origin) relation has a very different dimension in the Indian context, other than the meaning the term 'communal' indicate in its derogatory application. Hindus are away from the exclusive senses in regard to *Upasana* and *Upasana Paddhati* - object of worship and way of worship. Hindus do not deride a Muslim because of those two - *upasya* and *upasana paddhati*. The Indian Ajlab Muslims too had been living, in their erstwhile society, in the same atmosphere. Hence, they do not find Hindu way of living ridiculous, Intolerance to one's way of living by the other has not been an issue of simple communalism or communalism for simple economic reasons as applied by the Western authoritarian and the Marxist scholars respectively.

The term 'communal' cropped up following the clashes of small communities in Europe. Each tiny state of Europe suffered from the division of small communities within its own and those were in incessant clashes one with the another. And those cleavages, in course of time, were reflected in the clashes, many times nefarious, amidst the various sects of the same Christianity in Europe. Christian Europe was never of catholicity. The cruel persecution that one sect of Christianity committed on another even in comparative modern period of European history can be witnessed simply going through Voltaire³ Those were communal clashes within the same Christianity. Hindu-Muslim relation in India,

3. Will Durant, Story of Philosophy, chapter Voltaire. Voltaire's pamphlets are referred there that depict diabolical social torture on Protestants by Catholics in France.

normal or riotous, is not of the same kind of those clashes of communities i.e. communalism within Christianity. Europe had little experience of living with Islam as an adjoining part of Christian state-societies. The absence of such a historical experience in the West has led to have no comprehensive social, political term to identify the issue.

Another stream, the Marxist history writings have infused a way of thinking of a mechanical exercise where space for living peoples' cultural tradition, habit, inhibition and syncretic nature of social development find little expanse whereas the economic aspects, not with its catholicity but within the span of Marxist terms, find determining baritone. Historical studies in independent India have suffered from a sense of recluse for the same. 'The intellectual milieu of the post-partition decades influenced the choice and preference of certain themes-a tendency more pronounced among 'Muslim' scholars based in Muslim institutions. Apart from their own psychological inhibitions, there were obvious constraints imposed by the historiographical trends which, until the mid-1980s, did not allow much space for a discourse outside the Marxian intellectual framework, seminal work on economic and agrarian relations was produced, with 'Economic Nationalism' 'Peasant Movements' and 'Agrarian unrest' providing the staple diet to a generation tutored in Marxism-Leninism. The practitioners of intellectual, social religious and cultural history, on the other hand, were less 'respectable' when not frowned upon as 'revisionists' 'reactionaries' or 'Old fashioned' Studying Indian Islam or the history of its followers outside the paradigms of 'medieval India' was not on the historian's agenda"⁵

The Indian Ajlab Muslims' real enigma is : though they live in the Indian civilisation, they are made not to feel it. The identifiable belonging in the same root not perceived in the subjective plain is the major cause for the suffering of the Indian Ajlab Muslims. Their rootless dilemma stems out from this junction.

The Hindu-Muslim relation is not a historical issue of stereotyped communalism, it has the root in the cultural alienation and this alienation is exploited, as and when required, by a section of the Ashraf Muslims for class and political interest. Such a section of Ashraf Muslims consider the Ajlab Indian Muslims as subjects under their imposing statures. The cultural root of Indian Muslims lost for the conversion is the question here. The sense of nationalism is not a likely outcome while cultural identity is glossed over and a facade of cultural confrontation, invalid in virtual reality but projected as a non-soluble one, reigns high. Well, for the term communalism, let it rest here

5. Mushirul Hasan, Islam And Indian Nationalism, Reflections on Abul Kalam Azad, Monohar Publications, New Delhi, 1992, P/3

presently. The real problem of the Indian Muslims is not with the Hindus but with the rigid tenets of Islam.

Most British officials and some scholars that came in India during East India Company Raj or in later half of 19th century had the preconceived notion that well-knit, strong bonds bound Indian Muslims with the Arabian peninsula-thus forming a solid religious entity and it acts as a monolith.⁶

Many formulations were believed in as to be the 'cultural coherence' or 'essential community of thought'⁷ etc. and it was generally held that 'the solidarity of Islam was a hard fact against which it was futile to run one's head'⁸. Another traveller stated, 'It is a tableau in which we see represented a religion, a civilisation and culture, and an outlook differing profoundly in all material respects from those of the Hinduism'⁹. Those ideas do not portray whole truth about Indian Muslims.

Islam of Arabic or Persian form was not the form the Indian Muslims could have adopted for themselves. In India the neat tenets and the pristine dogmas of the Arabic Islam had to give way to many indigenous customs i.e. in India Islam contained some heterogeneous qualities. 'Medieval Sultans may have wanted to erect a uniform religio-cultural system and impose religious authority from 'great' or 'middle' traditions but long distances and syncretic belief and practices inhibited them from doing so. In the end the 'Islamic Little Tradition' - i.e., Islam as it was practised in everyday life-with its roots firmly anchored in Indian soil, developed autonomously from centralised political control. The faraizis in Bengal, the mujahidins in the north-west, and other itinerant preachers imposed their will sporadically in certain areas but their impact was transient.'¹⁰

Apart from the British scholars who had thought non-syncretic Islam was 'keeping desert faith pure in the land of idol worshippers'¹¹, other British officials and scholars-William Crooke, Malcolm Darling, Alfred Elliot, W.H.Sleeman had different views. Charles Alfred Elliot noticed in Unnao, near Lucknow that Muslims wearing dhotis and using 'Ram Ram' as a mode of salutation.¹²

6. Bampfylde Fuller, *Studies on Indian Life and Sentiments*, John Murray, London, 1910,p/125

7. Henry Whitehead, *Indian Problems in Religion, Education, Politics*, London, Constable, 1924.

8. Lawrence, *Essays*, London, Constable, 1956, p/119.

9. Ronaldshay, *India : A Bird's-Eye View*, p/214.

10. Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation, India's Muslims since Independence*, Oxford University Press, Mumbai-Calcutta-Madras, P/30/1997.

11. Fuller

12. Fuller ; *studies* p/130-131.

Another opinion runs ‘for a thousand years, our own religion of Islam had been intimately bound up with India ; and in India, Islam had own some of its greatest triumphs, for its own popular form of civilisation’¹³

Elliot noticed those who perhaps had not converted to Islam at a much earlier time.

Such opinions are not rare. It is not a mere assumption that Muslims in India do not form a monolithic society as a whole. It has many layers -one distinct from the another. This multi stratum feature apart, Islam in India holds three folds : Ashraf-Ajlab divide, exploitation of Ajlabs by the Ashrafs for centuries, Ashrafs guiding, mobilising Ajlabs as their force to take on the Hindus and the Ajlabs too, being roused by the Islamic attitudes contained in some parts of their scriptures^{13A} which percolate to them through the Ulema and others, get motivation as they come to have properties and riches by so doing. Islam thus turns to a cry of Zihad sweeping aside the multi-layered features of Indian Muslims. It acts on a skilled mechanism. And this mechanism was at the centre stage of Hindu-Muslim cleavage since the last quarter of 19th century. and it reached its extremity in gruesome murders, loot and women abductions in East Bengal - particularly in Noakhali in September-October, 1946 right after the Great Calcutta killings that started on 16th August, 1946. One sided riots (riot means clash of two opposite forces, which did not happen in East Bengal - it was always one sided, hence genocide) had happened continuously in East Bengal since almost the beginning of 20th century and those are appended in later pages of this book. The Calcutta Killings of 1946 and Noakhali genocide 1946 was diabolically conducted to terrorise the Hindu community. Cold blooded game plan of a group of Ashraf Muslims in league with British administration ignited such inter- religious passion so that the majority of Ajlab Muslims became fanatic to drive out millions of Hindus from their ancestral land of thousand years. The scheme was executed planfully and dastardly with the connivance of British administration. Had British policies in India not let their supportive hand in this game, obviously for their imperial interest, the crude scheme would not have found its days.

Once such a diabolical game is let loose, it continues for many years and the same has been happening for last sixty years in East Bengal - East Pakistan - Bangladesh wherein 38% of Hindu population in 1945-46 has been reduced to 9.5% in 2004-05 and soon, if the trend is not arrested, Bangladesh shall be Hindu Shunya - without the Hindu population within 2020 or so. Bengal has earned meanwhile a nomenclature —East Bengal, East Pakistan, Bangladesh

13. Maulvi Zakaullah (1832 - 1910) Professor of Arabi and Persian at Muir Central College in Allahabad, referred in Annemarie Schimmel’s Islam In The sub-continent, Leiden, E.J. Brill 1980, p/197.

in a period of sixty years but the repression of worst types on the minority communities of Hindu Buddhist- Christians by the brute majority of Muslim population has been continuing there unabated.

The said mechanism was born out of the ashes of 1857-59 war of independence that caused the capitulation of East India Company's rule in India. One kind of rule—of British Company's was substituted by the other kind—British Crown's governance. The armed upsurge of the Sepoys and masses made that rule of the John Company collapsed. Once the direct British crown's governance was imposed in 1858, Britain was soon aware of what might happen to British Raj in India if the perception and plan of 1857 found expression again.

The first Indian census on population was conducted in 1872. The said census showing the demographic facts in India, also exhibited Bengal province had a Muslim majority. The overwhelming muslim majority in the east part of Bengal province (%) outweighed the Hindu majority (%) of west part so much so that in the entire Bengal province - east and west part taken together—Muslim-Hindu proportion stood to 58% and 42% respectively. The immediate task of British policy pursued in post 1857-60 period was to extirpate the possibility of a revisit of 1857 armed struggle of united people. At that time India was the life line for the vigour of British empire.¹⁴

Hindu-Muslim cleavages has the genesis in Sind since the early 8th century for Arab invasion under Muhammad-bin-Qasim and that steadily spread over to other regions as subsequent Turk-Afghan et all invasions extended. The cleavage did not spread on all India at a time as the Arab-Turk-Afghan invaders' endeavour to extend their territorial sultanates took six hundred years to spread on considerable parts in India (712-1300 A.D.) The experience of hostility between the invaders and invaded for six centuries could not but left uneraseable mark on the relation of two opposing sides based on two faiths having opposed innate culture and history.

The invader-invaded relation was not an unassuming operative force, it was not politico-economic or caste-status ridden question alone. The invasions of Mahmud of Gazna or Muhammad Ghori on North India or Alauddin Khalji's on South India were obviously distinct than Taimur Lang, Nadir Shah or Ahmed Shah Abdali's invasions on Delhi. No length of Secularist-Marxist

14. British colonial power was spreading then on Asia and Africa. India was the bastion for capital, growth of Industry in Britain and man power to control colonial empire. Britain attained the level of economic super-power because of India.

vocabularies can obliterate the basic difference of those two types of invasions in Indian history. Hindu society was based on indigenous accretion of ethics, social customs, family formulations, and Rajdharmā—all those together constituted a sense of individual and social morality—Dharma in general and the overall belief in Ishvara pervaded all those senses. Turks, that plunged on India had abandoned their ancestral faith and on the contrary, being converted to the new faith—Islam, they used Islam as an appliance to invigorate their command on new found land and the people. They stormed on temples, Viharas, learning centres and social places and cities with three pronged objectives - plunder, expansion of Sultanate and heralding paramountcy of their faith Islam on the faith of the people whose kingdoms and territories were annexed to the Sultanates. Those policies were consistently followed till the days of Farrukhshier, the Mughal (1713-1719) that lessened for only a brief period of Jalaluddin Mahmud Gazi (Akbar). The later Mughals were so infirm, they could not look beyond Lal Killa.¹⁵

Governance of invader-rulers was not the only factor for Hindu-Muslim cleavage in India, it was deeper in the conflict of culture, way of living and Dharma of Hindu with those of Sunna of Islam. Minander, the Greek ruler had ruled on a vast area of North-West India in 2nd century but being culturally in Hindu India he and his descendants got absorbed in Hindu society. Governance acted here as a secondary matter. In case of Turks-Afghans the course of history did not move along the likewise route. Islam, in its that form the Turks-Afghans carried in India, was the prime factor not to let it move along the likewise route. During Mughal period the intensity of such campaigning done by Turko-Afghans were lessened but was not absent altogether. Conversion to Islam was vigorously pursued in Bengal when Mughals permanently annexed the province to their empire. Swelling up of Muslim population in East Bengal that propelled to huge majority and revealed by first state census of 1872 was due to invigorated proselytisation continued in Mughal period.

Arab-Turks-Afghans—since the beginning of 13th and Turko-Mughals since the 16th century got political ascendancy in India, but till the last part of 18th century—for about six hundred years—an insurmountable reality was that Islam could not be carried to, notwithstanding good efforts, more than fifteen percent of Indian people. This is a unique feature in terms of world history. The main causative factor is Turko-Afghans (Mughals too Turks) could carry no such cultural-civilisational

15. Mughals since 1719 to 1857.

message that could draw peoples' affinity. Nothing positive in temporal and non-temporal discourse could be offered that was unknown to the Indian people. The invaders thus could not present an advanced stage or system of

human social development to the Hindu psyche of India. *Dispirited Islam during Mughals* It was no civilisational synthesizing, it was the martial aspect that let the Turks-Afghans ascend to political paramouncy and to subsume a part of Hindu society in their faith. The human social development and learning tradition of India overwhelmed the invaders of dispirited martial capacity in the long run. East India Company with advanced martial capacity arrived on the scene in India at this time by the mid-eighteenth century. Consonant to the question of Hindu-Muslim divide for the manoeuvred, forced conversion of Hindus and for wanton plunder of Hindu temples and heavy taxes on Hindus during the sultanate period¹⁸ and the imperial years of Mughals¹⁹, the fact was that Hindus remained predominant in the affairs of trade and commerce, management of land and land revenue and local self governance. Zamindars, local chieftains were predominantly Hindus. Apart from this, powerful Hindu kingdoms existed peripheral to the Muslim sultanates since 13th to the 18th centuries till the coming of British East India Co and then upto the period of 1947. This is the basic temporal reason as to why Islam could not convert more than 15% of total Indian people in about six hundred fifty years. (1193-1857). Most of the Turk Afghans that came invading India and as fortune seekers, had little experience for land and land revenue management, nor had they trading affinity and experience. Mostly army personnel and mercenaries Turk-Afghan rulers settled in Delhi could not lay hold of the Indian economy that remained in the hands of the Hindus though its growth was seriously stifled because of the existence of repressive pillaging alien Sultanate rule. Those were the days of sordid and wanton plunder by the alien rulers. Even Nanak Dev, Sikh Guru witnessed and expressed with deep anguish the pillaging barbarity of Babur, the Mughal.²⁰

17. Arun Shourie, Harsh Narayan, Jay Dubashi, Ram Swarup, Sitaram Goel, 'Hindu Temples, what Happened to them, Vol-I, A Preliminary Survey, Voice of India, New Delhi, 1990.

18. For instance, Alauddin Khalzi imposed 50% of produce as tax on the Hindu peasants and Zezia and Trade Taxes as trade was mostly done by the Hindus. High taxes and Zezia taxes continued till the days of Akbar who discontinued Zezion but that was re-imposed during Aurangzeb's time.

19. Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi, Tarns. S.M. Imamuddin, Ducca, 1974, p/166-167 and Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, ed. Syed Ahmed, Ducca,p/375 may be referred, as example, to show how terribly the Hindu peasants were repressed by the Turk-Afghan rulers.

20. Nanak Dev's *Doha* referred in 'The Jafarname of Guru Govind Singh' by Jasbir Kaur Ahuja, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai, 1996.

Those were the days of that kind of persecution, hence communalism of the 19th/20th century were not conspicuous in that period.

Those facts were observed as 'Even in their heyday, Muslims were rarely engaged in trade or non-military professions. The Banking concerns were Hindu owned, with result that the Muslims had little share in the wealth pouring through new mercantile activities promoted by the colonial merchant rulers. The growing dependency of the Muslim aristocracy on Hindu merchant financiers further fuelled animosities against the Hindus in general. All these factors delayed the emergence of Muslim Bourgeoisie.²¹

By the middle of the 18th century the long rule of Turk-Afghans in the imperial seat of Delhi had become dispirited. Aurangzeb did everything to make his successors—the minor Mughals decrepit and again the invaders, the same Turk-Iranian-Afghans launched series of invasions. This time, however, it was not to thrush the Hindu kingdoms and Hindus alone but to crush and plunder the Mughals and Muslim principalities. The same kind of invasions by the same kind of marauding people from almost the same geographical regions but the target was simultaneously the same and the opposite! The same target was India, while the opposite was the pounding on Mughals and Muslim principalities unlike targeting the Hindu kingdoms in case of the first. The second waves sealed the fortune of Mughals and Subahdar-Nawabs the Muslim rule in general.

Muslim rule was dispirited, vigourless, and crumbling in mid-18th century while British East India Company arrived in the economic and political scene in India.

Contrary to the general belief that East India Company had India from the *East India Co* Muslim rule, the Company. extended its rule precisely *had India from* by manoeuvring in diplomacy and outweighing in martial *predominant Hindus.* plans the predominant Hindus. Notwithstanding the 3rd war of Panipet (1761), Marathas commanded from Maharashtra to Orissa

21. S.A.I. Tirmizi, Introduction, The Paradoxes of partition (1937-47) Vol 1, 1937-39, Centre For Federal studies, Jamia Hamdard (Hamdard Univer-University), New Delhi, Assn. Manak publication New Delhi-1998,p/3.

S.A.I. Tirmizi confirms that Ashraf Muslims i.e. descendants of Turko-Afghans were incapable of doing trade & commerce etc. In Lahore of 1946 Hindus had 60% pucca houses, 66% of trade, 173 factories (of total 218), 81% capital deployed in factories, 90 Branches of Banks (of total 93), 78 insurance Cos (of total 80) 10 Colleges (of 12), 12 Vocational Colleges (of 15) 33 High Schools (of 36), 13 Hospitals (of 16), 70 % of commerce, 85% of immoveable properties. 85% of total revenue accrued from the Hindus. Such conspicuous instances are there in Sind and East Bengal where Ashraf Muslims Planned, organised riots and carried it out by the Ajab Muslims whom they had exploited for centuries.

including Delhi and neighbouring regions. E.I. Co. had Punjab from the Sikhs, subsidiary alliance bound the Rajasthan as a whole, Assam and North East states were never parts of Muslim rule i.e. were under Hindu and janajati rules. The regions of present Uttarakhand, Himachal and Kashmir were of Hindu kingdoms. The present M.P., Chattishgarh, and south Indian states including Tamilnadu clearly record to have numerous Hindu principalities. East India Company had to confront substantial resistance from only a Muslim ruled state, Mysore (1799). It is because by the mid-18th century Muslim rule in India was on the verge of disappearing, military power and vigour of Muslim rulers ebbed low being dispirited and demoralised.²² It thus had lost its historical relevance. One of the main causes of Hindu-Muslim struggle against the E.I.Co in 1857 was for the basic fact that E.I. Co. had gained its ascendancy over both the Hindu and Muslim kingdoms and not from alone the Muslim Nawab, Subahdar etc.

This is the reason why British rulers felt, immediately after 1857-58 that the Hindu-Ashraf Muslim divide that had been existing since 12th century (to be precise, since 8th century-the period of Muhammad-bin-Qasim's Sind invasion in 712 A.D. destroying the great Shiva temple as an act of first iconoclastic onslaught),²³ should be nursed and shaped in contemporary socio-economic form. 'Soon after the suppression of 1857 Revolt Elphinstone observed in his minute dated 1st May 1859, that Divide et impera was the old Roman motto and it should be brought into operation in India.'²⁴

A further note may be obtained from 'initially the Muslims had highranking positions in revenue administration, but by 1785, they were replaced by European collectors, while the Kayasthas and Brahmins—best suited for collecting revenue—were retained in traditional positions'²⁴ and that 'that the Company's land policy, culminating in the Permanent Settlement, sowed the seeds of religious animosity in Bengal'²⁵

There are also opinions that what deepened this alienation further was the colonial judicial and educational system. In 1772 Warren Hastings

22. Political Map of India, 1757 to 2nd Anglo-Sikh war during Governor General Lord Dalhousie.

23. Destruction and pillaging of famous temple and the city of Debal by Muhammad-bin-Quasim in 712 A. D.

24. S.A.I. Tirmizi, introduction, Paradoxes of Partition (1937-47) volm I- 1937-39, Centre for Federal studies, Jamia Hamdard (Hamdard University, p/4

25. Amalendu De Had it been a fact, how the various riots recorded since the 14th century at many parts India could be reasoned. It is simply not the issue.

superimposed British overseers while continuing with Muslim Qazis and Muftis.²⁶ Again ‘the preservationist measures such as the codification of Hindu and Muslim laws, patronising religious orthodoxy, accepting of personal laws, concerning marriage and inheritance and encouragement of orthodoxy—all embittered relations between the two communities.’²⁷ And ‘because of the company’s pressure, the anglicization of judiciary gained momentum and by 1820s Cornwallis dismissed Muslim Judges and appointed European district Judges.’²⁸

Such opinions, as stated above, exhibit what is said earlier on the question how Marxist-Cambridge schools desire to depict Indian history. Do these observations have relevance to explain the Hindu-Muslim united struggle of 1857 that happened years after ? The 1857 struggle was waged by a combination of Hindus and Ajlaf Muslims along with an insignificant number of Ashraf Muslims. Rather, the facts are completely otherwise. In the early decades of East India Company’s rule, the British were apprehensive of encounter from the Muslim elements alone. Governor General Ellenborough wrote to Duke of Wellington on 4th October, 1842 after the fall of Ghazni and Kabul that the Muslims wanted the English to be defeated in Afghan wars and, he thought, Hindus liked that as one of the gates of Somnath temple was brought back from Ghazani by the British forces. He then commented ‘it seems to me most unwise, when we are sure of the hostility of one tenth, not to secure the enthusiastic support of the nine tenths which are faithful,’ Again he wrote on 18th January, 1845 to Wellington, ‘I cannot close my my eyes to the belief that that race (Musalman) is fundamentally hostile to us, and therefore our true policy is to conciliate the Hindus’²⁷ This tactics of divide et impera soon was reversed in favour of pro-Ashraf Muslim policy that continued till 1947. The 1857 war hastened constitutional and qualitative changes in British governance and it almost eliminated the threat from the Ashraf Muslims. On the opposite scale, right from the mid-19th century, the British began to feel the Hindus as a potential threat because of the growth of political ideas and national consciousness amidst the Hindus. The development of the idea of nationalism, the British pragmatically realised, would pose real challenge to the continuation of British governance in India in future. Hence, the British initiated steps for rapproachment with the Muslims.

Hence, not without British advise, Muslims remained aloof from the committees of Landholders Society, Bengal British India society, British Indian Association etc. initiated by the Hindus, rather the first Mahamedan Association

26. Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge, 1972, p/37

27. Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, Bombay, 1946,p/103

was started in Calcutta in 1856, and Nawab Amir Ali Khan founded National Mahamedan Association at Calcutta in 1877 having, in its visualised objects, political representation of the Muslims i.e. Ashraf Muslims. Thus National Mohammadan Association at Calcutta was already formed eight years earlier of the formation of National Congress in 1885.

The British, further to widen the rift, floated a debate in press drawing attention to the fact that not a single Muslim attended the first session of Congress held at Bombay, 25th December, 1885. The intention was to wean away Muslims from the Congress and depict Congress as a Hindu representative body only. The British plan of political surgery on the spirit of 1857 war of independence were thus being manipulated right from the period of 1860s. The Congress realised immediately after its formation that the National Mohammadan Association of Bengal decided to stay aloof and not to merge with the Congress.²⁸

‘The observations of The Times (London) in this context was revealing : “Its congeries of races, its diversity of castes, all seemed to find common ground in their political aspirations. Only one great race was conspicuous by its absence , the Mahomedans of India were not there. They remain steadfast in their habitual separation. They certainly do not yield to either Hindu or Parsee in their capacity for development, but they persistently refuse to act in common with the rest of the Indian subjects of the Queen-Empress. Not only in their religion, but in schools and almost all their colleges and all their daily life they maintain an almost haughty reserve. The reason is not hard to find. They cannot forget that less than two centuries ago they were the dominant race, while their present rivals in progress only counted as so many millions of tax-paying units who contributed each his mite to swell their glory of Islam.”²⁹

Cross, the then Secretary of state commented in his letter to Viceroy Dufferin, 14th January, 1887 that the abstention of the Muslims from the Indian National Congress was a matter of elation-‘this division of religious feeling is to our advantage.’³⁰ The issue of separate representation in the local bodies were raised during the discussion on Ilbert Bill in the legislative council on 3rd May 1883 by Muhammad Yusuf, two years ahead of Congress formation in 1885 and much earlier than the Communal Award of 1932 and separate electorate programmes of 1935, Indian Admn. Act. Rather the significant facts delineate : ‘The Bengal Muslim feudal classes thought the future to be bleak. In order to pull them out of their pitiable plight, Nawab Abdul Latif

28. S.V.Seshagiri Rao, Political Islam in India, Origin Strategy and Mobilisation, Martyrs’ Memorial Research Institute (MMRI), Vidyanagar, Hyderabad, 2005, p/14

29. Ibid, p/14

30. Ibid, p/14

founded the Mohammadan literary Society in Calcutta in 1863 so as to enable the higher and middle-class Muslims to secure substantial share in government services and to draw them closer to the British ³¹

And ‘The northern Muslims were obviously sullen over the loss of political power to the British. They found difficult to tear themselves away from the past. Though they had ceased to be the governing class, they continued to be so much obsessed with their vanishing glory and privileged status that they considered themselves comprising the aristocratic class of the country ³²

And ‘The Muslim response to the socio-economic and political issues raised by the establishment of the British rule was not uniform as a community. The attitude of the trading classes in the Western and Southern India towards the new rulers and the Western civilisation was that of cautious compromise. In Northern India, on the part of the feudal, higher and middle classes, it was one of forced submission and on the part of the Ulama and the masses, one of bitter resentment and hostility ³³

The Ashraf, thus, were thinking not only differently than the Hindus, they were supercilious to the interest of Ajlaf Muslims and were concerned for their own lineage and category. To speak of Muslims they meant the Ashrafs i.e. the Turk-Afghan-Iranian and other alien races descents, a very insignificant minority of the Muslim population in India. The Mohammadan Literary Society founded in Calcutta, 1863 by Nawab Abdul Latif was the progenitor society to found Muslim League in Dacca, 2006. Sir Syed Ahmed should be viewed from this angle of the anxiety of Ashraf Muslims, pointing to the obsessions of the Ashrafs with their vanishing glory and privileged status Sir Syed wrote in 1869 that ‘the fatal shroud of complacent self-esteem is wrapt around the Mohammadan community ³⁴

Sir Syed’s Aligarh movement (1884-1898) and Nawab Abdul Latif’s Mohammadan Literary Society in Calcutta (1863) both had pre-fixes and suffixes in the political arena of India that ultimately led to partition of India.

Years before Sir Syed, Syed Ahmed Barelavi, from a very different angle, waged zehadi armed violence to establish Dar-ul-Islam in India overthrowing British rule of Dar-ul-Harb- known as Wahabi movement. That only committed aggression on Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s Punjab, not at all against any British territory. However, the Zehad was frustrated in the combat at Saidur (Punjab). It has in its rank and file Ajlab Muslims, many from Bihar and Bengal, roused

31. Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *The Dynamics of a rural Society : A study of the economic structure in Bengal Villages*, Berlin, 1957,p/315

32. *British India*, Cambridge, 1972,p/37

33. S.A.I. Tirmizi As referred in 24,p/7

34. Uma Karua, *Muslims and Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi, 1977,p/4

fanatically in the name of fundamental Islam. Sir Syed noticed the capitulation of Syed Ahmed's Zehad and his course. Thus his effort to protect the Ashraf interest was streamed to constitutional, academic means to co-operate and reconcile with the British governance.

And in East Bengal Faraizi movement that continued from 20s of the 19th century to 20s of the 20th century spearheaded by Shariatullah and his son Mohammad Mohsin alias Dudu Mian, both educated on the fundamentals of Islam at Mecca, propagated to go back to the fundamentals of Islam. The agitation and propagation that continued for the said long time in East Bengal was largely participated by the Ajlab Muslims.

Many social customs and fetishes existed in the Arabian Islamic society that had the origins in the mass root level since the days prior to the rise of Islam. Muhammad ibn Abdal-Wahhab initiated Wahabi movement in Arabia in 18th-19th century. He urged the Arab Muslims to go back to fundamentals of Islam and wage Zehad fiercely against the overlordism of Automan Turk empire. The pasha rule of Automan Turk empire was overthrown after prolonged fierce wars and the present Saudi Arabia, free from Turkey Automan empire, was established. The said Wahabi Zehad decreed the uprooting of all social customs and fetishes of Arabian society that had origin prior to the rise of Islam.³⁵

The Faraizi convulsion, following Wahabi Zehad in Arabia, decreed elimination of many social habits and customs in the grass root level of East Bengal Ajlab society. The East Bengal Muslims had traditional social inheritance living side by side of Hindus. Their primordial Hindu cultural inheritance flowed in muted tone. The common mother tongue and language, Bengali, was, naturally the prime conveyor of the intimate feelings of East Bengal Ajlab Muslims with their inheritance. The Decree of zehadi Faraizi convulsion in East Bengal for long time eradicated many of the cultural links at grass root level of rural East Bengal and hostility to Hindus was thus instilled in Muslim mind in the name of fundamentalism of Pan-Islamism. This hostility so created resulted in the gruesome days of 1946 and in the subsequent years till this day.³⁶

By the second half of twentieth century, observing the rising nationalist tendency in the Hindu psyche, British rulers were determined for *divide et impera*. Muslims had found earlier in the Zehad of Syed Ahmad Bareilavi, that their separatist efforts were of no consequence. And British power found, while Wahabi movement could be easily given a dissipation, united struggle of 1857 entombed the John company's Raj against which the rising was directed.

35. S. Abid Husain P/44

36. Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri, Rare Documents, part I Lahore, 1967 p/85-86 (Referred in Book as in 29 ibid)

Soon after 1857-58, the British crown government, having India-Empire directly taken over, realigned their policy towards Ashraf Muslims. Thus Nawab Abdul Latif's Mohammadan Literary society at Calcutta (1863) and Sir Syed Ahmad's AMU was acclaimed. Apparently nothing wrong could be found with the projection of the two new founds. The time space between 1857 and two new founds may draw attention of the observers. From Syed Ahmad Bareilavi to Sir Syed Ahmad there runs a line that draws a shift from the anti-Hindu-anti-British attitude to contesting Hindus-pro-British attitude.

W.W.Hunter publicised the conditions of Muslims in Bengal in 1871, just a year before the first census in India, 1872. It revealed for the first time by statistical survey that Muslim population was overwhelmingly in majority in East Bengal. His contention was, Muslims remained aloof from English education because they were 'opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements and hateful of their religion'.³⁷

The British government thought Sir Syed's approach would ease the Ashraf Muslims to have English education to compete the Hindus as they would be free from the 'opposed to the traditions, unsuited to requirements and hateful of their religion.' Sir Syed Ahmad's 'pragmatic considerations demanded that the struggle had to be constitutional rather than militant. His main concern was for the spread of English education among the Muslims. With this end in view, he worked hard for a reconciliation between the British government and the Muslims. That is why Sir Syed in his *Ashbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* and 'The Loyal Mohammadans in India' attempted to exonerate his co-religionists from blame for fomenting the revolt. His firm political realism convinced him that the Muslim elite lagged far behind the Hindu elite in responding to the western education, which was essential for achieving political rights and objectives as also to understand the dynamics of constitutional battles'³⁸

Sir Syed's efforts yielded response. Muslims engaged in trade, commerce and in other professions in Bombay and U.P. responded to have English education. Meanwhile, for two reasons-famine and economic exploitation - educated Hindu middle class were agitating against the government policies and 'confronted with the rising opposition the British turned towards the Muslims as their potential ally'³⁹

36. V. Lutsky, *Modern History of Arab Countries*, USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1969.

37. Suhas Mazumdar, *Zihad*, Voice of India, New Delhi, 1995.

38. W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalman*, Delhi, 1969, p/142

39. Lekcharan Ka Majuma, *The paradoxes of partition*, ibid 29.

‘Moreover, certain world economic forces also influenced this policy orientation. By 1870s the British had started coveting the strategic region of the Middle East. This made it necessary for them to reconcile with the Muslims in India, because they had close cultural and religious relationship with them’⁴⁰

Sir Syed, Middle East Policy, British Power

‘Thus the changed British imperialist and colonial interests were perhaps responsible for shift in the official policy towards the Muslim Middle class’⁴¹

‘Mayo (1868 - 72) and Northbrook (1872-76) had initiated reconciliations and by 1888 for Dufferin (1884 - 88) Muslims had become one of the two mighty political communities of our Indian cosmos’⁴²

The spirit of united struggle of 1857 became a past passage in the 1880s and 1890s.

‘it was in this backdrop that Sir Syed looked at the situation in his time from the point of view of his class and wanted English education only for “Ashraf (upper classes) and not for ajlab (lower classes). Delivering a speech at the foundation laying ceremony of Islamiyah at Bareilly he said “to teach English in the madrasa set up by you, is not proper. It is a mistake. No doubt English education is highly necessary for our community to impart higher education to their children. It would be more suitable for you to arrange for some elementary education for these boys (poor Muslim children) so that they can read and write. Give them simple booklets so that they can learn Namaz (prayer) and Roza (fasting) and other principles of Islamic religion.’⁴³

There stood, then, four segments : imperialist power and governance, Nationalist forces, (it comprised Congress and armed struggle for national liberation movement. The second one is narrated in Chapter-II.) Aristocratic upper class Muslim classes for Muslim identity and share in government offices and Ajlab Muslims - 98% of Indian Muslims left as uneducated segment to serve, as and when required, in the name of Islam, to serve the politico-economic interests of the Ashraf Muslims.

Sir Syed introduced English education to the Muslims. There was no wrong in it and he was generously helped by the moneyed Hindu People for this purpose and had close friends like Raja Jai Kishen Das etc. The great error he committed was fathered by his inheritance from the psyche of Turk-Irani— Arab-Turani descendant Muslims in India thinking themselves as the total of Islamic Kaum excluding the Muslims from the Indian ancestors considering them as not yet Islamic per excellence to the alien descendants at one hand

40. S.A.I. Tirmizi, as referred in 24, p/8

41. Peter Hardy, as referred in 27, p/118

42. Above 37, p/

43. Peter Hardy, The Muslims in British India, p/160

and, on the other hand, to consider the Hindus - as they are - wielding antagonism.

Sir Syed Ahmad was so engrossed with the idea of how to let Muslim upper class have employment in government that he, speaking on 'the present state of Indian policies' at Lucknow December 1887, stated 'Now, I take Mohammadans and the Hindus of our province together, and ask whether they are able to compete with the Bengalis or not? Most certainly not. When this is the case how can competitive examination be introduced in our country?'⁴⁴

It indicates the feudal gentry's prejudice against the emergent educated middle classes.

In 1880s showed a growing trend of Muslim separatism led by upper caste Muslims. The National Mohammadan Association represented to Lord Ripon demanding preferential treatment for Indian Muslims on the ground that they were backward but nevertheless a politically important community.⁴⁵ The followers of Sir Syed Ahmad and Amir Ali further claimed that the application of strictly numerical criterion in determining claims to representation and power was grossly unfair to the Muslims whose historical importance in India's political life had been considerable.

In this back drop, partition of India, if and when necessary in future, was being toyed with as early as in the year 1883. W.S. Blunt had suggested his provincial plan i.e. partition of British provinces, and in 1883 he had the momentous suggestion, according to which, India had to be partitioned on religious lines. All the Northern provinces that had Muslims, should be brought under one Government, and all the Southern provinces which were Hindu should be brought under another Government. The imperial authority should be maintained through British armies maintained in each area.⁴⁶

Partition of Bengal - 1905 was not far away. The idea of partition of Bengal was germinated having seen the 1872 Census Report that showed for the first time by detailed statistics that Muslims had numerically absolute majority in East Bengal. And the partition of Bengal was not partition alone, it comprised

44. Collected Lectures and Speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad p/128-29 vide, discussion, Asghar Ali Engineer, Indian Muslims, A Study of Minority Problem in India, Delhi 1985/39P

45 Francis Robinson, Separatism Among Indian Muslims, The politics of the United Provinces Muslims 1860 - 1923, OUP,1993,p/119

46. Farzana Shaikh : Community and Consensus in Islam-Muslim Representation in Colonial India , 1860-1947, Bombay 1991, p/114

a proposal of annexation too - annexation of Hindu dominated Assam to East Bengal so that East Bengal-Assam jointly becomes a Muslim dominated state whereas English educated middle class Hindus in West Bengal the reckoning force of national consciousness find it inconvenient to stir remaining with Bihar and a part of Orissa. “In order to break the force of Bengali Bhadrolok militants who formed the vanguard of the freedom movement, Curzon partitioned Bengal though ostensibly for administrative reasons. It was intended to create a rift between Hindus and Muslims as is born out of Curzon’s much quoted speech at Dhaka in February 1904 offering East Bengal Muslims a prospect of ‘unity which they had not enjoyed since the days of old Mussalman viceroys and kings.’ Thus the dangling before the Muslims of East Bengal the bait of professional advancement, the imperialist strategy sought to turn the anti-partition agitation into an inter-communal contest.”⁴⁷

What Sir Syed had said in Lucknow, December 1887-‘now, I take Mohammadans and the Hindus of our province together, and ask whether they are able to compete with the Bengalis or not?’ shows that nationalist Hindu Bengalis were planned to be axed by the partition of Bengal jointly - the British Government and a section of the Ashraf Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad would have relief in mind for the partition of Bengal, 1905. The mighty protest to undo the partition of Bengal 1905, activated the joint effort of British and Ashraf Muslims to have a political platform to counter act the growing nationalist trends and movements. The Muslim delegates to the All India Muslim Conference held at Dhaka on 30th December 1906 resolved to form All India Muslim League. Muslim League was delivered at Dhaka, East Bengal by the union of Ashraf Muslims and British political desire. Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Lucknow, Hyderabad and other regions by far prominent and better known in Indian sultanate history were left behind. It was because NWFP and Punjab apart, (Sind was then in Bombay province) Muslim majority was then in no province other than Bengal and nationalism, obviously anti-British, was fast growing in Bengal. Hindus in Bengal heralded the nationalist movement in India and they had to pay the price for the same. Nawab Abdul Latif’s Mohammadan Literary Society, Calcutta, 1863, ripened to Muslim League at Dacca, 1906. Nawab Salimullah of Dacca moved the first resolution defining the aims and objects of All India Muslim League.

1. To promote among the Muslims in India feelings of loyalty to the British crown, and to remove any miscalculation that might arise as to the intention of the Govt. with regard to any of its measure.

47. W.S.Blunt, India under Ripon - A private Diary quoted in K.K.Aziz, A History of Idea of Pakistan, p/1

2. to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims in India and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government and
3. To prevent the rise among the Muslims of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other afore mentioned objects of the League.⁴⁸

However, all Muslims didn't rally around the Muslim League then. Aligarh Student Union had passed a resolution in May 1906 advocating Hindu Muslim political co-operation. But the Muslim leadership was still in the hands of landed aristocracy but clear signals were there the English educated young Muslim generation, not of the landed aristocracy in general, had started to be with Congress. While another section of Muslims led by Agha Khan placed deputation to the Viceroy in August, 1906. The deputation comprised Muslim nobles, jagirdars, zamindars, taluqdars, lawyers, merchants and retired officials. They also submitted following Sir Syed Ahmad policy, that 'the number of seats to be allotted to the Muslims in the legislatures should be estimated not only on the basis of their numerical strength, but also on that of their political importance' and their service to the defence of the empire. It was further stated that the election or nomination to the legislative chambers, so far in practice, had failed to give them proper representation. They insisted that they should send their own representatives through separate electorates.⁴⁹

Responding such delegations Minto's comments were significant. Minto wrote to Morley on 15th August, 1906 'I have always had great hopes of the Mohammadan population and now that they are becoming somewhat alarmed at what they consider Bengali success the justice of our safeguarding their interests will become all the more apparent.'⁵⁰ and again he stated to Agha Khan delegation in reply 'any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent.' and 'Muslim political rights and interests will be safeguarded in any administration with which I am concerned'⁵¹

Thus came Morley-Minto Award, having provision of separate electorates under the Indian council Act, 1909. It was certainly a very significant award

48. S.A.I. Tirmizi, as referred in 24, p/8

49. S. S. Prizada, ed. Foundation of Pakistan ; All India Muslim League, Documents 1906-1924, Vol-1, Karachi, 1969, p/6

50. Syed Rai's Ahmad Jafri, Rare Documents part I, Lahore, 1967, p/247-53, referred in The Paradoxes of Partition (1937-47), p/16 ibid SL24

51. M.N.Das, India Under Morley and Minto, Politics Behind Revolution, Repression And Reforms, London 1964, p/167

offered by the British to the Ashraf Muslims as the British Government itself engineered the entire plan and led the plan to have the Award. It was, for that matter, a landmark concession officially gained by the Muslim League founded by landed aristocrats and a section of the educated middle class. It was not the result of any class or mass movement. Provision of this separate electorate in 1909 was the foundation stone laid for the final partition of India in 1947. The said Morley-Minto Act, 1909 envisaged franchise right for only 0.02% of adult people, hence upper caste Hindus and Ashraf Muslims had the franchise right. Morley-Minto were the architects of the partition design.

Many of the Muslim leaders did not join Muslim League at that time though. They wielded greater influence on the Muslim people than the League leaders at that time. Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Dr M. A. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad and some others were those prominent leaders who did not join Muslim League. Islam did not stay on their way to nationalism. They did not agree to Sir Syed Ahmad's pro-British loyalism and the policy of separatism, though they supported his socio-religious movements. The partition of Bengal was annulled, 1911. But meanwhile separate electorate dream had come already true.

The crucial importance of Morley-Minto Reforms was its political consequence of encouraging and acceding a separate Muslim personality to pave the way for establishing pan-Indian Muslim organisation with a political manifesto designed for the Muslims. The said Reform of 1909 caused ascension of Muslim League founded in 1906. The joint cerebral effort of W.A.J. Archbold, principal, Aligarh College, the Viceroy Minto and Secretary of State John Morley and the Simla deputations by Muslim League and Agha Khan caused a decisive break with 'the silent policy of earlier decades' - the policies that were contemplated since 1870s shortly after the war of Independence, 1857-58.

The said Act of 1909 was a calculated application of British diplomatic skills to defoliate nationalist claim of Congress as a representative body of people across the religious, caste or creed line. British policy, in next years, also articulated policies to identify separate electorates for the 'castes' within Hindu society. 'Separate electorates, along with reservations and weightages gave birth to a sense of Muslims being a religio-political entity in the colonial image - of being unified, cohesive and segregated from the Hindus. They were homogenised like 'castes' and 'tribes' and suitably accommodated within political schemes and bureaucratic designs... In this way separate electorates created space for reinforcing religious identities, a process which was, both in conception and articulation, profoundly divisive'⁵².

52. Musirul Hasan, *Legacy of Divided Nation, India's Muslims Since Independence*, OUP, 1997, P/35.

The Morley-Minto Reforms articulated, by means of shrewd concessions to a certain section of fundamentalist Ashraf Muslims of landed aristocracy and affluent segment, to wreck the broad bases of Indian nationalism.

World War I, since August, 1914 let both Congress and Muslim League remain passive. Lucknow pact was concluded between Congress and Muslim League in 1916. Some say it was a scheme of constitutional reforms. The fact is, Congress agreed to the policy of separate electorate and weightage of minorities on the basis of religion. Muslim minorities got weightage in U.P. Bihar, Central province, Bombay and Madras. Hindu minorities got weightage in Punjab and Bengal. The pact indicated innate weakness of Indian National Congress. What British government had offered to Sir Syed's designs, Muslim League and Agha Khans's appeals, were accepted by Congress in the Lucknow pact and instead, gained nothing for the National Liberation Movement. Congress leadership left principles aside to gain in bargaining and for want of determination, lost in the bargaining and the principles—both. The Congress committed recognition that Muslim League represented the Muslims in India, which the Muslim League neither at that time nor later on ever was. The Congress thenceforth speciously submitted itself to impression that Muslim League represented the Indian Muslims and continued dialogue with Muslim League for Hindu-Muslim question. It led to the growth of Pan-Islamism and a sense of Muslim State opposed to pan-Indian identity. It was a grievous blunder, Congress thus assisted to establish Muslim League in the psyche of Indian Muslims, while Congress did not pay their due to the nationalist Muslims. Years later, during the days of claim for Pakistan, Jinnah warned, Congress should not think or claim that it represented the Indian people, that Congress was not representing the Muslims in India, it was a Hindu party.

The Lucknow pact (1916) was a surrender of Congress principles. Hindus of U.P. and Punjab had misgivings regarding the Lucknow pact. And as soon as world war I was over, the Khilafat movement stepped in. The Lucknow pact couldn't stir the Muslim people as their attention then was more focussed on what was happening in Turkey where Turkey Khalifa was reduced to the status of a feudatory state by the British as per the treaty of Sevres in 1920. Turkey-the Ottoman Turk Empire was overcome by the Allies in October, 1918.

Muslims who were under pan-Islamic fervour, convened Khilafat conference in April-May 1918. They demanded reinstatement of Turkey Khalifa's imperial and religious status immediately. Educated Muslims, Ulamas, Ulemas of Deoband and Firangi Mahal joined it and they founded Jamiatul-Ulema -i- Hind in 1919. Congress, in the form of non-cooperation movement for Swaraj, joined the same. The movement was devised by Gandhiji (i.e.

joining non-cooperation movement for Swaraj within a year with that of Khilafat) to be one and a whole, actually it had a bipolar origin and body incorporated so that it seemed to be of a joint stream for a temporary period. Many Congress leaders and some of eminent Muslim Leaders too were opposed to the amalgam of national movement and Turkey Khalifa's interest, extraneous to national question.⁵² It was Gandhiji's single minded decision that bound Congress with Khilafat movement. An inquisitive observation shows Gandhiji was a democrat in a special way, he always held fast his own views and had those imposed on Congress by means of his stances, his so called moral point of view. During Khilafat days many leaders said in many ways to support the Khilafat-Noncooperation amalgam. Maulana Mohammad Ali advised Muslims to work for Swaraj along with the non-Muslims so that Khilafat aims may be achieved.⁵³ Dr. M.A. Ansari linked India's freedom with the liberation of Asia.⁵⁴ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad opined that Khilafatism and nationalism were organically related. Jawharlal Nehru advanced the idea 'Pan-Islamism in 1914 and later was an anti-imperialist force. It weakened the British people in their war effort and it coloured the back ground of the Khilafat movement in India'⁵⁵ He, however, did not state what objective conditions supported his such observation.

Gandhiji called it 'the Kamadhenu' and it was 'an opportunity of uniting Hindus and Musalmans'⁵⁶

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar of course strongly opined Indian Muslims 'who were carrying on the Khilafat movement, actually went on to the length of inviting the Ameer of Afghanistan to invade India'⁵⁷

Years after, on 1st January, 1931, Maulana Mohammad Ali dictated a letter from his death bed to Ramsay MacDonald, the British Premier, saying 'The real problem with us is to give full power to Musalmans in such provinces as those in which they are in majority, whether small or large, and protection to them in such provinces as those in which they are in a minority and in order to be absolutely fair to the Hindu community also, precisely the same thing must be done with the Hindus. 'Unless in these few provinces Muslim majority are established by new Constitution, I submit, not as a threat, but as a very humble and friendly warning, there will be civil war'⁵⁸

53. Bipin Chandra Pal, C.R.Das, M.M.Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai opposed Gandhiji's resolution at Calcutta Congress.

54. Mohammad Ali : His Life, Service And Trial, Madras, p/151

55. Moin Shakir, Khilafat to Partition, 1970, p/30

56. Dorothy Norman, Nehru, Vol II, p/11

57. Musirul Hasan, Mahatma Gandhi And Indian Muslims 1969, p 132

58. B. R. Ambedkar, Thoughts on Pakistan, Bombay, 1946. P/112

Gandhiji advocated for purity of means and aims. The gross religious movement to protect a falling repressive arch feudal extra- Indian state which was abolished by Turks themselves (Kemal Pasha, 1924)- signalled the basic weakness of the non-cooperation movement planned by him. *Khilafat Movement* Thencefrom it crippled all his later movements too. His and Jawharlal's Khilafat -Non cooperation movement amalgam distinctly helped the growth of two-nation theory in Indian political firmament. Maulana Mohammad Ali's letter, beside some others like that, testifies it. Congress exhibited no incisive social-political analysis along with a fair grasp in regard to Indian Ashraf Muslims while concluding Lucknow pact of 1916 and combining Non-cooperation movement with Khilafat of 1920.

'The Muslim leaders were in quest of an effective means of resolving the Khilafat question to their satisfaction, and were aware that violent methods were not possible for a disarmed people. In their perplexity they sought Gandhiji's advice. He advised them their agitation should be organised on the basis of nonviolent non-cooperation, and in the event of this being the case, he could lend his support and guide them in their struggle. The Muslim leaders, chief among them Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. M.A. Ansari and the Ali Brothers thereupon decided to call a conference of Muslims in Delhi to consider the steps to be taken to right the Khilafat wrong. Gandhiji, Swami Shraddhananda and some other Hindu leaders were invited to it. Mahadev and I accompanied Gandhiji. The maulvis and maulanas debated the question whether it would be consistent with the teachings of the Holy Koran to eschew violence in what was felt to be a righteous cause; After prolonged discussions, Gandhiji, with his legal subtlety, came to their aid. He told them that the Holy Koran had made violence permissible ; it was not mendatory. If that were not so, every quarrel, feud or other disagreement among the Muslims would have to be resolved through violence. Gandhiji's interpretation was accepted by Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers, and then by the orthodox section, the maulvis and maulanas. The Muslims thereupon decided that the agitation against the government on the Khilafat question would be nonviolent.

Before the conference met, the Muslim leaders had made an offer to the Hindu leaders of Delhi that, if the Hindus supported the Khilafat agitation the Muslims as a community would give up caw slaughter. When Gandhiji heard of this, he said the Hindus must render unconditional support to their fellow citizens in distress.... Later when Mustafa Kemal Pasha abolished the institution of Khalifa in 1924, the Islamic world in India and elsewhere quietly accepted the inevitable. However, the Khilafat conference was kept alive in India for some years till it faded away, as also the unity that had been forced between Hindus and Muslims during the Khilafat agitation. Personally I did not believe

in the historicity of the Khilafat. The Turkish sultan had not always been considered the spiritual head of Islam. Sometimes even the Mughal emperors proclaimed themselves to be the Khalifas...⁵⁹

And, then, again continues Acharjya J.B.Kripalani, Gandhiji's companion since Champaran satyagraha 1917 to 30th January 1948, twelve years General Secretary of AICC (1934-1945) and President of Congress 1946 ...At this time, the Moplahs, a Muslim community in Malabar, rose in revolt as they believed that British rule had ended and they were free. They established a 'Khilafat' kingdom and enthroned a king and indulged in loot, plunder, arson, and murder and in this the Hindus were the victims. That was the Moplah idea of a khilafat kingdom! The government did not intervene. Gandhiji decided to go to Malabar with Mohammad Ali to explain the situation to the Moplahs and pacify them...⁶⁰.

One quaint fact stood even in 1926. In April 1926, after more than two years of the abolition of Khilafat by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in Turkey, a meeting of Khilafat Conference was presided over by Mohammad Ali where he opined that while he objected to the Suddhi resolution of Hindu Sanghathan, Muslims had the right for tabligh, it was the duty of every Muslim to convert people of other faiths to his own. And 'he said that he prayed for the day when he would convert Gandhiji to Islam; This led Dr. Ansari to renounce his membership of the Khilafat committee and the Muslim League. Maulana Azad who was present in the Khilafat meeting, remained a silent spectator.'⁶¹

Apart from this, 'In 1926 tension between Hindus and Muslims again rose and there were communal riots in several parts of North India, in which the Muslims were the aggressors and Hindus the victims. The Hindu Mahasabha, which met in March, 1926, passed a resolution on sanghathan and siddhithe meeting was attended by prominent Congressmen like Malaviya, Lajpat Rai, Jairamdas Doulatram and Dr. Chaitram Gidwani. Among the leading members of Hindu Mahasabha was Swami Shraddhananda.'⁶²

One of the many negative results of the communal tension, hatred, and rioting was that a Muslim youth assassinated Swami Shraddhananda as he was lying ill at his residence in Delhi. The youth had a good pretext to meet the Swami, he wanted to discuss religious matters with the Swami. One, in this context can recall how Guru Govind Singh was murdered at Nandan !

59. S. S. Pirzada, ed., : Pakistan : All India Muslim League Documents, 1906-1924 Vol-I, Karachi, 1969, p/6

60. J.B.Kripalani, My Times, An Autobiography, Rupa & Co New Delhi, 2004, P/90 57* Ibid, p/115

61. ibid, p/155

62. ibid, p/154

Well, Khilafat movement, encouraged and steered for a while by Gandhiji, opened the wicket for communal politics that led to 1946 - 1947. Gandhiji tried to make an amalgam experiment with a vast and complex nation, his fixed ideas, real politicking, Islamic Sunna and his exclusive non-violence - all his own and the whole nation had to pay the price - no Congress leader's opinion was adhered by him since the 1920s. Gandhiji's reaction after Swami Shraddhananda's murder was inimical of his style, 'I regard myself as a friend of the Mussalmans, their wrongs are my wrongs... Mussalmans have an ordeal to pass through. There can be no doubt that they are too free with the knife and the pistol. The sword is no emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was and still remains the supreme law,' He yet pleaded for mercy to be shown to the perpetrator of the crime saying : 'The fault is ours'.⁶⁴ One, however, may feel indulgent to recollect here that Gandhiji did not like to plead to save the life of Bhagat Singh in 1920 as he had pursued a non-violent course for the liberation of Bharat. ! Montagu - Chelmsford Reforms, 1919 continued with the same line of Morley-Minto reform, 1909. It extended the electoral franchise to 1% and 3% of people in the Centre and Provincial parishads increasing it from 0.2 of Morley-Minto Refrom of 1909. Actally Montagu-Chelmsford Refrom, 1919 was an extension of Morly-Minto Refrom, 1909 and those created, in the structure of governance, a greater space for Muslim League to pursue the communitarian politics to create a separate

*Montagu-Chelmsford
Award 1919*

pan-Muslim identity opposed to pan-Indian national identity. This was the point where British Government and Muslim League found the space for comradeship.

The condition of Muslim leaders belonging to Congress, not subscribing the Muslim League, rather stood inelegant before the British government. This was in tune with British-Muslim League designs. Separate electorate on the basis of religion, reservation on caste etc. got root in the national political life being assiduously articulated by the British to prove and to act on the scene as if India was not a nation as a whole but an amalgam of two national identities having other sub-stratums of the major identity - Hindus, who need to have socio-political justice by means of categorised electoral rights.

Meanwhile, the general Hartal on 6th April, 1919 organised as a part of *Rowlatt Act 1919 & Jallianwalabagh* movement against the Rowlatt Act, (1919) and the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, 13th April, 1919, signalled Gandhiji's ascendancy as the leader deciding the course of Congress political line thence forth. All India Congress Committee, Congress working Committee

63. CWMG, Vol*XXXII, pp 473-475, referred by J.B.Kripalani,

as above

64. Ibid.

and Provincial Congress Committees were formed as per Nagpur Congress (1920) resolution. In the Calcutta Congress, 1920 resolution moved by Gandhiji for non-cooperation movement along with Khilafat was opposed by senior leaders of Congress and was put to vote for a division. But Gandhiji's predominance was firmly established in the Nagpur special session of Congress, December, 1920 and his set of beliefs and convictions known as Gandhi-ism became Congress policy thenceforth. Other old guards of national leaders, C.R.Das, Bepin.Ch. Pal, Malaviya, and others had to make way for Gandhi-ism.

Lokemanya Tilak had died in 1920.

Almost right on the days of Khilafat, unprecedented communal riots broke out at many parts of the country in 1922-23. It was not that the Khilafat passion had no contributions to those riots. C.R.Das, Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Azad and Sorojini Naidu and others had to tour the affected areas and they, while issuing joint statement, recommended inter-communal national pact on 4th May, 1923. The leaders yet not understood what kind of problems from how many angles they would have to confront in days to come.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani put forward a scheme in 1924 - in his idea to resolve the communal tangle -that dismissed the proposal of Dominion Status and instead wished for complete independence for India with Muslim cooperation provided Caste Hindus resolve to support his proposals such as, a) recognise the bi-communal (Hindu-Muslim) basis of the future independent state, b) convert the Muslim majority provinces into Muslim states and the Hindu majority provinces into Hindu States, and c) create an Indian Federation of those states and place it under a supreme National Government, composed of Hindus and Muslims.⁶⁵

And again, on March 1927, some prominent leaders of various groups met at Delhi and Jinnah presided over it. The unanimous decisions were: 1. Muslim representation in the Central Legislature not to be less than one third, 2. Sind should be a separate province independent of Bombay Presidency. 3. Reforms should be initiated in North West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces of India. 4. Proportion of representation will be made in accordance with the population in Punjab and Bengal.

The resolution then insisted, if the demands were acceded by Congress i.e. the Hindus -since then Congress was being termed as not national party but a Hindu party - Muslims would accept joint electorates in all the provinces

65. Pirzada,ed., Foundation of Pakistan, All India Muslim Documents, 1906-1924, I, Karachi 1969,p/99, quoted in, as noted 47.

so constituted. And Muslims would also be agreed to the same kinds of concessions to the minorities in Bengal, Punjab and MNWFP as the Hindu majorities in other provinces were prepared to make to the Muslim minorities.⁶⁶

Both the proposals of Maulana Mohani in 1924 and prominent Muslim leaders under M.A. Jinnah at Delhi, March 20, 1927 were claims precursor to partition of India and creation of Pakistan, while Congress had been endeavouring to have a route for its movement along the line of democracy and nationalism and revolutionaries were struggling for national liberation. British policies were persistent following divide et impera and it advised, guided Muslim League and fundamentalist Maulana and Imams covertly and overtly by official manoeuvring and mechanism.

The tunning of the partition of India along the religious divide - not communal divide, as stated earlier - had already set in the political arena during and right after Khilafat movement . In Turkey Khilafat was overthrown in 1924 by Kemal Ata Turk and the said proposals of Maulana Hasrat Mohani were initiated in the same year 1924. Jinnah and other Muslim leaders' proposals came in 1928 - not distant in terms of years.

The Simon Commission, initiated by Lord Birkenhard, Secretary of State for India, was boycotted and the formation of a constitution, that would be acceptable by various elements - specially the League and fundamentalist ulemas and other organisations - was felt as an imperative. Madras Congress resolved to have a committee for the said purpose including members from various political parties under Chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. The committee was to draft a Swaraj Constitution.

The Nehru Committee recommendation published in Aug, 1928, recommended Dominion Status and joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims only where they were in minority. The All Parties Conference held in Lucknow in the same month accepted the recommendation of the Nehru Report with some amendments. Although provincial 'balance' was assured to be acquired, the Nehru report was more unitary than federal in character. The Muslims, therefore, declined to accept it. As decided in the Lucknow Conference, the Nehru Report was placed before All Parties National Convention held in Calcutta, on 28th December, 1928. Jinnah, on behalf of the Muslim League and Tasadduq Ahmad Khan Sherwani on behalf of the Central Khilafat Committee put forward six amendments to the report, the Conference adopted the two and rejected the remaining four⁶⁷

66. Jamiluddin Ahmad, *Historic Documents of the Muslim Freedom Movement*, Lahore, 1970, p/86

67. S. A. I. Tirmizi, as noted in 24 foot note.

Nothing of worth mention was heard about the Motilal Committee Report in the subsequent period, as it was evident Muslim League and its associates would not have it accepted.

Muslim League and its associates were insisting for federal character of constitution not for obedience to federalism. The Motilal Committee Report was not rigidly unitary, rather it provided federal provision having a unitary centre which was waged having due regard to the then given conditions in India.

Jinnah and Muslim League were, in no time, champions for federalism. Britain and Muslim League desired All party conference adopt a federal proposal that would ease creation of a separate state having Muslim majority in certain provinces as well assuring retention of Muslim specific provisions in other provinces of Hindu majority. Maulana Mohani's proposals, Jinnah's proposals at various Muslim party meeting, Delhi, 1928 and Muslim League-Central Khilafat Committee's six point rejoinder to Motilal Committee Report at Calcutta Conference of All Parties, 1928 -were all drawn with a determined single line object- to increase bargaining power as much as possible to create a separate Muslim state partitioning India which, on the other hand, was also the British policy, overtly or covertly, to have India partitioned when they would have to quit.

Thus Muslim League-British designs had already acquired a concerted mature stage before the Congress Passed the resolution of Purna Swaraj in Lahore Congress, 1929. Meanwhile, other forces for national liberation were gaining strength. Resolution to form Trade Unions was adopted in a Congress meeting at Amritsar, 1919. In 1920, 1921 T.U. movements had gained strength so that four to six lac workers joined in the various *dharmaghats* (strikes).

Gandhiji suffered potently in assessing some traits of Muslim mind , individually or collectively, from the general inferences of Islam. He, contrary to reality addressed Jinnah and other fundamentalists with much more weightage than the Muslim leaders and activists who were in far more better position to negotiate with national identity and nationalism. Gandhiji followed a compressive course to negotiate with Jinnah which reached to the position of even appeasement. At many a times, even upto the period of crucial post-election period of 1937, Jinnah was not so worthy to be negotiated with had Gandhiji and Congress talked to, having a collective machinery of negotiation, than Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan of NWFP, Sikandar Hyat Khan of Punjab, Fazlul Haq of Bengal and, as well, the Muslim leaders of Sind. 1937 election results exhibited the blunders.

The Lucknow pact (December, 1916) and similar accords were concluded on the very wrong impressions that Muslims constituted a separate political

entity consonant to their religious organism. And, in this way, the separate growth of a Muslim political world was eventually legitimised.

‘Both the political language within which the Congress sought accomodation with Muslim political activists, and the basis on which Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi established an entente with pan-Islamic leaders during the Khilafat movement in the early 1920s, had far reaching consequences. The energy derived from recognising Muslims as a distinct religious and political unit implied that the basic terms of reference precluded any lasting solution of the communal tangle’⁶⁸

Subhas Chandra Bose and other young nationalists of Congress who did not subscribe to Gandhiji’s morbid mania for non-violence, meanwhile had grown as a very popular centre of dynamic nationalist force tended towards socialist economic programmes. They, particularly Subhas was very close to non-Muslim League progressive Muslim leaders. Nehru’s stances were peculiar. Sometimes he used to write long letters to Gandhiji rather harshly, and next to that, surrendered to Gandhiji’s wishes.’⁶⁹

Gandhi-Arwin pact, 1931 caused only the withdrawal of third non-cooperation movement and joining of Congress in the second Round Table Conference.

Thence came Indian Administrative Act, 1935. Congress rejected the Act but ‘there was no doubt in anybody’s mind that it should contest the elections, and its outstanding performance in the Central Assembly strengthened this view’⁷⁰

Indian Administrative Act, 1935 that clearly and precisely articulated the separate constituency for the Muslims and Hindus in the form of reservation, was a prelude, in the constitutional way, to the partition of India. The results of the elections were revealing. Only 12% of the total population or near about 35 million people enjoyed franchise right according to this Act. Elections in the Central Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies projected a very significant

Indian Administrative Act. 1935

68. Musirul Hasan, as noted in 49 foot note, p/50

69. ‘Jawharlal accepted Marxian Social analysis . and considered Russian Revolution the fulfilment of Marxist ideas. He was not only a socialist, but a ‘ scientific socialist’, that is, a ‘Marxian Socialist’. However, though in ideology and outlook an idealist, in practice he was a realist. Whatever he might say or write, he did not cut himself off either from Gandhiji whom he often could not understand, or the older leadership which, in his eyes, was conservative, if not reactionary. This trait of him of being idealist in thought and expression and a realist in action, came out clearly, as we shall see, during the course of Congress Session at Lucknow over which he presided, J.B. Kripalani, as referred in 56, p/260

70. Ibid, p/291

feature so far the choice of people, in general, were concerned. It was revealing both to the Congress and the Muslim League, but in different ways. Out of the eleven legislative Assemblies, Congress commanded a majority in six, and it emerged as the largest single party in other three Assemblies. Muslim League, on the contrary, failed to secure a clear majority in any of the four Muslim majority provinces inspite of separate electorates and the Communal Award. Muslim League could master only 109 out of 482 seats it contested. Congress, on the other hand, was not popular with the Muslim masses except the NWFP. Congress failed to secure a single Muslim seat in Bengal, Punjab, U.P., and C.P.⁷¹

‘Out of the 1585 seats allocated to the Provincial Assemblies, Congress won 716, while the Muslim League own only 109 out of 482 seats reserved for Muslims and represented not more than 4.8% of total Muslim electorates. This clearly shows Sikandar Hayat Khan’s Unionist Party in the Punjab, Fazlul Haq’s Krishak Praja Party in Bengal, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan’s Khudai Khidmatgars in NWFP were determined to continue their traditions of inter communal co-operation which had tended, on the whole, to benefit them immensely* In the faction ridden Sind, Muslim notables found it difficult to rally round a political party as feeble as the Muslim League’⁷²

One need not run long to understand that feeble Muslim League which performed so dismally in elections of 1937 (based on Communal Award and separate electorate), would not have the scope of rejuvenation had Congress not been outmanoeuvred by British policies who sensed ill in such dismal performance of Muslim League. Congress decision to resign from the Assemblies in 1939 ran short of judicious assessment of the then given national and international socio-political situation. And more than that, Congress failed to keep up the independent position of the Bengal, Punjab, NWFP leaders as stated above by appropriate political-organisational work in unison with them. Second world War changed the entire political scenario in home and abroad since 1939. Subhas Bose was out of Congress in 1939, he was by far advanced than other Congress leaders to understand the international situation at that time.

Fazlul Haq wanted united front with Congress to form a Ministry in Bengal. Haq’s Krishak Praja party was not in a position to form a government of its own without either the support of Congress or the Muslim League. Haq was not willing to side with Muslim

71. Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of partition of India, 1936 -47*, Delhi, 1987, p/13

72. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman, The Muslim League And The Demand For Pakistan*, Cambridge, 1985, p/282.

League. But Congress declined to support him . As Haq-Shyama Ministry failed, Haq had no way but to be with Muslim League and it was Fazlul Haq, so went the political situation because of the blunders committed by wrong political understanding of Gandhiji and Nehru, who proposed and moved the Muslim League resolution for Pakistan in 1940. Gandhiji and Nehru both were responsible for throwing Fazlul Haq to the precarious seat offered by Muslim League.

Sir Stafford Cripps, special envoy, British Government arrived in India (March, 1942) to confer about some special proposals to Congress, Muslim League and other political parties. Japan declared war and became a power in world war II opposing the Allied powers by the tail part of 1941. British colonies in South East Asia got threatened and British approach to colonial questions, particularly for India, needed then a calculative design. Cripps proposed i). India should have, while war was over, a dominion status maintaining status quo during the war period, ii). A Constituent Assembly would be formed by general election at the end of war and that Assembly should have nominated members from the princely states. The said Constituent Assembly should frame the constitution for the Dominion, iii). Some provinces and regions of India may remain, as independent dominions, within the British empire. Cripps proposals practically aimed at partitioning India into many pieces - not acceptable, the mission reached nowhere.

Cripps met Gandhiji on 27th March, 1942. On his proposals Gandhiji said, ‘ why did you come if this is what you have to offer ? I would advise you to go back home by the first available plane’. Congress working committee considered the proposals for five days, the first three days were attended by Gandhiji, then he left for Sevagram, allowing the working committee to carry on negotiation with Cripps. During the discussions, Asaf Ali said ‘You cannot coerce the Muslim community to join the Indian union’. This irritated J.B.Kripalani and he said ‘Why not ? Did not America coerce the South to see that it did not break away from the American union ? We may not go to war about it, but we shall use all the non-violent methods to prevent the division of India.’⁷³ That was in 1942, but Muslim League did not hesitate to go to war - direct action to have Pakistan on 16th August 1946. Asaf Ali perhaps felt no shame to observe who those were to coerce for the partition.

Then Came 1943. A created famine claimed lives of millions in Bengal.

*Famine in
Bengal, 1943*

Owing to not enough rainfall, production of food grains were not adequate in some parts of India, 1942-1943.

73. My Times, An Autobiography, J. B. Kripalani, Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2004, P/428.

That would not have caused so severe a famine in Bengal, in parts of Bihar and Orissa had British policy of public distribution of foodgrains was not ruthlessly faulty for political considerations that stressed on export of million tons of foodgrains inspite of actual shortage of four million tons in that year. Price level of essential commodities in 1943 sprang as high as ten times over that of 1939 level. The major number of fifty lacs of people that lost their lives for that famine were from Bengal. Grossly faulty distribution system of food grains by motivated administrative mechanism furthered severe sufferings of rural poor people Bengal's social-economic life was shattered grievously. Rural economy in West Bengal could not recuperate its position within a few years.

East Bengal peasants, majority Muslim, got signal from two things : some joined Tebhaga movement of the communists that sowed the seeds of looting and plundering of Hindu properties in rural East Bengal and that was followed by the growth of Muslim League in East Bengal rural area because Muslim League actively supported the plundering of Hindu properties and assets. In 1946, Muslim League registered absolute grip on election results in East Bengal, though it lost, peculiarly in the election of 1954 to the United Front in East Bengal (East Pakistan) never to regain its position there

Congress leaders arrested for Quit India movement, 1942 got released from jail on 6th May, 1944. British government, to gain political control in

*Gandhi-Jinnah
Direct Dialogue
by letters, 1944*

India under the shadow of imminent assault of Japan and Azad Hind Fouz, arranged, through Wavel (Viceroy, since Oct. 1943) Gandhi-Jinnah direct dialogue, opening advantage for Jinnah-Muslim

League. Congress-Muslim League leaders met in several rounds, courtesy Tezbahadur Sapru committee. The British diplomacy widened the rift between Hindu-Muslims further and settled the position of Jinnah and Muslim League claim as sole representative and bargaining centre for the Muslims in India. Congress, because of Gandhiji's appeasement attitude (-Gandhiji it may be assumed, never properly assessed political Islam-) and Nehru's infirm political aptitude, diminished its own command to represent all people including the Muslims as the National Congress and was practically reduced to the stature to speak for the Hindus thus making way for Jinnah to thunder.

Muslim League represented Muslims, then whom Congress had to represent being outmanoeuvred by British-Muslim League entente? Congress

*Rajagopalachari's
proposal concending
Pakistan question, 1944*

insisted to deny the gross realities of politicking in which it was pressed into. Congress had been suffering since 1920s a false dichotomy between ideology and

pragmatic politicking. In those conclaves, courtesy Sapru committee (named after Tez Bahadur Sapru) Chakraborty Rajagopalachari placed proposals to

Muslim League - (i) National Congress might agree to consider the issue of Pakistan when independence gained, (ii) Plebiscite, then, would decide the question of Pakistan, (iii) Muslim League would have to join the interim government to remain in it till the independence attained.

Congress was thus creeping to accept partition and Pakistan proposal in
Bhulabhai Desai, 1944. Jinnah was assigned full authority to have dialogue
Congress leader with Gandhiji by the Council conference of Muslim
and Liaquat Ali Khan League at Karachi, 1944. Gandhi-Jinnah dialogue
agreement, 1944 continued by letters 21 - 27th Sept., 1944. As Jinnah
 insisted the settlement of Pakistan demand prior to British relinquishing authority,
 the dialogue ended inconclusively.

Notwithstanding the disagreement, an agreement was concluded, having
 subsequent conclaves, signed by Bhulabhai Desai, leader of Congress in the
 Central legislature Assembly and Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of
 Muslim League, stating i) the number of seats of both the parties, Congress -
 Muslim League, in the legislative Assemblies should be for each 40% of total
 seats. The remaining 20% seats would be represented by religious minorities
 (Christians, Sikhs, Parsees and Scheduled castes), iii) British General should
 head the Armed Forces, IV) The question of Pakistan would be decided in
 the period following once the political status of the nation was finally decided.

The de-facto recognition of Pakistan question was acceded by Congress
 in 1944. Lord Wavel, Viceroy, declared the plan to constitute an Executive
 Council having representation from the political parties under the supervision
 of Viceroy. Congress and Muslim League leaders met
Lord Wavel, at Simla, June 1945. Gandhiji, Ballavbhai Patel,
Simla Conf., Maulana Azad, Nehru etc represented Congress.
1945 Wavel's Executive Council was almost of the same
 frame as that of Desai-Liaquat Ali agreement, 1944 but it contained a distinct
 provision that representation in the Executive Council should be based on
 representing the religious identity instead of the political parties. Congress
 thought of itself as a national party, while Muslim League claimed itself to be
 the sole representative of the Muslims in India, neither of them could accept
 the situation for mutually antagonistic propositions. In addition to this, the
 Executive Council, as proposed by Wavel, would be liable to British crown
 and parliament. Wavel's proposals, hence, were fated to reach nowhere.

November, 1945 witnessed the trial of the soldiers of Azad Hind Fouz in
 New Delhi. As all the information, news of great struggle and sacrifice and
 arrival of Azad Hind Fouz and Netaji upto Kohima liberating Andaman and
 Nicobar Island got unfolded, partially though, a sense of triumph and spirit
 spread over the entire nation and within two and a half month, on 18th February,

1946 the crews of the ship 'Talowar' stood firm supporting the strike for their rational demands. On the next day, all the crewmen of twenty warships joined the revolt and on 20th February, 1946 gun-battles raged between the revolting

*Azad Hind Fouz,
Mass movements
and Armed revolts,
1946*

armed navymen and British forces at Bombay. As the news flashed all over India, Navymen at Calcutta, Karachi, Vishakhapatnam and the coastal guards at Pune, Thane, and Delhi publicly expressed their solidarity to the struggling Navymen. The Royal Navy

Force of India moved closer to the verge of raising flag in support of the struggle. The Air Force pilots and Air Force ground workers at Bombay had been in continuous strikes in those fateful days. Peoples' peaceful demonstrations expressing fraternity to the struggling Navy and Airmen met brutal repression at Bombay. One estimate suggested, 300 demonstrators were killed and about 1200 sustained grievous injuries. Calcutta witnessed the stupendous 'Rashid Ali Day' demonstrations and strikes, even the essential services of water, lights etc of the Calcutta Corporation were suspended to be served to the 'English' people and the public, in general, by cessation of work by the Municipal Corporation workers in support of the movement. Ballabh Bhai patel visited Bombay to meet the struggling Armymen and the revolt-movement was called off on 23rd February 1946.

The Trade Union Workers all over India waged widespread movements on their wages and other facilities demands under the Trade Union charters.

*Trade Union
Movements, 1946*

By 1945 and the first three months of 1946, 1276 'strikes' involved 1.38 million workers of vital industrial sectors, small and medium enterprises, even the

industrial workers of the princely states participated in the movements claiming settlements of their demands. Significant among them were the workers of the Kolar goldmine of Mysore and the textile workers of Gwalior. Peoples' anti-colonial mass movements had already reached a racking stage by August-September 1945 that accentuated, as stated already, in the armed revolts of February, 1946.

All those struggles waged with self respect and national pride got momentum for the stupendous affects that Azad Hind Fouz and Netaji Subhas passed on and round the entire nation and that exposed to Britain the four columns - Army, Navy, Air Force and the industrial economic sectors - on which rested the colonial rule, no longer stood devoid of their national identity and vigour. Azad Hind Armymen brought in trial (of a part of them - while many soldiers were murdered in cool blooded secrecy in the remote spots in India) - the factual news of their patriotic grim struggle and the message of Netaji in the liberation cry 'Jai Hind' and 'Delhi Cholo' flashed in broad, the nation heard the bell of independence.

Gandhiji, since 1920s, could not solve, rather gradually created space, for that vexed socio-political problem of Hindu-Ashraf Muslim cleavage being overplayed by British diplomacy and Muslim League of Ashraf fundamentalists' unrelenting attitudes, whereas, Netaji Subhas wished not to have parloours with the British government to have a gifted freedom through diplomatic documentation or to make space for Muslim League of Ashraf Muslims who act as an alien social part in the Indian society to carve out a land by manoeuvre and pacts. Azad Hind Fouz , originally planned as a volunteering force by Rashbehari Ghose, the revolutionary, residing in Japan since 1919 , later raised to regimented soldiers front by Cap. Mohon Singh , exhibited , becoming a full fledged army under the spirited and able leadership of Netaji, the nationalist Hindu-Muslim unity in the struggling National Army of India in a most inhospitable situation for want of sophisticated arms and ammunition, uninterrupted supply of war materials and food and provisions. Azad Hind Fouz accelerated the pace for Indian independence.

The 1857 War of independence decimated English Company Raj in India, 1858. Azad Hind Fouz forced British Crown Raj to quit India in 1947. The two struggles were of different historical times, waged in different world orders, yet united armed struggle of the Indian dauntless forces adequately backed up by the struggling people revealed to be equally successful to put an end of the two Rajes (East India Company upto 1857 and British crown 1857- 1947.). This part of history yet wait to be Properly recorded with adequate information, documentation and uninhibited approach. Provincial Assembly elections were held in April, 1946 having only the participation of 13% of the people. Congress accalimed majority in the general electoral areas i.e. Hindu areas and NWFP province while Muslim League had the Muslim Reserve seats in the Hindu majority areas and Muslim majority Bengal. In the Muslim electoral areas of two Muslim majority states of Punjab and Sind, seats were claimed by local Muslim parties and Muslim League.

The election results conspicuously exhibited (i). people by huge majority were opposed to the partition of India, (ii). huge numbers of Muslims in the non-Muslim majority states were supporters of Muslim League viz a viz Pakistan, (iii) Muslim League represented the Muslims in India. NWFP, later on, urged for plebiscite in that state to decide whether to join Pakistan or remain with India. That demand was turned down by British authority. Had that just demand been conceded, NWFP would be with India. In the provincial Assemblies Congress and Muslim League had 930 and 497 seats respectively, though, except Bengal Muslim League was not in a position to form government in any other state. Communist party, a tiny existence in Indian politics, that

*Election of
Provincial
Assemblies 1964*

assiduously assisted British war endeavours onward from 1941 and lent support, since 1940 to Muslim League claim of Pakistan, could garner nine successful candidates only all over India. While Muslim leaders and influential professionals, such as, M. C. Chagla, Brelvi, Moinuddin Harris, M.R.A. Baig, socialist Yusuf Meherally, Nuri and others expressed indignation against the attitude of Jinnah⁷⁸ and while Abul Ala Maududi, Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami, founded in August, 1941 also considered League was ill suited to carry out a Islamic order - two different views from opposite poles -, it was quite unlikely that the communists were unaware of those facts. It was for a policy of the British government that assiduously tried to collect support for Jinnah and Pakistan scheme from various political and economic nooks. The design could be traced from another angle, the Muslim Chamber of Commerce (MCC) founded in Calcutta, 1932 resolved on no specific issue till 1942 and it acted almost mutely beside the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)⁸⁰. Even a separate Muslim Chambers of Commerce was not liked by Muslim industrialists and merchants in Peshawar and other places. But, in 1940 the year of Pakistan demand by Jinnah and Muslim League, Adamji Haji Dawood, Ispahani, Sultan Chinoy, G.A. Dossani laid stress on MCC and in September, 1943 Federation of Muslim Chambers of Commerce and Industry was projected to be launched immediately.⁸¹

The first meeting, Delhi, 19th April, 1945 could claim little attendance and press coverage but, soon Muslim capitalists, merchants and traders from Sind, Bombay and Bengal joined hands to make MCC a success.

Those developments to constitute a distinct Muslim identity and centres of resources were engineered by British manoeuvres as organising communist support for Pakistan demand.

After the failure to gain what had been aimed at by Jinnah and Muslim League from the Cabinet Mission (1946), Muslim League, in its meeting at Bombay July 29, 1946, decided to launch an agitation 'to achieve Pakistan' and 'to organise the Muslims for the coming struggle to be launched as and when necessary'. (Muslim League never launched any movement against its master the British government); The League Council declared August 16 as 'Direct Action Day'. 'Though the 'Direct Action Day' was to be observed throughout India by the Muslim community, it passed off

78. J. H. Taleyarkhan, *They Told Me so*, Thacker, Bombay, 1947.

79. A. A. Maududi, *Nationalism in India*, Lahore, 1947

80. Markovits, *Businessmen and the Partition*, p/289, as referred by Musirul Hasan in 51 above.

81. To Jinnah, Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence, 3rd Sept., 1944, referred, *ibid*, p/70

on the whole peacefully everywhere except in Calcutta. The fact was that in Bengal there was the League government . It itself took the initiative and directed and guided the atrocities perpetrated by the Muslims on the Hindus⁸².

‘The Premier, Suhrawardy, and his companions organised it , with the help of local goondas and those brought from outside. The orgy of loot , arson, rape and murder that followed was called a jihad, a holy war against the Kafirs, the Hindus ! It is said that 5,000 innocent Hindu men, women and children were killed and 15,000 were left wounded. These are the most conservative figures⁸³

This book deals in detail about the ‘The Great Calcutta Killings - 1946’ (to borrow the title from The Statesman, Calcutta) based on reports, figures, statistics, observations, memoirs, memories first hand, editorials of various papers and journals, press photographs and press releases of the government reports of esteemed Congress and Hindu Mahasabha leaders and voluntary organisations etc.,

The Calcutta riots were in planned way followed by inconceivable hellish murder, arson, loot, rape, abduction of women and hellfire conversions of Hindus to Mohammadanism in Noakhali genocide. On September, 7th, 1946, Gulam Sarwar along with Ulemas and Muslim League leaders called a meeting and asserted ‘ to devise ways and means to wreak vengeance for what the Muslims had suffered in Calcutta’ . And the holocaust, in full swing, started on October 10, 1946.

This book tries to keep the records of some of those that had happened in Noakhali, and elsewhere in 1946 as far as practicable by papers, documents, narrations, reports etc. though, it must be admitted , the full scale narrative history cannot be contained in a single book as this one since the details and the analysis of all that happened require a few volumes instead of this one. Yet, the endeavour is an effort not to let all those to get out of memory and lost for ever as that will amount to make history lost which, most unfortunately, is being pursued from some certain quarters having political purpose and design.

Dinesh Ch. Sinha
Editor, Krishanu

Ashoke Dasgupta
Editor, History Now

82. J.B.Kripalani, My Times, An Autobiography, Rupa & Co, New Delhi, 2004, p/565

***A short note on armed struggle for
National Liberation Movement, culminated in Azad Hind Fouz,
that would not have agreed to the Partition of India.***

The national liberation movement did not navigate only along the constitutional civil movement of non-violent nature. Congress, the mainstream political party followed that way but besides that a strong stream of armed national liberation movement flowed since the beginning of the 20th century, right only after forty six years of 1857-60. British was highly sensitive, at every period, in regard to armed national liberation movement.

But, before that, Basudeo Balwant Phadke (1848-83), because of organising revolt with 300 tribal people against money venders, and later on the British, was deported to Aden and was murdered in prison, 1883. In the court he declared ‘My aim was to drive out the British and set up a free Indian Republic. O my countrymen, forgive me for I have failed in my mission.’ The Chapekar brothers Damodar, Balkrishna, Basudev and Vinayaka Ranade were hanged on 1897. They were disciple of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Jugantar party and Anushilan Samity of Calcutta and Ducca (Dhaka) , Abhinava Bharat in Maharashtra gained eminence as centres of armed national liberation movement by 1906 - 1909 period. Hemchandra Das Kanungo of Jugantar Party visited west Europe and had contacts with Russian revolutionaries in exile in 1907. On his return in Bengal ,1908, bomb manufacturing got an impetus. Other underground samities of Punjab, Juktapradesh, M.P., and southern states had contacts with Bengal and Maharashtra underground samities. Though by 1908-09 Manicktala garden society (an affiliate of Jugantar party), Abhinava Bharat, Anushilan Samity were abandoned and Barin Ghose, Ullaskar Dutta, Hemchandra Das, Upendranath Bandhopadhyay, Jatindranath Mukherjee , Pulin Behari Das, Bhupesh Ch. Nag and Vinayak Savarkar, Ganesh Savarkar and many others were imprisoned, the armed struggle for national liberation was indomitable. Anushilan Samity was reorganised in Varanasi in 1909, Abhinava samity of Maharashtra, Rajabazar Samity of Calcutta and Barisal Samity of East Bengal became very soon active. In 1909 an attempt for rebellion by the Punjab soldiers stationed at Calcutta met not the success. In 1912, revolutionaries hurled bomb at viceroy Hardinge causing great injuries on his person. Rashbehari Bose was the mainstay of the action. In February 1915, an well crafted plan to cause insurrection in five garrisons, including that of Lahore of Punjab, did not materialise for pre-emptive action of one agent of intelligence in disguise.

The same flow continued unabated. Kshudiram, Prafulla Chaki , Jatindranath Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin), Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Jatin Das, Surjya

Sen, Pritilata Waddedar, Shanti- Suniti, Binooy-Badal-Dinesh, Dukaribala Devi, Nanibala Devi, Kanailal Dutta, (hanged 1908), Satyendranath Bose (1908), Ananta Lakshman Kanhare (1910), Narayan Deshpandey, Krishnagopal Carvey (1910), [all three for killing Jackson, D. M. Nasik], Wandil Iyer, (shot dead Ashe, collector, Tineveli and committed suicide), Master Amir Chand (1913), Abodh Behari (1913), Balmukund (1913), Basanta Biswas (1913) [all for hurling bomb on viceroy Hardinge]. Kartar Singh Sarabha, Bishnu Ganesh Pingle, Jagat Singh, Harnam Singh, Buxi Singh, Narain Singh, Gilwali, (all 1915), Sohanlal Pathak (1916- for anti-British activities in Burma, Malay, Singapore), Budh Singh (1916) [anti-British activities in Siam] 27 soldiers for revolt of the Indian Army at Singapore under the leadership of Subadar Major Dandi Khan (1915), Chittapriya Roy, Monoranjan Sengupta, Nirendra Dasgupta, Jatindra Paul (1915) [all companions of Bagha Jatin, at Balasore fight] Bholanath Chattopadhyay, Bharat Pratap Singh, Nagendranath Dutta [Girija] Babu (1918) [all three tortured & murdered in Jail] Ramprasad Bismil, Asfakulla, Thakur Raoshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiry (1925) [Kakori conspiracy case], Jiten Dasgupta, Madhu Dutta, Pulin Ghose, Naresh Roy, Tripura Sen, Bidhu Bhattacharya, Harigopal Bal, Sansanka Dutta, Nirmal Lala, Moti Kanungo, Probhash Bal, Ardhendu Dastidar (1930), [Jalalabad Battle, Chittagong], Swadesh Roy, Monoranjan Sen, Rajat Sen, Debaprasad Gupta, (1930) [Kolarpol Battle, Chittagong], Ramkrishna Biswas (1931) [murdering Police Officer Tarini Mukherjee] Nirmal Sen, Apurba Sen (1932) [Dhalghat Battle] Pritilata Waddedar (1932) [for attacking European Club, Chittagong.] Surjya Sen (1934) [leader of Chittagong revolution], Tarakeswar Dastidar (1933) [Chittagong revolution], Krishna Chowdhury, Haren Chakraborty (1933) [Chittagong revolution]

Malappa Dharnaasethi, Qurban Hussain, Sri Krishna Sardar, Jagannath Sinde (1931) [Sholapur working Class uprising]. Chadraseshkar Azad (1931) [Hindustan Society Republican Army], Baikuntha Shukla (1934) [for killing Phani Ghose, betrayer, at Bettia] Harikishan Lal (1931) [for shooting & injuring Mont-morency, Punjab Governor], Gurudas Mal (1931) [father of Harikrishna Lal, died of repression in Jail].

Pradyot Bhattacharya (1933), Braja Kishore Chakravorty, Nirmal Jiban Ghosh (1933), Ramkrishna Roy (1933) [all revolutionaries at Midnapore in connection with killing Douglas and Burge, District Magistrates] Mrigen Dutta, Anath Panja (1933) [died by police bullets after killing Burge the D. M.], Kanailal Bhattacharjee (1931) [killed R. R. Garlick inside court 27th July 1931, and himself shot dead by police there], Dinesh Mazumdar (1934) [Jugantar Party's famous leader, for hurling bomb to Charles Tegart at Calcutta], Bhabani Bhattacharjee (1935) [for attempt to kill Sir John Anderson,

Bengal Governor], Anuja Charan Sen (1930) [died while hurling bomb on Sir Charles Target at Calcutta], Santosh Kr. Mitra, Tarakeswar Sen, Panchanan Palit (1931) [murdered in Hizli detention camp by Police and Sepoys], Bangir Goswami (1930), Anil Charan Das (1932), Gurudas Ram (1934), Nabajiban Ghose (1934) [all killed in jail under severe torture]. Santana Guha (1934) [arrested, tortured, went in hunger strike for 21 days in Jail and in Rajshahi Jail. She was brutally tortured and died there], Mahabir Singh Rathore, Mohit Moitra, Mohan Kishore (all 1933) [martyrs of hunger strike in Andaman Cellular Jail]

Bina Das (Bhowmik), (1932) [Shot at Stanley Jackson, governor of Bengal at Senate Hall, Calcutta University convocation, she was given nine years Rigoorous imprisonment], Shanti Ghosh and Sunity Chowdhury (Ghosh) [shot dead Stevens, D. M. Comilla on 14th Dec. 1931, was convicted for life as they were minors], Ujjala Mazumdar (1934) [sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment being connected with shooting at Sir Anderson, Bengal Governor at Darjeeling on 8th May, 1934]

This list is yet not exhaustive and hundreds of armed freedom fighters all over India struggled, waged battles, sacrificed life, suffered terrible tortures in prison. British, in fact, were more worried about the armed struggles than the peaceful movements. This flow continued upto 1934-35 and flickered as World War II broke out in 1939.

This stream was not confined in India alone, rather it soon acquired an international dimension. India's national liberation movement was not contained in the country alone, it had an unrelieved international perspective too. Indians in abroad founded *Samity* in Europe, USA and Asian 'countries to address the cause of national liberation. Shyamaji Krishnavarma founded 'Indian Home Rule' a samity in 1905 at London having 'Indian Sociologist' as its mouthpiece Krishnavarma's India House was the centre for, beside many others, Vinayak Savarkar, Birendranath Chattopadhyay, S.Ranabir Rana, V.V.S.Ayer etc. Most of the members had to go to Paris in 1909-10 because of British police intimidation. Meanwhile, Madanlal Dhingra, a student revolutionary and follower of Vinayak.D.Savarkar went to martyrdom gladly as he shot dead John Curzon Wily in London. Paris thus became the second largest centre of Indian freedom fighters at abroad within 1910-1914. Madam Vicaji Rustam Cama and Sardar S.R.Rana unfurled Indian National flag, designed differently then, at international socialist Congress on 18th August 1907. British labour leader Ramsay McDonald, later British Prime Minister, was also present in the congress. He and his colleagues walked out of the conference for the unfurling of Indian National flag there.

The Paris centre led by, beside others, Krishnavarma, Madam V.R.Cama, Lala Hardayal, Sardar S.R.Rana, Birendranath Chatterjee, V.V.S.Ayer etc

increased communicative compass and scope to get in touch with the European international political sphere. 'Indian Sociologist' (edited by Shyamaji Krishnavarma) and 'Bandemataram' (edited by Madam Cama and Rana) were used to be sent to India. During world war I Madam Cama and Rana were interned. Shyamaji Krishnavarma and Birendranath Chattopadhyay sought refuge in Switzerland and Berlin respectively. The Paris centre thus became defunct. In 1906, Taraknath Das propagated in Canada against British rule in India. He, while in USA, published the journal 'Free Hindustan' that ran popular with the Indians there. Lala Hardayal also founded the journal 'Gadar' (in memory of 1857-59 war of independence) at San Francisco in 1913. 'Indian association' founded there under initiation of Lala Hardayal, Taraknath Das, S. S. Bhakna soon was renamed as 'Gadar'. It spread nets in USA, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, / Malaya, China and in some lands of pacific regions. The journal 'Gadar' was used to be sent to India and plans were afoot to raise regiments having fund from Indians in abroad and to function with all such resources as a resurging centre for armed freedom fighters in India. That Indian freedom struggle was increasingly having impressions of international political happenings became clear when Lokamanya Tilak assessed the positive aspects of Russian revolution in his journal 'Keshari' on 29th January, 1918 and Bepin Chandra Pal in a speech in 1919, severely criticised British propaganda on Russian revolution.

Raja Mahendrapratap, President of Provisional Indian Government (in Kabul) visited Petrograd in 1918. There a convention, presided over by Lunacharsky of Soviet Union, expressed solidarity with the struggle for Indian independence. Mahendrapratap and Barkatullah, designated as Prime Minister of provisional Indian Government, was received by Lenin on 7th May 1919. Anne Besant, while inaugurating the Congress Conference in 1917 noted in precise tone the changed scenario in international affairs due to Russian revolution. All those happened before Rowlatt Act, 1918 and Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919. Indian Independence Committee (Berlin Committee) was formed in 1918 in Germany as the united organisation of all Indian revolutionaries. Birendranath Chattopadhyay was the secretary.

Indian revolutionary movement for national liberation and Azad Hind Fouz, did not suffer for the communal question that was initiated by British and Ashraf affluent Muslims of trade and big land holders that kept Congress engaged in the labyrinth of communal question from which it never could disengage itself because of its appeasement policies towards Muslim League.

CHAPTER—I

ELECTIONS OF 1945-46 : PRELUDE TO POGROMS AND PARTITION

With the surrender of Japan on 15 August, 1945 and the successful close of the war, there was a change of government in Britain. The Labour Party came to power defeating the Conservatives in the 1945 General Elections....Soon the Government announced holding of General Elections in India. Elections were to take place by the beginning of 1946.

The Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha fought the election on their respective manifesto. The manifestoes of these three major parties are quoted below :—

“LET US GO TO WAR”

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF MUSLIM LEAGUE, 1946

Quaid-Azam Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah on behalf of the All India Muslim League (AIML) declares that the ensuing election of the Central and the Provincial legislatures of India will be taken as a plebiscite of the Muslims of India on Pakistan and the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BMPL) in its meeting on 1 August 1945 adopted a resolution to this effect. Major Attlee’s Labour government on behalf of the British Imperialism has accepted this challenge.

In these days the ballot box is the only medium through which the public opinion can be ascertained with the greatest possible accuracy. The Muslim League, therefore, as the organization of the plain blunt Muslims who are not addicted to clever machinations, have straight way demanded general election in India and have declared that they would take this election in India as a plebiscite of Pakistan and a plebiscite on their claim to represent the whole of Muslim India. His Majesty’s government has decided to hold election in the next winter. “We are therefore, in the midst of war as the General Election is going to be the first pitched battle for Pakistan with the enemies of Muslim India.”

The Bengal Provincial Muslim League is making necessary preliminary preparations for fighting this battle. We have to marshal and mobilise our resources for winning this war. The BPML represents the 35 million of Muslims of Bengal and it has now on record over 10 lacs of members. In such a democratic organisation as this, it is quite natural that there will be difference of opinion among its leaders, workers, members and supporters. "I appeal to all in all sincerity and earnestness to bundle up all their differences and to preserve them if necessary in cold storage during the pendency of our common struggle. Our internecine conflict either for power, personal likes or dislikes or for anything for the matter of that at this juncture would be suicidal. The result of the coming general election shall have far reaching consequences and for sometimes the destiny of India shall be determined by it.

In this war of ours, in spite of all our differences legitimate or otherwise, ideological or personal, we must unite. As a first step, in order to avoid all possible chances and apprehensions of disruption in our own army the Working Committee of the BPML in its meeting of the 27 August 1945 passed a resolution suspending all elections for reconstituting the union, the sub-division, the district and the provincial League till the declaration of the result of the elections of the central and provincial legislatures. I am summoning the Council of the BPML Parliamentary Board among other things to elect members of the BPML Parliamentary Board. "It does not require much wisdom to understand that our winning this General Election would much depend upon the composition of the Parliamentary Board. I, therefore, warn the gentlemen of the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League from now not to allow personal interest to overpower their sense of Patriotism."

Pakistan means complete independence. They are fools, dreamers, visionaries or the hypocrites who think that Pakistan can be achieved without the greatest imaginable struggle and sacrifice. It must be known clearly to every soldier of Pakistan that the way to Pakistan is harder than the way to cavalry.

Our poets and literators, artists and artisans, youths and students, landlords and peasants, ulama and laymen must answer to the clarion call of the great leader of Muslim India, sink all their differences, forget the past, and pull all their resources for the winter struggle, the general election of Legislatures.

The Congress has plunged itself into a useless and unnecessary conflict with the League. Let us gallantly meet the challenge. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has in his recent statement talked of territorial autonomy and the right to secede from the centre and has kindly promised place his proposal to the All India Congress Committee. It is very kind of him indeed. But the Muslims of all India are, unfortunately for the Congress, not just as foolish as they would like them to be. They can by the grace of God now see below the surface.

The Pakistan formula is very simple and corresponds with the realities of India politics. The basis of Pakistan idea is real democracy, freedom, equity and justice and is opposed to imperial domination and economic exploitation which is the basis of the favourite, “Akhand Bharat” of the Congress.

Free India was never one country. Free Indians were never one nation. In the past India was “Akhand” under the domination the Mouriyas and the Mughals and is now “Akhand” under the domination of Great Britain. Liberated India must necessarily be, as God has made it, a subcontinent having complete independence for every nation inhabiting it. However, much weakness the Congress may have for the capitalists of Bombay and however much they may desire by way of doing a good turn to them to open opportunities for exploiting the whole of India under the cover of “Akhand Bharat” Muslim India to a man will resist all attempts of the Congress to establish dictatorship in India of any coterie, group or organization. Pakistan means freedom for all, Muslim and Hindus alike.

While appealing to the Muslims to join the army of the League and to fight its defensive war against the Congress I would warn them not to forget the now quiet and apparently indifferent Imperialist of Delhi and London. We must not forget that the achievement of Pakistan lies in the ultimate liquidation of the British imperialism.... We shall win Pakistan by the toils and sacrifices of our own people and not through the courtesy and benevolence of the British since we have taken our stand upon the solid rack of equity, justice and fair play, since freedom and liberty and not domination and exploitation is the incentive of our struggle, by the grace of God we are going to win, if we are united. So unity, fraternity and liberty shall be the battle cry for our first war of Independence.

The head and the heart of the people as I have seen during my tour in Bengal are perfectly sound and they will not make any mistake unless the leaders at the top in their anxiety to secure their leadership create confusion in their mind. We, therefore, must guard ourselves against this only possible source of disruption. We must never forget for a moment that Pakistan is our end and a ministry under the Government of India Act of 1935 will be merely incidental. Whoever amongst the leaders will exhibit any tendency to secure his position from now in the future Assembly either as a minister or Prime Minister shall be marked well and Muslim Bengal shall never forgive him.

The general election is the beginning of our struggle. Immediately after recording our votes in favour of Pakistan at the polling centres, immediately after winning our plebiscite liquidating the false claims of the Congress to represent the Muslims we shall direct our attention towards British Imperialism

and demand immediate transference of power to the peoples of India on the basis of Pakistan. Our battle is a battle for freedom for all and we hope and trust that every genuine freedom loving man and woman shall be with us.

We are going to fight the Congress but we don't feel quite happy about it as we never like to consume any part of our energy in fighting the Congress, the Mahasabha or in fact any Indian people or organisation. Our battle is entirely defensive. We did not like to fight the Congress, they unjustly and unfairly, like the Fascist aggressors have forced war on us.

Therefore, without malice, without vengeance, with complete faith in our ultimate victory, with heart within and God over head LET US GO TO WAR.¹

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF CONGRESS, 1946

On behalf of the Central Election Committee

It was not possible to hold any meeting of the AICC to consider the fuller manifesto in view of the imminence of the General Elections. The Working Committee therefore issued the following manifesto on its own authority:

ELECTION MANIFESTO, 1946

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone suffering in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict

1. "LET US GO TO WAR" issued by Abul Hashim, Secretary Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Later on Published by Society for Pakistan Studies, Dacca, January 1970, cited in Shila Sen, "Muslim Politics in Bengal 1937-47", Ph.D. Thesis, JNU, 1972, pp 403-9

with the armed might of a great empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression the Congress has risen stronger than ever and more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius: it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and civil liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the constitution. This constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with a great deal of autonomy for its constituent units and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise.

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war, and even now, this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority and complete ignoring of Indian interests and views has reached a new height, an incompetence in the administration, leading to terrible famine and widespread misery among our people. There is no way to solve any of these urgent problems except through freedom, and independence. The content of political freedom must be both economic and social.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standards of the masses. It is to the well being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities must

be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object and paramount duty of benefitting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth.

In international affairs, the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations, and particularly with her neighbours on the east and the west and north. In the Far East, in South-East Asia and in Western Asia. India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand these closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and cooperation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism every where can world peace be established.

On 8 August 1942, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's story. By its demands and challenge the Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle cry that the Congress faces the elections for the Central and Provincial Assemblies.

The General Legislative Assembly is a body with no power or authority and is practically an advisory body whose advise has been given. Large numbers of our countrymen are still in prison and many others who have been released are disqualified from standing for election. Obstructions in the way of holding public meetings still continue in many places. Yet, with all these and other handicaps and drawbacks, the Congress has decided to contest the elections to show that inevitable result of elections, however restricted, must be to demonstrate over whelming solidarity of the opinion of the voters on the issue of Independence. Therefore, in this election, petty issues do not count nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries — only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our Motherland, from which all other freedom will flow to our people.

So the Congress appeals to the voters for the central Assembly all over the country to support the Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture which is so pregnant with future possibilities. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of Independence : that pledge has yet to be redeemed and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. But the time is coming when we shall redeem it in full, not by the election but by what comes after it. Meanwhile, this election is a small rest for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence, and march together to the free India of our dreams.”²

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF HINDU MAHASABHA - 1946 **“COMING ELECTION AND THE DUTY OF THE HINDUS”**

The general election to the Legislative Assemblies of India is impending. Two main issues that will be raised before the countrymen are— national unity of India and complete freedom.

The ideology of the Hindu Mahasabha is very clear. Hindu Mahasabha has clearly announced to the countrymen that it would follow the same policy towards both the Hindus and the Muslims, even if they are in minority in any province in India.

No scientific procedure has been followed in defining the existing provincial boundaries. On the contrary, the self-interested imperialists have drawn them in such a way that the people of the country are forced to indulge in suicidal quarrel amongst themselves; so there is no one to point out the flaws and injustices in defining the present boundaries. We have to solve the problem by redefining the boundaries on a scientific basis.

Ideally and justifiably, the provinces should be defined on the basis of language and culture. Unless this policy is followed, dissatisfaction and loss of interest among a large section of population enhance the administrative complexities perennially and endangers the peace and well-being of the country.

Nowadays, quite a few, swayed by the bluff of self-determination, are being attracted to unrealistic plan. I hope people will not be deceived by these unrealistic promises. In fact, it is the aim of a group of communal and selfish people to strengthen the imperialist role by dividing the country in the name of self determination. Their real intention is to create national disunity and separation. But the majority community of India cannot let their fatherland,

2. From Congress files, reproduced in *INDIA WINS FREEDOM*.

their holy land, disintegrate to serve the interests of a group of narrow minded communal opportunists. Those, who want to divide the country and the nation unnecessarily and unjustifiably would be considered as anti-national in the eyes of international justice and they should be treated likewise.

The communal award has created the wall of disunity and separation among the concerned communities. Until this award is repealed and joint electorate established, no fair election is possible. The really independent wishes and feelings of the people of the country cannot be properly reflected in an election based on separate electorate. A genuinely democratic election cannot be held without a joint electorate comprising every adult citizen of the country. So, the so-called demand for self-determination cannot be proved by hastily and spuriously held election.

Here, till now communal obstinacy is stronger than reason. The influence of a middle-aged fanaticism is more effective than political or economic reasons. So, is it possible to know the real wishes of the people if this situation prevails?

In India there was never any obstruction in celebrating religious rites by different communities. India has always been famous for liberality and tolerance to other faith. So religion has never been a problematic issue in India.

If 35 crore people of India raised their demand in unison, in spite of their different religious beliefs, then no nation in the world, however strong, would dare to dismember India. Our neighbouring countries, i.e., Russia and China, are the glaring examples of it. Now our common people also know it.

There is no doubt that the death toll would have been much higher in the great famine of 1943 if assistance had not come from the other provinces. In Bengal, Muslims are relatively poorer, so it was possible, due to a higher death toll among them, to get reduced to minority from majority. Those Muslim League slyboot, stupefied with the daydream of forming a separate independent state do not even remember the tragic lesson of the great famine of Bengal.

Moreover if India disintegrates, the neighbouring countries will become tempted to attack India. Such examples are frequent in Indian history. Especially, the aggressors will become more daring with the belief that the different communities of India would not or could not unite and resist them. There is no hope for India from self-interested and unsympathetic communities—under the circumstances it will be cause for greater danger to link the fate of independent state with the interest of such a community.

These apart, Hindus will have even more important religious reasons. Hindustan is their motherland, their holy land and their divine land. Hindus must see that their ever worshipped motherland is not destroyed. Hindus will

not hesitate to make sacrifices to preserve the unity and integrity of the holy motherland. For the Hindus, India is not only their motherland but also the holy place to worship. Hindus will never tolerate the dismemberment of their motherland until the last. So their aim is clear, duties are clearly defined—united India and complete freedom. In this crusade, the Hindu Mahasabha will never be deprived of the Hindu's sympathy.³

Vande Mataram
Sri Haridas Haldar
Secretary, Parliamentary Board,
Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

It is clearly evident that the Muslim League fought the crucial election only on one-point programme, i. e. establishment of Pakistan by dividing India. “This election battle is the first battle of achieving Pakistan. Our future depends on victory in the election.” (G. M. Lahori, Imam of Jama Alamgir Mosque, Lahore). The very election manifesto of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (printed above) gave a clear mindset on the contemporary political situation in the country. To Mr. Jinnah, the League supremo, this election was “a plebiscite of the Muslims on Pakistan” and he was proved correct. The manifesto was a war-cry outwardly against the British but actually against the Hindus.

The Muslim League secured 86.8% Muslim votes and triumphed in every single Muslim constituency for the Central Legislative Assembly. It clearly showed that 86.8% Muslims of India wanted division of the country and establishment of a separate homeland for the entire Muslim community.

In Bengal, the results were more spectacular for the Muslim League. It captured 115 seats out of 123 reserved for the Muslims, and formed the ministry under the leadership of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy with the support of the European members numbering 25 and the members belonging to Scheduled Caste Federation led by Mr. Jogendranath Mandal. It was a stable government, no doubt, but the fate of the Hindus of Bengal became unstable and doomed for ever.

The League leaders, intoxicated by the victory at the polls, now became openly bellicose. At the convention of the league legislators, “Ismail Chundrigar of Bombay said the British had no right to hand over the muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Mohammed Ismail of Madras declared that the Muslims of india were in the midst of a Jihad, a holy war. Shaukat Hayat Khan (a Minister in Khizr Hayat Khan's war-time Cabinet, later dismissed) said if Muslims were ‘given a chance’, they would ‘show a

3. Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha election manifesto, S.P.Mukherjee papers. S.F.74
Translated from Bangla by the author of ‘Communalism in Bengal’

rehearsal now when the British army is still there'. Sir Feroze Khan Noon thundered that if they were driven to fight a central government or Hindu raj, then the havoc which the Muslims will play will put to shame what Chengiz Khan or Halaku did."⁴

Some indications of coming events came from the speeches of the League leaders. As early as the beginning of April 1946, Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon said that 'the havoc which the Muslims will play will put to shame what Halaku did' (Tribune, Lahore, 11 April 1946). And Halaku (Hulagu) Khan is known to the history of the world as one of the most cruel and remorseless destroyers of life and property. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar said in August 1946, seven months before the bloodthirsty dagger was actually unsheathed, that 'Pakistan can only be achieved...if need be, and opportunity arose, by shedding the blood of others. Mussalmans are no believers in the creed of *ahimsa*. we will do just as the situation demands' (Tribune, Lahore, 18 August 1946). And according to Raja Ghazanfar Ali's statement (31 August 1946), they were to wait 'until the fire order comes from Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah'. On 4 September, Khan Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot, President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, appealed to the Muslim lawyers 'in the name of Islam and Pakistan....to cast aside all thoughts of personal occupation, business and profit, and as shock troops of the Muslim League spread out all over the province, in every village, qasba, town and city, to do preliminary spade work of propaganda without which no revolutionary upsurge and determined struggle is possible' (Dawn, 5 September 1946). Even the Quaid-i-Azam, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, thought of civil war as an effective method of coercing his adversaries to agree to the demands of his Muslim League.⁵

Under this hostile atmosphere, the British Prime Minister Mr.C.Attlee announced in the Parliament (15 March, 1946) of his Government's decision of sending a Mission of Three Cabinet Ministers—Pethick Lawrence, A. V. Alexander and Stafford Crips—to India with the intension of finding out a solution of the vexed problem of transferring power to the people of India.

4. H. V. Seshadri; The Tragic Story of Partition.

5. Ganda Singh: A Diary of Partition Days.

CHAPTER-II

THE CABINET MISSION PLAN : COMMUNAL DIVISION

CABINET MISSION'S PLAN : IMPLIED PERILS

The salient features of the new Constitution recommended by the Cabinet Mission were : (1) There would be a Union of India comprising both British India and the Princely States, which would deal with the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications with necessary power to raise required finances. (2) All other subjects and residuary powers would vest in the provinces or the Princely States. (3) All the provinces would be grouped in two parts : one comprising the Hindu-majority provinces and the second Muslim-majority provinces.

The recently elected legislators would elect from their respective Provincial Assemblies their representatives community- wise. General (all others except Muslims and Sikhs), Muslim and Sikh, were the three classifications. These representatives would sit in three Sections as follows :

Section A - Madras, Bombay, United provinces, Bihar, Central provinces and Orissa.

Section B- The Punjab, North-West Frontier province and Sind.

Section C- Bengal and Assam.

These three Sections of the Constituent Assembly would decide the provincial constitutions for the provinces within their group ; provinces would have the power to opt out of the groups by a decision of their new legislature after the new Union Constitution came into force. After the group constitutions are settled the three Sections of the Constituent Assembly would re-assemble, together with representatives of the Indian States, for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.

The ingenious nature of this grouping of the Hindu-majority provinces and the Muslim-majority provinces of British India had placed 19 crores of Hindus

on an equal footing with 9 crores of Muslims in the Central Government and Central Legislative Assembly-the principle of 'parity' in action! The power to frame the provincial constitutions was given to the Sections which in effect placed the fate of NWFP and Assam at the tender mercies of their respective Muslim-majority groups. The Central Indian Union was to be a weak centre with Muslims sharing equal power with the congress and the field left free for establishment of Muslim domination over all the areas envisaged under the Pakistan scheme. Gandhiji at the very first sight of the plan wrote to Cripps saying that this plan was far worse than the Pakistan scheme.¹

Mr. Jinnah was unhappy that there was no specific mention of Pakistan in the recommendations and the Congress was dismayed that the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission contained seeds of division without dismemberment.

Mr. Cripps explained to Mr. Jinnah the significance of the recommendations and asserted that there might not be any mention of Pakistan in letter, but in spirit the Muslims would get more than what they had asked for.

"This is what Cripps himself told Jinnah when the latter asked him how Pakistan would come under the proposed all-India Union. "There are two propositions- a small Pakistan with sovereign rights and a treaty relation and a larger Pakistan which would function together with Hindusthan on terms of equality within an all-india Union for the essential purposes of defence and foreign affairs. Under the second alternative, there would be two federations linked by a Union Centre. The Indian States would come in either at the Union or at the federation level and there would be equal representation of Hindusthan and Pakistan at the Union level. The communal balance would be retained at the Centre by some means even if the Indian States came in.""²

Thereafter the Muslim League agreed to accept the Mission plan, on the assumption that it contained the "germ of Pakistan."

On the other hand, the initial reaction of the Congress was not favourable; it was in two minds as to whether to accept or to reject it. The views of the Congress clashed directly with the League's interpretation of the Mission's plan. Jawaharlal Nehru in his concluding address to the Congress Working Committee meeting on 6 July, 1946 at Bombay had said :

"So far as I can see, it is not a question of our accepting any plan, long or short. it is only a question of our agreeing to go into the Constituent Assembly. That is all and nothing more than that. we will remain in that Assembly so long

1. H. V. Seshadri : The Tragic Story of Partition.

2. V. P. Menon : Transfer of Power.

as we think it is good for India. We will come out when we think it is injurious to our cause and then offer battle. We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the constituent Assembly.”³

This was tantamount to rejection of the recommendations of the Mission, specially its grouping system of provinces which was the corner stone of the Mission plan.

Analysing the implications of the recommendations of the Mission, Mr. Nehru affirmed the Congress view at a press conference :

“We will be entirely and absolutely free to determine what we have to do there; we shall be solving the problem of minorities on our own and we shall not accept any outside interference; the big probability is that there will be no grouping of provinces.”⁴

The Cabinet Mission’s clandestine effort to placate the Muslim League through compulsory grouping of provinces was thus shattered and Mr. Jinnah’s hope of achieving a bigger Pakistan in no future dashed to the ground.

This made Mr. Jinnah furious and he called upon his followers to resort to “Direct Action”, on 16 August, 1946 undoubtedly against the Hindus, and not the Britishers.

3. Indian Annual Register : July-Dec. 1946

4. Ibid

CHAPTER-III

MUSLIM LEAGUE CALLS FOR “DIRECT ACTION”

DIRECT ACTION RESOLUTION OF MUSLIM LEAGUE : BOMBAY, 26-07-46

All India Muslim League’s ‘Direct Action’ resolution passed on July 29, 1946, has been compiled in the Indian Annual Register, this is mentioned below :-

It has been called “Direct Action” resolution, a misnomer it proved as the Muslim League did nothing against the alien authority in the way of “direct action”, there was no agitation directed against any practice of this Government. The resolution said :

“Whereas the League has today resolved to reject the proposal embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy of May 16, 1946, due to the intransigence of the Congress on the one hand and with the breach of faith with the Muslims by the British Government on the other; and whereas Muslim India has exhausted without success all efforts to find a peaceful solution of the Indian problems by compromise and constitutional means; whereas the Congress is bent upon setting up a caste Hindu Raj in India with the connivance of the British; and whereas recent events have shown that power politics and not justice and fair play are the deciding factors in Indian affairs; whereas it has become abundantly clear that the Muslims of India would not sit content with anything less than the immediate establishment of an independent and full sovereign State of Pakistan and would resist any attempt to impose any constitution, long terms or short term, of the setting up of an Indian Government at the Centre without the approval and consent of the Muslim League, the Council of the All-India Muslim League is convinced that the time has now come for the Muslim Nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan and assert their just rights and to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present slavery under the British and the contemplated future of caste Hindu domination.

“The Council calls upon the Muslim nation to stand as a man behind their sole representative organisation, the All-India Muslim League and be ready for every sacrifice.”

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAMME

The Programme of Direct Action Day was published in the STAR OF INDIA on 13.08.46 :-

STAR OF INDIA- 13. 08. 46

The Secretary of the Calcutta District Muslim League notifies :-

The All India Direct Action Day, declared by the All India Muslim League, will be directly observed in Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly, Metiaburz, 24 Parganas mill areas under the direction of the Calcutta District Muslim League.

The programme for the Day is as under :-

Complete hartal and general strike in all spheres of civic, commercial and industrial life save and except the essential services of water works, hospitals, physicians' clinics, maternity centres, light, electricity, gas and postal services.

Processions, “Kafelas” and “Akharas” with music bands and Tabaljungs will start from all Mahallas in Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly, Metiabruz and 24-Parganas and coverage at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument (present ‘Shaheed Minar’) between 3 and 6-30 P. M.

Joint mass rally and meeting of Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly, Metiabruz and 24-Parganas will be held at foot of the Ochterlony (present ‘Shaheed Minar’) Monument from 3 PM on Friday the 16th August. Hon’ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy leader, Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Party and Prime Minister, Bengal has consented to preside.

Representatives of Minority suppressed and oppressed people and anti-Fascist parties who have been unjustly by-passed by the British Government and who are ready to make common cause with the League in its fight for the equal freedom of Muslims, the Hindus, the Scheduled castes, the Adivasis, the Tribals, the Christians and other peoples are welcome in the meeting.

Every Ward and Branch League must prepare a complete list of mosques in its area, depute three workers in every mosque on Friday, the 16th August to explain the new policy and action plan of the League before JUMA prayers and to report to the District League

about this arrangement. A manifesto on the Subject has been specially published and is available from 8, Zakaria Street, Calcutta.

Special Manajat (Prayer) should be offered in every mosque on Friday after Juma prayers for the freedom of Muslim India, the Islamic world and the peoples of India and the East in general. The “Munajat” has been printed and published and is available from 8, Zakaria Street, Calcutta.

I appeal to the Musalmans of Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly, Matiabruz and 24-Parganas to rise to the occasions and make the rally a unique success. We are in midst of the rainy season and the month of Ramzan fasting. But this is a month of real Jihad of God’s grace and blessings, spiritual armament and the moral and physical purge of the Nation. It is a supreme occasion of our trial. Let Muslims brave the rains and all difficulties and make the Direct Action Day meeting a historic mass mobilization of the Millat.

Muslims must remember that it was in Ramzan that the Quran was revealed. It was in Ramzan that Battle of Badr⁹, the first open conflict between Islam and Heathenism was fought and won by 313 Muslims and again it was in Ramzan that 10,000 Muslims under the Holy Prophet conquered Mecca¹⁰ and established the Kingdom of Heaven and the Commonwealth of Islam in Arabia. The Muslim League is fortunate that it is starting its action in this holy month.

CALL FOR TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF HINDUS
Secret Circular Issued Among The Muslims

1. All Muslims of India should die for Pakistan.
2. With Pakistan established whole of India should be conquered.
3. All people of India should be converted to Islam.
4. All Muslim kingdoms should join hands with the Anglo-American exploitation of the whole world.
5. One Muslim should get the right of five Hindus, i.e. each Muslim is equal to five Hindus.
6. Until Pakistan and Indian Empire is established, the following steps should be taken :-
 - (a) All factories and shops owned by Hindus should be burnt, destroyed, looted and loot should be given to League Office.
 - (b) All Muslim Leaguers should carry weapons in defiance of order.

- (c) All nationalist Muslims if they do not join League must be killed by secret Gestapo.
- (d) Hindus should be murdered gradually and their population should be reduced.
- (e) All temples should be destroyed.
- (f) Muslim League spies in every village and district of India.
- (g) Congress Leaders should be murdered, one in one month by secret method.
- (h) Congress upper offices should be destroyed by secret Muslim Gestapo, single person doing the job.
- (i) Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Goa, Vizagapatam should be paralysed by December 1946 by Muslim League volunteers.
- (j) Muslim should never be allowed to work under Hindus in Army, Navy, Government services or private firms.
- (k) Muslim should sabotage whole of India and Congress Government for the final invasion of India by Muslims.
- (l) Financial resources are given by Muslim League. Invasion of India by Nizam communist, few Europeans, Khoja by Bhopal, few Anglo-Indians, few Parsis, few Christians, Punjab, Sind and Bengal will be places of manufacture of all arms, weapons for Muslim Leaguers invasion and establishing of Muslim Empire of India.
- (m) All arms, weapons should be distributed to Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Lahore, Karachi, branches of Muslim League.
- (n) All sections of Muslim League should carry minimum equipment of weapons, at least pocket knife at all times to destroy Hindus and drive all Hindus out of India.
- (o) All transport should be used for battle against Hindus.
- (p) **Hindu women and girls should be raped, kidnapped and converted into Muslims from October 18, 1946.**
- (q) Hindu culture should be destroyed.
- (r) All Leaguers should try to be cruel at all times to Hindus and boycott them socially, economically and in many other ways.
- (s) No Muslim should buy from Hindu dealers. All Hindu produced films should be boycotted. All Muslim Leaguers should obey these instructions and bring into action by September 15, 1946

[Taken from : Stern Reckoning—G.D.Khosla,
Oxford University Press, N.D.—110001]

CHAPTER—IV

HOW COMES 16TH AUGUST : LOOT, MURDER, ARSON, RAPE, ABDUCTION AND CONVERSION

Even before the Direct Action resolution was passed on 29th July 1946 in Bombay Conference of All Indian Muslim League under the stewardship of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Bengal Muslim leaders were sharpening their weapons for *Jihad* in Bengal. Abul Hashim, Bengal Muslim League leader, had declared at a date quite prior to 29th July 1946, that,

*'Where justice and equity failed, shining steel would decide the issue.'*¹

Nazimuddin, the ex-Prime Minister of Bengal (Muslim League) stated, that,

*'There are 150 different ways to cause trouble particularly as the Muslim League is not restricted to non-violence'*²

The Prime Minister of Bengal, H.S. Suhrawardy expressed to the journalists in Delhi, well before a week of 29th July, 1946, that,

*'he considered it would be difficult to control the disturbances at Calcutta if something like a Direct Action Day is observed.'*³

Well before the 16th August, 1946, on 4th August 1946 an well schemed meeting was held at Calcutta wherein Mahalla Sadars (local Muslim leaders), Muslim trade union leaders and activists, and others congregated to plan how and in what manner the impending Direct Action Day would be executed.⁴

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1. Abul Hashim's speech in the Legislators' Convention, New Delhi, 10 April, 1946. reported in Star of India.
 2. Military Report p.1, para 4 as quoted by Suranjan Das, Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947, Oxford University Press, 1993
 3. Suranjan Das, Communal Riots in Bengal, Oxford University Press, 1993, p/177
 4. *ibid.*

In accordance to such schematic approach, it was seen before one week of 16th August 1946, that League had already instructed the

inmates of all Muslim hostels, how they would act on 16th August, 1946. How they would have knives, kerosene oil, methylated spirit etc.

And how they would set tram cars and military vehicles ablazed having taken strategic position on 16th August, 1946.⁵

Habib-ur-Rahman was a Leaguer, he had turned to be a Congressman and revealed in public such circulars that,

even advocated measures to anaminate nationalist Muslims (read non-leaguers) and Congressmen, if necessary.⁶

The Pakistan Ambulance Corps (as if Pakistan was already established before 16th August 1946!) was mobilised, a First Aid Centre was established near the Monument where a few days after, on 16th August 1946, the Jihad rally would be organised.⁷

League Volunteers were placed in the city's major hospitals. Why? Obviously to attend Muslims injured, if any. It shows, well before 16th August, preparation was elaborately made for massacre in Calcutta on 16th August, 1946.⁸

THREE IMPORTANT AND ALARMING STATEMENTS

1. Mr. Jinnah on two-nation theory :

“We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by definition or test of a nation. We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature, art and architecture, customs, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions. In short, we have our distinctive outlook on life and of life.”⁹

2. Mr. Suhrawardy on bloody politics for achieving Pakistan :

“Bloodshed and disorder are not necessary evil in themselves, if resorted to for a noble cause. Among Muslims today, no cause is dearer or nobler than Pakistan,”¹⁰

5. *ibid*

6. *ibid*

7. *ibid*

8. *ibid*

9. Jinnah-Gandhi Talks, 17 Sept. 1944

10. Suhrawardy, in an article in the Statesman, Calcutta, 5 August, 1946.

3. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan foretold the future of Hindus in Pakistan :

“How can you talk like this? You have been long enough in Western Punjab to know the Muslims there. Surely you can see that Pakistan would be an imitation to them to cut the throat of every Hindu Bania—Pakistan would mean a massacre.”¹¹

JINNAH’S STATEMENT

“What we have done today (the day when the League Council passed the Direct Action resolution) is the heroic act in our history. Never have we...done anything except...by constitutionalism. But now...we bid goodbye to constitutional methods.”

“Now the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to direct action. I am not prepared to discuss ethics. We have a pistol and are in a position to use it.”

“Jinnah said he did not restrict Direct Action to non-violence, we have also forged a pistol that is non-violent. We mean every word of it. We do not believe in equivocation.”

MUSLIMS KNOW WHAT IS DIRECT ACTION

Mr. Nazimuddin, ex-CM. of Bengal and one of the most prominent members of the Muslim League said in course of a speech :

“There are a hundred and one ways in which we can create difficulties, specially when we are not restricted to non-violence. The Muslim population of Bengal know very well what “Direct Action” would mean and so we need not bother to give them any lead.”¹²

Mr. Gazdar (President, Sind Muslim League)—“But I regret that certain top-ranking Congress leaders are out to make the earliest opportunity to crush the League by turning British guns and police bayonets on Muslims. I warn them that they will have to pay for Muslim lives thus lost by Hindu Blood with compound interest.”¹³

DIRECTION : HOW MILITANT SLOGANS TO BE RAISED AT MAIDAN MEETING

“The slogan should be — To the Maidan ; To the Maidan ; To the Maidan ; Brethren of Islam ! Please explain this circular to the people of your elaka, mohalla, in mosques, schools, colleges, clubs, tea-stalls and hostels. Ask them to awake, arise and unite under the banner of Muslim League and make this

11. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan to Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit.

12. Azad, Morning News, 11 August, 1946

13. *ibid*, 12 August, 1946

hartal a success. Assemble at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument in procession with the accompaniment of bands at 3 p. m. Lead the procession in such strength and enthusiasm that even the blind, deaf and dumb can appreciate their strength and determination.”

FANATIC PROPAGANDA ON ZIHAD LINE

“On 4th August 1946, a rally of 400 of the Muslim National Guards was held in the compound of the Calcutta Madrassa..... They urged the audience to get ready to make sacrifice for the achievement of Pakistan. (Suhrawardy was present in the meeting).”

“A meeting of 500 Muslims was held at the maidan on the night of the 4th-5th August 1946.Direct Action was described by the speakers as a revolution against the British and the Hindus.”

SOME EDITORIALS

In the editorial headed “Direct Action” the Asre Jadid (Urdu newspaper) dated the 1st of August 1946, refers to the decision of the Muslim League to resort to Direct Action and remarks “these Britishers who do not exercise their votes in the Constituent Assembly Election are responsible for the present state of affairs.”

It commends the Europeans for appeasing the Congress and conspiring by putting Hindus against Muslim interests... “Direct Action should be taken against them. To the Muslims Direct Action means a fight and a fight implies violence. Direct Action may not be civil disobedience but will be in the nature of revolt.”¹⁴

ABUL HASIM’S STATEMENT

“Abul Hasim, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, remarked that it was in the fitness of things that the Muslims had bidden adieu to constitutionalism and negotiations. They had declared war against British Imperialism and so on.”¹⁵

“There are many instances of British ingratitude to the Muslims and hence the decision of the British to hand over power to Congress is not surprising.”¹⁶. It condemns British imperialism for their alliance with the worst enemies of the Muslim, namely, the Congress and observes that “if the Muslim nation is not yet dead, *they will not allow the Pandit and the Bania Government to go*”

14. Asre Jadid, Urdu Newspaper, Calcutta, 1 August, 1946

15. Police Report Quoting Abul Hasim’s statement.

16. Asre Jadid

on even for a moment. Government of Pandit Nehru will be the forerunner of a great bloodshed in the country creating a storm which will sweep off not only the British but also the high caste Hindus. The entire responsibility for this bloodshed would rest with British-Bania conspiracy. Muslims should prepare now to fight for their rights at the cost of their lives.*"¹⁷

RAMZAN IS THE MONTH OF ZEHAD

"In this holy month of Ramadan, Mecca was conquered from the infidels and in this month again a Jihad (Crusade) for the establishment of Pakistan has been declared. It has been directed by the All India Muslim League Council at its Bombay session that Jumma, the 18th Ramadan 1365, Hijri, i.e. the 16th August, 1946, will be observed as a day for All-India Hartal. Let the blind see, the deaf hear and the dumb speak out that the Muslims are living nation and will not rest till freedom is achieved."¹⁸

"Muslims, unite under the Banner of the League. Let this circular be explained to Muslims in every mosque on Friday (16th August 1946) and everybody be directed to assemble at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument in their tens and thousands at 3 p. m. on that date. The assemblage by its vastness and grandeur must proclaim to the world at large that the Muslims are awake, that they are brave people and that they are determined to secure their freedom."

KAFIRS WERE FINISHED-OFF IN THE MONTH OF RAMZAN

"Brethren of Islam, let it be remembered that in this holy month of Ramadan, the Holy Koran revealed itself, and Ummat Mohammed appeared as the Prophet. In this month, the Kaffirs (non-believers) were annihilated in the great battle of Badr and Mecca was wrested from their hands. The holy Koran was freed from the hands of the infidels and the foundation of Islam was laid. It is by the grace of God that the All India Muslim League has selected this very month during which the holy Koran revealed itself. Mecca was conquered and the battle of Badr was won, for a crusade for the establishment of Pakistan and has resolved that 16th of the August should be observed as an All India Hartal day. This will be direct Action Day and will be the signal for the beginning of All India fight for the establishment of Pakistan.

* italics ours

17. Asre Jadid

18. English translation of the Urdu pamphlet issued by the Calcutta District Muslim League Secretary, S.M.Usman.

Explain the importance of the two resolutions of the All India Muslim League Council which were adopted at its Bombay session on the 29th July, so that men and women, the aged and the young, adult and children all may make themselves ready for the supreme sacrifice to be offered in a crusade for the attainment of Pakistan. Let them exhibit by their action that they are ready to sacrifice themselves like the great martyrs Serajddoulla, Syed Ahmed Bareilavi, Tipu Sultan and that they are all prepared to be annihilated rather than be slaves of the British and the Hindus, and that they will not rest until India is freed from British domination and the Brahmin-Bania grip.”¹⁹

Asre-Jadid excited the Muslims, in its editorials, to win their rights by force and jihad, Leaflet, in the name of S.M.Osman, the Mayor of Calcutta, was widely circulated stating :

‘We are starting a Jihad in Your (Allah) name... We promise before You that we entirely depend on You. Make us victorious over the Kafirs (read Hindus), enable us to establish the Kingdom of Islam in India’ (the Leaflet was titled ‘*Munajat For the Jihad*’)²⁰

Another pamphlet warned the kafirs bearing a picture of Jinnah having a dagger in his hand,

Oh! Kafirs, your doom is not far and the general massacre will come. We shall show our glory... and shall have extraordinary victory.²¹

Qaumi-jang-ka-table-Baj Aaya (The drum announcing the national war has been clarioned) called for,

Opening training centres at all places for the Muslim Youths and wait for Qaide-Azam’s orders’.²²

Another Leaflet, largely distributed, urged Rivers of blood will flow, we shall have the swords in our hands and the noise of Zikr. Tomorrow (16th August) will be doom’s day.²³

On the other hand, Hindu Mahasabha pamphlet issued on 16th August, 1946, though firm, had a distinct tune, not soaked with communalism. It urged all not to succumb to forced hartal. It stated,

‘Hindus to give a clear answer to this act of effrontery. It is the duty of every Hindu to carry on as usual his normal occupation. The

19. Leaflet widely circulated by Muslim League Organisation a few days before 16th August, 1946.

20. Quoted in G.D.Khosla, *Stern Reckoning! a Survey of the events before and following the partition of India (Delhi, 1952), P.55.*

21. S.Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal*, p.213

22. Quoted by Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947*, OUP, 1993, p.168

23. -Do-, p.168

Hindus must make organised efforts to see that no Hindu, non-Muslim or non-League Muslim is forced to join the hartal. We therefore request the public to continue on that day their normal work. They must not yield to any coercive measures. Remember that to join the hartal is to support the demand for Pakistan'²⁴

The Bengal Provincial Hindu Students' Federation also was of the opinion—
‘the Hindus must make organised efforts to see that... (none) is forced to join the hartal (on 16th August)... Remember that to join the hartal is to support the demand for Pakistan’²⁵

The Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee responded to the situation urging in line with national stand of Congress, that did not formally agreed, upto that time and about nine months following, to partition of the nation. The BPCC issued circulars to all District Committees opposing to the hartal on 16th August, 1946 as that was directed not to the freedom of the nation, rather that would divide the nation on worst communal line.²⁶

COMES THE DAYS FOR JIHAD

“The call to the revolt comes to us from the Quaid-e-Azam of the Muslim leaders. Brave, this is what we want. This is the policy for the nation of heroes. For so long we have been acting like beggars. We are glad from the core of our hearts to hear this magnificent news. This is what we have been eagerly waiting. God has granted to the Muslims in the month of Ramzan what they have been clamouring for. The day for an open fight which is the greatest desire of the Muslim nation has arrived.”²⁷

THE SLOGANS TO BE RAISED

(1) *Larke Lenge Pakistan*

(2) *Marke Lenge Pakistan*

(3) *Sala Hindu Lok ko Mar dalo*^{27a}

24. Political Notes on the causes of the Calcutta Disturbances, August 1946, p.20, Quoted in Suranjan Das's *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947*.

25. *Star of India*, 21st September, 1946. Quoted in above.

26. PNC, pp 8 & 20. Quoted in above 29

27. Leaflet issued by frontal organisation of Muslim League.

27a. *ibid*

MARCH TO MAIDAN !

“Muslims unite under the Banner of the League. Let this circular be explained to Muslims in every mosque on Friday (16th August 1946) and every body be directed to assemble at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument in their tens and thousands at 3 p. m. on that date. The assemblage by its vastness and grandeur must proclaim to the world at large that the Muslims are awake, that they are brave people and that they are determined to secure their freedom. Let the blind see, the deaf hear and the dumb speak out that the Muslims are a living nation and will not rest till freedom is achieved.”²⁸

KAFIRS' (HINDUS) DAYS ARE NUMBERED

“Oh Kafir, your doom is not far and the general massacre will come. We shall show our Glory. Will have a speical victory.”²⁹

CLARION CALL TO WHOM?

“The day for an open fight which is the great desire of the Muslim nation has arrived.

Come those who are simple, wanting in peace of mind and who are in distress. Come those who want to rise to heaven. By fighting you will go to heaven in this holy war.

Those who are thieves, goondas, those without the strength of character and those who do not say their prayers—all come. The Shining Gates of Heaven have been opened. Let us enter by thousands. Let us all cry out victory to Pakistan, victory to the Muslim nation and victory to the army which has declared a ‘Jehad’.”³⁰

THE PREPARATION SCENE

1. In Razabazar Muslim youths were found sharpening weapons.
2. In Lalabagan bustee youths found sharpening daggers and Knives on 15th.
3. A number of houses in Dharmatolla St. were reserved for goondas.
4. On a search in Belgachia area, a large number of swords, lathis and daggers were recovered (after the riot).

28. Leaflets, pamphlets, innumerable, were so circulated, read-out, propagated on streets and Masjid areas indays between 1st August to 14th August, 1946.

29. *ibid*, as one of those.

30. *ibid*, as one of those.

5. In Kidderpore area a large number of swords and daggers were recovered (after the riot).
6. Muslim shops were marked ‘Pakistan’.
7. League people in the lorry used swords, knives, daggers and lathis.
8. Instruction had been issued to several Muslim hostels to make preparation to set fire to tram cars and military lorries on the 16th.
9. During 16th–18th or 19th August, Muslim lorries with lathis and weapons and brickbats were found in Barrackpur Trunk Road. Weapons were stored in 8, Zakaria Street and Nakhoda Mosque.
10. All the railings which were surrounding the Ripon Square had been uprooted and turned into sharp weapons.
11. Muslims goondas found sharpening weapons on 15th in Belgachia.
12. On 16th August and on next days Jihadis pressed on roads many trucks to carry rioters.
13. Prime Minister Suhrawardy of united Bengal and Mr. Osman, Mayor, Calcutta issued coupons for petrol lavishly to organise Jihadis from 15th to 18th August 1946 though petrol was rationed then.³¹

FOREWARNING BY POLICE OFFICERS WERE IGNORED

1. “It is rumoured that procession from different Muslim localities are likely to come out tomorrow armed with lathis etc. They will proceed towards the Monument where a mass meeting will be held. There is likelihood of breach of peace on that date” (SI. D. Mullick of Entally P. S. to AC. A. M. Gupta).

2. “There is apprehension of trouble on the 16th August, as the Muslim League followers will bring pressure on Hindu’ Shop Keepers and labours to join the demonstration in observance of the 16th August. As regards tomorrow’s hartal, Hindu-Muslim clashes and breach of peace is apprehended”. (SI. Shakrul Hosain, O. C., Beliaghata P. S.)

3. “There is apprehension of trouble tomorrow, 16th August.” (SI. Kabir Chowdhury, O. C., Manicktolla P. S.)

4. “—There is apprehension of breach of peace if Hindu shops are kept open on the 16th August, 1946.” (SI. Abanai Ch. Roy, Chitpore P.S.)

31. Part of revealed facts as per Calcutta Disturbances Commission of Enquiry, 14 Oct. 1946 to 14 Nov 1946, Vol-I

**A Few Hour-Wise Reports On
Murder, Assault And Loot On 16th August 1946**

(Not Exhaustive)

Stabbing commenced at 4-30 a.m.

Between 6-30 and 7-30 a.m. large number of armed persons gathered at Maniktala area.

- 7-00 a.m. : Rioting broken out at Maniktala Bazar.
- 7-30 a.m. : Sergent E. Williams of Lalbazar Telephone Office reported that he was escorting lady operators in a police truck along Central Avenue and the same lorry was obstructed by Muslim youths.
- 7-35 a.m. : There were communal clashes at the crossing of C.R. Avenue and Beadon Street crossing. At the junction of Bowbazar St. and Lower Circular Road (Sealdah junction) large crowds of Muslims armed with lathis and iron rods had assembled.
- 8-25 a.m. : Terretti Bazar—fighting going on.
- 8-30 a.m. : Communal clash started before City Cinema in Lower Chitpur Road.
- 8-32 a.m. : Fighting between Hindus and Muhammedans in Lower Chitput Road.
- 9-00 a.m. : Situation in Sealdah was very grave.
- 9-05 a.m. : Disturbances going on in Wards Institution Street.
- 9-12 a.m. : Stabbing going on in Ripon Street, Wellesly Street and Mullick Bazar.
- 9-15 a.m. : There were various messages of riots from various other quarters. Between 9-15 and 9-30 the Control (room) received messages in quick succession and from all over Calcutta from Shambazar on the one side and Watgunge on the other.
- 9-30 a.m. : Burtolla Police Station was in fact attacked by Muslim mob, and Burtolla was shouting for armed police force from Lalbazar.
- 9-55 a.m. : Repeat of the same message from Burtolla P.S.
- 10-10 a.m. : Thousands of Hindus and Muhammedans fighting in Dum Dum Road and Muslims starting fire.

- 10-12 a.m. : It is reported that at Garpar, Jugipara Lane—that is Canal area in North Calcutta-east of Upper Circular Road—disturbances going on.
- 10-30 a.m. : Trouble in Harrison Road—fighting going on before Rippon College (now Surendranath College)
- 10-30 a.m. : Information received that Muslims of Maniktola and Narkeldanga had stabbed some of the Hindus and looted Hindu shops.
- 11-05 a.m. : Riot ensued savagely in front of Rippon College and its vicinity.
- 11-08 a.m. : Special Branch officer reported that fire was set on Kamala Bastralaya at 2/2 Vivekananda Road.
- 11-50 a.m. : Informed that situation of Harrison Road, Central Avenue, Vivekananda Road, College Street, Cornwallis street, Mechuabazar Street, Tarachand Datta Street, Zakaria Street and Chitpur Road was tense—arson, murder, looting and rioting taking place in these places—rioters for outnumbered the police force and were all armed with dangerous weapons.
- At Mirzapur St. junction (Upper Circular Road) the road was filled with excited Muslims, mostly armed. A little to the north of Sealdah crossing there was rioting in progress. Between 8 and 8-30 on Circular Road near Science College and near corner of Vivekananda Road, brick-battling was in progress.
- Rai Sahib B.C.De wrote a letter to the Police Commissioner that his house had been broken into.
- Mr. Banerjee, a Judge of Dharmatolla was killed while protecting a little boy.
- 11-50 a.m. : A large turbulent procession of Muslim rioters proceeded, while looting indiscriminately, from Sealdah to Bowbazar. Another procession of same nature engaged in the same type of nefarious acts proceeded towards Maidan from Upper Circular Road. Another gang of riateers with naked swords and lathis advanced upto Hatibagan from Shyambazar.
- 1-30 p.m. : Fire set on Hindu houses at Sasthitala; five corps of Hindus found on Narkeldanga Main Road.

- 3-00 p.m. : Massacre happened at Garpar area. Hindus are slaughtered on the western side of the canal. Arson was largely committed.
- Large crowd of Muslims gathered at Maidan near the monument. Ruffians and goons largely attended the gathering. They slipped off from the meeting and got involved in arson, looting and murderous assaults even before the meeting was ended. It was confirmed by intelligence report of the armed forces.
- 4-05 p.m. : Shops around Light House Cinema Hall were stormed, looted.
- 4-20 p.m. : Muslims, in organised gangs, stormed Bengal Club.
- 4-30 p.m. : Armoury shop of K.C.Biswas, near Metro Cinema, was bursted by Muslims and all guns and other weapons were looted.
- 4-42 p.m. : The renowned shop-store 'Kamalalaya' at Dharmatala Street was plundered.
- 5-10 p.m. : In areas around Dharmatala pillaging and murders raged. Chadni Chowk Bazar looted by Muslim rioters. Armed marauding Muslim goons rushed out from Bustee areas of Indra Roy Road.
- The junction of Mirzapur st. and Upper Circular Road witnessed large gathering of agitated Muslims.
- Sen & law Company's shop and Bata Shoe company's shop at Wellesly Street was looted. Hindus murdered in Wheat Factory at 8, Tarachand Dutta Street.
- The large Cycle shop of Laxmikanta Das at 152, Lower Circular Road gutted and pillaged. Many houses of Hindus at Raja Dinendra Street have been burnt down.³²

Further to this, other reports reveal :

13. We got reports from Fulbagan area under PS Entally that passers-by were being molested, robbed of their purses, specks, and other valuables in their possession by Moslem hooligans of the locality who were shouting Pakistan Kaem Ho Chuka... by 11 O'clock (sic) in the morning the whole of Dhurmatollah Street and Circular Road from Rajabazar... Moulali seemed to have been completely under the sway of the Moslem goondas.³³

32. Revealed by CDCE, 1946

33. Report of the Bengal Congress Committee, AICC Papers, File No. G-53, p/81

14. By 7-30 in the morning barricades of dustbins tied to iron rods had been erected to block Tala and Belgachia Bridges. Efforts to barricade Vivekananda Road and Central Avenue were afoot, and one person had been killed and seven wounded in the fracas that ensued there. Around the same time Bowbazar, Dharmatalla, Lower Circular Road witnessed large procession. Around 8-45 in the morning communal clashes in China Town and Vivekananda Road were reported, and by 8-50 a.m. there were reports of ‘Chokras’ and ‘Goondas’ collecting at Russa Road while a Muslim mob was reported to be collecting at Tolly village and was looking ominous.³⁴ At 10 a.m. increasing reports of violence on the part of angry Muslim groups from various locations began to come. Muslim League volunteers were seen pulling people off cycles, they were also obstructing the delivery of essential goods—all the supplies of Macdonalds’ boarding house were tipped into the road.³⁵ At around 12 noon, Suhrawardy is reported to have gone to the Bowbazar street to pacify a predominantly Hindu crowd and was unsuccessful—his car windows were broken by a stone.³⁶ By 1-30 p.m. there was widespread rioting in the city, particularly in Central Avenue and Bowbazar districts.³⁷ By 3 p.m., there was already a pitched battle going on opposite Kalighat tram depot. and Russa Road where a Muslim procession was attacked by Hindu and Sikh crowds.³⁸
15. *At Howrah : 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.*
 ‘The Direct Action Day’—16th August 1946 was organised with the same fury in Howrah. Right at the morning between 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Shariff Khan, leader of Howrah Muslim League and MLA, led a virulent mob at Salkia, Shibpur, Panchanantala, Kalibabu’s Bazar and surrounding areas. Some Hindus had opened their shops as usual. Those were forced to shut down.³⁹ Since the morning frenzied Muslims, with lathis and other weapons moved on the town enforcing *Hartal*. Those who attended Howrah Maidan meeting returned, forced closure of shops on G.T.Road and Hindu residents at Rameshwar Malia Lane protested. Another large column of Muslims arrived on the scene from Shibpur, looted two shops and rioting began.⁴⁰

34. Diary of Events of Eastern Command Intelligence Centre.

35. *ibid*

36. *ibid*

37. *ibid*

38. *ibid*

39. AICC Papers, p/112-113, F.No. G-53.

40. Calcutta Disturbances Enquiring Commission (will be marked as CDEC henceforth), Govt. of Bengal, West Bengal State archives, file no. 398/46

16. Howrah : On 17th August, 1946, fire was set on fifteen boats at Bichali Ghat. Those were laden with straw. The boatmen attacked by Muslim rioters, lost lives. The number was high.⁴¹ The Hindus, as per Howrah District Magistrate's report could organise themselves for counter action on 18th August 1946, but the Commissioner of Burdwan, commenting on the same report on D.M.Howrah, contradicted report and asserted that on 18th August 1946, it was the Muslims, not the Hindus who were engaged in the looting and killings. On that day the number of clashes, looting and killing were reported as 15, 40 and 14 respectively.⁴² The Commissioner further kept on record, 'even on the 19th, the Hindu attack on the Muslim *bustee* at Olabibitola was preceeded by the determined attack of 200 Muslims armed with bows, catapults with iron balls etc., who attacked the Municipal ambulance car upon which one of the armed guards had to fire in self defence.'⁴³
17. Howrah : On 19th August 1946, Hindus, so attacked, looted and killed by three days, 16th -18th August, 1946, retaliated and in the ensuing clashes in the areas mentioned, left 10 dead, 20 injured and many houses looted. On 20th August, 1946, the situation improved, 10 deaths were reported on that day though.
18. Howrah : Riot at Railway Yard and Ferry Yard :
 Reports of riots in the nearby areas under Railway authorities were also recorded. As per Howrah D.M.'s report, the Muslim League volunteers tried to disrupt the train services on 16th August, 1946. On the next day the 17th August, Hindus of up-country men and Punjabi's retaliated. Clashes continued on 18th August 1946, between up-country Hindumen', principally, and the East Bengal Muslim Khalasis by the side of Ferry Yard, B.N.Railway while clashes and looting also went on between the groups of the same two communities at Shalimar Marine Workshop. All the marine barracks thus were looted.⁴⁴
- The D.M. Howrah had opined that the attacks and riots by the Muslims were not preplanned. He was of the opinion that he did not find 'evidence for regular plan of action or pre-arrangement on either side.'⁴⁵ But the Commissioner, Burdwan overruled his contention basing on the reports from the Superintendent of Police, which reported that riot at some

41. Howrah D.M.'s report, CDEC.

42. Burdwan Division Commissioner's comment on Howrah D.M.'s report, CDEC

43. *ibid*

44. D.M.'s (Howrah) report, CDEC.

45. *ibid*

areas happened when Lorry-loads of Muslims were brought there for the purpose and the raid on the floating boats couldn't have happened at the same time without premeditated plan.⁴⁶ Commissioner of Burdwan, the superior authority on D.M. Howrah, spoke plainly on factual reports.

19. At Metiaburz, Kidderpore :

Riots expressed its monstrous face at Metiaburz, Kidderpore areas. The bustees in those areas were wiped off. The lowest available estimate of killings stand to 600 alone there. Kesoram Mills of Birlas had a labour contingent of 500 Orissi labourers. Almost all of them were butchered by the Muslims and situation was so frightening that Biswanath Das, the Ex-Prime Minister, Orissa, had to come to Calcutta to see by himself what was the extent of massacre there.

20. At Ballyganj : South Calcutta :

Ballyganj of the South Calcutta area, also experienced gruesome tales of Muslim League–Bengal Government engineered riot. On 20th August 1946, report emanated from Fort William that about four dead bodies were struck in the Ballyganj Sewage pumping station. Mr. Keating, personnel assistant to Chief Engineer, W&B Deptt. was given charge to dragout the bodies and he worked from 21st August to 24th August 1946 with a group of *Doms* and dragged out 110 dead bodies from 14 to 200 feet inside level of the sewage caves.

21. At Mominpur Area : South-West Calcutta :

In the same way, about 20 bodies were dragged out from Mominpur Pumping Station. Both those incidents exhibit what a diabolic reign was let loose in Calcutta by Muslim League–British Government.⁴⁴

22. At Gariahat Market, situated at South Calcutta area, traders that came in the market with goods on 16th August 1946, could not go back to their houses and had to stay there for the night, when they fell under the knives and swords of Muslim Leaguers. Most of them were killed, money or goods belonging to them were looted.⁴⁵

23. In Park Circus area, states one reminiscences, '(our) arriving too late in a car along with two other comrades to rescue a communist doctor and his family in Park Circus. He was middle aged and had set up a people's clinic to provide cheap medical service to the poor in the locality who were Muslims. It was they who killed him and his son and later his wife

46. Burdwan Commissioner's report on D.M.'s (Howrah) report. *ibid*.

44. Health and Local Self Government, Action taken, file no 351/46, part. B.IX.

45. Monikuntala Sen, *Danga, Deshabhag, Swadhinata* p/44. (Smt. Sen was a prominent CPI Leader).

and daughter after gang-raping them... what still makes me shudder is remembering how communal or, I suppose, any fanaticism makes human beings do such ghostly deeds and then go about living their lives without too much or any remorse.⁴⁶

The real problem with the *communists* is : while they themselves have ever been remained bogged with political-communalist mind-set, they have never understood what Islam is in the context of Indian social life.

24. Another observation :

‘As we entered the town further ghastly sights of violence met our eyes, dead bodies lay strewn everywhere. I clearly saw the body of a person lying on the marble steps of the porch of a house, his heads was neatly severed from his body and lying a few feet away. I saw a Sikh clad only in shirt and shorts, without his turban, being chased by a man with an unsheathed sword, panting after him like an animal after its quarry.’⁴⁷

MURDERS AND LOOTING AT CANNING STREET

At 55, Canning St. an aluminium shop was looted, saw several hundred people going away with various articles looted from shops of Hindus. Picked up 6 dead and 7 injured persons, mostly Hindus from Canning St. area.

LOOTING AT AND AROUND WELLESLEY AREA

Marquis St., Elliot Rd., Royd St. are all badly affected areas.

Mass looting by Muslim crowd continued on Corporation St. and Wellesly St.

AT DHARMATALA

Khan Sahib Khalilur Rahman, D. C. North, reports “chaos and disorders going on in Dhurumtolla St., Wellesly St., Market St., Corporation St. and Free School St. Local Police had been simply overpowered. Shops are being looted and murders and assaults are being continued. It is difficult to control the situation unless military is requisitioned.”⁴⁸

BENGAL GOVERNMENT AND CALCUTTA CORPORATION LED BY MUSLIM LEAGUE ASSIST LIBERALLY THE ZEHADIS

On 16th and dates thereafter, a large number of lorries and private cars brought into service by the muslims.

46. The Journey of An Indian Communist, Mohit Sen (Sen, CPI theoretician)

47. Husseyn Saheed Suhrawardy : A Biography, by Shaista Ikramullah, (Suhrawardy’s niece) Karachi, 1991, p/53

48. CDEC, Govt. of Bengal, West Bengal State Archives

Mr. Osman, Mayor of Calcutta and the Chief Minister issued special coupons for Muslim League goondas for work from 15th-18th August. A very large number of these coupons issued in the name of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, used for the purpose of obtaining petrol during 15th-18th. These lorries used for the purpose of looting and carrying Muslim League Volunteers.⁴⁹

Mr. Osman, the Mayor, utilised his position to get corporation lorries to carry League Volunteers.

Mr. Ispahani, one of the Agents of Grain Procurement, supplied lorries to carry League Volunteers on the 16th at 10 a. m. Muslims with League flags hoisted in cars and lorries were demanding petrol on special coupons issued by the Chief Minister. Then the petrol pump was damaged, proprietor was attacked. Petrol pumps at Bowbazar, Central Avenue and Tarachand Dutt St. were looted.

RIOTS ON ROUTES RETURNING FROM MAIDAN MEETING

It was apprehended that a critical period might be on the conclusion of the meeting at the Ochterlony Monument. People went there armed with lathis and other weapons.

Before 3 p. m. which was the time of meeting, looting and murder had already commenced. On way to meeting shops in Dharmatolla were looted.

Fiery speeches were made by Suhrawardy, Osman and Nazimuddin at the meeting. Instead of trying to pacify the crowd, they have excited them, further to violence .

At about 16.00 hrs. a very large Muslim crowd, the largest ever seen in Calcutta, was present at the Ochterlony Monument. It included large number of Muslims who ran fast to rioting. Those slipped away and swelled by others after the meeting was finished, looted and burnt Hindu shops. At that time ferocious murder and looting was going on all along the street.

Ammunition shop of K. C. Biswas was looted immediately after the meeting in the presence of the police officers.

“YOU HAVE 24 HOUR’S TIME : DO WHATEVER YOU ARE CAPABLE OF” : SUHRAWARDY

Suhrawardy at the Ochterlony Monument on the 16th August 1946, told his audience that 24 hrs. time had been given to them to establish Pakistan.

Mr. Ispahani, a very staunch Muslim Leaguer, made inflammatory speech at the maidan.

49. ibid

MANIKTALA—ULTADANGA AREA DEVASTATED

Found a mob of about 1000 Hindus and Muslims fighting on Ultadanga Bridge and many fires blazing on the east side of the canal. Cleared the bridge and went over to the east side of the canal and was then informed that women and children were being murdered in the bustees by the local Muslims.

Premises Nos. 11 and 25 of Raja Dinendra Street were attacked by two thousand Muslims and burnt.

Telephone message from Subodh Roy of 244/C, Vivekananda Road (at the crossing of Raja Dinendra Street and Vivekananda Road) complaining that a crowd numbering 300 attacked his house. Telephone message from N. K. Malik of 39, Ultadanga Road informing that there was fire and disturbance at Daspara. Sarat Chandra Das and Bhuban Mohan Sodh living at 14/4, Uzir Chowdhury Road and 39, Ultadanga Main Road are said to be in danger and they want them to be removed.

About noon, arson, looting on an extensive scale was perpetrated by Muslims on Hindu dwellings and shops on the other side of the Maniktala Main Road between its junction with Upper Circular Road and the concrete bridge.

‘On 17th August 1946 at about 2-30 p. m. I was sent to Ultadanga and found about 50 to 60 huts burning and the whole place looted. These burning huts belonged to the Hindus and the Mohammadans who were to the North had set the same afire. I noticed a crowd of Mohammadans with blazing torches still setting fire to the other huts. On 18th August 1946... We were informed that people were looting some houses and also setting fire to them; we proceeded to the spot and found looters coming the house with loot.’⁵⁰

***HINDU BUSTEE GUTTED DOWN :
CHILDREN THROWN INTO THE FIRE***

‘I proceeded into Ultadanga Main Road with my patrol, the bustees on either side of the road were in flames with crowds of Muslims gathered around. I noticed a group applying a lighted torch to a shop room... I then cleared the mob down Ultadanga Road to their own locality and then returned to the burning bustees. There about 40 Hindu women, children and old men who had been too frightened to leave by the Muslim mob, were rescued from the fire and taken to the comparative safety of the west side of the canal. This whole bustee area was subsequently razed to the ground and these people would undoubtedly have been burnt to death. I was informed by the local Hindus that a number of children had been thrown into the fire.

One Subodh Chaudhuri of 37, Manicktalla Rd. reported looting of cloth shops by the Muslims. Telephone message received from Subodh Roy of Vivekananda Rd. that a crowd of 300 Muslims attacked his house..... from about noon, arson, looting on an extensive scale was perpetrated by Muslims in Hindu-dwelling house and junction with Upper Circular Road and the concrete bridge.

Hindu shops of all sorts on Vivekananda Road from 2-storied building (250, Vivekananda Road – a soap factory and 256 a moodi shop) and others to that point upto Upper Circular Road, all shops on the southern side of the footpath of the Vivekananda Road was looted and some were burnt, 37, Manicktalla Road was looted on 16th at 9-30 a. m. 260, Vivekananda Road – a kerosene shop was looted and burnt.⁵¹

Bad characters of Manicktalla-Bagmari area : Salim alias Salma, Ghausia, Abdus Haque, Ghulam Nabi, Kalimuddin Chaudhuri, Ishaque Sardar, Abu Jan.

***HOUSE OF DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER ATTACKED.
NARKELDANGA GARPAR AREA TURNED TO MASS OF RUINS***

21, Narkeldanga Main Rd. house of Rai Bahadur S. N. Mukherjee, Dy. Commissioner, Calcutta Police, was attacked. I received information from Goodman & Co. at 44/1, Canal East Rd. to the effect that they were being attacked at their workshop.

At about 1-30 p. m. Hindu houses at Sasthitolla near the junction of Muslim locality were set on fire. Three men were stabbed. Five men were found dead near Narkeldanga Main Road.

By 11 a. m. 16.08.46 Bipradas St. was invaded by crowd of Muslims armed with lathis, daggers, swords, soda water bottles and so on and shouting slogans like Allah-ho-Akbar and so on. There was a regular invasion on the Hindu locality in Bipradas St. by Mahommedans including the house of Mr. D. K. Das, a well-known advocate and a Flight Lieutenant in the Air Force during the war.⁵²

***RAJA DINENDRA STREET AREA AND
GARPAR AREA DEVASTATED***

Muslims collected on Raja Dinendra St. and Garpar area all armed with lathis and they are in a threatening attitude to attack the Hindus of the locality. Hindus had suffered gratefully on Narkeldanga Main Rd. including the house of

51. *ibid*

52. CDEC

Rai Bahadur S. N. Mukherjee situated on the east side of the railway line, opposite Mohunbagan bustee inhabited by Muslims.

The trouble to the east of the canal started fairly early on the 16th but it received certain amount of attention in the afternoon of the 16th when Rai Bahadur S. N. Mukherjee crossed over the border... But by time certain amount of attention was bestowed, the whole area had been devastated.

“A large Muslim crowd numbering over one thousand had collected on Narkeldanga area, and was trying to set fire to Hindu dwelling houses including my residence and my house was surrounded by a Muslim mob. (S. N. Mukherjee, D. C. North) ... between 11 and 12 noon (16. 8. 46) there was serious arson in Raja Dinendra St. and for which a crowd of two thousand Muslims were responsible; they were attacking Hindu houses and setting fire to Hindu dwelling houses on Raja Dinendra Street between 11 and 12 noon.

Important houses looted and gutted were No. 11 and 25, Raja Dinendra Street—at the crossing of Dinendra street and Garpar.”⁵³

VANDALISM CAMOUFLAGING UNDER RED CROSS FLAG

At about 8-30 p. m. 4 Muslims were brought to the District office under arrest. These 4 Muslims were challenged on Upper Circular Rd. near its Junction with the Mirzapur Street, by the Military while they were proceeding from South to the North, in a jeep No. BLB 7536 displaying the Red Cross flag without permission. The jeep also displayed Muslim League Flag; a dagger was found on the foothold of the jeep by the military and taken charge of. On further search of the jeep two big sized choppers were found in its side pocket.⁵⁴

VANDALISM FROM BUTCHER SLUM : HINDU IDOLS THROWN INTO GUTTERS

Kasai bustee in Sasthitala St. at the crossing of Narkeldanga and Sir Gurudas Rd. is a very big bustee.

Suhrawardy visited this bustee and the area around Narkeldanga Main Rd. and Maniktalla Main Rd. on 16th and 17th. In the morning (19. 8. 46) 4 Hindus and 1 Muslim were reported to have been stabbed at Narkeldanga area as a result of clash that took place due to the incident of one Rajab Ali, a local Muslim leader of Kasai bustee, Narkeldanga, was instigating the Muslims of that area.

53. ibid

54. ibid

Rajab Ali was the leader of the Muslim mob from Kasai bustee, which set fire to the two Hindu bustees in Sasthitala. Mohammedans of the locality defiled the Hindu idol of Shibalinga at 13/1, Shasthitala Rd.–they desecrated the idols Shitala Mata and Shiba and threw them into the drains.⁵⁵

***HINDUS MURDERED IN GAS STREET :
CORPSE THROWN IN DITCH***

At 11 a.m. on 17th Hindus on Gas St. were murdered in broad day light on the street itself and their corpses were thrown into the canal.

Muslim goondas brought out Hindus one by one from certain premises Nos. 2 and 3 Gas St. and so on and murdered them in the street and also in their rooms.⁵⁶

***HINDU CORPSES : AT MANY PLACES :
DAGGER, SWORD USED INDISCRIMINATELY***

Report at 8-25 a.m. “Indiscriminate stabbings are going on Gas St. and the crossing of Raja Dinendra St. One dead body of a Hindu was found lying on the footpath of Gas St. Another body was found on Belliaghata Main Rd. Three Hindu-looking dead bodies were found inside shops at 1, Narkeldanga Main Rd.

At about 3 p.m. there had already been horrible cases of massacre and burning in Garpar area just on the west of the canal. Swords were much in evidence as a weapon being used by rioters. There were some murders of Hindus near the railway bridge on Manicktalla Main Rd.⁵⁷

BELEGHATA CONTROLLED BY LEAGUE RUFFIANS

Received information (at 11-20 pm. on 18. 8. 46) that certain parties were gathering in the area of Chingrihatta Railway bridge (Belliaghata) and their intension was to raid the Narkeldanga area by way of railway lines... Patrol Staff searched the vicinity and found a large number of men lying concealed in between the lines and iron girders supporting the railway bridge. They were all found to be in possession of dangerous weapons viz, iron bars and large bamboo poles with butchers’ knife, tied to its end,... One person, Mir Sahib was arrested with a bamboo pole with butcher’s knife tied to its end.⁵⁸

55. ibid

56. ibid

57. ibid

58. ibid

SUHRAWARDY MEETS THE GOONDAS AT MIDNIGHT

... at about midnight we met the Hon'ble Chief Minister being conducted by Mr. Barnes, Dy. Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, at Lichibagan by one old offender the dangerous weapons. He questioned the arrested man (Mir. Sahib) who stated that the dangerous weapon was left by one old offender Rafique. The Hon'ble Chief Minister suggested a fixed picket....

***OC. HASTINGS POLICE STATION,
CALCUTTA DEPLOYED RUFFIANS BY ARRANGED TRUCKS***

I Further reported to him that I saw three buses taking the people from the Muslim locality near the mosque at 7, Belliaghata Main Road to Anjuman Mofidul Islam at Beniapukur. This naturally created certain amount of the panic. These parties were escorted by Officer-in-Charge S. I. Nurul Huda Bhuiya (of Hare St. P. S.) who on being questioned stated that he was doing so under orders of His Excellency and the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Houses which were looted near the Pareshnath Temple itself are mostly pucca buildings owned by the Hindus.⁵⁹

***DEVILISH MASS MASSACRE AT RAZABAZAR,
MASS MURDER AT 25 BUDDHU OSTAGAR LANE
SUHRAWARDY RELEASES THE CRIMINALS***

In the early hrs. of the 17th August morning, a Hindu household at 25, Budhu Ostagar Lane was attacked by a Muslim mob and 25 out of 37 members of the family murdered—the house was ransacked and set on fire and properties looted. Police arrested some Muslims of the locality. (Suhrawardy wrote the Police Commissioner to release the Muslims).

***DIABOLICAL REPRESSION ON THE FAMILY OF
RENOWNED MATHEMATICIAN JADAV CHAKRABORTY***

A number of persons with injuries from the house of Mr. Chakraborty situated at 85, Upper Circular Rd. took shelter at the thana. Trouble in front of that house started quite early about 7 a. m. on the 16th August and continued throughout the 16th and 17th August unabated and five hundred to six hundred Muslims entered the house, molested women, robbed them of their ornaments and one of the beasts raped a woman.⁶⁰

59. *ibid*

60. *ibid*

HINDU CORPSE ON PULL-VANS : MY NAME IS SHEFALI

While I was going, a handcart came from Kali Shome St. between Keshab Sen St. and Mirzapur St. I stopped my lorry and I found injured persons and dead bodies on the handcart. One girl was alive and she gave her name as Shefali.

I went to Kali Shome St. from where the cart was drawn and found also other bodies injured and dead. Found a handcart containing 5 bodies (3 females & 2 males); found 2 more women and men lying on the street.⁶¹

FRENZIED MOB VIOLENCE AT SEALDAH-BOWBAZAR AREA

At 2-31 p.m. the O. C. Muchipara informed that a big procession coming from Sealdah proceeding via Bowbazar, were looting shops.

Another procession from Upper Circular Rd. Shouting belligerent anti-Hindu slogans and looting shops on the route proceeding towards Maidan.

The slogans are :

1. Larke Lenge Pakistan.
2. Marke Lenge Pakistan.
3. Sala Hindu Lok ko Mar Dalo.

BAGMARI AREA DEVASTATED :

GUNS FROM HINDUS TAKEN AWAY BY POLICE AND GOONDAS

Licensed guns from Hindu houses in Bagmari area were taken away by the police of Maniktalla P.S. Gun was taken away from 241/A, Bagmari Rd. from Tarapada Ghosh's house by force by Basu Mian and Hafiz, known bad character.

MURDER, LOOT AND ARSON CONTINUED FOR

TWO DAYS AT BAGMARI VILLA : O.C. OF MANICKTALLA HIMSELF TOOK ACTIVE PART IN KILLING AND LOOTING

Bagmari Villa :- a very palatial and an expensive building well furnished, was attacked and looted towards the morning of the 17th. No mention of the incident in the records, no step to stop wanton destruction and looting at Bagmari Villa; for three days this looting arson and murder continued in Bagmari Villa.

Bagmari Villa is about 600 to 700 yards from Maniktalla P.S. Police was all along been aware of looting arson and of the most brutal murders including

61. *ibid*

the murder of women and men at Bagmari Villa and in other places in Bagmari both on the 17th and on the 18th.

Charges of murder, arson and looting against A.K.M.Fazlul Kabir Chaudhury, the O.C. of Manicktalla himself.

Serious allegations against the O.C. of Manicktalla P.S. in the Jugantar, Dainik Basumati, Hindusthan Standard in bold letters.

MURDER AND RAPE AT BHARAT MIHIR PRESS

Disgusting incident happened at Bharat Mihir Press on Upper Circular Rd. near Rajabazar—two Hindus were killed and also there was a case of rape.

LOOTING IN PARK STREET WHILE RETURNING FROM MAIDAN MEETING

16th August 1946 :

5-45 p.m. Received telephone message from some gentlemen of Park Street intimating some disturbance on Park Street. While on rounds, it was noticed that supporters of Muslim League, when they were returning from the general meeting, miscreants of the passing crowd, broke open the following shops on Park Street :

- (1) Messrs. S.K.Ghosh Ltd. Wine Merchant of 46, Park St.
- (2) Jalajoga of Park St. Sweetmeat shop.
- (3) R.K.Datta & Bros. of 80 Park St. (Poddar shop)
- (4) Dairy Shop of 82 Park St.
- (5) Paresh Nath Ghosh of 82 Park St. Sweetmeat shop.

WIDESPREAD LOOTING AND RIOTING AT ENTALLY AND PHULBAGAN AREA

17th August, 1946 :

1-30 a.m.—Received information that looting and disturbances going on at Phulbagan area. Before the arrival of the police party the local mob had already looted the shops of Hindus in the locality. In course of rounds several shops of Hindus on Dehi Sree Rampore Road, Dr. Suresh Sircar Road and Phulbagan Road were seen looted. About 2000 Hindu male, female and children were rescued from the different areas of the elaka and sent in private lorries to Bhowanipore police station area.

***HIDUS FLEEING AWAY FROM BENIAPUKUR AREA :
STRAY STABBING TOOK PLACE :
DEAD BODIES OF HINDUS LYING ON ROADS***

18th August, 1946 :

From early morning Hindu males, females and children were rescued from Beniapukur Road, Beniapukur Lane, Cremation Street, Linton Street and various quarters and given shelter on the thana premises. They numbered about 4000.

In the day time some stray stabbing took place and two bodies of Hindus were found on Beniapukur Road, one body of a Hindu was found on Lower Range, one body on Congress Exhibition Road.

EXTENSIVE PLUNDERING, ARSON AND ASSAULT AT MULLICK BAZAR

Looting in Mullick Bazar started about 5 p.m. Hooligans started looting the shops in Mullick Bazar and set fire and there were stray assaults. On that stretch of road Circular Road where Mullick Bazar is, there were a lot of Bihari Hindus—Hundreds of them who had their shops—motor accessories and utensils—all these shops were looted and these Bihari shop-keepers were rescued and taken to St. Xavier's College. On Circular Road itself opposite the Cemetery there was wholesale looting of Hindu shops. Mullick Bazar area was looted for 2 days. On the 17th August, 1946 I left Head quarters at about 2 a.m., at about 2-30 a.m. we noticed some persons looting a wine shop—R.K. Shaw & Co.—wine merchant of 39, Free School Street. 5 persons were arrested whose names are :

Abdul Majid, Liaquat Hossein, Gulam Rasul, Majir Ali and Mahommed Akram. Sharkh Abdul of 35, Gorachand Rd.—a notorious fellow.

***LOOTING AND BURNING OF HOUSES OF PROMINENT HINDUS :
HINDU LADIES DISHONoured AT PARK CIRCUS AREA***

Every respectable Hindu houses in Park Circus had been ransacked and burnt. Many of these houses had not only been looted but are inhabited by goondas.

Mr. S.K. Banerjee's house was ransacked at 7 a.m. on 17th.

H.L. Basu's house was ransacked at 5 p.m. A retired Judge by the name of B.K. Roy murdered. Mr. Banerjee, a judge of Dharamtalla was killed while protecting a little boy.

Eminent physician, Dewan Bahadur Hira Lal Basu, Retired Principal of the Medical College, Dr. U.P. Basu, Late P.C. De of the Indian Civil Service, B.C. Dutta, an Advocate of the Calcutta High Court—all these houses were ransacked and burnt and family members molested.

In the case of the house of the late Mr. P.C.De, a relation of Sir Nazimuddin was leading the mob which ransacked it. Park Circus was kept free for depredations, if necessary, by Muslim goondas upon Hindu families.

Some other families and houses affected in Park Circus :

Mr. J.C.Gupta's house

Dr. Sachin Bose's house

Capt. P.K.Sengupta's house

Prof. S.C.Mahalanabish's house

BELATED DECISION IN SENDING MILITARY :

GOONDAS GOT FREEHAND IN LOOTING, BURNING AND MURDERING

Belated decision of sending military to Park Circus, Corporation St., Wellesly St., Park St. and Free School St. at 18-50 hrs. on 17th. Riots increased in intensity in all these places when there was murder, arson and looting on a very large scale.

Dy. Commissioner of Police, Security Control, arrested 6 persons, having in their possession, dangerous weapons in Gope Lane (Entally).

Telephone message from Mr. J.C.Gupta to Lal Bazar : Mobs are moving about in Circus Avenue looting houses; at the present moment, they have attacked a house near the old residence of Fazlul Haq in Jhowtala Road. PL. send police at once.

..... serious trouble on the 16th broke out in Phulbagan area from at least 1-30 p.m. and trouble was taking place near the crossing of Phulbagan and Hatibagan Road, near the crossing of Dr. Suresh Sircar Road and Deb Lane and on Phulbagan Road itself, in Gope Lane, in Ismail Street and Beniapur Road.

PILLAGE, TORCHING OF HOUSES AND CARS OF HINDUS

Shops of Hindus had been looted in Phulbagan area. There was not a single shop which was not looted. During the night of 16th, 17th say between 2 and 2-30 a.m. the Mohammedans in that area were dragging motor cars out of garages, setting fire to them and attacking Hindu houses.

***LICENSED GUNS OF HINDUS TAKEN AWAY
BY MUSLIM LEAGUE LEADERS***

Before 12 noon of the 17th pillage, ransacking, loot of Hindu's houses had practically been completed. Lal Mia (Moazzem Hossain of Park Circus)

Nasrullah, Parliamentary Secretary were in Control room—Lal Mia and Saleem collected guns from Hindus in Park Circus.

***EXTENSIVE LOOTING AND MASS MURDER OF HINDUS IN
PARK CIRCUS—KAREYA AREA***

With the lifting of curfew at 04.00 hrs. (17th morning) trouble began to flare up again particularly in the Park Circus, Entally and Corporation St. Trouble created by looting by Muslim gangs. In Park Circus a large number of Hindu houses looted. Not a single Muslim house looted.

At 9-20 hrs. on 20.8.46 serious disturbances in the Karaya Market area, when a large body of Muslims from Beckbagan came in and killed some Hindus.

Sukumar Ray of Lansdowne Rd. phoned to the police Commissioner on 16th saying that his uncle's house (Kiransankar Roy), at European Assylum Lane was being attacked and the situation was very serious and asked to send help, but no help sent.

***HOUSE OF RENOWNED CINEMA ARTIST CHHABI BISWAS AND
ADJACENT AREAS OF DILKHUSHA ATTACKED AND VANDALISED***

Serious trouble there had been on Dilkhusha St. Chhabi Biswas and other people living in Dilkhusha Street were in great danger. Their properties were looted and they were attacked, their houses were attacked.

On the 16th evening Lal Bazar sent out pickets to Dilkhusha Street through the intervention of Sir Harry Burn.

***GRUSOME MURDER OF B.K.ROY, SONS STABBED,
HOUSE RANSACKED : INHUMAN BEHAVIOUR OF
MAULANA AKRAM KHAN, PRESIDENT, B.P.M.L.***

“The houses of Mr. B. K. Ray at P.81, Mrigendra Lal Mitter Road is just opposite to Maulana Akram Khan's house. They were in friendly and neighbourly terms. An assurance was given by Maulana Akram Khan (President, Bengal Provincial Muslim League) that they could safely stay. But the house was repeatedly attacked. The last attack which ended with the murder of Mr. Ray started at 4 p.m when 500 Mahammedans armed with metal rods, axes and so on attacked this house. Mr. Akram Khan was in his own verandah when these people belonging to the Roy family were imploring him to use his influence with the crowd. The distance between the two balconies would be about hardly 25 to 30 feet. Mr. Akram Khan turned

round and went into his own house. When the opposite house was being ransacked and people therein were being murdered inside, the Maulana was inside his house.

While on rounds received information that premises No. 81, Mrigendra Lal Mitra Road, were attacked by Muslims and *domes* of Jannagar Rd. ... A police armed squad in charge of Sgt. P. Flynn was passing by that way and at once went to rescue and opened fire. ... Five men were arrested inside the premises No. P.81, Mrigendra Lal Mitra Rd. The whole house was looted by the rioters and Babu Basanta Kumar Roy, a retired Sub-Judge was stabbed to death and two sons of Basanta Kumar, Sisir Kumar Roy and Lt. A.K.Roy were also stabbed. Sisir Kr. Roy and Lt. A.K.Roy were removed to Chittaranjan Hospital where they were dressed and discharged.”

RUFFIANS ARRESTED : RELEASED BY SUHRAWARDY

18th August, 1946 :

“At about 7-15 p.m. this evening I arrested eight Muhammedans who were engaged in looting food stuffs from the Mullick Bazar Market. The goods were being removed in motor lorry BLL 152 driven by one Mohammed Yunus of 57, Lower Chitpur Road without a license. Names and addresses of the looters are :

Muhammad Yunus—driver, 57, Lower Chitpur Rd.

Ali Hossain—135, Park Street

Shaik Girjan—57, Lower Chitpur Rd.

Mahommed Rouf—99, Lower Chitpur Rd.

Kadir—71, Lower Chitpur Rd.

Abdul Majed Khan—135, Lower Chitpur Rd.

Shaik Mohammed Ishak—99, Lower Chitpur Rd.

... Some of the party were wearing Red Cross arm bands. On questioning them as to the nature of the work they are to perform for the Red Cross, I was informed that they were to remove dead bodies from the streets. I took the arrested persons to the Park Street P.S.

The thana gate being locked, awaiting the arrival of the man with the key when the Chief Minister arrived at Park Street P.S. and one of the thana officers called me into the P.S. as the Chief Minister wanted to see me. After reporting the whole incident to the Chief Minister in the presence of Dy. Commissioner, Police Vehicle Department (Mr. H.S.Ghosh Choudhury), he ordered the immediate release of the arrested persons.”

***WANTON DESTRUCTION OF HINDU HOUSES AND SHOPS IN
COLLEGE STREET-HARRISON ROAD-MECHHUABAZAR-KESHAB SEN ST. AREA
SEVERAL HINDUS SAVED FROM BUTCHER'S KNIVES***

18th August, 1946 : 03-03 hours

“While on duty at the crossing of Central Avenue and Harrison Rd. I heard terrible screams coming from behind the Police Morgue (Kalabagan bustee). Broke open the flimsy door and out rushed several Muslims armed with knives and lathis. It was necessary to open fire on them. I found 9 women and 11 men in the room all Hindus. The rescued Hindus were taken to Mullick Street in Bowbazar.”

COMILLA UNION BANK SET ON FIRE

By 11-25 hrs. there was considerable trouble at the crossing of Mechuabazar and Cornwallis St. crossing and a very violent Mahammedan mob with iron rods, lathis and big knives came from Mechuabazar side and rushed into Keshab Sen St.

The Mahammedans set fire to Comilla Union Bank branch at Cornwallis St. They also looted some shops.

100, Harrison Road is a block of Buildings—many Hindu families live there; attacked and looted.

***BHARAT KALABHANDAR, ONE OF THE BIGGEST GENERAL STORES
LOOTED FROM 11 A.M. TO 5 P.M.***

At 11-50 a.m. a large Muslim crowd was seen breaking the premises No. 147 Harrison Road—Bharat Kala Bhandar—a very fashionable store. Looting started before 11 a.m. and continued till 5 p.m. and then it was set on fire. This was one of the biggest general store in Calcutta.

Kalabagan bustee on both sides of Harrison Road described as danger points. They made preparation for Direct Action Day.

***STABBING, TORCHING AND LOOTING BY GOONDAS FROM
KALABAGAN AT THEIR SWEET WILL***

Situation at Mechuabazar and College Street very grave at 1 p.m. Serious disturbances in Keshab Sen St. Stray cases of stabbing of Hindus by Muslims of Kalabagan; situation grew worse and stabbing of Hindus by Muslims, arson, looting etc. continued with unabated fury.

KALI TEMPLE ATTACKED : LOCKED-UP HINDUS RESCUED

The Hindus complained that the Muslims were trying to attack the Kali temple and had actually defiled the Puja which was going on in the Comilla Union Bank. After separating two mobs we rescued about 100 Hindus who had locked themselves in two small rooms in the Comilla Union Bank

***FAMOUS SHOPS LIKE DALIA AND LAKSHMI STORES
IN COLLEGE ST. MARKET LOOTED AND GUTTED***

At the crossing of College St. and Mechuabazar St. the famous Tailoring shop “Dalia” was looted and gutted in the presence of the police.

In Harrison Rd. big fires : Hindu houses were burning by large Muslim mob.

Lakshmi Stores - a famous shop on the crossing of College St. and Harrison Rd. was looted, burnt and razed to the ground. A Hindu house at the junction of Amherst St. and Keshab Sen St. was attacked by a Mahammedan mob.

***ATTACK ON BURRABAZAR FROM ALL SIDES—KALABAGAN TO COLOOTOLA AND CHITPUR
TO CENTRAL AVENUE : RESPECTABLE BENGALI AND MARWARI FAMILIES-TARGET OF
HOOLIGANS FROM KALABAGAN BUSTEE***

Many Hindu houses of big and respectable Hindus were burnt at Tarachand Dutta Street. There are houses of rich Marwaries and Bengali gentlemen. Barring one or two Hindu family houses every one of them was set on fire or looted by Muslim goondas coming from Kalabagan bustee.

Poddar families of Tarachand Dutta St (Dayaram Poddar’s house) : Anandi Lal Poddar - Ex-Mayor of Calcutta : From his house properties worth Rs. 50 lakhs of rupees have been looted.

The depredation was such that a big iron safe, five or six mounds in weight had been thrown down from storey to the street. Womenfolk of that place in order to save them had to jump into the next house and then had to pay Rs. 5000 to the Sergeant in order to escort them to safer place.

HIGH OR LOW, RICH OR POOR AND RULER OR RULED NOBODY SPARED

There are some respectable Bengali Houses, viz. house of Raja Debendra Mullick and Kumar Kartic Chandra Mullick’s house. This house has been looted. Taraknath Mullick of Clock Tower House was arrested for filing statement before the Enquiry Committee.

RESPECTABLE CITIZENS OF BURRABAZAR ILL-TREATED AT LALBAZAR

Many Men specially Marwarees came to the police Commissioner to secure help. They brought their own lorries and sought only escort. D.P Khaitan came to request the Chief Minister to provide some escorts for him and for certain Marwarees. He was refused admission into the Control Room. Police Commissioner said - "In fact I had shoved him off and pushed him off the verandah".

PLUNDERING, ARSONING AND MURDERING AT CANNING ST. AREA

Area around Lalbazar-Teretti Bazar, Phears Lane, Chitpur, Ezra St. Canning St. all were burning.

At 10-45 p.m after the curfew a crowd of 100 Moslems armed with spears was found in Canning St.

ATTACK ON HINDU SHOPS AND DWELLING HOUSES AT AMRATALLA ST.

In Amratalla St. trouble began as early as 6-30 a.m. when Muslim mob incited the local Mohammedans to commit violence on the Hindus and forced Hindus to close their shops. By 10 a.m. a Hindu had been killed in Lower Chitpur Rd. and looting of Hindu shops began in Canning street and Lower Chitpur Road.

FIRING ON HINDUS FROM SHINDURIAPATTI MOSQUE

Mohammedans from Shinduriapatti Mosque fired at people at the Punjab Hindu Hotel and people at Bangur buiding.

29, Ezra St. / Ezra St. - Terertti Bazar and Lower Chitpur crossing, near City cinema on Lower Chitpur Rd. - scene of devastating riot.

DESTRUCTION AT MECHHUABAZAR AREA

Found large mobs on Mechhuabazar St. and Burman St. where there was a large area on fire.

Five garages were set on fire and the body of a woman who had obviously been killed. Found a large building on the east side of the Central Avenue had been looted. Signs of a serious conflict were observed i.e. general disorder and blood on the floor, though the house was empty of persons and no bodies could be found.

ROADS-STREETS-LANES-AVENUES—CARNAGE EVERYWHERE

Mr. Kashiprasad jharia, 8A, Rajmohan St. reported that a mob set fire to the neighbouring houses at the junction of Tarachand Dutta St. and Chitpur.

B. N. Agarwalla of 2, Tarachand Dutta St. reported at 2-15 p.m. that large crowd had assembled there and is trying to set fire to houses.

I was then engaged in removing injured and dead persons from Chitpur Rd., Burman St., Bal Mukund Makkar Rd., Nilmadhab Sen Lane and Harrison Rd.

Message received from Mr. Saligram, a man of position used to live at 4, Tarachand Dutta St. reporting that in front of his house a mob consisting of Moslems are looting the shops and houses of Hindus and throwing soda-water bottles. They have broken a petrol pump and just now set fire to his house.

—Serious rioting is in progress in Tarachand Dutta St. premises No. 8 and 6 are being set on fire.-Murder took place at Tarachand Dutta St.-dead bodies are lying on the road. Murder was committed at the flour mill at 8, Tarachand Dutta St., a gentleman called Mr. Venkateshwaran living at, 13, Tarachand Dutta St.

—Hindus were moving from or leaving Zakaria St. Many Hindus' shops and Hindus' houses have been looted and set on fire in Colootola, Tarachand Dutta St.

Premises Nos. 3 & 4 Tarachand Dutta St. and some neighbouring houses were looted and burnt.

Havoc was going on in Mandir St. and also in Phears Lane within the Green Area of Zakaria St.

PULIN SEN MURDERED : DAUGHTER BRUTALLY ASSAULTED

Pulin Sen was murdered in his house in Chitpur Rd., a little south of Zakaria St. crossing near Nakhoda Mosque. His dead body was thrown out on the street and his daughter was brutally assaulted.

WHOLESALE MURDER OF HINDUS AT TIRRETTI BAZAR—PILES OF DEAD BODIES—POLICE BECAME ALERT AFTER SMELL FROM DECOMPOSED BODIES REACHED LALBAZAR POLICE HEADQUARTERS, SOME SAVED THEIR LIVES ON PAYMENT OF RANSOM

In Tiretti Bazar within the view of Lal Bazar-50 to 100 yards away from the police Headquarter, there had been a regular massacre of Hindus in the morning of the 16th. Ravages commenced at 7-30 a.m. on the 16th from the Muslim League office at 22, Teretti Bazar Street.

In the afternoon of that day there was looting of stalls at that place and murder had begun. On that day the streets had been littered with corpses and stolen property.

The police in Lalbazar did not know that there had been such wholesale murder in Tiretti Bazar until they could smell corpses, unless one got a smell of decomposed bodies.

A divide and rule principle was followed. First the Doshads and other people were asked not to interfere and the Bhatias of the locality were killed. Having finished their depredation on Bhatias and other Hindus, they started general massacre of Doshads on 17th.

On 18th August, 1946, a large number of Hindu shopkeepers and residents of the bazar were also killed. The bustee was set on fire-daggers, lathis and guns were used.

People of that locality who saved their lives had to pay Rs. 4000 to a certain alleged meeting of Muslims and goondas.

“As far as I remember my first information was when the smell of decomposed bodies began to creep in my Control Room.”—Police Commissioner.

***SUHRWARDY’S INTERFERENCE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES
BY THE POLICE OFFICERS***

“Mr. Suhrawardy working day and night without food or sleep for 3 or 4 days, locking himself up in the Control Room.”

“Chief Minister made suggestions /directions in Control Room on sheets of paper to the Police Commissioner, Police Commissioner was unable to do anything owing to constant interference and orders by the Chief Minister.” What can I do? The Chief Minister is sending in slips and interfering all the time.”

***S.O.S. FROM THE HINDUS : SARCASTIC REPLY FROM THE
LALBAZAR POLICE HEADQUARTERS***

- (a) Congress will give you protection.
- (b) Goddess kali will give you protection.
- (c) Help yourself, we cannot do anything.
- (d) “No orders to interfere, No instructions, Can’t do anything”

“I had overheard some shocking conversations over the telephone in the Control Room. When a call came to the Commissioner to send some European Sergeants—meaning the Anglo-Indian members of the City Police force—they would tell the caller in a cool and calculated voice, ‘Keya bolega, Mister, aap jo mangta hai us rakam ka Sergeant to aap ka hi hookum ke saath India quit kar

gaya.” Hardwick was a little stupid but a lot more crude and tactless. On other occasions when someone wanted help he would say, “Who am I to interfere in your affairs. The Hindus want us to get out. The Muslims want us to leave the country to them. I am so helpless. Why not ring up the Congress office?” Could one imagine a more irresponsible and arrogant police chief anywhere?

***WHOLESALE MURDER OF ORIYA LABOURERS (OVER 500) AT METIABURUZ :
MILITARY WITHDRAWN DURING DISTURBANCES :
LAKSHMINARAYAN TEMPLE DESTROYED : IDOL DEFILED***

At 8 a.m. it was reported that rioting had broken out near Metiaburuz where shops of all denominations had been looted and casualties were estimated at-35 killed and 76 injured, done exclusively by the Muslims.

At 16 hrs. Garden Reach area-situation beyond control of police.

There was a mass massacre of Hindus and looting in that area by Muslims. Oriyas were asked to come in by a different gate and as soon as they stepped in they were massacred. Thirty dead bodies were seen to have been deposited on Lower Circular Rd.

Orissa Minister Biswanath Das was sent to investigate into the killings of Oriya labourers of Kesoram Cotton Mills.

The Lakshminarayan temple of Metiaburuz was burnt down.

Trouble started at 8 p.m. and the Military patrol was withdrawn at 10 p.m.when Muslims were still reported to be murdering Hindus.

MASS SLAUGHTER OF MARWARI STUDENTS AT NISTARINI HOSTEL

At Nistarini Hostel at Ratu Sarkar Lane.—Killing of all but one student of the hostel. According to report in the press 17 or 18 out of 19 students had been butchered by the Mohammedans.

MURDER OF STUDENTS AT RIPON HOSTEL

Two students of Ripon Hostel at 24, Harrison Rd. named Kirtibhushan Gupta and Parimal Dutta were shot dead on the night of 16th/17th or rather in the early morning of 17th at 1-30 a.m.

***POST GRADUATE STUDENTS LIVES IN DANGER—
SAID PROF. M. L. ROYCHOWDHURY***

Professor Makhanlal Roychowdhury, Supdt. P.G. Hostel, reported to the Dy. Commissioner, North, that six senior University Students were in great

danger of their lives at 2, Raja Raj Narayan St. which was several times attacked by Muslim mob, being a Muslim locality.

MURDER OF STUDENTS AT SCIENCE COLLEGE HOSTEL

Around 13-50 hours Asst. Commissioner, North Suburbs was informed that several University Students were in danger at the Post-graduate Hostel at No.2. Raja Rajnarain Street, which had been attacked several times by a Muslim mob. The Assistant Commissioner with Sergeant Grant from section E and police squad proceeded to the spot and inside the hostel found 4 men lying bleeding on the floor. Two of them were already dead and the rest were found gasping with agonies while profuse blood was oozing out from stab wounds. Thick fresh clots of blood were found from this right up to the entrance door of the houses of S. K. Ismail of 3, Saheb Bagan (Raja Rajnarain Street).

***REPEATED ATTACK ON SCIENCE COLLEGE :
RAID ON BRAHMO BALIKA VIDYALAYA***

At about 1-30 a.m (17.8.46) Dy. Commissioner of Spl. Branch phoned Dy. Commissioner, North District (S.N Mukherjee) that a mob was trying to enter the Science College.

Simultaneously Mr S.M. Bose of Bose's Laboratory informed that the mob was trying to enter inside the Brahma Balika Vidyalaya.

Information came from one Mr. P.C. Ghosh of 7, Girish Vidyaratna Lane at 5-48 a.m. (17.8.46) that Science College has again been attacked. On arriving at the spot, I found a mob of over one thousand Muslims throwing stones and some of whom brandishing big torches were attempting to set fire to the Science College premises.

LETTER FROM PROF. P.C. MAHALANABIS

Prof. P.C. Mahalanabis wrote a letter stating his experience in the Presidency College. He saw a contingent of Muslim National Guards marching down Central Avenue with wireless Vans.

Brahmo Girl's School is being attacked—message

***HOUSE OF SYED NAUSHER ALI, EX-SPEAKER OF BENGAL
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ATTACKED—TOOK SHELTER IN POLICE STATION***

“On the 16th August, 1946 at about 2-30 p.m. I was informed that the house of Syed Nausher Ali at 66/1A, Baithakkhana Road had been raided by the Mahommedans in that locality and that he and his family were in fear of

their lives. I proceeded to the spot and found a huge crowd of about 300 Mahommedans there. I fired one gas shell and dispersed the crowd. I found the house of No. 66/1A with all windows and doors broken. At the request of one of the members of the house I entered and found that all furniture etc. have been broken up and the inhabitants had taken refuge in one room. I saw Syed Nausher Ali and he informed me that as he had the Congress flag flying in his house, the local Mahommedans pulled it down and wanted to fly the League flag. He and the female members asked me to evacuate them as they feared they would be killed. I took all to Amherst Street Police Station.”

(Mr. A. F. Kinchin, Inspector, Motor Vehicle Dept.)

***PLUNDER AND LOOT OF MAHISHADAL RAJBATI—MULLICK BAZAR—
PARK CIRCUS MARKET : AS IF NADIR SHAH HAD COME OVER
CALCUTTA AND HAD LET LOOSE HIS HORDES—
MR. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ.***

“In the afternoon (of 16th), Mullick Bazar which was within half a mile from my house was looted, I was then standing on the veranda and I found people rushing in great merriment on all sides and the police paharawallas accompanying them. Everyone was happy, as if they were accompanying a marriage procession. In the same night the Park Circus Market was looted on the next day, I believe, the Mahisadal Rajbati was attacked. There was a Traffic out-post nearby. In spite of that all the belongings of the house were looted within two hours, and the police were looking on. Men were carrying this looted properties and I had reports that a member of the Provincial service had been found carrying a silver tray in his hand.

It seemed to me that during those days, not only the British rule had ended, but that some learned Nadir Shah had come over Calcutta and had let loose his hordes of plunder and loot.” (Bengal Legislative Assembly Minutes)

SIR JADUNATH SARKAR'S SON MURDERED

The eldest son of Sir Jadunath Sarkar the eminent Historian was murdered during the riot, while his grandson could somehow saved his life when the hostel wherein he was staying in the Park Circus area was attacked.

BHIM NAG LOST HIS SON

One of the sons of Bhim Chandra Nag, the well-known confectioner and maker of **Bhim Nag Sandesh** fame, also lost his life during the anti-Hindu riot.

***NOT A SINGLE ATTACK ON EUROPEANS OR THEIR SHOPS :
GOVERNOR BURROWS HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF***

Though “Direct Action Day” was intended to be a gesture against the British, there was not as far as I know, a single case of any attack on a European or even an Anglo-Indian as such. European shops, which had suffered seriously in February (and which incidentally presented a very tempting target to the crowds at the Ochterlony Monument meeting) were left severely alone. It is almost uncanny how in the European shopping centres the Indian shops had been selected for destruction.

***LOSS SUFFERED BY THE HINDUS :
POLICE UNABLE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT***

“How many hundreds, if not thousands, of Hindus have lost their properties and lives and had their women butchered I have no accurate figure”—Police Commissioner.

These are only a small fraction of innumerable brutal incidents recorded in the Minutes of the Calcutta Disturbances Commission of Enquiry. As per newspaper report 65% of the 2500 devastated houses/shops, belonged to the Hindus, 20% to Muslims and the rest to others.

UNITED INDIA TORE IN TWO LIKE VULTURES....

“The filthy and dreadful slaughter changed the shape of India and the course of history. The corpses of men, women and children lay stinking in the gutters of Chowringhee Square until the only reliable garbage collectors of India—“the vultures”—picked them clean; and with every mouthful, they picked away the fabric of unitary India, which Britain had pains-takingly built up over more than a century and a half, and finally tore it in two.”

[Leonard Mosley, The last Days of the British Raj, P.11]

CHAPTER—V

THE GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS IN PRESS REPORTS

The Statesman

CALCUTTA ORDEAL

The Government of Bengal has failed lamentably in judgement and executive ability. By forcing a general holiday on the public on the Muslim League's day of direct action it has brought about the consequences that many feared. Their fears were vigorously set out by the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and would have been vigorously set out and supported by a large vote in the Assembly had the Chair not rejected an adjournment motion. From early on Friday there was violence in the streets, which increased rapidly in the early afternoon as processions made their way to the big demonstrations on the maidan. Ruffians in the crowd armed with lathis knocked pedestrians and bystanders about, bands of ruffians ran about the city in lorries... and smashed up property.

The full story of what happened cannot be told yet. The sum of tragedy known at the time of writing is over 270 killed, more than 1,600 injured*, about 900 buildings on fire, much looting in many parts of the city. Direct action day has given the city two days of horror. Violence was feared, though not on so unrestrained a scale, when the Government decided on action that was certain to produce inflammatory language and communal clashes in the streets. There was however some assurance from those arranging the demonstration that it would be peaceful and orderly, though when a holiday was announced and explained as a precaution against clashes in the streets that might lead to larger disturbances it was obvious that Ministers themselves were dubious. That being so, it was incumbent on them to take precautions against a breakdown of civic order.¹

1. Extracts from an editorial, Statesman, 18th August, 1946

OVER 270 KILLED, 1,600 INJURED IN TWO DAYS
COMMUNAL RIOTS IN CALCUTTA

Over 270** persons were killed and more than 1,600 injured in vicious communal rioting which broke out in Calcutta on Friday and continued throughout yesterday.

Despite a curfew imposed from 9 p.m. on Friday to 4 a.m. on Saturday, the situation showed no improvement, with the result that the Governor was forced to call out the military in support of local police from Saturday afternoon.***

Sec.144 was also promulgated in the city, prohibiting the assembly in public of five or more persons and the carrying of weapons ... Curfew was renewed on Saturday night ...

The disturbances began early on Friday—the Muslim League’s ‘Direct Action’ Day. Stabbing, arson, looting and destruction were widespread on both days. The city appeared to be under mob rule.

Mobile police patrols moved about the streets and had to open fire and use tear-gas on several occasions.

The Calcutta Fire Brigade worked at full pressure and dealt with nearly 900 fires... A considerable number of fires could not be dealt with as crowds prevented firemen from reaching the scene. Mullick Bazar (a market on Lower Circular Road), a Bengali newspaper office in North Calcutta, and several bustees were completely gutted.

The Statesman office was attacked on Friday afternoon by a mob of hooligans, who surrounded the building and set fire to a number of doors and windows. Members of the staff managed to hold off the crowd and keep the fires under control till the arrival of the Fire Brigade and the police.

Apart from the damage caused by arson, the financial loss incurred ... through looting alone may exceed a crore of rupees.⁶³

* and ** numbers were put having figures as much available at that disturbed, troubled hours, murders were by far higher in numbers, as later reports revealed about 500 (five hundred) Orissi labourers were killed alone in Keshoram Cotton Mill area of Metiaburz Zone of Calcutta on the first day of riot on 16th August, 1946. *Statesman*, itself, on 22nd August, 1946 commented ‘the riotings appalling results—the slaughter or wounding of anything upto 15,000 people...’

*** Governor Burrows actively supported Muslim League, he expected the ‘Direct Action’, would be one sided affair, when he found Hindus were in resistance, he had no way but to call out military.

63. Extracts from a news report, 19 August, 1946.

*In Press Reports**Hindustan Standard*

16th August 1946 : Editorial Comment :

‘nationalist Bengal, be they Hindu or Muslim are opposed on principle to the mandate of the League. With them the issue is vital one. They cannot and will not participate in a demonstration the object of which is the repudiation of all their cherished political principles. Millions of such Nationalists all over Bengal claim protection from the Government against coercion to which they are likely to be subjected by the overzealous followers of the League.

Amrita Bazar Patrika

states on 30th August, 1946 describing how heinous was the cruelty :

‘Another victim is brought to the scaffold. On his bended knees, he ask for mercy, but his innocent head, bent down in humility makes a better target and is smashed. Yet, another one is caught. One of his ankles is held with a long rope which is held by one and others are belabouring him with lathis—the rope is let loose—the victim tries to run—it is nailed—he falls to the ground, the end comes with a blow on his head.’

The Statesman

The British controlled and edited paper commented on 20th August, 1946

‘This is not a riot. It needs a word found in mediaeval history, a fury. Yet ‘fury’ sounds spontaneous and there must have been some deliberations and organisations to set this fury on its way. The horde who ran about battering and killing with 8 ft lathis may have found them lying about or brought them out of their own pockets, but that is hard to believe we have already commented on the bands who found it easy to get petrol and vehicles when no others were permitted on the streets. It is not mere supposition that men were imported into Calcutta to help making an impression.’

The Statesman further commented on 20th August, 1946

‘it (the League) would be held in active hatred and contempt... (and) be an object of sustained fear and detestation, in the eyes of disquietingly many of the Provinces inhabitants...’

Life Magazine

Sept. 9, 1946, U.S.A.

‘In the streets of Calcutta for four days last month Hindus and Moslems clashed in savage rioting. The riot subsided, leaving the

sun-baked streets littered with dead and dying. For a while the streets were quiet.

Then the Vultures came down. In India they are not unaccustomed to the taste of human flesh, for the Parsis leave their corpses unburied on ceremonial towers where carrion birds may eat them. Attracted by sight rather than by smell, the vultures swooped down into the death-filled streets of Calcutta. Clacking their curved beaks, beating their enormous wings to keep balance, the birds tore at the dead.

Margaret Bourke White, LIFE photographer, ventured into a street of upper Chitpur Road where the fierce fighting had occurred. There she saw and photographed the hideous sight (right). Hindus and Moslems lay side by side, putrefying in the 95 degrees of humid summer heat. They hovered, digesting on nearby roofs and walls (above). But many were still hungry. Indian burial parties, walking barefoot through the bloody streets, had to beat the birds away to bury what was left.

All this was a symbolic segment of the current struggle between Hindus and Moslems over the future government of the independent India that is now approaching its birth. In these riots an estimated 7,000 people were killed and another 20,000 injured.' (p/38-39)

Modern Review

SEPTEMBER, 1946

THE CALCUTTA RIOTS

The Muslim League Supreme council met in Bombay and on the 29th of July declared for 'Direct Action'. 16th August was fixed as a day for the initiation of the movement. Fiery speeches containing mainly veiled threats of Civil War and drastic action against 'Quislings' followed. The League Press and the League spokesmen started a tirade against the Congress in particular and Hindus in general. In Calcutta, the League, papers started stepping up their programme of incitement causing great apprehension amongst all Nationalist circles.

Then followed the declaration of August 16th as a public holiday in Bengal and Sind, the two provinces where Pakistani Ministries were in power. In Sind, the Governor, being a veteran I.C.S. man, knew what would be the consequences of such a holiday, and further the Chief Secretary of the province was a dutiful person. The holiday was therefore declared to be illegal and was cancelled without anything untoward happening. It is to be noted here that the Governor of Sind, who approved of this action on the part of his Chief

Secretary, is far from being anti-Muslim League—indeed, on the contrary. The Governor of Bengal being a newcomer could not even imagine what was being planned and as for his advisers, the less said for the present the better.

The Nationalist members of the Bengal Legislative Council expressed great concern at this ominous move on the part of the Bengal Ministry and the Leader of the European group added his support to the voice of opposition. But the Chief Minister was unconcerned, once he was safe with his British-given majority, and for the life and liberties of Hindus in Bengal, that concern was that of the Muslim League? He uttered some airy remarks about the holiday being ‘a better way of avoiding conflicts than persons ring round and throwing stones at shops or dragging at people from trams, buses and motor cars and those and thereby enforcing their wishes,’ a few lies about the Congress and then steamrolled the opposition’s motion out of existence. No promises were made, indeed no notice was even taken of the demand for the protection of the non-League section of the public in Bengal. Ever since the day when British Bureaucracy, acting through its major-domo Ramsay Macdonald had delivered the Province of Bengal into the hands of the Muslim League, oppression and enslavement of the Hindus of that province had been the main objective of the Pakistan Government, and Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy saw no reason to deviate from the programme. If anything untoward happened, the League spokesmen would utter lies till they were blue in the face, blaming the Hindu, like the Wolf blames the Lamb in *Aesop’s Fables*. The ‘Holiday-makers’ would naturally escape punishment and their holiday enjoyment would be further enhanced through the booty they would amass through their gentle pastime of ‘hunt the Hindu’. And since all true-blue Britishers would be pleased any way with this fresh Pakistani insurance against ‘Quit India’ so why bother?

Meanwhile, the programme of incitement reached new heights. Pamphlets and circulars were distributed broadcast amongst the hirelings and the fanatic camp-followers of Mr. Jinnah. An extract from one such pamphlet will serve as a fair example.

“In our history the month of Ramjan is sacred to Islam and in the Koran this month has been held in the highest esteem. The Koran was revealed in this month and Mohammad was accepted as Prophet in this month.

In this month of Ramjan, the first open war between Islam and Kaffers started and Mussalmans got the permission to wage Jihad against and *kill the Kaffers* and Islam secured a splendid victory. In this Ramjan month we were victorious in Mecca and *idol worshippers were eliminated*. In this month, the foundation of Islam was laid.

According to the wishes of God, the All-India Moslem League has chosen this sacred month for launching this Jihad for achieving Pakistan.*”

Lorry loads of Muslim Leaguers, some of them in green uniform, began going round the city and its outskirts shouting slogans of Jihad (holy war against infidels) and uttering war-cries of Pakistan. Non-Bengali Muslims were prominent in this parade, which became more and more intensified as the day approached.

The uneasy dawn of the 16th found large bands of ‘processionists’ armed with long sticks, iron rods, bludgeons and sharp weapons parading the city all over with League flags. Any shop that was even partially open was immediately stoned and the shopkeepers belaboured. Vehicular traffic was forcibly stopped and the passengers beaten up. Sikh taxi-drivers were a special target and even lone cyclists did not escape. Any resistance merely increased the fury of the ‘peaceful processionists,’ looted shops, cracked heads and stab-wounds being the reply given to protests or remonstrances. *Police were significantly inactive, indeed the City was totally innocent of police protection.* The first case of violence was at Manicktola corner where a poor milk-man was assaulted, his milk spilt and utensils smashed up. A Hindu-owner’s sweetmeat shop nearby was looted, broken up and the shop-keepers assaulted. Similar occurrences happened all over the City, the Leaguers bludgeoning the non-Leaguers into submission without the slightest interference from the police.

Having thus succeeded in terrorising and driving the Hindus off the streets the joyous processionists then went to the *maidan* where a mammoth meeting was in session soon after mid-day. Pakistan flags and Jihad banners there were in plenty, but they were outnumbered by far by the long-sticks, bludgeons and daggers that the ‘peaceful processionists’ carried with them. Fiery speeches were delivered inciting the listeners to a frenzy and a Jihad (holy war) was declared on the (Hindu) infidels. The vast gathering split into large mobs uttering frenzied howls and brandishing their weapons. These then streamed into the main thoroughfares breaking open Hindu shops and murderously assaulting the poor unfortunate Hindus they could find. The arrangements were perfect for the programme of loot, arson, rape and murder and truck-loads of goondas armed with dangerous weapons and incendiary material were rapidly sent to the more distant parts to reinforce the local hooligans. Soon the city was ablaze from North to South and from East to West. The telephone wires were jammed with

* The above is an extract from an Urdu pamphlet published by Mahammad Usman, Secretary, Calcutta District Muslim League, and printed at Eastern Art Press, 12, Balai Dutta Street, Calcutta. Mr. Usman is the Mayor of Calcutta at present.

frantic appeals for police-aid from Hindus of all sections of the city, *but these appeals were disregarded in toto*. Even where by chance there were some police, they seldom did lift a finger, excepting in certain instances where they bestirred themselves in gleaning some loot. In some cases the police present are alleged to have said that they had orders not to interfere in such political demonstrations. *It is possible that the higher European executive of the police had decided that the 16th August demonstration would be a golden opportunity to 'learn' the Hindu to protest against police shooting the beating up school-boy processions.*

The Hindus of Calcutta gradually realized that denial of police-aid was part of the programme. It was not as if there were not enough force at the disposal of the authorities. Armed police and Anglo-Indian armed sergeants were there in plenty, sitting idle and twiddling their thumbs. And further there was sufficiently large military force available at a minute's notice. *Indeed if malice, lust and cretinism had not prevailed and prompt action had been taken in the afternoon of the 16th then thousands of Hindu and Muslim lives and fifty to sixty million rupees worth of property would have been saved.*

The situation soon became precarious for the Hindus all over Calcutta. The entire city was at the tender mercies of tens of thousands of armed ruffians mad for loot, rape and murder. Their Fuehrer had declared a Jihad, and thousands of gangsters had been imported to reinforce them. Further they seemed immune from the action of Law, for, the police had so far been mostly lookers-on.

After the initial panic had subsided, the Hindus in desperation began to gather together in defence groups and fierce resistance was given to the bands of desperadoes that were attacking the Hindu areas. Soon resentment at this black treachery began to mount high and in certain areas retaliation began. By night fall of the 16th the city was transformed into an Inferno resounding with the cries of the dying and wounded and the fierce battle-cries of the attackers and defenders. Curfew was declared but no definite attempt at the restoration of law and order was noticeable. The sky reflected the glow of a hundred fires while the streets were almost completely blacked out due to the streetlamps not being lit. To cap all the telephone service broke down almost completely.

Mass butchery started with the early dawn of Saturday, while loot and arson spread like wild fire deteriorated till it was completely out of control and yet military aid was not called for. As the day lengthened Hindu retaliation began to mount high, till by evening, the attackers became the attacked with determined bands of Hindus attempting to break through into the predominantly Muslim

localities. It was only then late in the evening of the 17th, that the League authorities asked for military aid for the police, which was instantly forthcoming. Military action began against the Hindus, for the protection of the Muslims, and many Hindus were shot down in the remote sidestreet where no disturbance had taken place, during the early hours of the 18th. But this was stopped after strong protests were registered with the authorities. Meanwhile, the Hindus in Muslim areas were left mostly to their fate, though volunteer rescue groups began to function with the help of sympathetic military patrol officers.

The carnage continued for two more days until the military took matters entirely into their own hands and very large forces were employed in penetrating deep over a widespread area. The situation was brought under control only after the direction and control of affairs relating to law and order had virtually passed out of the hands of the League Minister-in-charge of Law and Order, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, and his henchmen in officialdom.

Panic continued and still continues, and hardly a day passes without some unwary Hindu or Hindus being stabbed in the back. Restoration of peace is nowhere in sight nor does there seem to be any organised attempt at it. Peace committees are being formed, it is true, but they are composed in the main of person on whom people have little faith, if any at all.

There is not enough space in these columns to give fuller details of this horrible catastrophe, and indeed, full assessment of the damage, in lives and in property and treasure, has not yet been made. *The casualties amount to between six to eight thousand killed and fifteen to twenty thousand wounded while the value of property looted and destroyed amounts to anything between five to seven crores of rupees, Hindu property, looted, damaged and destroyed, being nearly 90 per cent of the total.*

The League spokesmen, from Mr. Jinnah downwards, are trying to place the blame for this horrible orgy of death and destruction at the door of the Congress. This was only to be expected as it follows the League pattern of planning. But if the matter had not been so tragic, one should have been amused by the ludicrous side of this brazen lie. If the Congress in Bengal had really possessed even one-twentieth of the capacity for organization attributed to it by such accusations by the League, then Nationalism in Bengal would not have been in the terrible predicament it has been placed in during the last ten years. Indeed, excepting for the press reports of the interviews of a few of the leaders with the Governor, the people of Calcutta had no reason to be even aware of the existence of the Congress during the first few fateful days. The League has unwittingly paid a great compliment to the Congress in general and the B.P.C.C. in particular, and the Congress should be thankful for it.

An Enquiry Commission has been appointed and all nationalist organizations in Bengal should throw off duty to the public, on whose loyal support they have been capitalizing. We have no hesitation in condemning all suggestions for boycotting the Enquiry Commission as being idiotic. Nothing might come out of it, but all the same the fullest possible bulk of evidence should be placed on record, and all steps should be taken to prevent tampering with evidence and the suborning of witnesses. Those who have suffered should be assured of support and thus helped towards throwing off their defeatist attitude.

Whole volumes might be written on the terrible happenings during the Great Riot. We have neither the time nor space available for recording them excepting for a few salient features. One is the strange apathy of the police towards Hindu suffering and the disinclination of the keepers of Law and Order to call in the Military, until the tables had been turned. Another point is the complete immunity that the Europeans, Anglo-Indians and excepting a few rare cases, even the Indian Christians enjoyed during the riots. There was a minor attack on the *Statesman* offices, but that was probably a mistake committed by imported ruffians, who were probably checked as soon as those in command arrived on the scene. This immunity is significant since the Direct Action was stated to be directed primarily against the British by the League 'High Command'.

HOSPITAL ADMISSION OF RIOT VICTIMS ON AUGUST 16

Much play has been made by the League of the supposed 'fact' that 'By about noon on Friday (the 16th August), the Mussulman injured formed the largest number in the Campbell Hospital, that by the end of the day more than 75 percent of the total 350 admissions in the Medical College Hospital were Muslims. Of the total admissions on the first day in all hospitals of Calcutta—taking into account the first fifty admissions in each hospital—the Muslims were by far the larger number,' etc., etc. Needless to say that like all statements of 'facts' by the League, here also the premises are false as well as the deductions. Our information is that the three biggest hospitals show the following record :

Medical College : Frist case, brought at 7-15 a.m.—a Muslim carpenter. He was stabbed in Keshab Sen Street, a thickly populated Muslim area mostly inhabited by Muslim *goondas*.

Second case—a Hindu, brought at 7-35 a.m.

Total for August 16—435, Muslim 207; Hindu 176 and unknown 52.

Campbell Medical Hospital : On 16th August—first admission at 9 a.m. (Hindu); second, at 9-30 a.m. (Hindu); third, at 9-30 a.m. (Muslim).

Within 11 a.m. total cases brought 14—Hindus 7 and Muslims 7.

Total cases on 16th August, 132—Hindus 67 and Muslims 65.

Carmichael Medical College Hospital : On 16th August—first admission at 7-45 a.m. (Hindu); second, at 8-30 a.m. (Hindu); third, at 9 a.m. (Hindu); fourth, at 9 a.m. (Hindu); fifth, at 9-30 a.m. (Hindu); sixth, at 9-30 a.m. (Muslim).

Total admission up to 12 noon on 16th August, 16. (Hindus 11 and Muslims 5).

MODERN REVIEW, SEPTEMBER, 1946

CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON CALCUTTA RIOTS

The Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution on the Calcutta Riots. The resolution was released for publication on August 31 :

The Working Committee have heard with deep sorrow reports about the recent happenings in Calcutta in connexion with the observance by the Muslim League of Direct Action Day on August 16 and on subsequent days. They deplore the serious loss of life and property and condemn in particular the acts of brutality committed against defenceless persons, especially women and children. The Committee offer their sympathy to the innocent sufferers of whatever community and party and call upon them to meet the situation with courage, forbearance and fortitude.

On July 29, the Council of the All-India Muslim League passed a resolution deciding upon direct action. In support of the resolution, inflammatory speeches were made, and subsequently speeches and statements and pamphlets by responsible members of the League and Ministers, and article in some League newspapers have served to inflame a large section of the Muslim Masses.

The Government of Bengal declared August 16 a public holiday in spite of protests and thereby gave an impression that the observance of August 16 was enjoined by the Government and that persons not joining in the observance could claim or get no protection from the Government.

It appears that processionists carried big bamboo sticks, swords, spears, daggers and axes which they brandished when ordering people to shut their shops from the early morning of August 16 and mercilessly assaulted anybody who declined or hesitated to close his shop. Stabbing and looting started early in the day and guns are said to have been used by hooligans in many places. Murder in most brutal circumstances, looting and burning of houses on a large scale followed and lasted to three or four days, resulting in the death of several thousand persons and the looting and burning the property worth crores of rupees.

There was practically no police, or traffic pole to be seen on August 16 and even the precaution of sending foot and mounted police to accompany processions, as is done with Moharram and other processions was not taken; even when police were available they rendered no help to peaceful citizens and frantic appeals for help to officers in charge police stations were not heeded and the people were told to save themselves as best they can. The curfew order was not enforced, even after was proclaimed, for the first two nights. Although no transport was available to the public, hooligans used motor lorries. Petrol was freely used for committing arson. Houses and furniture and articles were smashed or burnt and whatever to be removed was carried away. Dead bodies litter the streets and many dead and dying persons thrust into manholes of underground sewerage and thrown into the river.

The military were not called out till long the havoc had commenced. In some places the police participated in looting. After the end of murders, loot and arson, Hindus indulged in reprisals wherever they could and a large number of Muslims were killed.

It is satisfactory to note, however, that in the midst of mutual slaughter and inhuman barbarities, were cases where Hindus gave shelter to Muslims in distress and Muslims gave protection of Hindus in difficulty.

The Committee are concerned to note that communal tension in other places has increased and resulting in murders have arisen. There is a general apprehension that this may extend and, unless checked in time, may become very widespread. It is the primary duty of every citizen to prevent this and of every Government to maintain peace and ensure protection to its peaceful citizens.

In view of the very serious nature of the riots, like of which has never before happened in any part of the country, it is essential in the opinion of the Working Committee that a thorough inquiry be laid by an impartial tribunal which can command the confidence of the public into the circumstances preceding August 16, the incidents of that day and the following days and the steps taken by the Government, both before and during the riots to meet the situation.

The Working Committee place on record their opinion that the Government of Bengal utterly failed to maintain peace and give protection of life and property to peaceful citizens.

The Committee realize that the wounds inflicted not only on the bodies but also on the spirit and self-respect of the people will take long to heal. Nevertheless, they appeal to them to forget and forgive and to utilize this terrible experience of re-establishing goodwill and friendly relations, which have been

so rudely disturbed during recent time, between the different communities. The Working Committee are of opinion that the communal problem cannot be solved by intimidation and violence, but by mutual understanding, friendly situation and if necessary, by agreed arbitration.

THE “STATESMAN” ON CALCUTTA RIOTS

The Statesman, responsible for expressing British in Calcutta, was unsparing in its condemnation of the Bengal Government on whose shoulders blame for the great carnage was squarely and rightly put. A few relevant extracts from its comments made on different dates closely following the event are given below. The Statesman can never be accused of Hindu leanings, foremost in the support of the British community in Bengal and their spokesman, this Newspaper has always been a champion of the League, so during the Cabinet Mission negotiations. In the light of the remarks, the hollowness, falsity of the statement made by the Muslim League can be easily gauged. On August 18 under the caption ‘Calcutta’s Ordeal’, the Statesman writes :

The Government of Bengal has failed lamentably in judgment and executive ability. By forcing a general holiday on the public on the Muslim League’s day of direct action it has brought about the consequences that many feared. Their fears were vigorously set out by the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and would have been vigorously set out and supported by a large vote in the Assembly *had the Chair not rejected an adjournment motion*. From early on Friday there was violence in the streets, which increased rapidly in the early afternoon as processions made their way to the big demonstrations on the *maidan*. Ruffians in the crowd armed with lathis knocked pedestrians and bystanders about, bands of ruffians ran about the city in lorries to assault people and smash up property.

The full story of what happened cannot be told yet. The sum of tragedy known at the time of writing is over 270 killed, more than 1,600 injured, about 900 buildings on fire, much looting in many parts of the city. Direct action day has given the city two days of horror. Violence was feared, though not on so unrestrained a scale, when the Government decided on action that was certain to produce inflammatory language and communal clashes in the streets. There was, however, some assurance from those arranging the demonstration that it would be peaceful and orderly, though when a holiday was announced and explained as a precaution against clashes in the streets that might lead to larger disturbances it was obvious that Ministers themselves were dubious. That being so, it was

incumbent on them to take precautions against a breakdown of civic order. This, it was expected, would be done. The degree of their failure to think and act rightly is visible all over Calcutta today.

Police and firemen have had an overpowering task. In places the mob was so vicious that it would not let the firemen work. Calcutta is a large city; its protectors against violence and disaster cannot be everywhere at once. *It was obvious from an early hour that some of those who were set on disrupting the city's peace were privileged.* The bands of ruffians rushing about in lorries, stopping to assault and attack and generally spreading fear and confusion, found the conveyances they wanted. On a day when no one else could get transport for their lawful occasions these men had all they wanted; *it is not a ridiculous assumption that they had been provided for in advance.* Nor is it straining probability to believe that the groups and individuals who roamed the streets shouting about a Jihad, an observation we make from our own hearing, made things very much worse than they might have been. (Italics ours—Ed., M. R.)

On August 20, the *Statesman* repeated what it wrote two days ago, and under caption 'Disgrace Abounding,' made the following comment :

'On Calcutta's horrible ordeal we gave verdict two days ago. Owing however to the difficulties of producing and distributing a newspaper in the stricken city, that verdict could not reach all our readers. We condemned unsparingly the Bengal Government for lamentable failure in judgment and executive ability.'

'That verdict we repeat. The origin of the appalling carnage and loss in the capital of a great Province, we believe the worst communal rioting in India's history, was a political demonstration by the Muslim League. Bengal's is a Muslim League Ministry. No other major Indian Province possesses one—for Sind hardly counts, being small and politically peculiar. Of all India's provincial Ministries, the Bengal Ministry, therefore, as the outstanding League Ministry, should have been the most scrupulous in ensuring that such a political demonstration caused no disturbance. Maintenance of law and order is any Ministry's prime obligation, and the obligation on the Bengal Ministry, in fulfilment of the League's declared policy of keeping *Direct Action Day* peaceful, was unique.

But instead of fulfilling this, it undeniably, by confused acts of omission and provocation, contributed rather than otherwise to the

horrible events which have occurred. No balanced person would charge it with having deliberately planned a catastrophe of such magnitude. Nevertheless, in retrospect, its conduct before the riots stands open to the inference—not only by its political opponents—that it was divided in mind on whether rioting of some sort would be good or bad. Whatever truth such ugly inference may contain, the Ministry's utter, hideous failure to prevent what, for its own honour's sake and that of its party, it should have been at particular pains to avoid, is in any case blatant. It has fallen down shamefully in what should be the main task of any Administration worth the name. The bloody shambles to which this country's largest city has been reduced is an abounding disgrace, which owing to the Bengal Ministry's pre-eminence as a League Ministry has inevitably tarnished seriously the All-India reputation of the League itself.

In a second editorial on the same day, the following remarks were made which indicates that previous preparations had carefully been made. Specific allegations of goondas having used even the Chief Minister's special petrol permits have also been made in the Calcutta press and as yet stand uncontradicted. The *Statesman* writes :

This is not a riot. It needs a word found in mediaeval history, a fury. Yet 'fury' sounds spontaneous, and there must have been some deliberation and organisation to set this fury on its way. The horde who ran about battering and killing with 8 ft. lathis may have found them lying about or bought them out of their own pockets, but that is hard to believe. We have already commented on the bands who found it easy to get petrol and vehicles when no others were permitted on the streets. It is not mere supposition that men were imported into Calcutta to help in making an impression.

On August 21, this newspaper again wrote :

'The present Muslim League Ministry's primary responsibility for the bloody shambles to which its capital has been reduced is, as we indicated yesterday inescapable. Whether, nevertheless, it can contrive to remain unaltered in office, is the question. Already, in view of the manifest administrative breakdown that has occurred, speculation turns naturally towards the provision for breakdown in the constitution under Section 93. Whether, in fairness, this Section should be applied is, however, unfortunately not at the moment only a provincial problem. It must depend partly on what policy the Congress party followed towards Muslim representation in the new

Central Government. But if Section 93 is not applied, and the present Bengal Ministry succeeds in remaining unchanged in power, the assuredly it would be held in active hatred and contempt, would be an object of sustained fear and detestation, in the eyes of disquietingly many of the Province's inhabitants—for the things done, and not done, in Calcutta this month cannot reasonably be expected to be soon forgotten. Such assentiment, widely entertained towards an established Administration throughout a populous Province, would be a matter of all-India concern.'

On August 22, the *Statesman* once again returned to the charge and commented :

'The group of incompetents, or worse, who owing to their office necessarily bear primary responsibility for the communal carnage in Calcutta, a catastrophe of scope unprecedented in India's history, have been insufficiently seen or heard in these grim days. We mean the Ministry. The Governor has broadcast twice. conferences have been held by an impressive galaxy of local officials. But the Muslim League Ministers, the men upon whom, because Ministers, and because the rioting arose from a Muslim League political demonstration, inescapably rests much guilt for the rioting's appalling results—the slaughter or wounding of anything up to 15,000 people, mainly the innocent poor of all communities, and gigantic financial loss—have not yet taken the initiative of meeting the Press, although the Chief Minister, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, has made a broadcast on recent events.'

We refrain from quoting the comments of other newspapers in and outside Bengal for they too express the same sentiments. The remarks of the *Statesman*, a Friend of the League, ought to be sufficient to give out some part of Calcutta public mind which experienced the horrors of the three-day carnage."

CHAPTER—VI

THE GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS : ON THE FLOOR OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST SUHRAWARDY MINISTRY

The Modern Review, October, 1946

The no-confidence motions against the Bengal Ministry were defeated in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. *The European and the Communist members remained neutral.* The Anglo-Indians voted with the Ministry. One Indian Christian voted for the motion. With Mr. Fazlul Huq's re-entry into the League, the Muslim members formed one solid bloc in the House, the full strength of which was used to throw out the no-confidence motions. Leaders of all the parties spoke on the motions which were debated for two days. We give here the extracts from a few speeches which would be sufficient to indicate the trend of the debate.

Dr. S.P.Mookerjee said :

They had been discussing the genesis of the disturbances. Time would not permit me to go through the details of the history and the course of events during the last few years but let him say this that what had happened in Calcutta was not the result of a sudden explosion. It was the culmination of an administration, corrupt and communal which had disfigured the life of this great and happy province. What was the resolution passed in Bombay at the session of the All-India Muslim League Council? It had been stated on behalf of the Muslim League that the Cabinet Mission proved unfaithful to the Muslim interest and thereby created a situation which had no parallel in the history of Anglo-Muslim relationship in this country.

I will certainly hold responsible Mr. Suhrawardy, Chief Minister, who lost his mental balance when he made that statement from Bombay that he was going to declare Bengal to be an independent State. He knew that troubles were ahead. If you analyse his speeches

it would appear clear that he knew that troubles were ahead. I am not raising this question as to how many Hindus or Muslims had lost their lives. The question is have Government succeeded in protecting lives and properties, no matter to which community they belong.

Mr. Suhrawardy says that at 12 noon on Friday he realised that the situation was very bad. Very well, what did he do at that time? Why did he not call for the military at that time when the civil police failed to protect life and property? On Friday he knew that the trouble was there, no matter if the Hindus were aggressors or the Muslims. Why did he not immediately proclaim Section 144? Why did he place the entire city at the mercy of *goondas*? Why did he allow the Maidan meeting in these circumstances? We charge him with the deliberate offence of having played havoc with lives and properties of the citizens of Calcutta. On Friday night in a message to the A.P.I. he said that the condition in the city had improved. Section 144 is supposed to have been promulgated on Friday night. On Saturday the Curfew Order was promulgated but neither of these was actually enforced. How is it that in spite of Section 144 and the Curfew people were allowed to move about committing looting and murder? You have heard that within a stone's throw of Lalbazar Police Headquarters, shops were looted, people were murdered and all sorts of offences were committed without the police being able to check them.

On the 23rd the Chief Minister broadcast a message of peace to the people of Bengal and within half an hour of that he sent out a special message for foreign newspapers through foreign correspondents. What was said in this document was entirely different from the message of peace broadcast to the people of Bengal. In the message for foreign consumption Mr. Suhrawardy said that it was Hindus who were to blame for the riots. Then he blamed the British Government and lastly he said he could not say what would happen in future if the Interim Government functioned.

Mr. Suhrawardy has complained that he cannot control the Police Commissioner. If that is so, how Mr. Suhrawardy interfered with the administration of a police office in a manner unworthy of any Home Minister of a province? In Park Street Police Station seven *goondas* were taken by a European Inspector with looted property.

[Mr. Suhrawardy objected to Dr. Mookerjee calling these people *goondas* and was heard to remark that Dr. Mookerjee was a *goonda*.]

I might be a goonda, but Mr. Suhrawardy was the prince of goondas. Were all these people who were arrested with looted property then Muslim gentlemen? Was it not a fact that within 10 minutes Mr. Suhrawardy appeared on the scene and got those persons released? It is on record (cries of 'shame, shame,' from Opposition Benches).

[Mr. Suhrawardy admitted that he interfered in the matter but the property was not looted properly but rice and dal that was being taken in a lorry to a *Musafirkhana* on Chitpur Road. He interfered otherwise the men for whom these were meant would starve. He had no knowledge of any arrest in this connection.]

The Muslim League had asked for 500 gallons of petrol from the Bengal Government. That was not granted. But petrol coupons were issued in the name of Individual ministers and special coupons were issued to the extent of 100 gallons in the name of the Chief Minister. That was how preparations were going on and arrangements were made under the very nose of the Home Department of Mr. Suhrawardy (cries of 'oh, oh' from Muslim League Benches). Could Mr. Suhrawardy deny that he himself went to Howrah and met local officers there and chastised them, took them to task because Muslims were unprotected there? Did he take similar pains.... (prolonged interruptions from Muslim League members).

At last I have said some home truths which have made my friends opposite nervous and hysterical. Mr. Suhrawardy is playing a double role. How can he do all this things while he is a Minister? Is he not responsible for preservation of life and property of people so long as he is a Minister? Whatever my friends opposite can say, it has been proved beyond a shadow of doubt that Mr. Suhrawardy and other Ministers are unable to administer the affairs of the province, impartially at any rate. They have hopelessly failed and on that ground they are not fit to occupy office for one single moment.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq said :

The great disturbance had not risen from the moon. Whether it had been the result of well-planned action made by one side or by both sides they did not know. God alone knew that and the future might say the truth. On Friday morning telephones began to come to me from the Muslims and Hindus of various parts of Calcutta that troubles had broken out. I thought that the troubles were of a minor nature and the calls were the result of the sense of intolerance that

was in the nature of the Bengalees and the Indians, however, gentlemanly and intelligent they were. I advised all of them to ring up the police and came to know that although the police was being appealed to in some cases, their reply was that they (police) had no orders. Wonder of wonders! What the police were here, and why were they paid for, if they had not known that when peace and tranquility was disturbed? Their first duty had been to jump into the situation in order to defend public peace and tranquillity.

In the afternoon, Mullick Bazar which was within half a mile from my house was looted. I was then standing on the veranda and I found people rushing in great merriment on all sides and the police paharawallas accompanying them. Everyone was happy, as if they were accompanying a marriage procession. In the same night, the Park Circus Market was looted. I sent my nephew and the Editor of weekly *Mohammadi* to the Park Circus police outpost. To my astonishment I learnt that the officer-in-charge told the informants that he had no time to go and see what happened. Certainly some change must have come over to the Calcutta Police! On the next day, I believe, the Mahisadal Rajbari was attacked. There was a traffic police outpost nearby. In spite of that all the belongings of the house were looted within two hours, and the police were looking on. Men were carrying the looted properties and I had reports that a member of the Provincial Service had been found carrying a silver tray in his hand. I wanted that the House should know why the trouble was allowed to grow to this gigantic proportion and within 24 hours, the entire situation was made to drift beyond control.

It seemed to me that during those days, not only the British rule had ended, but that some learned Nadir Shah had come over Calcutta and had let loose his hordes of plunder and loot.

On every occasion I wanted police help, but the reply had come that my complaints had been noted and help would be sent to me in proper time. The situation had been such that police officers would not control, Control offices would not control and the Government House was not available. It was my impression that this thing would never have happened if the police and the military had taken a strong measure on Friday, the 16th, when troubles broke out. The inactivity of the police was directly responsible for the great loss of human life.

Already we have blackened our face to the civilised world that the Hindus and Muslims cannot live together. It would be a tragedy if the debate on such a matter cannot be carried on without passion and prejudice and calm judgement. These are matters which requires to be carefully looked into in order that any recurrence of what had taken place might be effectively prevented. The present motion, I think, is somewhat inopportune and ill-advised. As has been spoken by some speakers we are going to have a Commission to sit and investigate into all matters connected with the disturbances. And now we are discussing here practically many of the important issues which are subjudice before the Tribunal. Secondly, I feel that while we are discussing the affair in this House, issues of far greater moment and importance are hanging in balance in the talks that are going on in Delhi. While we are shouting here in this House, the fate of India is going to be decided, not by a resolution here and there, but in Whitehall and Delhi. It would have been well if the upshot and the result of these talks that are going on between the Viceroy and the Party leaders come to a settlement. I am an optimist in this respect. I feel that all will end well. If there is a Coalition Government at the Centre, there is no reason why there should not be Coalition Governments in provinces (cries on 'hear, hear' from the Government Benches). I have been a believer in Coalition Governments.

Mr K. S. Ray, Leader of Opposition, Congress said :

The Moslem League had been preparing for this day. It had issued appeal to all Moslems to observe the day. It had organised a Volunteer Corps. It had even organised an Ambulance Corps for each area in Calcutta. It is difficult to imagine why an Ambulance Corps was necessary—for a peaceful demonstration. But we did not see any appeal from any responsible leader of the League asking the Moslem public to be peaceful, non-violent, not to compel others to close their shops. On the contrary, there were the highly exciting articles in the Muslim League papers preaching unrestrained hatred of other communities. Even my friend Khawaja Nazimuddin whom we all have known as an iron upholder of law and order hinted that the League was not restricted to non-violence. I hope it will not be maintained that there was no organisation behind the hooligans. They shouted the same slogans—they acted in the same way, it was obvious that they were obeying orders. They had sufficient supply of petrol.

They had numerous lorries. *In Beniapukur area they compelled Hindus to sign Pakistan pledge which were later on published in the Azad. They forcibly converted persons to Islam.*

Now what was the police doing all the time these preparations were being made? We would like to know if the Criminal Intelligence Department had made any report regarding preparations that were being made for an armed procession. Every member in this House—every person in Calcutta knows that no precautionary measure was taken. There was not a single policeman anywhere in Calcutta. Even the ordinary precaution which is taken during the Moharrum or Puja procession—of sending some policemen with the procession—was not taken. Even after looting and assault began on the morning of the 16th—even after the gun-shop in Chowringhee was looted—the police did not make any effective move. All appeals for help from the police proved useless. Looting, murder, arson took place before them without their making any arrest. Everybody who approached the police got the same reply—‘no orders.’ On occasion—hundred times less serious—we have seen machine-guns on the streets of Calcutta. Military or Police patrol, I do not know which—came out in the evening of the second day but they drove along the main roads at 40 miles an hour without stopping to arrest hooligans or rescue those who were in danger.

We have a suspicion that the posting of officers has been made in such a way that in some districts all the administrative officers from the District Magistrate to the thana officer are Muslims. *I would like to know how many District Magistrates today are Muslims—how many Hindus—how many Europeans. I would like the Hon'ble Chief Minister to tell us how many Superintendents of Police in Charge of districts are Muslims, how many Hindus and how many Europeans. I would also like him to state the number of thanas in Bengal and how many thana officers are Muslims and how many Hindus. I do not wish to cast reflection on all Muslim officers but it is undeniable that the canker of communalism has affected the service. No Hindu feels safe, if the officer is a Muslim and I believe that a Muslim feels the same if the officer is a Hindu. But unfortunately for the Hindus with the advent of the League Ministry most of the key positions not reserved for Europeans have gone to the Muslim officers. Even during the riots in Calcutta, Hindu officers have been*

transferred and our protest was of no avail. Therefore, Sir, this conspiracy of crushing the minority community in Bengal began not with the Direct Action Day. It began much earlier, it began from the first day the League Ministry took office. It was their deliberate plan to fashion the administrative machinery in such a way, that the minority community would be reduced to utter helplessness.

MR. SUHRAWARDY'S REPLY

Replying to the charges levelled by the Opposition against his Ministry, Mr. Suhrawardy made certain significant admissions. He tried his best to shift the responsibility for the carnage from the shoulders of his ownself and the League leaders, on whom it fairly and squarely rested, by repeating the totally false and trumped up accusations. In the same breath he made the Hindus, the Congress and the British Government responsible knowing full well that all these three were separate entities. He said :

It seems that the incidents which took place were the results of a chain of circumstances in various fields of life, the magnitude of which no one could foresee and which was outside the experience of everyone. The first and most important link in the chain are undoubtedly those factors which produced political tension between the Hindus and Muslims. The ideologies of Pakistan and Hindustan were being asserted by Muslim and Hindus in their separate camps with vigour and determination, backed by threat of civil war. Each party went to the polls in the last elections and appealed for support to the electorate on this issue. The Muslims almost unanimously voted for Pakistan. Congress won its victories on the issue of undivided Hindustan. But all this remained academic until, firstly, the parliamentary Party and subsequently, the Cabinet Mission came out to frame a plan for evolving a new constitution and for installing an Interim Government.

The Muslim League was betrayed by the Cabinet Mission on the very last day—June 25. Muslim India was thunderstruck at this shameless betrayal. I have not met one single Englishman who has not hung his head in shame at the manner in which the Muslim League was betrayed by the Cabinet Mission.

So, on one side the Muslims were burning with resentment against the British Government for its signal betrayal. It is true that Congress had allied itself with the British Government and had accepted an Interim Government to the exclusion of the Muslims. But the Muslim League,

as far as I know its mind, thought resentful of the Congress attitude, still deemed British Imperialism its chief foe having played fast and loose with the Muslims.

What of Congress? Alas, they took their position too seriously. They considered that their entry in the Interim Government as Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council had given them unlimited powers. They considered direct action as directed against them and not against the British, whose successors they fondly imagine themselves to be. I believe they feared that if direct action should succeed, it might induce HMG to modify their offer of power to Congress.

In the following words of the Premier, it is apparent that he had previous knowledge of the coming trouble, He said :

Police precautions were taken. Instructions were given to the Civil Supplies Department to keep all their vehicles in their depot until such time as it might be known whether disturbances would take place or not, Similar advice was given to the oil companies in view of the high vulnerability of their oil tankers, and our opinion was conveyed to the military that their vehicles should not run unless under escort.

On August 15, the Commissioner of Police informed all police officers that the Emergency Action scheme, which had been prepared before this Ministry took office, would be brought into operation with effect from 8 a.m. on August 16.

Mr. Suhrawardy, as Minister in charge of Home Affairs, knew that incidents had begun since early morning of the fateful day. During the debate, he sought to minimise the gravity of the morning incidents saying that they were of a minor nature probably for the good reason that the perpetrators of those crimes were his co-religionists. He knew that by 8 o'clock in the morning the situation was taking a grave turn when the Emergency Action scheme was being put into action by the Police Commissioner with his knowledge. He was in the Police Control Room by 2 o'clock and felt that the situation was going beyond control of the civil police. By 2-45 p.m. situation was about to go out of the hands of the police when military authorities were asked to remain in readiness. By 4-30 p.m., the situation apparently went beyond control of the civil authorities and military authorities were asked to come to the aid of civil power. This is Mr. Suhrawardy's own admission and even after this, he permitted the maidan meeting to be held, himself presided over it and moved the Pakistan resolution and permitted inflammatory speeches to be delivered there. He could not cite a single instance of Hindu attack on Muslims in purely Hindu areas earlier than 3 o'clock when a small procession of Muslims coming

from Tollygunge was obstructed on Russa Road near the railway bridge. At the maidan meeting very many of the 'audience' were armed with lathis and daggers. We have published photographs to prove it and this has been admitted by everybody except the perpetrators of the crimes. Here is what Mr. Suhrawardy himself said about the beginning of the events :

The police force, such as it was, was fully mobilised on the morning of August 16. Incidents were reported as early as 7 o'clock, but they were of a minor nature, and the two parties were kept apart by the local police. But the situation rapidly developed and grew from bad to worse. It was, however, localised, and although obstruction was offered to processions passing through Hindu areas several processions which passed through purely Muslim and European areas found their way to the Maidan. I hope it will be appreciated that the police force of Calcutta or for that matter of any city is not recruited to cope with a general communal conflagration in every part of the city. They have been found generally sufficient to deal with normal disturbances, and on previous occasions, even under a Section 93 regime, the military have been called out days after a disturbance broke out. The Commissioner of Police, to my knowledge, put the emergency scheme into operation early in the day—at 8 o'clock. He utilized the forces at this disposal to the best of his ability. He accepted all calls for assistance that were made on him at Lalbazar. He and his officers worked unceasingly. He himself remained on duty until the early hours of August 17, and he and his officers took it by turns to be at Lalbazar throughout.

It has been stated that, generally speaking, the police stood idle and allowed assaults and looting to take place under their very eyes. It is stated that when the police were asked to intervene, they said they had received no orders, or they had orders not to interfere. I have been solemnly asked by some people to ascertain from the Commissioner of Police if he gave such orders. I can categorically state that no such orders were issued. How, I ask you, can I or the Commissioner of Police, be held responsible if in some place or places the police at hand do not intervene and do not perform their duty in preserving law and order?

I am asked, why did I go to the Control Room, and what was I doing there? As far as I remember the incidents of that crowded day, I entered the Control Room about 2 p.m. after having visited several localities and having ascertained for myself that tension was rising and the conflagration was likely to be general. At that time the compound of Lalbazar was flooded with armed police and lorries. Some had

gone out on urgent calls. I gave to the Commissionr of Police my appreciation that the military should be called out. At 2-45 p.m. a warning was communicated to the military authorities to be in readiness as their services might be required. At 4-30 p.m., a decision was taken and communicated to the military authorities requesting them to come to the aid of the civil power, and for this purpose to concentrate a force at Sealdah in order to keep open certain important thoroughfares.

In the Control Room, where calls were pouring in unceasingly I too took down reports and passed them on to the Commissioner of police for I was thus able to watch the course of the disturbances and how the reports were dealt with and what action was taken on them and I have no doubt that not being entirely dumb. I offered suggestions when I deemed expedient.

I insisted that very evening on curfew being proclaimed and on the military being put into position. The report from Howrah not being satisfactory, arrangement was made for troops to be brought to the Howrah Rest Camp from Barrackpore. It was clear as time passed that calls were increasing, that the disturbances was spreading and that the police would be fully extended. At 11 o'clock it was decided that the military would patrol the area already designated.

VOTING ON THE NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

As we have mentioned at the beginning of the note on the no-confidence Motion, this motion was defeated. But a few remarks about the voting of the different groups seem to be called for.

European members' role in this debate deserves special notice. Their action has thoroughly justified the Quit India policy of the Congress. They have made it abundantly clear that so long as their part of loot and plunder remains in tact, they are not concerned with anything else. We would say that the Europeans of Bengal have 'nobly' kept up the traditions of the East India Company, that ruthless and shameless band of adventurers and cheats, who came to this country when it was ridden with civil war. They took good care to set brother against brother and to put premiums on dishonesty, corruption, treachery and faithlessness. In this way they succeeded in carving out an Empire in what was once the world's richest country. Two centuries have since elapsed. The East India Company has gone with the wind but the 'successors' to that band of rouges have carried on. Thanks to the lust, and rapacity of Europeans in this country, India today is perhaps the world's poorest country.

There is a lot of correspondence about the Anglo-Indians in the daily press. We have not much to say at present but we consider that one of their own community who wrote a book entitled *Cimmeri* was fully justified in calling his community benighted. The Anglo-Indians in opposing the Bengal no-confidence motion, showed themselves to be allied with the powers of darkness as did some of their community who joined with the looters during the riots. They have to make up their mind whether to march in step with nationalist India or to remain camp-followers of the reactionaries and exploiters who have infested India for the past two centuries. The Anglo-Indian cannot run with the hare and chase with the hounds.

Three members of the scheduled caste have left the Congress party and voted with the Ministry. We had previously remarked that we had seen in the Congress nominations to the Bengal Assembly and the Constituent Assembly not only carelessness and partisanship but criminal negligence so far as nationalism in Bengal is concerned. The defection of these three members elected on Congress tickets, proves again that our judgment was right.

MODERN REVIEW, APRIL 1947

THE THIRD CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES

The third attempt for the establishment of Pakistan began on March 25* and continued in full fury for more than a week. The attack comes from the same political party and the object is the same although there has been a change in the tactics. This time, there was a determined flare-up in certain plague spots of the city over which the League has the strongest hold and the hospital records for the first few days would show that victims almost exclusively belonged to one community. Attacks on unwary passers-by and helpless residents generally in the bustee areas continued. A portion in the heart of the city, within visible distance from the Government House, was impassable for foot or vehicular traffic for members of one community. This area is well-known as a stronghold of the League. The whole of South Calcutta, inhabited by Hindus, was completely quiet, and the virulence of the attacks was concentrated in the Eastern suburbs of the city.

One of the most significant facts of this third attack is the alliance of a section of the police with the League agitators. The Muslim National Guards, in open defiance of Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. and the curfew orders, began to parade side by side with the police. On complaint to the governor, they were, however, withdrawn from the streets. But police, both unarmed and

*. *That is, 25th March, 1947*

armed, took their place. It is alleged that the victims of attacks were subjected to arrests and assaults in many cases, while the attackers were leniently passed over. The mixed areas where the League has its hold have been the main target. Serious charges of house-breaking, assault on women and children, theft in the name of search, aiding and abetting to set fire, and murder have been publicly made and some such complaints have been taken to the Courts, but none of these officers have even been suspended pending disposal of the cases. The recently recruited Punjabi Muslim armed policemen have caused deep distrust in the city and allegations against some of them of serious crimes have been made in the Court. In one such case, although the Chief Presidency Magistrate observed that the allegations were grave, he ordered police enquiry instead of holding the inquiry either himself or by a Magistrate. The public have all along complained, with very strong ground, that the brutality of the junior officers continue because their seniors take no steps against them. This has served as an encouragement for them to throw their whole might in the fight for Pakistan even to the point of killing people. It is alleged that in the northern outskirts, a bustee was set on fire and some of the inhabitants of this very bustee were shot down while the attackers went away scot-free. It was openly alleged in the press that petrol for setting fire to this bustee was obtained from the officer-in-charge of the police station from his own store that the arson was committed in his presence and even that he had fired at residents of the bustee who tried to escape. These allegations are exceedingly grave and any decent administrations would have taken drastic and severe steps to bring him to trial. But instead, as is usual with the League Administration, this officer continues unscathed and in spite of the fact that legal proceedings have been started against him, he has not even been suspended.

Some significant changes in the police administration have recently been made here, evidently with the object of furthering the cause of Pakistan. Sixteen out of twenty-five police stations are under Muslim officers-in-charge. Out of the seven divisional detective Inspectors, who investigate cases and conduct arrests six are Muslims. Only one Hindu D.D.I. controls two police stations, while the six Muslims are in charge of the remaining twenty-three. In spite of very strong public resentment, the most communally minded Deputy Commissioner in the force has been placed in charge of Lalbazar Head Quarters, whose rank is next to the Police Commissioner. All the key-positions in the police are now held by the League and utilised for furtherance of the cause of Pakistan. And this in the city of Calcutta 75 per cent of whose inhabitants are Hindus, who contribute about 90 per cent of the rents and taxes!

IN INDIAN POLITICS HINDU POINT OF VIEW
HAS BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY IGNORED

—DR. S. P. MOOKERJEE

DR. MOOKERJEE FORESAW THE GRIM TRAGEDIES AWAITING THE HINDUS

When the political situation in India was very tense Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee as President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, wrote a long letter to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell on 25th August, 1945, from Bombay.

There are certain matters fundamentally connected with the working of the present Constitution and also affecting India's future Constitution which it is my duty to bring to your notice, particularly at a time when you will be holding discussions with His Majesty's Government regarding India. The Hindu Mahasabha is the only political organisation in India which claims to represent the point of view of Hindus as such on all matters affecting our political rights. Although we are a Hindu organisation, our policy and programme regarding the future Constitution of India are based on strict principles of democracy and we ask other community. We have no option but to recognise ourselves as a Hindu political organisation because our political rights have been flagrantly ignored in the past and even today they do not receive due consideration at the hands of the British Government and their representatives.....

He also said, under the Communal award separate electorate, whose main object is to protect minority, has been conceded to the Moslem community in provinces where it is in a majority and not to us, Hindus, where we are in a minority. Again weightage has been given to Moslems wherever they are in a minority but Hindus in provinces like Bengal and the Punjab, though they are in a minority, have not been given representation even on the basis of their population strength.

Mr. Turnbull noted against this sentence; "The Hindu seats are called 'General Seats & the Muslims & Depressed classes & Christians have separate electorates'. In effect the Hindus have a separate electorate."

Regarding Pakistan he stated that - we stand unreservedly by the doctrine that India's geographical and political unity which is a reality must continue intact and there can be no compromise on this issue on any consideration whatever. Economically India's division into separate sovereign zones will be disastrous. Further the claim of Pakistan is based on the plea that the minority Moslems must not be coerced into accepting a system of administration which will be dominated by Hindus. But may I ask what is Pakistan itself except that it constitutes a tyranny of the majority over the minority? Mr Jinnah's demand is that provinces in India where Moslems are in a majority will be cut out of

India, depending on the decision of the Moslem majority alone. His majesty's Government has repeatedly said that it will not force upon India any constitution unacceptable to any large minority community. If the deciding party is to be the minority, surely the Pakistan issue must depend on the wishes not of the modern majority but of the minority Hindus in the provinces concerned, who will be gravely affected by such an arrangement. Pray do not overlook the fact that Pakistan or Division of India is no solution of the communal problem. Millions of Hindus will live as a minority within Pakistan and millions of Moslems will live as a minority within Hindusthan. Before Mr. Jinnah's claim can be considered he has got to answer two questions satisfactorily. He says he can never submit to majority rule. If 75 per cent of India's Hindu population is so small a majority that it can not persuade 25 per cent of Muslim minority to remain as willing citizens within India, how can Mr. Jinnah demand that in a province like Bengal 54 per cent of Muslims will constitute themselves into such a big majority that they alone will decide the fate of 44 per cent of Hindus living in that Province. Is that not a tyranny of the majority over a minority based entirely on religious consideration? Secondly, Mr. Jinnah must have some scheme for protecting minority rights within his Pakistan. Any scheme which he may himself adopt for the reasonable protection of the religious, cultural, political and economic rights of the minorities within Pakistan will be acceptable to the Hindus for protecting Muslim minority rights - wherever necessary. Why then, one may ask, should India be torn to pieces on communal and religious considerations? We do not wish that any Province should have the right to secede from the Indian State. Our first and foremost objective is the self-determination of the Indian people as such. We do not want to see encouraged cleavages and dissensions based on communal or provincial considerations. After India attains her freedom, if any particular territory desires to break away from the Indian State it must make out a case for it and the matter can be finally decided not merely with reference to the interest of that territorial unit alone but to the interest of the Indian State itself. I admit there is need for redistributing the boundaries of the Indian Provinces on linguistic and cultural considerations. Take my own Province of Bengal. More than six million of Bengali speaking people reside in areas immediately adjacent to Bengal which now fall within Behar, Assam and Orissa. If Bengal's boundaries are redistributed on a linguistic and cultural basis, Bengal ceases to be a Moslem majority province. Let each province enjoy the fullest possible autonomy and develop itself according to its own light and judgement; but over and above all these Provinces there must exist a strong Central Government which will be able not only to maintain a correct foreign policy and defend India's boundaries but also see to it that internal security is maintained and

India's economic advancement is achieved for the benefit of all classes of her people, irrespective of race, creed and community.

It is a matter of deep regret that the Hindu point of view in Indian politics has been systematically ignored. The Congress is not a Hindu organisation and its leaders have repeatedly pointed out that they do not represent Hindus as such. The Moslem League is a full-fledged Moslem body and represent Moslem opinion. How can you settle the Hindu-Moslem problem by a Congress-League settlement ? This means that the Hindu point of view will remain completely unheard. It may be as a political party we are still not as strong as the Congress but my experience resulting from constant tour throughout India justifies my asserting that there are millions of Hindus throughout India who today stand by the Hindu Mahasabha. Even though we may be in a minority, our view-point must not be crushed. You should adopt a system of proportionate representation in selecting members of the legislature and certainly of the Constituent Assembly. If, for instance, the Hindu Mahasabha secures 30 per cent of the total Hindu votes in the coming elections, we may rightly insist on our having representation as a party determined by such votes. (Transfer of power, Vol. VI, p-161, Source : Dr. Mookherjee to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell (Extract), L/P&J/8/683: ff 8-12).

CHAPTER—VII

DEPOSITION OF THE POLICE COMMISSIONER AND ARMY COMMANDER BEFORE CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

F. Burrows, Governor of Bengal, representing British Government and to understand how Muslim League and the Prime Minister Suhrawardy made the civil government stifled to function, and reduced the administration to make way for Muslim League to force *Pakistan demand* by human massacre and loot, so that Congress and particularly the Hindus—succumbed to their demand, can be found from the witness of Doland Ross Hardwick, Commissioner of Police, Calcutta before the Calcutta Disturbances Commission of Enquiry, on Monday, 18th November 1946.

Donald Ross Hardwick- Police Commissioner's Statement

Monday, the 18th November, 1946.

PRESENT

Sir Patrick Spens.	President
Sir Saiyid Fazl Ali	Member
Mr. B. Somayya	Member

President : (Turning to Mr. Mohd. Asir, Representative of the Commissioner, Wakfs) I have looked at what you call your report We will accept that as statement which you yourself or others with you can prove for us. But it contains good many obviously hearsay statements which of course I shall not be able to accept. Therefore at a much later date if you want to prove any of hearsay statements, you will let us have the names of specific witnesses who prove them and in due course put in their statements.

Mr. Mohd. Asir : I have annexed a statement in original of the persons who daily informed me and I will produce those people.

President : You need not annex those statements at the present moment, you must let the Secretary have the names of the people whom you propose all.

Mr. Mohd. Asir : I will do that even today.

**DONALD ROSS HARDWICK, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, CALCUTTA,
SWORN IN AND EXAMINED AS A POLICE WITNESS.**

(Written Statement-Ex. p-2.)

1. Introduction— When the riots broke out on the 16th August, I had completed three months service as Commissioner of Police. A note on the strength and disposition of the Calcutta Police has been written by Mr. Tolson, the same officer has given a note “Before August the 16th”, much of which based on materials supplied by me. In order, therefore, to make my narrative concise and digestible as possible, I shall try to trace the history of the August 16th to 20th as I saw it

2. August 16th— My first intimation of any trouble was received by phone from the Deputy Commissioner, Headquarters, soon after 07.00 hours it was to the effect that rioting had broken out in the Manicktolla Bazar, when Muslims tried to force Hindus to close their shops. The local police were dealing with the situation. but if the situation deteriorated he would send a force from Lalbazar. I said that if nothing serious occurred, I would, as previously arranged, pick up the Chief Secretary in a police lorry soon after 10 hours, make a short tour of parts of South Calcutta and then come to control Room

Since no further reports reached me, I left my house soon after 10.00 hours, picked up the Chief Secretary at 14/1, Rowland Road, whence we made a short tour of the Russa Road and Bhowanipore area, before paying a visit to the Imperial Bank in Strand Road, where we had had trouble on August 15th over picketing by girls. We found everything normal, and proceeded to the Control room in Lalbazar. I noticed from inspection of the Incident Board that reinforcements had been sent out to the Upper Circular Road and were operating between the Vivekananda Road crossing and Sealdah crossing. None of these forces had returned. It was clear that necessary action was being taken, and the southern areas of Calcutta were quiet. I do not remember now at what hour the Hon’ble Chief Minister and Mr. S.A. Salim, Parliamentary Secretary came to the Control Room, but they arrived during the course of the morning.

It was about 13.00 hours when information of looting in Colootola Street reached the Control Room. I decided to accompany a Riot Squad to see for myself what was the state of this area. I found large numbers of persons throwing brickbats and soda-water bottles at other people on the roofs of

houses, and the latter were retaliating. The area is mainly a Muslim one, but there are a few Hindu houses and shops. As soon as the Riot Squad arrived, the crowds took to their heels, remaining at a respectful distance. Excited crowds were in the alleys, but the situation did not demand the opening of fire. Two Hindu shops, a hardware store and a hosiery store, were being looted. The looters of the hardware store ran away, one man carrying several aluminium *deckchies* on his head tripping and losing his loot. A tear-smoke grenade was thrown by the police into the hosiery store, and after an interval several looters disgorged themselves into the street; several persons, all Muslims were arrested. Some prominent Muslims of the locality begged me to let them off, but I refused. Tear-smoke was fired both up and down the street with the result that the crowds melted down the *gulleys*. Leaving most of the force at the spot, I proceeded with the arrested persons up to Cornwallis Street, where I found the Deputy Commissioner, Detective Department, engaged in keeping opposing parties separate. I stayed in this area for some time and then decided that I should return to Lal Bazar because, although we were keeping opposing parties apart for the time being and the police were not being attacked, the police could not continue doing this indefinitely and would eventually be defeated by exhaustion. I may add that throughout my tour I saw no dead or even injured persons. The Deputy Commissioner, Headquarters, on my behalf rang up the Chief Secretary about 14.30 hours to say that the situation had deteriorated and to request the aid of the army. The Hon'ble Chief Minister and Mr. S. A Salim were in the Control Room but left about 14.45 hours to attend the meeting on the Maidan. The Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal rang me up some time before 15.00 hours, and I told him that the situation in the Harrison Road, Wellington Square and Corporation Street area was bad. and that the Hon'ble Chief Minister agreed that troops should be called in. I sent a police lorry to Government House to escort His Excellency to Lal Bazar, where he arrived about 15.00 hours. Accompanying His Excellency were Brigadier Sixsmith and Brigadier Mackinlay and I took His Excellency through the area where I had been, and then down Lower Circular Road past Sealdah, down Dharamtalla Street, along Free School Street, Park Street, Chowringee, Bentinck Street and go back to Lal Bazar, where we arrived shortly after 16.00 hours. The reason for going along Free School Street, Park Street and Chowringhee was His Excellency's desire to see Chowringhee where cases of looting had been reported to him. During his tour we saw no rioting (although the streets were littered with brickbats) and no dead bodies or injured persons. We passed through a procession of Muslims somewhere near the Lower Circular Road-Dharamtolla Street

crossing (I think) but all was peaceful. Chief Secretary had arrived at the Control Room, and the situation was discussed with His Excellency, and the military authorities. At that we had hopes that the situation was improving and His Excellency was definitely of opinion that the situation did not justify the immediate use of troops. It was decided that troops should be brought into the Rest Camp at Sealdah Station, whence they could put out mobile patrols to relieve the police in keeping open certain big streets. The Sub-Area Commander had been informed at 14.45 hours that an application was being made to the Chief Secretary for military assistance and the 2nd Yorks and Lancs arrived at the Sealdah Transit Camp at about 16.00 hours. After this my impressions are confused. The Hon'ble Chief Minister returned (after the meeting on the Maidan) to the Control Room accompanied by many members of the Muslim League, among whom were (I think) Lal Mia and Mr. Usman. During the evening members of the public were insisting on talking the Hon'ble Chief Minister and concentration on work was made impossible. Requests for pickets, armed guards, armed escorts for rescue work were pouring in. The Hon'ble Chief Minister and his friends were arguing at the top of their voices, and at times it was difficult to receive messages over the five telephones on the Control Room table. The Hon'ble Chief Minister himself took delivery of many of the written telephone messages which were coming in from next room. We had arranged that the Deputy Commissioner, Detective Department, should tour through the worst area in North Calcutta and make contact with York and Lancs. The intention was that he should report by phone or wireless to me as soon as he considered the situation was getting beyond control. I would then contact the Sub-Area Commander and the Yorks and Lancs would come in actively. This officer telephoned to me to say that the situation was bad. I understand that he discussed the situation at Sealdah with Area Commander, Fortress Commander and Chief Secretary, and that he was advised to ask for more police from Lalbazar, and that, if we could not supply them, the troops would come out. From the records it appears that two lorry patrols were despatched to Sealdah at 18.20 hours. I do not recall now whether I had any conversation with the Fortress Commander over the telephone. The Deputy Commissioner was told to patrol the routes which it had been intended should be patrolled by the Army.

We also decided about 20.00 hours that it was necessary to impose curfew on the Town and with His Excellency's concurrence curfew was imposed between 21.00 hours and 04.00 hours. I wished to extend it to 05.00 hours at least, but the Hon'ble Chief Minister said this would impose great hardship on Muslims owing to the *Ramzan*. The southern portion of Calcutta and its

suburbs was comparatively peaceful till the afternoon when brickbattling of Muslim processions, on their way to the meeting on the maidan took place.

To begin with it appeared that the curfew would have a steadying effect, especially as heavy rain came on later. After 23.00 hours the situation deteriorated and after discussion with the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Chief secretary, the Chief Secretary asked Fortress Commander that the troops at Sealdah should immediately be employed in aid of civil power. I understand the actual orders were communicated to the York & Lancaster at Sealdah 00.30 hours on the 17th August 1946, and that patrols commenced on 01.45 hours. covering the area between Vivekananda Street on the North, and Colootolla Street on the South.

So far as arson is concerned, serious cases did not occur till the afternoon the 16th, the first big fire occurring sometime after 15:00 hours. No further serious fires were caused till nightfall. To begin with, the Fire Brigade was able to answer calls unescorted, but as the night wore on riotous mobs intervened and large numbers of armed police had to be employed on escort duty with the Fire Brigade. My forces at Lal Bazar were dissipated in answering calls from private persons for help, many of which transpired to be inspired by apprehension and a desire to have police in the proximity of the callers residences. Eventually I was compelled to ignore calls of this nature and to rely on calls from the police stations.

3. August 17th.— From 02.00 hours the situation seemed to improve, and there were less calls for reinforcements from Lal Bazar. The Hon'ble Chief Minister remained in the Control Room till about 04.00 hours and the Chief Secretary till 05.00 hours. I stayed on till shortly before 07.00, hours. by which time I was exhausted through lack of sleep and food. During my absence the Inspector-General of Police kindly placed two Superintendents of Police at my disposal at 10.00 hours. On my return to the Control Room at about 11.00 hours, I was informed that my presence was required at Government House at 12.00 hours. I had no opportunity to study the situation and make an appreciation because the Hon'ble Chief Minister engaged me in continual discussion, asserting that if only I would put down pickets at a large number of posts and supply armed police for rescue work, there would be no more trouble. I was unable to agree with him, because my whole force would be frittered away, and even then would not be sufficient to implement his plan. At noon there was a conference at Government House, attended by the Chief Secretary. Additional Secretary, Brigadiers Sixsmith and Mackinlay, and myself. It was decided that three Battalions should dominate the area bounded on the north by Vivekananda Road, on the south by Bowbazar Street, on the

east by Upper Circular Road and on the west by the river. [This area comprises the Burrabazar. Jorasanko (except a small area in the north) and Amherst Street police-stations in North Town and roughly one-third of the area of the Hare Street, Bowbazar and Muchipara police stations in South Town.] It was also decided that the Cast Lancasters should give us assistance in South Calcutta, operating from the Dhakuria Lakes and Park Street.

To accompany the three Battalions operating in North Calcutta, the military authorities stated that they would require three officers of the rank of Deputy Commissioner, 45 officers of the rank of Inspector or Sergeant, and 210 Armed Police. One Deputy Commissioner was also required for work with the East Lancs. I pointed out that this would mean a serious depletion of my limited and already tired force and that in order to satisfy this demand I should have to withdraw police from the streets immediately rather than increase the number. However, no reduction in the number was accepted and I returned to Lal Bazar to work out arrangements for the supply of this force. I may mention here that on the 16th August I had to bring in long before 14.00 as reinforcements the force ear-marked to relieve those who had come on duty at 08:00 hours. Consequently I had few, if any, really fresh men available. The army did take over a number of static guard duties, thus relieving police for more important duties, but as far as I can remember this relief did not take place till after midday on the 18th August.

The police force deputed to accompany the troops in North Calcutta left Lal Bazar at 15.15 hours and returned in small parties to Lal Bazar between 21.15 hours on the 17th August, and 08.45 on the 18th August. There had been a misunderstanding, and during my absence these forces were recalled, and no police were sent to take their place. The original intention was that the police should remain with the troops. One great difficulty was the feeding of the police; they are not equipped to stay on the ground for days on end but have to be relieved for feeding and rest at intervals whereas the troops carry rations for several days and the individual soldier gets his regular rest and food at the Battalion, Company or Platoon Headquarters established in the area where they are operating.

I again had no time to appreciate the situation throughout the city because soon after 16.00 hours the Fortress Commander came in and asked me to accompany him through the area in which the troops were operating. We were out from 16.30 hours and the streets were found to be deserted.

The situation eased in the area in which the troops were operating, but up to midnight considerable forces of police were sent out to the Bhowanipur and Ballygunge Park Curcus areas.

In addition to police patrols one company of the East Lancs were sent to Park Street police-station soon after 18.00 hours with instructions to patrol Surendra Nath Banerji Road, Wellesley Street, Park Street, Free School Street and other roads in that area such as Marquis Street, Elliot Road and Royd Street. They were also to patrol from Park Street to Park Circus. that the troops operating in the North Town area should extend their operations to gain control of the Shampukur, Jorabagan and Burtolla police-stations, and for this purpose I supplied one Assistant Commissioner, four Inspectors, one Sergeant-Major, three N.C.C Os. and thirty-five sepoy. This force left Lal Bazar at 16.15 hours and remained continuously with the troops till after the 20th August 1946. In view of the shortage of police, I then made arrangements to arm more of the Traffic Police and to call in constables from all the police stations to make good the shortage.

I was in conference with the Chief Secretary, Additional Secretary and Fortress Commander from 19:30 hours to 20:15 hours.

During the night I learned of a most unfortunate incident which occurred at Park Street police-station at about 20:00 hours. when the Hon'ble Chief Minister ordered the release of a lorry and seven Muslims who had been arrested while looting foodstuffs in the Mallick Bazar. I directed the Deputy Commissioner, Public Vehicles Department, to send me a full written report along with statements of witnesses. Copies of the report and statements have been sent to the Chief Secretary, who informed me that he had shown the papers to His Excellency.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister was again present in the Control Room during the night. The situation improved during the evening and I left the Control Room at 02:30 hours on the 19th August 1946.

5. August 19th.-- I returned to the Control Room between 07.30 and 08:00 hours and found that the situation had definitely improved. At 08:45 hours I accompanied the Army Commander, the Area Commander and Brigadier Binney through the area in North Calcutta in which troops were operating, returning to the Control Room at 11:15 hours. The area was quiet, but there were a considerable number of corpses in the streets, especially in the northern portion of the Town. I made notes of the places and the approximate number of corpses (105 I think) and on my return had the information passed on to the Corpse Disposal Organisation.

On my return I was summoned to Government House, and on arrival there at 12:00 hours attended a conference, at which the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Additional Secretary were present. The situation was discussed, and it was agreed that it was not necessary to send troops to

Bhowanipur, but that the area should be closely watched. I knew that Brigadier Sixsmith was making a personal reconnaissance of this area. and said I would like to have his views. Meanwhile at about 14:30 hours I received a telephone message from the Army Commander that he had passed down Russa Road on his way to Tollygunge and that he thought tension was high. Without waiting, therefore, for Brigadier Sixsmith's appreciation, I took the precaution of sending out extra police forces to operate in the Bhowanipore area under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner, Detective Department, and Deputy Commissioner, Port Police. About 15:45 hours I had a discussion with Brigadier Sixsmith regarding the state of southern Calcutta ; he did not hold such alarming views as did the Army Commander. At about 16:45 hours I had a further discussion with the Area Commander (Ranking), Brigadier Sixsmith and the Fortress Commander.

During this day the situation had improved throughout the city and few incidents were reported. During the night the Deputy Commissioner, Detective Department, supervised the working of five patrols in the Bhowanipur area. I left the Control Room at about 23:00 hours and went to bed at 00:30 hours.

6. August 20th.--I left my house soon after 07:00 hours and went to Bhowanipore police-station in order to get more of the thana police out on the roads to restore confidence. I then visited the Kalighat Tram Depot. where I had sent constables, to start the tramway service again. (A few trams had run from this depot with police guards on the previous evening). The employees, however, refused to come out unless the union leaders gave the order, so I telephoned to the Agent in order that he might get in touch with these gentlemen I also sent the Officer- in-charge, Bhowanipore police-station, out on a like errand. This officer was also told to try and get some of the bus owners to bring out their buses and he was successful in getting some buses on the road during the day.

I then went on to Park Street police-station to get more constables out on the streets.

On arrival at the Control Room I passed on the information regarding the tram situation to Additional Secretary, with the suggestion that the political leaders should be approached and asked to use their influence with the Tramway Union.

At about 09:20 hours the Deputy Commissioner, Security Control (2), phoned information of a serious disturbance in the Karaya Market area, when a large body of Muslims from Beckbagan came in and killed some Hindus. Control had received a call from the Karaya outpost and had sent out a

police party at 08:51 Extra police were then sent out to form a picket in this quarter. At 09:30 hours Additional Secretary discussed with me the formation of peace Committees. I expressed the opinion that it was the duty of the political leaders to form such committees (Chief Secretary subsequently agreed with me). However, I sent out an officer to get in touch with the Secretaries of the Muslim League, B.P.C.C. and some Sikh leaders.

After this I was engaged with the Chief Engineer (Corporation) in arrangements to get the Corporation scavengers to work on the streets. From 10.15 to 13.00 hours I accompanied His Excellency, the Army Commander, the Area Commander and Military Secretary to the Governor through the military dominated area of North Calcutta, then to Entally, the rescue centre at the Ochterlony Monument and the Relief Centre at the Ashutosh College.

At 15.00 hours I left for the house of the Hon'ble Chief Minister with the Secretary, B.P.C.C., to attend a meeting of the leaders of the political parties regarding the formation of a Peace Committee. At this meeting those present were unanimously in favour of police and military pickets at all places where Hindus and Muslims border on one another. I asked for a list of such places and said that I anticipated that the number of pickets required would be so large that the police would not be able to supply a fraction of them. The Army would naturally make its own disposition, and if the Hon'ble Chief Minister wished them to provide pickets, he would have to take the matter up with His Excellency, Chief Secretary and the Military authorities. Those present then suggested pickets from 18.00 hours to 06.00 hours and patrols in the day time, under the mistaken impression that this scheme would require less men. On leaving the meeting at 16.15 hours I called at my house for some tea and a clean up, and returned to the Control Room at 17.30 hours.

It was arranged that one company of the East Lanes should make its Headquarters at the Karaya Outpost and should take position by 18.00 hours, prior to which hour a platoon of Tanks would make tour in the area. The area to be covered was Karaya Bazar, Park Circus, Beckbagan, Karaya outpost and environs.

At 19.00 hours I had a discussion on the situation generally with the Fortress Commander.

I left the Control Room for my house at 21.45 hours.

Sd. D.R. HARDWICK,

28-10-1946

Some significant notes

Police Commissioner, Donald Ross Hardwick crossed examined in the Calcutta Disturbances Commission of Enquiry, 18th November, 1946

Question :

189 : How long before the 16th were you hearing or were you informed of these slogans— ‘Larke Lenge Pakistan’ and ‘Mar Ke Lenge Pakistan’? / Hardwick : I think I heard them several days before; I wouldn’t like to commit myself to actual days but I think it must have been before.

191 : It is, you say, in general that you have heard for some days, before 16th, the two expressions? / I think so, yes.

192 : Did you also hear groups of Mussalman shouting—I am afraid it is not very good language but, however, it is there— ‘Sala Hindu Lok Ko Mardalo’ / I cannot remember.

193 : **President :** May I ask you Mr. Hardwick, do you recollect getting the report on the 15th evening? / I did not get it on the 15th.

195 : You yourself as Commissioner did not have your attention drawn to Belgachia or any area as being disturbed on the 15th? / That was not brought to my attention.

President : It does not necessarily mean that the attention of the local police may not have been drawn to it but I mean the Commissioner himself, as I think it must appear from the fact, that on the morning of the 16th he had not dashed off to visit any particular area.

196 : **Mr. B. C. Ghose :** On the 16th morning—I was just trying to find out—did you know that at 4 a.m. there was loud shouting of these slogans from a Muslim *Bustee* in Indra Roy Road? / Where is that it in what police station?

197 : Ballygunj. / No, I don’t.

198 : And that armed *goondas* were coming out of that place abusing the Hindus in filthy language? / No, I did not hear that. I have already mentioned in my statement what was the first information that was brought to me on the 16th.

199 : And that at 4.30 a.m. a Hindu motor driver had been stabbed near the Belgachia Railway Bridge? / No, I did not hear that.

- 200 : Now, I am going to put the question. Stabbing commencing at 4.30 a.m. ought to have been reported to you straight way if the police took any action in the matter. / Not necessarily.
- 201 : But that would give you an indication of a start of something which you were anticipating or about which you were apprehensive? / But we had already taken our precautions. Every incident would not be at once telephoned to me unless it was really of a big thing.
- 202 : Then cases of stabbing were not telephoned to you? / I do not know. The case was not mentioned to me.
- 204 : Let us not have a contention about it, I mean let us analyse it. On the 15th—I shall come back to it immediately—even a man in the street with little intelligence would have come to know that there was danger ahead on the 16th? / We knew that there was a possibility of trouble, of course.
- 205 : And your ideas, I take it was forewarned, is being fore-armed? / Yes.
- 206 : And, therefore, all necessary precautions ought to be taken? / Yes.
- 207 : As soon as incidents break out the very first one would give you an indication as to whether your ideas about the incidents following were correct or not, is not that so? / Yes.
- 208 : Therefore, would it not be very important if there was a case of stabbing at 4.30 a.m. by a Muslim crowd of a Hindu motor driver that ought to be reported? / I should think it should be, yes.
- 228 : Is it a fact that it was on Thursday the 15th August that you had issued orders to take Emergency Action? / Yes.
- 229 : To the whole force? / Yes
- 231 : I wish to point out to you that similarly incidents started at various other places much before 8 O'clock in the morning? / Yes.
- 233 : Therefore by 7 O'clock in the morning there were several incidents at several places? / We expected clashes.
- 234 : And having regard to clashes, I take it there were deaths? / I had known that people were killed in the early morning.
- 235 : What I want you to find out is that when people were actually being killed and places looted, would that come in a report to you? / Yes, to my Control Room.

The Army, Eastern Command, Calcutta didn't submit full report to Calcutta Disturbance Commission of Enquiry, 1946, thus vital information concerning the Calcutta Killings, August, 1946, was suppressed by British Army also under political instructions from British government as that government aided and abetted the Muslim League to commit riot to force *partition of India*. **Thomas Lindsay Binny, Brigadier General Staff, Head quarters, Eastern Command**, sworn in and examined before the Commission as an Army Witness on 15th November, 1946 reveals this fact :

- 557 : And the military did not, otherwise it would be in the record? / Presumably not, otherwise it would be in the record.
- 558 : Now, Brigadier, I want to ask you certain questions. You have compiled this report. Apart from this report, was any other report made? / Yes.
- 559 : To whom? / There was a report made to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, which was a secret report, and it was with his permission that this report was compiled from the one submitted to him and contains all the facts and evidence, leaving out the portions that were secret from the military point of view.
- 560 : Therefore, the report that is with His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief contains other facts which are not in this report? / Yes.
- 561 : As far as I know, you have used the word "secret" and, therefore, I believe I am being warned off, but as far as I know, they contained fuller details and various other matters and facts? / That I am not prepared to say.
- 562 : Do they contain fuller details? / I am not prepared to say that. The other report is in the possession of the Commission.
- 563 : Now, on the 11th of October you have been directed to file your statement; did you file your statement by the 11th of October? / I gave it to Mr. Saddler, I think, before the 11th.
- 564 : The report that you filed on the 11th and the present report, do they vary? / How do you mean?
- 565 : Are there any differences between those two reports? / I told you already the other is a secret report which contained certain military matters for the information of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

- 566 : Those are secret reports which contained certain military matters for His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief? / What you have in here is a word for word reproductive of what is in that other report, leaving out those particular matters.
- 567 : Are you careful to say that you never left off anything else? / Not that I am aware of.
- 568 : Is it a fact that Mr. Suhrawardy, at the Ochterlony Monument on the 16th, told his audience that 24 hours' time had been given to them to establish Pakistan? / I am not aware of that but you will be seeing, as I promised you this morning, the information we got on what Mr. Suhrawardy said at that meeting.
- 569 : This statement has not got anything to do with the military; it is not a military secret. Could you tell me—I don't want to look into your report at all, whether in the original report, this statement appears? / No.
- 570 : Are you sure? / Quite.
- 571 : It does not appear? / No.
- 572 : I shall ask my Lordships to look at it for the purpose of comparison? / Yes, you can.

President : That was a document handed to me and to my fellow Commissioners for the purpose of this proceeding, so that we might actually see what is gone in for the Commander-in-Chief. The Commander-in-Chief objected most strongly that certain portions had nothing whatever to do with this Enquiry; It should not be made public. Yet somebody seems to know; it makes me extremely nervous about the whole of this Enquiry. It certainly means that secret documents will be looked at by the Commission only and by nobody else whatever. The Report now before the Commission contains everything except the secret portions which are not to be made public. That shows how important it is that this Enquiry should be held in *camera*, and that no question should be asked about secret documents...

CHAPTER—VIII

AFEW PATHETIC, EMOTIVE APPEALS OF CITIZENS PERSECUTED, LOOTED AND BUTCHERED

(In no way exhaustive)

1. An appeal to Dr. S.P Mookerjee by the helpless Hindu merchants of Chandney Chowk market and College St.
2. An appeal from Asutosh Dhar of College St.
3. Appeal and memorandum on behalf of some prominent gentlemen of Maniktola, Kakurgachhi and Beliaghata area giving details of some gruesome incidents in those areas and suggesting measures to ameliorate the sufferings of the Hindus.
4. Memorandum from the residents of Harinath De Rd, Sitalatala Lane, Anathnath Dey Lane giving detail of repeated oppression and harassment at the hands of police and hooligans.
5. Memorandum to Chief Minister on behalf of the residents of Jugipara Lane, Vivekananda Rd etc. regarding police zoolom.
6. Memorandum from residents of Paikpara.
7. Letter from N.R. Auddy re; housebreaking, assortment, loot, and intimidation in his house on Park Street.
8. Letter from the Manager of Bengal Chemical & works re; stalemate created by hooligans in his factory area in Maniktala and office area in Central Avenue.
9. Copy of letter addressed to Governor Burrows by Dr. S.P. Mukherjee giving summary of many incidents of assault on Hindus.
10. Information supplied by Hindu Mahasabha - Word No IV ; some incident of assault and intimidation in Jugipara Lane.

11. Copy of a joint memorandum from large number of Hindu residents of Beliaghata to the Secretary to the Governor of Bengal.
12. Summary of incidents occurred in different parts of city .
13. Letter from I.C. Narang re; wanton police firing and theft during searches.
14. Copy of a memorandum from Suresh Chandra Banerjee suggesting enquiries into incidents and restoring peace.

1

Dr. S.P Mukherjee,
 Leader,
 Hindu Mahasabha,
 Ashutosh Mukherjee Road, Calcutta.

The humble petition of the undersigned merchants and shopkeepers
 of Chandney Chowk and Chowk Street. P. S Bowbazar, Calcutta.

Most respectfully sheweth :-

1. That there are about 70 shopkeepers of the minority community in the Chandney Chowk area who deal in different articles such as Medicines, Hardware, stationery, Hosiery and other articles. A large number of shopkeepers in the same area belongs to the majority community.

2. That your petitioners have got goods worth about lakhs of rupees in their respective shops.

3. That on account of the disturbances and on account of the threatening attitude of the hooligans, your petitioners closed the shops on 26. 3. 47. in the afternoon and left the place, under police protection.

4. That since then your petitioners have not gone back and opened the shops on account of the attitude of the hooligans.

5. That unless proper steps are immediately taken to protect your petitioners' property, heavy loss will be sustained by them.

6. That your petitioners humbly suggest that some amount of protection to prevent your petitioners' valuable properties from being looted by the hooligans in their absence may be given, if your Honour is pleased to place day and night armed pickets in the main gates of the Chowk. But your Honour is the best judge in the matter.

In the circumstances it is respectfully and humbly prayed that your honour will be graciously pleased to take necessary action in the matter and take steps for protection of the property of your petitioners.

And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Dated Calcutta
the 2nd. April, 1947

Sd/-Bhabataran Singha
and over 40 other merchants &
shop keepers of Chandney Chowk.

Copies forwarded to :-

1. H. E The Governor of Bengal,
Government House, Calcutta,
2. The Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Bengal, Writers Building, Calcutta.
3. The Commissioner of police,
Lallbazar, Calcutta.
4. The Administrator General,
Bengal, Old Council House St., Cal.
5. The Officer-in-Charge,
Bowbazer, P. S., Calcutta.
6. Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy,
Leader, Opposition Party,
Bengal Legislative Assembly, Bengal.

2

To
The Secretary.
Hindu Mahasabha, Calcutta.
Dated 2nd April, 1945.

Sir,

I beg to state the following case of police high handedness in my house at 5, College Square.

1. On the 1st April, 1947 at a little before 7 P.M a Sergeant whose name appears to be C. Horton of R.F. No390 accompanied by some armed Police (Pathans) suddenly came to the main Collapsible gate of my house when it was locked up from inside and our Durwan was waiting in his room at the gate.

2. The night shift work of my Press in the ground floor was going on at that time and the Duftaries of my Publishing firm were doing their duties. The night-shift workers remain in the ground and first floors at night.

3. The Sergeant, on coming to our gate, began to rebuke the Darwan in filthy language and ordered him to open the gate.

4. The Durwan, Rajaram Missir, at once obeyed him and the Sergeant and Policemen came in and dragged the Darwan to the foot path beat him mercilessly. He was then dragged in and again beaten and left in his room almost unconscious. They then went towards the staircase and finding a worker, Sridam Chandra Pal, there caught hold of him, threw him down on the pucca pavement, beat him mercilessly too. He was also left there semi-conscious.

5. They then went to the first floor and finding no one there got up to the Second and third floors, the residential part of my house. They entered each room, used filthy and obscene language to the womenfolk and pointed guns and revolvers at them and the children, frightening them in a preposterous way.

6. They also went to the kitchen. Kicked down the articles there. They even went into the bathroom. They kicked about the things that fell on their way.

7. During their stay for about half-an-hour they created such havoc in my house that some of the ladies and children were shivering all the night.

8. They arrested the Durwan and Sridam Pal with marks of injury in their persons. The keys of the gates were with the Durwan which we find missing. The main gate was left unprotected all the night.

9. That the said sergeant and the police party entered the house and that the Durwan was mercilessly beaten on the footpath had been witnessed by several respectable persons from their houses who testify to this part of my statement. They also found several passers-by beaten by the party even before the curfew time.

10. Neither I nor the arrested persons knew any thing about the cause of this sudden raid in my house when it was fully locked up. My Library (Asutosh Library) is closed and locked up at 5 P.M. when the employees leave owing to the curfew order.

2nd April, 1947.

I remain,
Sir

Your faithfully
Asutosh Dhar

and seven other Book sellers & Publishers

3

14, Sastitalah Road,
Narkeldanga, Calcutta
Dated 3. 4. 1947.

To

The President and Members of the Riots Consultative Commmittee, Calcutta
(Through : Dr. S.P Mookherji)

Dear Sires,

Subject :- A concise Memorandum on the happenings in the recrudescence of disturbances in a portion of the Eastern suburbs and attempts to improve the situation.

I annex herewith, on behalf of the minority community of the area covered by Narkeldanga Main Road, Sastitala Road, Joynarain T. P. Lane and Sir Gooroodas Road a Memorandum for favour of your perusal and necessary action. As far as is possible under the existing disturbed conditions of the locality, I vouch for the substantial corrections of the incidents metioned in the report which I had got corroborated from various sources. Owing to the difficulty of contacting the police, all the incidents could not be formally reported to them.

Thanking you in anticipation for the taking of appropriate measures for bringing the situation rapidly to normal, permit me to say that the minority community of this locality will co-operate whole-heartedly with all measures to be taken by you in this regard.

Yours faithfully,
Tarapada Ghosh
VICE-PRESIDENT
MANICKTOLLAH CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Copy forwarded to D. C North & O. C Beliaghatta P. S.

MEMORANDUM

1. On 27th March at about 1-30 P. M. the son of Surendra Nath Dutt of Charakdanga Road, a jeweller was stabbed to death near the Beliaghatta Sub-Area Rationing office. His father Surendra Nath Dutt was also assaulted but he narrowly escaped from death.
2. Another up country Hindu was also assaulted with knife on 27. 3. 47 near the aforesaid Ration office in the afternoon.

3. On 28. 3. 47 Bus No. 36 moving towards Sealdah was attacked near the junction of Chamru Singh Lane and Narkeldanga Main Road at about 9.30 a.m.
4. On 28. 3. 47 in the forenoon a resident of 43, Sastitala Road, the cousin of Bata Kristo Panja was assaulted with brick bat.
5. On 28. 3. 47 in the forenoon a boy i.e. a worker of Glass Blowing works located at 4 Sastitala Road was attacked with knife but he narrowly escaped death.
6. On 28. 3. 47 near 9 Sir Goorodas Road a grandson of Mr.J.N. Mitra, an advocate and a very influential member of the previous peace committee whose name is Benoy Dutt was stabbed to death and his dead body was found on the Mogul Bagan.
7. On the morning of 29.3.47 attempt was made to demolish premises No.39 Sastitala Road belonging to Benode Ghosh and some doors and windows of the same were taken away. The locks of the adjoining premises which were lying vacant were also broken.
8. On 29.3.47 at about 3.30 P.M. the servant of Dr. Ariff, Ashutosh Das by name was waylaid near 7 Sastitala Road and stabbed on the neck and before much mischief could be done the local people rushed there and chased the ruffians who bolted away after throwing some brickbats at them. A few minutes after the Muslim mob gathered on the maidan by premises No. 54, Sastitala Road, on the back of premises No. 53-49 Sastitala Road and behind premises No.41 and 43 Sastitala Road and began to throw stones at the premises on the Sastitala Road. They throw bomb on the courtyard of premises No.43, Sastitola Road, used fire arms and arrows and the local people with great difficulty drove them away. The Police and Military accidentally came and brought the situation under control. The miscreants tried to scale the boundary wall towards the north of 43 Sastitala Road and threatened the inmates of the house with deadly weapons.
9. On 0.3.47 several cases of arson were committed in the Bury's Bustee on Motilal Sen's Lane and Narikeldanga North Road by the Muslim hooligans. The hooligans also set fire to houses on Motilal Sen's Lane and Narkeldanga North Road on and from 28.3.47. A brick wall partitioning the Hindu Bustee and the Muslim Bustee of Saha Babus at Moti Lal Sen's Lane bordering Narkeldanga North Road was also demolished and when the Bustee people went to reconstruct it the ruffians did not allow them to reconstruct it. The Police and Military stood there as mere sightseers and did not help the people in the said work of reconstruction.

10. On 1.4.47 a Nepali, an employee of B.A. Railway was kindnapped at about 3.30 P.M. near the Beliaghata Rationing office and taken inside Chamru Sing's Lane who still, as alleged, untraced. His companion Nepali somehow scrambled out of the clutches of the ruffians and when the local people chased them the ruffians ascended the B.A. Railway line with deadly weapons, threw stones on the passers by on Narkeldanga Main Road and attempted to attack the house of late Babu Bhola Nath Mondal on Joy Narayan T.P. Lane. They also tried to do mischief to the Down Assam Mail. But prompt arrival of Military eased the situation and saved the people.
11. On 2.4.47 another attempt was made to molest and stab a Hindu pedestrian at about 8 a.m. near about the Beliaghata Rationing Office who run away for his life and then trouble originated. pelting of stones, brickbats began. But the Military's immediate arrival saved the situation. An wood workshop in front of No.3 Sastitala Road was set fire to by the inmates of the Muslim to the west of the workshop. Fortunately the fire was promptly extinguished by the local men.
12. The C.M. accompanied by Dr. Mukherjee, Mr. Kron Sankar Roy and the police officers came to the locality Sastitala Road on 30.3.47 at about 5.30 P.M. held conference at 31 Sastitala Road with selected local leaders of both the communities. The C.M. requested the leaders of both communities to help to maintain peace by exercising their sobering influence on the more exuberant members of their respective communities. The C.M. appreciated that the posting of military Pickets at strategic points in the Narkeldanga Main Road, Sastitala Road Joynarayan T.P. Lane and Sir Gooroodas Road would contribute towards bringing the situation on rapidly to normal and accordingly he promised to place the pickets at the points mentioned in an agreed list handed over to him in the confarence. On 31.3.47, 1.4.47 and 2.4.47 the situation in the locality continued to remain calm except for the few incidents mentioned above which, it is thought, would not have ocured had the promised pickets been posted and for frequent patrol by Military Squads undertaken as was done in the last October- November disturbances which brought the situation rapidly to normal. At about 2.45 p.m. on 2.4.47 the C.M. alone with Dr. S.P. Mookerjee, Mr. K.S. Roy and some other members of the Riots Consultative Committee with the D.C.North, D.C. Peace, O.C. Beliaghata and other police officials visited Sastitala Road and discussed the situation. The inhabitants stressed once again the need of placing of Pickets and/or more frequent patrolling of military squads of the affected area for a

rapid improvement of the situation as due to slight set back in the situation owing to isolated incidents since the first visit of the C.M. on 30.3.47, the only outlet of the people of the locality via the crossing of Joynarayan T.P. Lane and Narkeldanga Main Road was dominated by the hooligans, the deputationists requested the C.M. to open up for safe travel by pedestrians or buses and other vehicles either the route through the Narkeldanga Main Road and Gas Street through Upper Circular Road, or pending that a temporary route through Narkeldanga Main Road -- Charakdanga Road -- Canal Bridge -- Beliaghatta Road -- Railway Bridge -- Beliahgatta Road -- Lower Circular Road (Sealdah). Since the visit of the C.M on 2.4.47 police pickets have been noticed near the Sastitala Mandir and near the junction of Sastitala Road and Narkeldanga Main Road.

13. All other question of great moment is the safeguarding of practically all Hindu houses containing personal effects in Motilal Sen's Lane, Sir Gooroodas Road on the eastern side of the Railway Bridge, and Narkeldanga North and a few houses in Sastitala Road which have been completely evacuated by their inmates.

Tarapada Ghosh
16, Sastitala Road,
Narikeldanga, Calcutta
2. 4. 47.
Phone No.B.B.4051

4

Dear Dr. Mookerji,

Apropos the few written points that I sent you this morning through Dhiren Babu and also your visit to this locality with the C.M. this afternoon, for which the inhabitants of this place are deeply grateful to you all, I have to say that Police Pickets have been noticed in certain places in Sastitala since about 6 P.M. and that the Military patrolling Sastitala Road more frequently than in the last few days. A concise Memorandum on the situation is being sent to the Consultative Committee through you by S.J. Tarapada Ghosh, B.L. pleader and Vice President of the local Congress Committee. You will be kept informed from time to time about developments in this area.

2. One question that now requires immediate solution is on arterial route between this locality and Calcutta proper for safe and unmolested ingress and egress of the vast population, who are completely marooned here. I therefore suggest, on behalf of numerous residents of this locality the following :-

(I) OPENING OF THE RAJA BAZAR ROUTE.

For obvious reasons it is impossible for pedestrian and vehicular traffic to traverse in safety the distance either way between the junction of Sastitala Road and Narikeldanga Main Road and Gas Street and Upper Circular Road (Raja Bazar). It is suggested that strong Military Pickets be posted at the following points-

Crossing Sastitala Road and Narkeldanga Main Road, Front of Beliaghata Sub-Area Rationing Office on Narkeldanga Main Road, the Eastern approach to the Canal Bridge on Narkeldanga Main Road, Crossing of Gas Street and Raja Dinendra Street and crossing of Gas Street and Upper Circular Road (Raja Bazar). Secondly, arrangement should be for frequent patrolling of the route by mobile Military Squads. Thirdly, the footpath on this route should be cleared of all vendors, who should be made to vend their commodities in appropriate places marked for the purpose ; these itinerant shops form nuclei of small congregations of people. Fourthly, ensuring by the pickets or the mobile squads in this route strict conformity of Section 144 by the people on this route.

(II) ROUTE VIA BELIAGHATTA ROAD.

This route may, as an alternative, be kept open for the people of this locality pending the opening of the Raja Bazar Route. This route is as follows :-

Through Narkeldanga Main Road (at the crossing of Sastitala) -- Charakdanga Road -- Canal Bridge -- Beliaghata Road -- Railway Bridge -- Beliaghata Road -- Lower Circular Road (Sealdah). For this Route Military pickets require posting at the following points. Crossing Narkeldanga Main Road and Sastitala Road. Crossing Narkeldanga Main Road and Joynarayan T.P. Lane (B.A.. Railway Bridge), crossing Narkeldanga Main Road and Charakdanga Road and patrolling of this portion of the Narkeldanga Main Road by Mobile Military Squads.

3. Kindly note that due to our complete isolation from the outside world the most important problem of replenishment of Bazar supplies has become very acute. In this view of the situation it is essential that not even a day should be allowed to pass to open up either of the above routes.

Thanking you for the active interest taken by you for the welfare of this locality.

Yours Sincerely,
S.N.Sinha

5

Dr. S. P. Mookerjee,
77, Ashutosh Mukherji Road
Calcutta.

To The President and Member of the Riot Consultation
Committee, Calcutta

For the attention of Dr. Shyama Prosad Mukerjee.

On the 28th March, at about 1-30 p.m. when the adult males were in their respective places of work and the students were in schools and Colleges, Kankurgachi 2nd Lane was attacked from south-west and north corners by the Muslims of the adjacent places. They used bombs, spears, arrows and even Guns and pistols. They were warded off by a handful of men who were attracted to the spot by the wailings of children and women.

On the 30th March, at noon, a cottage of a widow at the junction of Kankurgachi 1st Lane and Kankurgachi Road was arsoned by the Muslims of Kankurgachi Road.

On the 31st March at about 10-30 A.M. the Muslims again made a mass attack on the Kakurgachi 2nd Lane and 1st bye-lane, where the Corporation school is situated. The Hindu houses were broken and looted. Another attack was repeated at about 2 P.M. This time the Muslim were armed with guns and rifles and fired at the Hindu inmates of houses close by. One lady, Pramatha Babu's wife, at 25/5 Kankurgachi 3rd Lane, Satya Maity of 3 Kankurgachi 2nd lane, Jyotish Das Gupta of 20 Kankurgachi 3rd Lane, Sudhir Santra of 20 Kankurgachi 2nd lane and a few others received bullet wounds. Some of the wounded were removed to Calcutta Medical College and other hospitals by the Ambulance. Persons, less seriously injured, got first aid at the National Infirmary hospital situated at the junction of Kankurgachi 3rd Lane Maniktala Main Road.

A wall dividing Kankurgachi 3rd Lane and Kankurgachi Road in the south has been demolished by the Muslims and portions of the 2nd lane being vacated by the Hindoos are being occupied by the Muslims from time to time. The house of Jagdeswar Karmakar in 37 Kankurgachi Road has been completely burnt and his cows and belongings looted. The house of Dr. Dhiren Ghatak at Kankurgachi 2nd lane has been looted and his IDOL (SITOLA) desecrated.

Usual profession of many men is at stand still, as a result there is suffering regarding food RICE, DAL, ATTA and POTATO may kindly be supplied free to Dr. S. Roy, National Infirmary, 189 Manicktola Main Road to be distributed under his supervision.

The Muslim and Hindu localities meet at the following places.

- (a) Kankurgachi Road and Kankurgachi 2nd Lane near the Rly. line.
- (b) Kankurgachi 2nd Lane (a small bye lane) end of which meets in the south with Kankurgachi Road.
- (c) Kankurgachi 1st lane joins Kankurgachi Road near the Nurjahan Nursery.
- (d) On the Manicktola Main Road near the Mosque in the east of the Railway line.
- (e) Bagmari Lane and Maniktala Main Road crossing (Near National Infirmary).

A MAP IS ENCLOSED, RED SHOWING MUSLIM BUSTEES AND BLUE THE HINDU AREA. We pray that at the above mentioned (a), (b), (c) and (d) places sitting and walking guards are placed till normalcy returns.

Bus No. 13 keeps us connected with the city. Since 28th March '47 it is not working. If they are induced to come and four military men are employed on the busses up and down from Circular Road to Bengal Chemical confidence will slowly revive and this will subdue rumours, allaying fears of both the communities.

Corporation men are not working. This being an area where most of the latrines are kutcha, are not being cleared and streets and drains are not being attended, resulting in an unhygienic atmosphere.

Enquiries to be made in this connection may kindly be made in conjunction with the undersigned.

with highest regards.

Yours faithfully,
Lakshmi Narayan Chowdhary
45, Kankurgachi 2nd Lane.

3. 4. 47

6

To His Excellency the Most Hon'ble
Sir Frederick Burrows,
Governor of Bengal

Re : Safety measures in the riot-affected areas under P.S. Beliaghata,
Calcutta

The humble petition of the inhabitants residing at the Manicktola Main Road, Sitalatola Lane, Narikeldanga North Road, Mohesh Barick Lane, Sastitola Road, etc., PS. Beliaghata, in the suburb of Calcutta.

Most respectfully shweth,

1. That the inhabitants residing in the localities mentioned above have been experiencing great deal of trouble and hardship owing to the Zooloom and high-handedness of the Muslims living in and around the localities.
2. That there have been many criminal acts for the last four days. Many Hindu have been stabbed to death on the Manicktola Main Rd, Sir Gurudas Rd, and other places and their houses burnt down by the Muslims. To crown all, the police, sergeants and officers are acting in league with the Muslims. They mercilessly belaboured and arrested many men and even boys, who were in their houses far away from the places of occurrences on 28.3.47. Further they entered the houses of many gentlemen and fired at the inmates therein at Sitalatola Lane and other places.
3. That the Hindus in the above-mentioned places are in a minority and as such they can not evidently take any aggressive part in the riot, but it is a pity that police arrested the Hindus when their houses brick-batten and burnt down by the aggressive majority community.
4. That on the very nose of the police, Hindus are being stabbed on the highways, thereby making those impassable. That the Coffeekhanas, hotels, and soap factories are the rendezvous of the murderers, but no step appears to have been taken by the proper authority to free those places from unrully elements.
5. That again and again acts of arson are being committed by the side of the houses of an influential Muslim leader at Narkeldanga North Rd.
6. That the Muslims used Double Barrel guns in firing at the inhabitants of the Suribagan bustee at Narkeldanga North Rd on 28. 3. 47.
7. That on the above-mentioned date near the Ry. Bridge on the Manicktola Main Rd (Kankurgachi) many Muslims attacked home-coming Bengal Chemical Staff of whom many were injured and did not hesitate to murder a boy at Sir Gurudas Rd.
8. That your petitioners are relying on the wisdom, impartiality and spirit of justics of your Excellency, humbly beseech early consideration of the position of the riot affected areas mentioned above.
9. That your petitioners pray that your Excellency may be pleased to command an investigation into the facts stated above and order the authorities concerned to take proper steps to safeguard the lives and properties of the people, who still live in the above-mentioned localities, inspite of Muslim-Cum- Police 'zoolooms' and high- handedness.

And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Dated, we have the honour, with great respect,
 Calcutta, Sir
 The 29th March '47. Your Excellency's most obedient servants,
 Sd/ Subodh Ch. Ghosh, 46, Sitalatola Lane
 Hrishi Krishna Dutta, 44, Sitalatola Lane

7

To,
 The Magistrate
 Sealdah Police Court.,
 Calcutta.

Dated, Calcutta The 29th March, 47.

Sir,

we the undersigned, beg to bring the following facts before your honour for necessary action.

1. That, we, are the inhabitants of Bibibagan (off Harinath Dey Road) under the Belliaghata Police Station area. Last night at about 10-10 P.M. (when the Curfew was in force) brick bats were thrown upon our houses situated on the northern side of our homestead where the Bustee stands. The matter was reported immediately to the Deputy Police Commissioner's office situated nearby on Upper Circular Road over the Telephone by Mr. Harendra Nath Majumder, Advocate of 7 Ram Mohan Roy Road at about 10-15 p.m. and the matter was taken down in the diary by the police.
2. That, sometimes afterwards some 'Pathan policemen' appeared at the scene accompanied by some Muslim Policemen and some Muslim inhabitants of the locality named (1) Hanif (ex-police driver) (2) Md. Sukkul, (3) Md. Safi (4) Md. Sultan and others who are new comers to the Bustee and instead of arresting the miscreants or taking any such steps forcibly entered the house of Late Rathin Nath Ghosh situated at 23/1 Harinath Dey Road now rented to Babu Dharendra Nath Bose and arrested all the inmates of the house on identification by such Muslim policeman and Muslim inhabitants leaving the ladies only under lock and key.

So instead of cheking the persons assaulting, these Pathan policemen oppressed the peaceful inhabitants of the locality who prayed for help to the police.

We therefore pray your honour to make a personal enquiry into the matter and oblige.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servants Ashutosh Chakrabarty and
six other inhabitants of Harinath Dey Road

8

Ward 30

To
The President
Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

Sir,

We the Hindu residents of Belgachia beg to bring the following facts before you for the protection of life and property of the Hindu of this area.

At the junction of Belgachia Road & Indra Biswas Road there is a huge Muslim Bustee known as Chatu Babu Bustee and inhabited by nearly 10000 Muslims.

Continuous stabbing and acid throwing upon the Hindu passers by are going on by these Muslims, at the junction of Indra Biswas Rd & Belgachia Rd. in presence of the police. We are giving below several instances which will corroborate the above statement.

That on 27/3/47 at about 8-30 p.m. acid was thrown by the Muslims in the car of Dr. Makhanlal Dey M.B of 12 Indra Biswas Rd in presence of the Police. The place of occurrence was the Jn. of Indra Biswas Rd & Belgachia Rd. Dr Dey was immediately admitted to the Carmichael Hospital, Lost his eye and is still ailing there.

That on 28/3/47 at about 4 p.m a Hindu Rikshaw puller was stabbed at the very same place in presence of the Police. The Hindu passenger of the Rikshaw was dragged inside the Muslim Bustee and killed there. When the Rikshaw puller was also going to be dragged inside the Bustee, the Hindu boys of the locality ran to save the life of the Rikshaw puller. In order to prevent them indiscriminate gun fire was started by Saukat and Murshed whose, residences is situated just at the Jn. of Indra Biswas Rd & Belgachia Rd. nine persons received Gun shot injuries and at once received to Carmichael Hospital together with the puller. All of them were admitted as indoor patient and are being there. The authentic Hospital report may be referred to for

ascertaining the gravity of the case. Not only the Police failed to take any action against Saukat & Murshed but even refused to record the evidences of those gentlemen who were the eye witnesses of the whole scene.

That on 29/3/47 at about 3 p.m. a Hindu passer-by was stabbed at the very same place by the Muslims of the Bustee and that also in presence of the Police. Dr. Subodh Ghose M.B. of Anath Nath Dev Lane gave him first aid and really was responsible to stop the severe bleeding, (the result of which might have been fatal). Several Hindu shops at the Jn. of Indra Biswas Rd & Belgachia Rd were looted and set on fire in the presence of the Police.

Instand of giving protection to the Hindu minority the Police made indiscriminate arrest of Hindu boys from their houses and shops. Even some of them were actually sleeping in their houses and some of them were grossly engaged in their respective avocations. Not only this, some responsible police Officers informed the local gentlemen that the Hindu minority might be attacked by the huge Muslim majority from north and south ; In that case there will be a general massacre of Hindus which we shudder to contemplate. The only way to save the lives of the Hindus of this place is to hand over this particular area to the Military Authority.

Over and above all these, the Govt. of Bengal is going to bring several thousands of Riot Refugees in the heart of this Hindus locality, by accomodating them in the Military Transit Camp, Talla Park, which has been very recently derequisitioned by the Military Authority.

If this thing is not stopped, not only there will be breach of peace, but also severe epidemic.

We earnestly request you to move H. E. The Governor of Bengal and The Hon. Chief Minister, for the safety of the whole locality.

Shishir kumar Bhattacharjya
55/1D Anath Nath Dev Lane

Kalipada Bhattacharjya
20, Anath Nath Dev Lane

Kalyan Kar
57 Anath Dev Lane.

Yours faithfully,
Satchidananda Gupta
50/A Anath Nath Dev Lane
Nityananda Banerjee
46 Anath Dev Lane,
and four others

9

To
The Chief Minister,
Government of Bengal

Re :- Police Zoolooms in the Manicktola area under Belegkata P.S.

Sir,

We the inhabitants of the locality, beg to report that yesterday at about 2-30. p.m. after a predominantly Hindu Bustee was set on fire by some unknown persons, some Pathan police accompanied with two sergeants forcibly entered the premises nos. 232/A, 232/B, 234/A, 234/B, 228/B, Vivekananda Rd, 2/3, Jugipara Lane, 1, Jugipara Lane, 4 & 13/B, Jugipara Bye Lane and mercilessly assaulted the inmates of those houses irrespective of males and females, by the help of gun-butts, battons, slaps, blows and even kicks and used most indecent and abusive language. The following ladies—Sm. Probabati Bose, Sm. Sorojini Mitra, Sm. Urmila Ghosh, Sm. Kamala Ghosh, Sm. Promila Ghosh, were assaulted and the following ladies—Sm. Chhyalata Ghosh (pregnant), Sm. Ranibala Ghosh, Sm. Radharani Ghosh, Sm. Promila Ghosh, all residing at 2/3/A, Jugipara Lane, received injuries and the following gentlemen were arrested after being very badly treated :-

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Haradhan Bhattacharjya, | 4, Jugipara Bye Lane |
| 2. | „ Kalipada Pal, | 13/B, Do. |
| 3. | „ Robindranath Pal, | Do. |
| 4. | „ Kalitosh Sengupta, | 232/A, Vivekananda Rd. |
| 5. | „ Keshab Ch. Bhattacharjya
(released on personal recognisance bond, Telegraph Master, Central Telegraph Office) | 232/B, Vivekananda Rd. |
| 6. | „ Mohini Mohan Bose | 234/C, Do. |
| 7. | „ Benimohan Das, | Do. |
| 8. | „ Nirmal Kumar Ghosh | 2/3/A, Jugipara Lane, |
| 9. | „ Suren Ghosh | Do. |
| 10. | „ Kesto Ghosh, | Do. |
| 11. | „ Amal Ghosh, | Do. |
| 12. | „ Haripada Ghosh, | Do. |
| 13. | „ Sitanath Ghoshal, | 2, Jugipara Lane. |

- | | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| 14 | „ | Gatikrishna Bose, | 1, Jugipara Lane. |
| 15 | „ | Hridoy Kr. Bose | Do. |
| 16 | „ | Anil Bose | Do. |
| 17 | „ | Santosh Kumar Ghosh | Do. |
| 18 | „ | Kalachand Saha, | Do. |
| 19 | „ | Rajeswar Saha, | Do. |
| | | and others. | |

The above houses were entered and the above acts done by the police because some local Muslims falsely told them that the inmates of those houses were responsible for the fire. We place these facts in expectation that the matter would be properly investigated and culprits punished. What has been done is against humanity, justice, and against all law and we hope you would listen to our grievances and redress them. Unless prompt action and enquiry takes place at once the tension between the communities would increase.

Calcutta,
The 3rd. of April '47

We have the honour to be
Sir
Your most obedient Servants
Ananda Prasad Bhattacharya and
20 others of Jugipara Lane

10

The Advisory Committee
Government of Bengal

Sir,

We the undersigned are some members of the Hindu Community residing at and near Simla Road, which is thick with members of the other Community. From the beginning of the unhappy riots dating from the 16th August last, we have been continually terrorised and intimidated by these very neighbours with whom we lived since our boyhood. Being a minority in this locality, we have been subjected to all sorts of indignities which would stagger humanity. Stones are thrown into our rooms, abusive language is often used, our women folk are often taunted and abused, our doors and windows are knocked, firearms are raised from some houses to hush us into submission, explosive substances are used to attract police or military who came only to threaten us,

with the intent that we should vacate these houses. Under the circumstances, we are at a loss to understand how to stay on here without the help of you who profess to find out means for redress and rehabilitation.

We therefore pray that you will be kind enough to come to this place and see with your own eyes how the matter stands here, and what help you may extend to this riot-affected locality.

Awaiting your kind response

Yours Faithfully
Sudhir Kr. Mitra
and six others

11

To
Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee
President, Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

Sir,

I, Tinkari Naskar, S/O late Ramtaran Naskar of village Sanatanpur, P.O. Garia, Thana Tollygunj, work in the Chloride Electrical Storage Co (I) Ltd., Entally.

On 28.3.47 at about 4-30 p.m. myself with all other staff of the said godown while getting back from work by the office lorry was attacked by a Muslim mob just near and behind the main gate of the company, well equipped with the deadly weapons. First of all, I heard Babu Lakshman Ch. Bhattacharjee and Mr. Kesauy who is our Asstt. Manager and Manager respectively, shouting 'Do not kill, Do not kill'. They were sitting by the side of the driver.

On hearing this I looked at front saw we were surrounded by a mob, well equipped with deadly weapons, and Lakshman babu being attacked and his left arm being cut off and dragged by the leg. Seeing that I got afraid and jumped off the lorry and ran on inside the godown and hidden myself inside the packing grass. There I stayed whole night and heard several times people coming in and shouting each other that they have finished 3 persons including Lakshman Babu. At about 5-30 p.m. I fled away and came to Sealdah station.

Tinkari Naskar
Vill : Sanatanpur
Dt. 6.4.47

12

To
The Commissioner of Police
Lalbazar police Headquarters,
Calcutta

Sir,

We, the undersigned residents of Paikpara Row, Paikpara Raja Manindra Road, and Sarba Khan Road beg to represent the following for your kind consideration :-

1. That in the pre-notification, dated the 18th, January, '47 the inhabitants (Non-Muslims) of certain specified areas, including Paikpara Row, Paikpara Raja Manindra Road, Sarba Khan Road and Dutta Bazar, have been served with a collective fine of Rs. 6,000/- only.

2. That the fine is not remitted yet, although the residents applied to yourself, in an application signed by 82 residents of this locality in a registered cover of February, '47.

3. That the incidents which took place here on the 1st. April, '47 in the early hours of the morning, between 2 to 5 A.M., (some of which are cited here) go to show, that not only we do not at all merit the fine imposed on us, but also we merit and deserve a special protection from troubling elements, as will appear from the statement below :-

4(a) Although there was a case of (Hindu) stabbing on the 31st, instant almost before the premises no. 26 & 27, Raja Manindra Road, almost before the police, no arrest was made; and that a number of men (Hindus) of Duttabagan Bustee (contiguous to our area) were arrested on the 31st. March. It is reported, that the bustee-men, out of whom the arrests were made, were on the same date, threatened by local hooligans who were making preparations for the assault of the 1st. April, referred to elsewhere in this application.

4(b) That the next morning (1st. April) some huts in the Hindu bustee were set fire to, as threatened by the hooligans, and although there was firing all the time, the Fire-Brigade was not called.

4(c) That the firing continued for three hours, re-inforced by exploding rockets containing steel splinters, probably from 26 & 27, Raja Manindra Road, wherefrom a Motor van, looking like a police vehicle, was several times seen, to ply towards the place of occurrence (Duttabagan Bustee).

4(d) A Hindu doctor was killed in his house as a result of the firing, and Hindu resident had a bullet or splinter wound, and was brought to the local doctor for first aid.

4(e) The Dy. commissioner of Police and his assistants who graced the locality by their inspection on the after-noon of April 1st., may vouch for the correctness of most of these statements.

5. That under the circumstances you will be pleased to find out which way the blame lies, and thus remit the collective fine which should be borne by parties other than the applicants, if at all.

Paikpara
April 3rd, '47

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servants
Prakash Chandra and seven others

13

Paresnath Saha of Balligunj Coal Siding, Talbagan, C/o Tribeni Singh reports :-

His mother Sm. Haridasi (aged 55 yrs) is missing from 2, Tiljala Rd. She was attempting to escape to her son at 4 p.m. on 29-3-47 when she was intercepted by Moslem Goondas at Rifle R. Her servant Gourilall was accompanying her. She was proceeding in two rickshaws, one carrying her and the other was carrying her belongings. The rickshaws belonged to Roshan Mian of 4 Tiljala Rd. The rickshawpullers were Imam and Khudabux. There was another man Khalil who was assisting the rickshawpullers. Khalil's address is 8 Dihisrirampore Rd. Khalil and the rickshawpullers and Gourilall reported that the assailants threatened them with daggers. The hooligans got hold on the rickshaws and Gourilall. Gourilall escaped. Gourilall can identify the goondas if he can see them. The old lady was not heard of since. The police at Ballygunge P.S. was informed. The police told them to come on the tomorrow.

14

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
Ditto	Sj. Haren Majumdar, 7, Ram Mohan Roy Lane	Hindu houses raided by Pathan soldiers and Anglo-Indian Sergeants who assaulted male and female members and also molested the ladies. Unlawful arrest, House-breaking. 4, Jugipara bye Lane and 232, 234A and 234B Vivekananda Road were raided by Pathan soldiers and Anglo-Indian sergeants who assaulted the inmates, male and female and also molested the females. The raiders entered the said houses by breaking open the closed doors. There was a similar occurrence a few days ago.	North Calcutta

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
	Sj.Manindranath Sarbadhikary Santosh Bis-cuit co.	Assault by Anglo-Indian sergeants and Pathan police. Ladies molested, wrongful arrests made.	Do

Pickets should be posted at

66/67, Bagmari Road, Calcutta, at the office of
The Bengal Acid Mfg. Co. Ltd

Pickets should be posted at

Chandni Chowk, Dharmatollah

1. Abandoned houses occupied by Bihari refugees.
2. Influencing non Bangalees under Bengal.
3. For it N.F. Jagadish Sinha

Appeals from helpless Hindus to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee

House breaking ; Assault ; Loot ; Mischief ; Intimidation :

The house was under lock and key and under the charge and care of several Durwans who reside in the ground floor of house. Last night a mob of Muslim Goondas raided the house into which they got in by breaking open the doors and locks. They mercilessly assaulted one of the Durwans and the other Durwans escaped into the Scottish Cemetery in the neighbourhood. The hooligans carried away as much furniture and other fittings of the house as they could and then smashed and destroyed the rest. They threatened the Durwans before they left at 6 A.M. that they would kill the Durwans if the latter came back again.

Mr. Auddy informed the police authorities at the Beniapookur P.S. who pleaded their inability to post any pickets. He then approached the D.C. Lallbazar and submitted a written statement of the above facts. The D.C. Lallbazar promised to post pickets.

The fact as such was narrated by N.R.Auddy, a respectable gentleman by a letter to Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, Member, Government of Bengal Constituted Riot Advisory Committee, which is stated next.

N. R. Auddy

“KRISHNA-KUNJA”
74, PARK STREET
Calcutta, 3rd April/1947

The Hon. Dr. Shyama Prosad Mookherjee

Honoured Sir,

With due respect and humble submission I beg to inform you and place on record that yesterday at about 12 o'clock mid-night a gang of about 40//50 Armed Muslim Hooligans with various kinds of weapons, house breaking implements, torches, acid, soda water bottles etc., entered in my house at above address by breaking open the lock of one of the main gates, after assaulting my four Durwans (Nepali) who were on duty and inspite of their efforts to prevent them.

One of the Nepali Durwans was severely assaulted and mercilessly beaten and the rests were asked to quit and vacate the premises forthwith, leaving the house to them, failing, they were threatened to be killed and thereafter the miscreants will carry on with the depradations. Without paying heed to their such threats, the Durwans tried their best and took every possible precaution to prevent them by going inside locking the inner doors from inside, but the Hooligans made their way in by breaking open the same and chased and fired at the Durwans, who finding no other alternative to save them, scaled down the Western Boundary Wall of the premises and got into the Scottish Cemetery situated by the premises and saved their lives for the night by hiding from the hands of such Armed Hooligans.

The Hooligans, finding the Durwans ran away, thought themselves quite safe, carried on their works and depradations by breaking open all the locks, clamps, safeties etc., (total about 25 in number) of all the doors, entered inside the rooms (both up and down stairs) broken all the Almirahs, Safes, Doors, Windows, Trunks etc., damaged the Electric Lines and took away almost everything they could lay their hands in, the value of which has not yet been ascertained, leaving the house in the early hours of the morning (i.e. about 6 A.M.)

Finding the Hooligans gone, the Durwans came in and found the place looted, ransacked, damaged, shattered etc., and in a hell of a state. They came out in the day light and tried to go to the Beniapurkur Thana to inform the Police, but prevented by some of the Hooligans still waiting just outside the gate, who told them not to come out and go to the Thana, otherwise they will be killed. The Hooligans then asked the Durwans to leave and vacate the place before sun set this evening (i.e. today 3.4.47) if they at all want to save their lives, making way for them to take away the rests of the booties left behind and to take possession of the house, failing, they will be killed at once.

Being unable to come out by the main gate, being guarded by some of the Hooligans, two of the Durwans made their way out through the Cemetery

and reported the whole matter to me. I forthwith intimated this to the O.C. (Mr. Ansari) and Jyotish Baboo of the Beniapukur Thana (being my jurisdiction) who told me that they are investigating into the matter; soon after, two Inspectors came to the spot and went round the whole house and gone away after necessary inspection. I contacted the said Offices again, requesting to give necessary help and take such action as necessary and to post police pickets on the spot till such time normal conditions prevail and to protect the lives and properties from the hands of such unlawful Hooligans. In reply I was told by them "Sorry, cannot do anything, what help can we give, no picket is available and cannot be given."

Being dis-satisfied with his such reply and without finding any other alternative, I twice sought interviews with Mr. Suhrawardy-the Chief Minister, but refused. Eventually, I had to see the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Lalbazar (H.Q.) explaining the situation and last night's sad incident, with a petition. He forth with passed orders on the O.C.-Beniapukur Thana to take every precaution necessary and report. This is the only action I have been able to take.

There is no Section 144 or Curfew in our area (Park Circus) which is always a disturbed area. Even there, the Hooligans in a body and in large numbers always freely move about, assemble, come out and attack the innocent and peace-loving people of the locality, break open the houses, damage, destroy, loot, put fire into the houses and contents therein, any time during the day and night. They do not even care the Police or Military and defy them. Police is quite reluctant in the interests of the innocent peace-loving Hindu inhabitants of the locality and these Hindus without fault of theirs, are often taken to tasks by the Hooligans and the Police take no action when informed. Owing to such serious oppressions by the Muslim Hooligans off and on, almost every Hindu inhabitant of the locality has to leave their Hearths and Homes with the fear of being molested and killed by such Hooligans. Whenever, any Police help is sought, it is not given and deliberately refused. The lives and properties of the Hindus in the locality are not safe and always at stake and the Government does not care at all to take any action for their safety and protection.

What is the meaning of all these? Are our lives and properties safe? Are we to live under British Raj or in the hands of the Muslim Hooligans? Are the Government going to save the lives and properties of the innocent public or they are allowed to remain in the hands of such Hooligans and to be molested, oppressed and killed and property looted, damaged, destroyed, burnt etc.? Immediate justice wanted. Are we to get such justice?

The above facts have duly been reported to you forthwith and which is hereby confirmed.

In the circumstances, you are requested to move immediately into matter and take every step necessary to eradicate such evils and protect the lives and properties of such terrifically oppressed Hindus of the locality and give ventilation of the facts in the paper for the information of general public.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this, Any communications you wish to have may please be made at the undernoted address.

N. R. Auddy
13, Clive Street
Calcutta
Phone : 3156, Calcutta

I have the Honor to be
Sir,
Yours Faithfully
N.R.Auddy

TELEGRAMS : RASAYAN, CALCUTTA

TELEPHONE : 6701

BENGAL CHEMICAL & PHARMACEUTICAL WORKS LTD.

THE PIONEER INDIAN HOUSE OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES

MANIKTALA MAIN ROAD, CALCUTTA

2nd April, 1947

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee
77, Ashutosh Mookerjee Road,
Calcutta

Dear Sir,

We have to bring to your notice that due to the current riots it has become impossible for this company to work either in its Maniktala Factory and office or in its registered office at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue. The number of workers at the registered office is about 100 and that at our Maniktala Factory and office about 2500.

The disturbances and tension in Chittaranjan Avenue in front of our office (almost opposite Islamia Hospital) must be known to you. The situation became untenable from the evening of Wednesday, the 26th March when on friendly advice of a respectable Mohamedan gentleman of the locality we had to clear our offices at about 3-30 p.m. and evacuate our men from there in lorries requisitioned from our factory for the purpose. We worked with a depleted staff then on Thursday and Friday very few of our constituents could call at our place; even constituents for whom cheques were made ready did not care to call to receive payment.

The position at our Maniktala establishment became very serious since afternoon of Friday, the 28th March, the road leading to its viz. Maniktala Main Road between the points from Canal Bridge to overhead Rly. Bridge being in the grip of hooligans who had been throwing brickbats to plying lorries and cars. On Friday, the situation deteriorated considerably and the

staff at our Maniktala became very restive to return home. The company provided two lorries to carry them to Upper Circular Road. But these lorries in the first attempt failed to proceed beyond the overhead Railway Bridge as hooligans held sway on the stretch of the maniktala Main Road beyond the overhead Railway Bridge upto the Canal Bridge. Later these lorries attempted again but when returning to our factory were waylaid and damaged, the driver driving at top speed escaped away serious personal injury and some cuts from broken wind-screen glass which was smashed by some flying brickbats.

Since Saturday, the 29th March both our office at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue and our Maniktala Factory and office had to be kept closed as none of the employees could be induced to face the danger attendant on their attempts to come to their duties.

This means a serious loss to the company and dislocation of all work in the factory and office. As you are aware this company supplies medicines and drugs to several Govt. Institutions, to various hospitals throughout India and this stoppage of all works will necessarily have a repercussion on the receipt of drugs and medicines by Govt. Institutions.

In the circumstances, we would request you to take immediate steps to render safe attendance by our staff to their respective duties at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue and at our Maniktala establishment. We would suggest to place an armed picket at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue and sufficient pickets to guarantee the safety of the passerby and running of motor cars and lorries between Canal Bridge and Railway Over Bridge on the Maniktala Main Road.

Rubber Stamp

Yours faithfully,
Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Ltd.
Sd/- illegible
Manager

77, Ashutosh Mookerjee Road
Calcutta
2nd April 1947

Dear Sir Frederick Burrows,

I enclose note dealing with some of the matters I discussed with your Excellency. I do hope you will kindly consider this and take necessary action.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- S.P.Mookerjee

1.4.47. Informer – Mr. M. N. Banerjee, Barrister-at-law

At Tangra near Philkhana or Gaukhana, Huges Road, we rescued more than 15 Dosads. Pathan Police went inside the bustee and shot dead several persons there and dragged their bodies to the pond nearby. The blood mark including the marks of dragging the dead bodies are still there.

We went at the request of the proprietors of the Good Luck Pictures at 55, Ezra Street.

It was alleged that Pathan police went inside the house and dragged the durwans and shot one of them. The owner fled by scaling the back-wall. At the bottom against the staircase clotted blood marks were found. During my stay there I was told by the Hindu Constables on duty that a Pathan V.C.O. threatened another durwan in their presence and told him that he would be killed. This fact was brought by me to the notice of Mr. Brahmachi A.C. who happened to be there at that time. The incident took place at about 1.30 p.m. yesterday (31.3.47).

Ward No. 19–Entally Police Station

Acts of hooliganism, arson, murder and looting committed by the Muslim mob in presence of the Pathan Police (armed guards) posted specially at the Guripara Mosque; situated between the Beliaghatta Main Road and Corporation Palmer Bridge Pumping Station.

A respectable Shikh gentleman, Jaswanta Singh by name, a-B. & A. Railway contractor, residing at 15 Palmer Bazar Road while passing through the Corporation thoroughfare emanating from Palmer Bazar Road was shot dead at about 2.30 P.M. on 29.3.47 by the Pathan Armed Police Guard posted at the Mosque situated near the Guripara Road as stated above. He was shot just two three minutes after he started from his residence on his motor cycle. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of Mr. Hyder, the Inspector-in-charge of the Entali Police Station. He was also shown the dead body and the motor cycle.

(2) It is also reported that another Punjabi and a Bengalee (both Hindus) were killed at the same place on the same date in the presence of the armed police guard.

Houses burnt and looted (loss of property in cash, kind, jewel etc.) on 28.3.47.

Ram Das, 7 Guripara Road bustee.

I. Moslem National Guards should be prevented from performing any police or other duties and should not be moving about in uniform.

I was assured by His Excellency that he had already passed orders that the Muslim National guards would not be used in any way by the police nor be allowed to function as such independently. They are reported to be moving about in trucks at night and being in uniform. they are not

easily distinguishable from the official forces. How can this be prevented? A few days ago a batch of Muslim National Guards forcibly picked up in their truck two constables from Lower Circular Rd., opposite Campbell Medical School on the alleged ground that the constables had failed to do their duties. The constables, it is understood, somehow managed to escape sometime later. They complained in writing but the matter has been hushed up and no steps taken against this new form of police-kidnapping. The file should be personally seen by His Excellency and drastic steps taken.

- II. Reports of attack and refusal to help on the part of the Punjabi and Pathan armed police are coming in. Reports of three such instances are enclosed. This had led to great panic and deterioration of the situation. I suggest that the cases should be immediately enquired into by some high-rank British Officer and steps taken against the persons involved. Further recruitment should be suspended pending examination of the question as to how far this new force has helped in the maintenance of peace. This is a most urgent matter as several hundreds new recruits are about to join.
- III. Mixed pickets must be posted at strategic points. H.E. suggested that each group may consist of four, two Hindus and two Muslims. Orders on this point should be issued today.
- IV. Roads and Bazars should be kept open and pickets should be placed at strategic points. Immediate experiment should be made with Dhuramtollah street and Corporation Street which Hindus dare not pass through and where shops have remained closed.
- V. In Howrah we saw a big collection of lethal weapons including guns and cartridges which were collected from inside a mosque. Our information is that in many mosques in Calcutta such collection have been kept. A surprise search of the mosques should be made by the military.
- VI. Mr. Doha's appointment as D.C.HQ. will be disastrous step. Similarly Howrah is in such a inflammable condition, an officer of the type of Mr. Abdullah of Noakhali fame should not be placed there. H.E. Should definitely intervene in these two cases. One of the D.C.s (North, South or H.Q.) should be a Hindu.
- VII. Civic Guards should be called out. Those who have been trained in the use of fire arms should be utilised. They may be mixed up communally. If armed pickets are short why should we not utilise the U.T.C. men or non-official Europeans who have been trained?
- VIII. Government of India should be asked for more Military help. If they refuse the responsibility for future deterioration will be their's.

DHURRUMTOLAH STREET

**The most affected place in this riot, in Central Calcutta.
Particularly from Jyoti Cinema to New Cinema.**

- a. Innumerable cases of stabbings.
- b. Forcibly dragging the passerby inside the bye lanes, articles looted or robbed, done to death by knife or other sharp instruments and then thrown in the main street or in the dustbin.
- c. shops looted.

Members of both the community have shops on both the sides of the street and particularly Chandney market is one of the principle markets of Calcutta where both the community have been doing business for long long years is practically wore a deserted appearance. Even small dalla-wallas scattered round the street cannot earn their livelihood. Foreign goonda elements are creating endless trouble much to the annoyance and inconvenience of shop-keepers of both the community. Many buses were smashed by throwing brickbats and other missiles. This particular street being a main thoroughfare is used by all the buses, trams and lacs lacs of passerby. It is very important that this route is kept well guarded.

Posting of guards at the following places will stop further mischief.

- a. Free School Street.
- b. Front of Jyoti Cinema.
- c. Front of Nilmoney Halder Lane.
- d. Front of Grant Street with special attention to all the approaches to the Chandney market.
- e. Chandney Chowk 1st Lane up to Ganesh Avenue.
- f. Madan Street (New New Cinema)
- g. Esplanade crossing.

ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL OF BENGAL

1. To appoint a Superintendent in the market.
2. To light all the places properly.
3. To appoint at least 12 armed guards and arrange to guard each gate day and night.
4. To arrange for a proper lavatory which can be used by the tenants as well as the customers.

HINDU VICTIMS IN THE RIOT

1. On 29/3/47, a Hindu waste-paper picker was stabbed by Muslims at about 2/30 p.m. near the dustbin at the x-ing of Khairu Lane and Mission Row Extension.

2. On 30/3/47 two Hindus were stabbed in front of Eastern Court, 29, Mission Row Extension at 10 a.m. by Muslims of the locality.
3. On the same day two Hindus were stabbed by Muslim in Mission Row Extension near Broadway Hotel.
4. On 31.3.47 5 Hindus passerby were stabbed and beaten by iron rods by Muslims at Phears Lane, near Chen Kuo Chinese school 83, Phears Lane, 3 of the half dead were thrown in the water tank opposite the school (inside a lane) and two half dead were thrown in the manhole. At about 12 a.m. the dead bodies were pulled out and despatched in a hand cart to an unknown place.
5. On 27/3/47 the Hindu Electric Mistry who attended Electric works at 83, Phears Lane was beaten by iron rod and thrown into the manhole.
6. On 3/4/47, a number of stabbing and arson took place in China Town. The Muslim culprits took shelter in the Muslim National guard's office, 22 Tiretta Bazar Street. A fat Muslim keeper of brothel at Tiretta Bazar Street (name Isphak and another named Ismail) and Muslim living at 90 Phears Lane were responsible for this crime on Hindus.
7. 6 Dasads attached to Dhapa slaughter house, were forcibly brought out from their huts by a Muslim Inspector and Punjabi Sepoys and shot. Those who showed some signs of life were beyonnetted till they were stone dead.
8. Girindra Babu, a school teacher living at Tangra is missing since 30/3/47. It is reported that he was forcibly taken to the Dhapa slaughter house and killed there like a cattle by Muslim butcher. Girindra Babu is aged 40 years and maintains a large family. Similarly the Muslim butchers killed a number of Hindus like cattles.

The Muslim National Guard parades China Town at night in defiance of curfew orders.

Hindu Mahasabha

Ward No. IV
284, Upper Circular Road
(Sukea Street Junction)
Calcutta-9

Date, the 3rd April, 1947

Re : Incidents happened at Jugipara Bye-Lane and Jugipara Lane.
Informant—Mr. S.K. Mukherjee and Mr. Baradapada Ghatak of Ward No.
4, Hindu Mahasabha.

It is reported by Sm. Pramila Pal aged 30 years of 13B, Jugipara Bye-Lane that one Sergeant broke open the door and charged her and her

mother Sm. Kiranbala aged above 50. Her husband, Kalipada Pal and her son Rabindranath Pal, aged 15 years were mercilessly beaten and were arrested subsequently in the house on protest of charging them, her mother Sm. Kiranbala and herself were pulled out of the staircase and thrown aside. While Kalipada Pal and Rabindranath Pal were taken out of the house, they cried and came out of the house when Haradhan Bhattacharyya of 4 Jugipara Bye-lane came and wanted to give them a rescue has also been charged by a sergeant with baton and arrested.

Re : 2/3A, Jugipara Lane

Kumari Bhabani (aged 11) stated that she was beaten by the bottom of the gun.

Jyotsnalata Ghosh (aged 13), Ranibala Ghosh (aged 18), Radharani Ghosh (aged 48), Pramilabala Ghosh (aged 14), Chhayalata Ghosh (aged 26) who is carrying now, all of them charged by the bottom of the gun and slapped Chhayalata Ghosh who has been removed to Carmichael Medical College Hospital. Sm. Sarojini Mitra was turned out of the house by force from the said house. When she took shelter in another neighbouring house she was also driven out from the neighbouring house immediately.

The following male members have been arrested from the said house :

1. Nirmalkrishna Ghosh (aged 20)
2. Sureschandra Ghosh (aged 50)
3. Krishnapada Ghosh (aged 22)
4. Haripada Ghosh (aged 20)
5. Amal Bose (aged 50)

The above gentlemen were also mercilessly beaten in presence of the women-folk in their house and arrested.

Re : No. 2, Jugipara Lane

One Sergeant entered in the above house after crossing over the wall and charged the male member, Sitanath Ghoshal, mercilessly, when the women-folk cried out, they were also charged. Sm. Durgabala Debi wife of Sitanath Ghosh was also assaulted.

Re : No. 1, Jugipara Lane

Sj. Ajit Kumar Biswas stated that six male members mentioned hereunder have been arrested and one of them was beaten mercilessly :-

1. Hriday Kumar Bose (aged 20).
2. Gotikumar Bose (aged 27).

3. Anil kumar Bose (aged 27)-who was mercilessly beaten as already mentioned.
4. Santosh Kumar Ghosh (aged 34).
5. Tarachand Saha (aged 30).
6. Rajeswar Saha (aged 60).

A boy of 12 years in the same house also stated that he was not even spared (beaten by one Pathan Armed Police).

It is also reported that one house in the Vivekananda Road near Jugipara Lane was raided by the Police and the members of that house (including females) were assaulted.

All the above incidents happened at about 3 p.m.

Ward 28 & 29

Barada Prasad Ghatak
2.4.47

To
The Private Secretary to
His Excellency the Governor of Bengal

Dear Sir,

We the Hindu residents of Belegkata and Maniktola—ward 28 & 29 respectively are in great danger of our lives and properties due to serious hooliganism. It has become almost impossible for us to go out and come back and unless protection is given, we do not know what will happen in these areas.

We therefore pray that proper, adequate and strong military protection may be granted to us. We cannot keep faith in Police protection as stabbing has been done in their presence and if they simply raised their hands no such occurrence would have taken place. We now approach you with the prayer that military pickets may be placed at the following places marked in the sketch attached herewith.

Perhaps it should be Residents of
72, Beliaghata Main Road
Ganapati Sircar
69, Beliaghata Main Road

Yours faithfully
B. B. Sarkar
69, Beliaghata Main Road
G.P.Banerjee
and 85 others

Copy forwarded to Dr. Shyma Prasad Mukherjee for necessary action.

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS, INFORMING INCIDENTS, BY CITIZENS OF CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH
RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
31.3.47	Sj. Uepndranath Chaudhuri, 9, Babudanga Rd.	Intimidation Mob of 150 Moslems supported by Pathan Armed Police marching towards Salkia from Ghosuri	Salkia, Howrah
Ditto.	Sj. Biswanath Lohia 171/1 Jogendranath Mukherjee Road.	Arson 15 houses set on fire at Bhotbagan and Gossain Ghat under Malipanchaghara P.S. Hindu houses being searched and Hindus are arrested.	Ghosuri, Howrah
Ditto.	Sj. Kalipada Hati 11, Canal South Rd.	Raid and Arson Several Raids by Moslems to the north of Slaughter house. One case of Arson at Katuakol Bazar near Palmer Bazar Pumping station.	Beliaghata
Ditto.	Sj. Santosh Kr. Ganguli 6A, Gooripara Road Baliaghata, P.O. Entally	Arson in Presence of Pathan Pickets who were threatening ladies. No mixed pickets. Pathan Armed pickets posted. One house set on fire in presence of pickets who did not interfere. Hindu women who went on roof tops for household duties shouted at by Moslems and Pathans pointing rifles at those ladies.	Beliaghata

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Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
1.4.47	Messrs. B.P.Varma & Co. 15, Sitala Lane	Unlawful arrest inspite of a licence to hold fire-arms Sj. S.A. Varma arrested. The Pathans came and said one of them was injured. Pathans enquired if anyone held a licence for a gun. Verma possessed a licence and was arrested, though he did not have his gun with him.	Beliaghata
1.4.47	H.K.Dey	Six Goalas-Auckland Sq. of them 2 stabbed, & fall in front of Theatre Road P.O.	
1.4.47	Mr. Hiran Ganguli, Councillor, Calcutta Corporation	Pathans surrounded and fired and then loot and arson. Police inactive 400 to 500 Pathan Armed Police surrounded the bustee and fired indiscriminately. The firing is followed by looting, arson and murder by Moslem goondas. Mr. Ganguli informed about 6 women rescued from that area. Mr. Ganguli informed the O.C. Mr. Kabir Chaudhuri who said there was nothing to worry about, the police was there to take care.	Ghosebagan, Talla area on the other side of Burrack- pur bridge.
Ditto.	Mr. M.N. Banerjee, Barrister-at-law	Murder by Pathan Armed Police. At Tangra near Philkhana or Gaukhana, Huges Road, we rescued more than 35 Doshads. Pathan Police went inside the bustee and shot dead several persons there	Tangra

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[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		and dragged there bodies to the pond nearby. The blood mark including the marks of dragging the dead bodies are still there.	Tangra
Ditto.	Ditto.	We went at the request of the Proprietors of the Good Luck Pictures at 55, Ezra Street. It was alleged that Pathan police went inside the house and dragged the durwans and shot one of them. The owner fled by scaling the back wall. At the bottom against the staircase clotted blood marks were found. During my stay there I was told by the Hindu constables on duty that a Pathan V.C.O. threatened another durwan in their presence and told him that he would be killed. This fact was brought by me to the notice of Mr. Brahmachari, A.C. who happened to be there at that time. The incident took place at about 1-30 p.m. yesterday (31.3.47)	

Miscellaneous. The Secy., Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha went to D.C.Hd.Qrs. with an application to give the Mahasabha permission for rescue and relief, during all hours. and to bring incoming passengers from Howrah and Sealdah Rly. Stations and to sanction adequate supply of petrol for this purpose. He was detained there yesterday and asked to go this morning. He went and came back as no order has yet been passed.

(2) It is alleged that complaints to the Control Room are now forwarded to the local police stations concerned to investigate, report and act. This takes time and immediate relief cannot be obtained.

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RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
1.4.47	Mr. Naresh Nath Mookerjee Dy. Mayor of Calcutta	Two cases of arson.	Beniapukur
”	Sj. Chaitanya Charan Ghosh, Secretary To Kumar Jagadish Ch. Singha of Paikpara	Yesterday one man was stabbed by Samsuddin of the neighbouring bustee in presence of armed police No.N.48. He never interfered. At night, however, police came and arrested 6 (six) Hindus from Bustee No.21 which is a contiguous one. At 3 a.m. Muslims fired on Hindus of Datta Bagan Bustee, one killed (Dr.Sudhir Das). These hooligans then set fire to houses. Another stabbing this morning at the junction of Manindra Road and Anath Babu Lane.	Paikpara
”	Harabhusan (of Daily Hindusthan), 2 College Sq.	Pathan Police entered into Asutosh Library and assaulted Hindus, Also in the College Sq. about 9 p.m.	College Sq.
”	Sj. Hrishikesh Chakravarti 9, Narkeldanga Main Road, (BB 5546)	One of two Nepalis who went to Beliaghata Ration Office was forcibly kidnapped by a mob of Moslems at the crossing of Sastitolla and Narkeldanga Main Road. At this the Hindus those were there became restive. Those Muslims fell upon the Hindus. Hrishikesh Babu rang up both Beliaghata P.S. and Control Room. Police came. The crowd	Narkeldanga

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Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		dispersed but again collected. Mr. Mukherjee wanted a picket. But no picket was posted. There was a picket from Wednesday, but that was subsequently withdrawn.	
2.4.47	Sj. Satyanath Bhattacharyya 12A, Southern Ave. (South 2138)	Missing. My brother-in-law Babu Debendranath Mookerjee (aged 70) Manager of D.N.Das, NLA, at 4A, Rajkisen St. Mr. Mookerjee resides at 35, Gorachand Bose Street, opposite Sahitya Parisad St. On Sunday (30.3.47) between 10 & 11 a.m. he, with a darwan, set out from 4A, Raja Rajkissen Street for Ultadanga. When Deben Babu was coming down from the Ultadanga Bridge on the eastern side, there was a row and the durwan fled. Mr. Mookerjee could not run away and as such was surrounded by a mob of Moslems. He was dragged into a lane close by. Mr. Mookerjee is not heard of since then.	Ultadanga
2.4.47	Ramjiban Shaw of 12, Sikdarpara Lane, Cal.	Arson At the crossing of Zakaria St. and Chitpur Rd. on 1st April a Hindu Bustee was attacked by a big mob of Moslems armed with lathis	Sikdarpara Area

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[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		and sharp weapons. At the rear of these Muslim hooligans, a lorryload of Punjabi Mussalmans armed constables and Moslem Police Inspector was in charge of this batch. These armed constables were inactive. At this inactivity the gang set fire to the whole bustee. The Scheduled Caste residents of this bustee gave resistance, but were fired at by the Punjabi Police constables, resulting in large casualties.	
2.4.47	Haripada Bidyabinod Kalipada Bhattacharjee Rabindra Nath Bose, Gope Lane.	Muslims of Ismail Street, P.S.Entally, headed by Isa, Yasin, Kaloo, daily gather at premises No.4 Gope Lane, P.S.Entally, in a large number and use the said premises No. 4 Gope Lane, as their base of attack on the neighbouring Hindu houses. From the said premises they attacked the premises No.5/1/1 and 5, Gope Lane and looted the same on 1.4.47 at about 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. respectively. From 31.3.47 they are regularly throwing bombs, brickbats, bottles and making arson from the said premises No.4 Gope Lane into the neighbouring houses viz. 5/1/1, 5/1/A, 5/1/B/, 5/2,/5/3, 5/4, 6/1, 6/2, 7, 7/2, 8/1, 8/2 Gope Lane causing great danger to peace in the presence of and in connivance with the Pathan Police.	Entally

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS, INFORMING INCIDENTS, BY CITIZENS OF CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH
RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		We are apprehending a great mass attack from the Muslims from the premises No.4 Gope Lane which can only be averted by timely posting of armed pickets there.	
1.4.47	Mr. M.N.Banerjee, Barrister-at-Law.	<p>At Tangra near Philkhana or Gaukhana, Hughes Road, we rescued more than 15 Dosads. Pathan Police went inside the bustee and shot dead several persons there and dragged their bodies to the pond nearby. The blood mark including the marks of dragging the dead bodies are still there.</p> <p>We went at the request of the proprietors of the Good Luck Pictures at 55, Ezra Street.</p> <p>It was alleged that Pathan Police went inside the house and dragged the durwans and shot one of them. The owner fled by scaling the back-wall. At the bottom against the staircase clotted blood marks were found. During my stay there I was told by the Hindu Constables on duty that a Pathan V.C.O. threatened another durwan in their presence and told him that he would be killed. This fact was brought by me to the notice of Mr. Brahmachari A.C. who happened to be</p>	Tangra

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS, INFORMING INCIDENTS, BY CITIZENS OF CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH
RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		there at that time. The incident took place at about 1.30 a.m. yesterday (31.3.47)	
28.3.47	Ram Das 7 Guripara Road bustee	<p>Acts of hooliganism, arson, murder and looting committed by the Muslim mob in presence of the Pathan Police (Armed guards) posted specially at the Guripara Mosque; situated between the Beliaghatta Main Road and Corporation Palmer Bridge Pumping Station.</p> <p>A respectable Sikh gentleman, Jaswanta Singh by name, a B. & A. Railway contractor, residing at 15, Palmer Bazar Road while passing through the Corporation thoroughfare emanating from Palmer Bazar Road was shot dead at about 2.30 p.m. on 20.3.47 by the Pathan Armed Police Guard posted at the Mosque situated near the Guripara Road as stated above. He was shot just two three minutes after he started from his residence on his motor cycle. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of Mr. Hyder, the Inspector-in-charge of the Entally Police Station. He was also shown the dead body and the motor cycle.</p> <p>It is also reported that another punjabi and a Bengalee (both Hindus)</p>	Entally

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS, INFORMING INCIDENTS, BY CITIZENS OF CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH
RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		<p>were killed at the same place on the same date in the presence of the armed police guard. Houses burnt and looted (lose of property in cash, kind, jewel etc.) on 28.3.47</p>	
2.4.47	Sailendra Kumar Mukherjee Jt. Secy., Ward IV, Hindu Mahasabha	<p>Dulal Chandra Adhikari, son of Satya Charan Adhikari reported to me at 9 a.m. that while his father was returning home with milk, he was killed by Pathan armed guard who was posted at the junction of Sashtitola and Narkeldanga Main Road. The body of the said Satya Charan Adhikari has been removed to Campbell Hospital subsequently. Now Dulal Chandra Adhikari begs that his father's dead body may be released so that the religious riots could be performed without post-mortem examination.</p>	Narkeldanga
8.4.47	Merchants of Chandney Chawak	<p>There have been cases of looting, passersby ambushed and then looted and murdered. Pickets should be posted at (i) Free School St., (ii) Front of Jyoti Cinema; (iii) Front of Nilmony Haldar Lane; (iv) Front of Grant St. with special attention of the approaches to chandney Market; (v) Chandney</p>	Dharmatola

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS, INFORMING INCIDENTS, BY CITIZENS OF CALCUTTA AND HOWRAH
RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DURING CALCUTTA DISTURBANCES TILL 1947
[NOT EXHAUSTIVE]**

Date	Informant	Nature of Incident	Area
		Chawk, 1st Lane up to Ganesh Avenue; (vi) Madan St. (near New Cinema); (vii) Esplanade Crossing.	
Do	Joges Ch. Shaha of 141, Beliaghata Main Road and others	The informants belong to Barwaritola Road Bastee, ever since Punjabi Armed Police have been posted as guards, the Barwaritola people are being harassed by the Pathan Guards and also by the Moslems of Satyapirtola Basti and neighbouring places. The Muslims of Satyapirtola tried to set a house on fire in presence of guards who did not interfere. This morning Pathan Police broke into the houses of the Bastee, abused the people and threatened them. Took away two persons whose fate is not known.	Beliaghata
Do	Manager, Bengal Chemical	<p>Maniktola Main Road from Canal Bridge to overhead Rly. Bridge came in the grip of the Hooligans who waylaid the lorry of the Company which was being used to transport workers.</p> <p>Since 29.3.47 office of the Company at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue and the Maniktola Factory had to be kept closed.</p> <p>Prayed for armed picket at 94, Chittaranjan Avenue and sufficient pickets to guarantee safe running of Motor cars and lorries between Canal Bridge and Rly. Over Bridge.</p>	Manicktolla

**Hindu Mahasabha
Ward No. IV.**

284, Upper Circular Road,
(Sukea Street Junction)
Calcutta-9

Dated the 28th March, 1947

The Deputy Commissioner of Police,
North District, Calcutta

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you that at about 6-15 p.m. today two trucks loaded with many Mussalmans and goalas were passing along Circular Road near Sukea Street junction. The second truck in which the goalas were standing started throwing brickbats on the passersby of the said locality.

A large number of such brickbats were thrown and some of the Hindus received injuries.

Two constables who were posted at the above junction, one of them with gun, did not take any action whatsoever, and stood watching the whole thing quietly.

On protesting to them about the incident no satisfactory reply could be obtained from them.

Their respective numbers are F.72 and F.17. The number of the truck is B.L.L.6405.

This is for your information and necessary action.

Yours faithfully
Sd/- S.K.Mukherji
Jt. Secy., P.T.O.

Copy forwarded to :

1. Hon. Chief Minister.
2. Sj. Kiron Sankar Roy, Leader of the Opposition.
3. Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

Incidents at Narkoldanga Main Road–Ward 29.

(1) On 1.4.47 one Gurkha was dragged inside Shamru Singh Lane from the front of Rationing Office and he has been killed.

(2) On 2.4.47 one man was chased at the same spot and he narrowly escaped from the attack with a dagger.

Incidents at Beliaghata Main Road-Ward 28.

On 1.4.47 in front of Sarkar Bazar in the presence of armed Muslim constables the hooligans set fire to Hindu houses several times.

**Hindu Mahasabha
Ward No. IV.**

PHONE NO. B.B.2265

195, HARRISON ROAD
(2ND FLOOR)

Calcutta May 7, 1947

The Commissioner of Police,
Lalbazar : Calcutta

Dear Sir,

SUB : WANTON POLICE FIRING AND THEFT DURING SEARCHES.

I beg to draw your immediate attention to two (2) matters of considerable importance, viz. the 'modus operandi' adopted by the armed police in dealing with the situation and indiscriminate searches of houses near the scene of occurrence during which cash and other valuable articles are alleged to be removed by the armed police.

Generally, what happens is that when the armed police arrives at the scene of occurrence they instead of holding any enquiry, start firing indiscriminately and at random with the result that many innocent persons are killed and seriously injured. Many such instances have been reported in this office. To cite one example I would draw your attention to the incident that took place in Cotton St. At about 10.30 A.M. on the 3rd May, 1947, there was a commotion on the western side of Kalakar St., inside Cotton St., where two men, believed to be Burmeze, with injuries were seen running from the western end of the cotton street. The police on getting the information arrived after some time at the scene in a truck. The moment they got down from the truck they began to fire wantonly with the result that a man named Ram Gopal, alias Balla, an employee of the Santi Niketan Hotel situated at 140, Cotton St., was hit on his forehead and died in the hospital where he had been removed. This man, it may be pointed out, was standing inside the Hotel. Besides, two (2) passers-by were also hit by the Police, one of whom died on his way to the hospital. This is with regard to the police firing.

There is another very serious matter which requires strong action and thorough investigation. After the above incident there was a thorough search of practically the entire locality. Some of the shop-keepers who had run away out of panic, when they came back after the search was over, found to their astonishment that their safes had been broken open and cash and other valuables taken away, presumably by the members of the searching party. In this connexion, it has also been reported that police searched one of the rooms

of premises No. 150 Cotton St., occupied by Mr. Murlidhar Khawas. The inmates of the house were assaulted and cash amount of Rs. 3,150/- removed from his cash-box.

This incident, which it is gathered was not of a communal nature, has created panic amongst the peace-loving residents of the locality. In view of the seriousness of the above incident and having regard to the need for checking such indiscriminate searches and firing I would strongly urge upon you to institute a thorough enquiry in the matter with a view to taking prompt and necessary action to end this sort of police 'Zoolom'.

Yours faithfully,
sd/- J.G.Narang.
Hony. Secretary .

Copy forwarded for information.

Sd/- Illegible
Hony. Secretary

LETTER BY SURESH CHANDRA BANERJEE, CONGRESS
LEADER, URGING FOR ENQUIRY ON RIOTOUS
DISTURBANCES CONTINUED IN 1947 :

LETTER DATED 8TH APRIL 1947

Subjects requiring enquiry :-

1. The circumstances under which on 30th March at 4-30 p.m. 4 men were killed. two men were injured and 66 men were arrested by a batch of Pathan Police led by Sub-Inspector Ismail of Police Station Entally at No.12, Huges Road.
2. The circumstances under which on 30th March at 3-30 p.m. the Musalmans of the Coffee House of Ful Chand situated at the Junction of Tangra Road and Chengrighata Lane set fire to an adjacent Hindu House on the Chengrighata Lane in the presence of the Pathan Police posted on duty nearby and while the fire was burning the Mussalmans encouraged by the Pathan Police entered the Hindu bustee at 36, Tangra Road, shot dead 2 men and took away Rs. 500/- of Sib Chand.
3. The circumstances under which a bomb burst in front of 35, Chengrighata Road on 29th March night at 11 p.m. and how this was followed by slogans 'Alla Ho Akbar' from surrounding areas, setting of fire in many Hindu houses of the locality and the killing of 2 Hindus in Kathpukur Bustee.
4. Whether on 26th night the Musalmans of Matijhil Bustee (Entally) set fire to the Hindu Bustee situated between the Matijhil Bustee and Chatu Babu Lane, whether after phone call the Pathan Police appeared on the scene and stimulated the Musalmans of the Motijhil Bustee to continue setting fire to the houses of the Hindus, whether as a result of this two Hindus were killed and 4000 Hindus of the locality who had lived there even during the August and October disturbances were forced to leave their houses, whether subsequently many of the houses were plundered by the Musalmans.
5. Whether on 29th March, at about 8 in the night the Musalmans of Jharbagan Bustee set fire to 8 Sib Tola Lane in and whether the Pathan Police was standing near by at the time and said nothing, and whether as a result the Hindus of the house ran away and whether subsequently the house was looted by the Musalmans backed by the Pathans and several thousands of Rupees in cash and coin were taken away.
6. Whether many houses of Kankurgachi 2nd and 3rd Lane have on several successive days been attacked, burnt and looted by the Musalmans of adjacent Phool Bagan Bustee (Narkeldanga).

7. Whether the Musalmans of Dutta Bagan and Basak Bagan Bustee have on several successive nights set fire to the adjacent Hindu houses compelling the Hindus to leave the Bustee.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAINTAINING PEACE INSPITE OF THE
EXISTENCE OF COMMUNAL TENSION :

- i. Military picket should be posted between the Matijhil Bustee and Hindu Bustee lying between the Matijhil Bustee and Chatu Babu's Lane, making it possible for the 4000 Hindus to go back to their houses. This military picket should be kept there till communal tension persists and the Hindus do not feel themselves safe.
- ii. Military picket on Bridge No. 2 (Entally) should be continued for sometime more as otherwise it will be impossible for the Hindus to the east of the Matijhil Bustee to live there.
- iii. Military picket should be posted at Convent Lane so that it be possible for the Hindus to the east of the Matijhil Bustee to live in their own houses.
- iv. The Pathan Police in front of bazar and in Lane in Beliaghata should be removed as the Hindus of the locality have done no harm to the Musalmans of that place and as there are many serious allegations against Pathan Police posted there. If police be at all kept there, it must be combined Hindu and Muslim Police.
- v. There should be military picket between Phull Bagan Bustee (Narkeldanga) and the Hindu Bustee of 2nd and 3rd Kankurgachi Lane.
- vi. The Military piquet in front of Jute Mills should continue to prevent possible clashes between the Hindus of Kadapara and Muslims of Phull Bagan and adjacent areas.
- vii. The Military picket in front of Lily Biscuit Factory (Ultadanga) should continue to make it possible for this small Hindu community to live there against the persistent attacks of the Muslims of Basak Bagan and Dutta Bagan Bustees.

8th April, 1947

S/d. Suresh Chandra Banerjee

CHAPTER—IX

GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS : IN THE EYES OF THE COMMUNIST LEADERS

“Our party leadership apprehended that something unpleasant might occur on 16th August. So, to ensure peace the leaders of the party were asked to stay particularly in the labour belt and mixed areas from the previous evening.

Following the direction of the party leadership, I went to the labour inhabited area of Narkeldanga. I was accompanied by the then leader of the railway union, Krishnamurthi and Nikhil Moitra (later expelled from the party). We spent the evening of the 16th at the Narkeldanga Railway Colony. I was then closely associated with the railway union. While waiting at the railway colony, we did not get any news from other areas. We saw processions, shouting slogans, passing frequently along the street. The labourers told us—“You may be attacked too. You better leave the place.” They informed us that riot had started, houses were burning, looting was going on.” We somehow reached the Sealdah station. Then we moved along Lower Circular Road. We found dead bodies lying scattered on both sides of the road and the attackers freely roaming about on the pavement. Houses were burning all around. Avoiding the pavement we started walking down the middle of the road. With great difficulty we walked past the Loreto School at Sealdah and reached the District Committee Office of our party at 121, Lower Circular Road. Here we were informed by party comrades that the whole of Calcutta was burning. We had to spend the night at the District Committee Office. That area too was not safe. All the time we were apprehending attacks.” [‘Janaganer Sange (translated)—Jyoti Basu]

IT WAS MUSLIM COMMUNALISTS THAT TOOK THE OFFENSIVE AND BLIGHTED CALCUTTA

“My own Experience was that the Great Calcutta Killings of August 1946 was a one-sided affair with the Muslim communalists and criminals going ahead to do what they did with practical immunity and little resistance. It was Muslim communalism that took the offensive and blighted Calcutta, at least.

Historically speaking, it is true that the Hindu-majority in Bengal tended to act with arrogance and disdain towards the Muslim-majority East Bengal and even their “Bengaliness” tended to cluster around the culture patronised by Hindu Zamindars and the intelligentsia. There was, surely, enough ground for resentment among the Muslims of Calcutta but this cannot obliterate the reality of my experience that the first large scale communal killings in my city during my youth were set off by Muslim communalists. Though what they did can be explained, it can never be justified.”

[The Journey of an Indian Communist—Mohit Sen]

PILES OF DEAD BODIES ON ROAD-SIDE

“Quite diferent kinds of incidents began to take place from the early morning of 16th August. Nobody could express in language that heart-breaking fracticidal incidents of that day. From the very morning rows of dead bodies were piled up on both sides of roads. A group of Muslim youths attacked the house of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. Communist leader Mansur Habib appealed to the Muslim mob to refrain from this fractricidal riots. In spite of their being desisted from these heinous acts for the time being, mass murders went on unabated in lanes and bye-lanes.”

[Translated from Saroj Mukhopadhyay’s ‘Communist Party and We’]

“Suhrawardy declared a holiday on 16th August, and the Muslims were directed to join a procession in large numbers. Everyone apprehended that something unpleasant would happen from that procession. Our party (C.P.I.) took a decision that we should join the procession. The purpose was to prevent untoward incident if any. But it was beyond party’s capacity to do much in this respect; because everything was done on a pre-planned way. Disturbances started as soon as the procession reached Dharamtala. A good number of people (of course Hindus) were wounded and died due to indiscriminate stabbing. Looting of Hindu shops started thereafter. Killing and looting went on with the progress of the procession. The well-organised procession at last ended in confusion and disorder. Communal fire engaged the whole city of Calcutta. Wild cries of Allah-ho-Akbar, Larke Lenge Pakistan and the like rented the air and throbbing of the heart of peace-loving citizens became speedier.”

Although the Hindus living in goonda-infested areas like Kalabagan, Central Avenue and Kidderpore were mercilessly butchered, the goondas did no harm to the people clad in dhoti & shirt-worn Hindu Comrades living in those notorious areas and were rescued by Muslim Comrades as they knew that Hindu Comrades were supporters of Pakistan demand of the Muslim League. Such instances may be mentioned :

1. Com. Biren ray was confined in Kalabagan bustee. He was shifted to a safe zone by the Muslims.

2. Com. Jolly Kaul and some others were confined in party commune in Kidderpore but were shifted to a safe area by Muslim comrades of Kidderpore at midnight.
3. Com. Ajit Ray, Gita Mukherjee, Annadasankar Bhattacharya, Sukumar Gupta and some others were the tenants of a Muslim businessman who kept them concealed for three days.
4. Com. Bankim Mukherjee and Pramod Dasgupta was also living in party commune in an adjacent building. Feeling unsafe there they took shelter in the house of Com. Abdul Momin nearby. All of them were saved by Com. Mansur Habibullah who along with Com. Indrajit Gupta rescued them with the help of a military truck.

[Riot, Partition, Independence (translated)–Manikuntala Sen]

CALCUTTA AT MIDNIGHT ON 15TH AUGUST, 1946

“I was then staying at a mess on Vivekananda Road–Cornwallis St. crossing I used to attend my duty in the Anandabazar Patrika Office on Burman Street by walking from my mess. In order to minimise the distance, I used a short route through a Muslim-dominated area where there was an ordinary mosque which did never attract my attention.

On 15th August, the day previous to Direct Action Day (16th August), I left office at about 12 pm. night for my mess. It was drizzling. The road was desolate. Reaching in front of the said mosque, I was surprised to find that as if the mosque had woken up from slumber. There was huge assemble of people highly excited with some motive and object. A truck, full of agitated Muslims was standing in front of the mosque. They were all armed with spears, swords and lathis. The whole body of the truck was decorated with Muslim League Flags. They were intermittently raising slogans like Pakistan Zindabad, Larke Lenge Pakistan etc.

I became a bit suspicious; yet I did not mind anything unnatural. But what seemed unnatural to me was sudden awaking of the sleeping mosque at that dead of night. Previously hardly any people was visible in the mosque; but on that midnight it was overflowing with people. One group of Muslims got down from the lorry and went inside the mosque. Immediately another group came out of the mosque well armed, boarded the lorry and went out. This was the situation there. I paused for a while and then proceeded to my destination.

On Chittaranjan Avenue and Vivekananda Road, I saw a few such lorries carrying armed Muslim League volunteers who were spread all over Calcutta to make direct action a success tomorrow morning. They were shouting raising militant slogans and brandishing deadly weapons but did no harm to me.”

[Hastantar (Transfer of Power)–Sankar Ghosh, journalist]

CHAPTER—X

SUHRAWARDY THREATENED TO DESTROY CALCUTTA : NEHRU EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN TO MOUNTBATTEN

In a telegram dt. 10.5.47, Viceroy Mountbatten communicated to Governor Burrows the following message :—

“Nehru who is staying with me, has read into Suhrawardy’s recent statement, a threat that the Muslims will do their best to sack Calcutta rather than let it be handed over to the Hindus after the partition of Bengal and that the present provincial Government will back disorders to that end.”

In Viceroy’s Personal report dt. 15.7.47 the matter was again discussed rather casually terming it as rumours :—

“There were rumours of an anti-partition day to be called by the Muslims on the 10th May and of an Indian Mutiny day, but in point of fact nothing came of either. Even Nehru was infected by these alarmist rumours and read into a recent statement by Suhrawardy a threat that the Muslims would do their best to sack Calcutta rather than let it be handed over to the Hindus after the partition of Bengal, and the present provincial government would back disorders to that end.”

[Transfer of Power]

But the utterings of Muslim Leaguers and apprehensions of the Hindus were not totally baseless and cannot be rejected as mere rumour. The cruel killing of Haren Ghosh in the house of Wachhel Molla on 9.7.47 gave some credence to the rumours.

Mr. Haren Ghosh (8.12.1895-9.7.1947) was the foremost “Impressario” of India. He had his office in a room in the house cum departmental store of Wachhel Molla on Dharmatalla St. Muslim League stalwarts including Suhrawardy used to meet at this house frequently and discuss secret political matters.

When division of Bengal and creation of West Bengal with Hindu majority districts including Calcutta was almost settled, Suhrawardy and his henchmen

became furious and threatened that Muslims would do their best to sack Calcutta, rather than handing it over to the Hindus. A blue-print for the purpose was drawn up in the Wachhel Molla house, it was believed.

Haren Ghosh, having his office in Wachhel Molla's house, somehow came to know of this evil design of Suhrawardy and his gang. A copy of the secret plan, it was believed, had fallen in his hand, but before he could slip out of the office with the plan, he was brutally murdered. His body was cut to pieces, placed in a steel-trunk and thrown in Rawdon Square.

The British officers were well-aware of Suhrawardy's political background, his close link with Calcutta's underworld, and his moral turpitude. A pen-picture of Suhrawardy's moral character is most revealing as hereunder :-

“The 47 year old Suhrawardy was the prototype of the corrupted, venal politician....

His political philosophy was simple : once a man had been elected to office there was never any reason to leave. Suhrawardy had assured his continued presence in power by using public funds to maintain a private army of hoodlums who, quite literally, clubbed his political rivals into silence.

During the 1942 famine that had devastated Bengal, Suhrawardy had intercepted and sold on the black market tons of grain destined for the starving of Calcutta, an operation which had earned him millions of rupees. He dressed in tailor-made silk suits and two-tone alligator shoes. His jet black hair, dressed each morning by his personal barber, sparkled with brilliantine.....

Suhrawardy had given his free run, setting himself, it seemed, the prodigious task of bedding every cabaret dancer and high-class whore in Calcutta.

Worst of all, his hands were covered with blood. By declaring a public holiday and letting his Moslem League followers know the attention of his police would be elsewhere, Suhrawardy had set the stage for the killings which had ravaged Calcutta on Jinnah's Direct Action Day in August, 1946.”

[Freedom at Midnight-Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre]

CHAPTER—XI

WHY CALCUTTA WAS SINGLED OUT FOR THE HOLOCAUST?

“Muslim League’s call for ‘Direct Action’ was supposed to have countrywide operation. Why, then, was Calcutta singled out? Several reasons have been suggested. Bhabani Prosad Chatterjee thinks one reason might be the fact that staging the bloodbath in Calcutta would have attracted the attention of the whole world to the might of the Muslim League, since at that time Calcutta was the most important city in India, indeed the second city in the British Empire. Another reason might be that Suhrawardy was trying to curry favour with Jinnah, and the killings gave him an opportunity to do that.”

[Prof. Tathagata Roy—My People Uprooted]

“Suhrawardy was camping at the Control Room of the Calcutta Police at Lalbazar, busy ‘watching the situation’. No police officer had the authority to move any men without his personal orders. It is believed that some officers defied him on his face and took out their forces. Generally the police, especially the Pathan policemen specially recruited by Niaz Mohammed Khan and the Anglo-Indian sergeants showed supreme indifference to whatever was going on. It also appeared that at least a section of them were under orders to foment trouble, not prevent or stop it. As for the Army, Wolpert writes that the Brigadier-in-charge of Calcutta, J.P.C. Mackinlay, had ‘ordered’ his troops to be ‘confined to barracks’ that day (quotation marks Wolpert’s), and observes that thus India’s largest, most crowded and most communally volatile city was left virtually naked. The Fire Brigade worked overtime right through, but were stopped at many places by marauding Muslim mobs.”

[Prof. Tathagata Roy—My People Uprooted]

EYE-WITNESS’S ACCOUNT OF THE HOLOCAUST

“From Dum Dum to the city of Calcutta we passed through suburbs most of which consisted of clusters of mud hut with straw roofs. These were all ablaze....As we entered the town further ghastly sights of violence met our eyes,

dead bodies lay strewn everywhere. I clearly saw the body of a person lying on the marble steps of the porch of a house, his white drill suit splattered with blood, his head was neatly severed from his body and lying a few feet away.

I saw a Sikh clad only in shirt and shorts, without his turban, being chased by a man with an unsheathed sword, panting after him like an animal after its quarry.”

[Begum Sayesta Ikramullah—Suhrawardy's sister]

“I decided not to walk back to Writers' Building or Lal Bazar. Very soon, however, a police motor-cycle arrived to take me to my office and from there to the Police Headquarters, where all the top bosses had assembled. The road to the office was strewn with brickbats and smoke was coming from the Teretta Bazar, right behind the Police Headquarters. Pitched battles had been fought in these areas, leaving many dead and injured.

Suhrawardy was in the Control Room. He was depressed and his eyes were moist when I reached there. “No one knows what is happening at the moment,” he groaned. “You can give me some reliable assessment. I know you are generally not disturbed and can be objective.” He gave me an armed escort to tour the disturbed areas. I drove through streets littered with dead bodies. At places I stopped the vehicle to remove the corpses to the pavements but then it became impossible to remove all of them. I even drove over dead bodies—I was helpless. It was maddening. The whole night I could not sleep; I kept repeating to myself :

When I came back after visiting most of the affected areas, Suhrawardy was waiting for me. Just then a senior police officer—a Hindu—who later became the Inspector-General of Police after Independence, arrived, clicked his heels and told the Police Commissioner, Hardwick, “Everything is under control, Sir, These people tell us lies. I am positive by now not more than 20 people have been killed and 200 injured.”

I challenged these figures and gave the Premier a sheet of paper giving street by street figures of dead and the casualties brought to the hospitals. On this Suhrawardy made some calculations and scribbled, “200 dead, 2,000 injured, if not more.”

[P.S.Mathur, Illustrated Weekly, dt. 15.8.1973]

During the later part of the night of the 16th/17th things were rather quieter, partly as a result of the military patrols in the Vivekananda Road area. There were, however, almost incessant telephone calls for help, many against apprehended as well as actual attack. Tension began to rise again as the morning went on and, after sending my second report to you (telegram No. 193), I went out for another extensive tour of inspection, traversing Bow

Bazar Street, Sealdah, Harrison Road and Chitpur Road. It was this tour that convinced me that the reports that I had received of the seriousness of the situation had erred on the side of under-estimation. I observed very great damage to property and streets littered with corpses. I can honestly say that parts of the city on Saturday morning were as bad as anything I saw when I was with the Guards on the Somme. Feeling was entirely communal—not anti-Government or anti-Police—but the attitude of the crowds was extremely hostile and menacing. They had developed a regular technique in dealing with the mobile police patrols. On the approach of a police lorry the crowd would disappear into side-alleys, only to re-form as soon as the patrol had passed. I actually saw—though at a distance—three cold-blooded murders committed in quick succession—a crowd clubbing three unfortunate individuals to death. It is worth remarking on the bestiality of the mobs, to which many people have testified. Many corpses were stripped and mutilated.

The marauders were not just *goondahs* of ruffians. Seemingly suave, sophisticated young men, quite a few college students among them, crazed by the spirit of *Jihad*, participated in the mass murders. **A hapless Bengali Hindu family had just alighted from a train at Sealdah station and were trying to find their way home. The rioters caught up with them, stripped a fifteen-year-old girl to nothing, and made her stand at the crossroads in full view of the world.** Not a single policeman was in sight anywhere. Then the torching began. Hindu-inhabited areas such as the southern part of Amherst Street, Bortola, Joransanko were in flames in no time. The fires burnt right through the night, punctuated by the war-cries of “*Alla ho Akbar; Ladke Lenge Pakistan.*”

[Prof. Tathagata Ray, *My People Uprooted*]

“On the afternoon of the 16th, I intended to go to a friend’s house. I just stepped out of my house and heard slogans like ‘Nara-e-Takbir–Allah-ho-Akbar’, and immediately thereafter an extremely abominable incident occurred before my eyes. I saw a gang of Muslim hooligans armed with sticks and other weapons. One of them hit a middle-aged man on his head with a big lathi. His head split in four and he was bleeding profusely. I knew the man; his name was Sushil Bose.

Witnessing this horried scene and hearing wild cry of Allah-ho-Akbar, I realised the situation was ominous and went inside the house. Thereafter a group of Muslims attacked Hindu houses one after another. Our door was damaged and letter-box broken. Inside the house, we were all confounded and panick-stricken. Father forbade us not to go outside.

At about 11 or 12 night, the ruffians again attacked the locality. I saw group of Muslims with swords, daggers and other kinds of arms in their hands. They were belligerently shouting at the top of their voice—that they would slaughter the Hindus one by one.

Mother, father, elder sister and me were all extremely terrified. We could be attacked any time. **The main cause of concern was my elder sister. She was fairly handsome. I realised that sister would be their first target. Lust for Hindu girls was inherent in their blood.**

One day a ghastly scene of barbarity came to my notice, while going to the University through Rajabazar area. Like butchers, who keep parts of slaughtered animals hanging by hooks, similarly naked bodies of Hindu girls—their hands and legs severed, were kept hanging by hairs. Horrid and heinous was that scene. It was the first time that I saw the open upper of ladies.”

[Mr.G.B.Majumdar, Ex. I.G. of Police, West Bengal]

“How many people died in the killings? No official estimate is available, the reason for which is probably that the killings were started by none other than officialdom. Bhabani Prosad Chatterjee puts the figure at about five thousand, with another fifty thousand or so grievously injured. The damage to property, of course, was beyond estimation. Lord Wavell had remarked that more people lost their lives in the Calcutta Killings than in the Battle of Plassey and had informed Pethck-Lawrence that the toll was 3,000 dead and 17,000 injured. Wolpert quotes unofficial claims of “as many as 16,000 Bengalis....murdered between August 16-20, 1946”. The number of dead was presumably determined by body count, and it is here that the estimates varied, because a large number of bodies had been thrown into the River Hooghly, or in the canals that pass through the city, or were pushed into manholes. Ashok Mitra at the time was living at Chandernagore, then a French possession, about thirty-five kilometres from Calcutta, on the other bank of the River Hooghly. A colleague of his, Noor Mohammed Khan, had his wife in hospitalised at the School of Tropical Medicine at Calcutta. When Khan was beside himself with worry for his wife, Ashok Mitra with his wife and Khan set out in his car on August 21 (his chauffeur refused to drive to Calcutta) and drove down to Calcutta over Grand Trunk Road, Willingdon Bridge, Barrackpore Trunk Road, Shyambazar five-point crossing and Central Avenue. On the way, all the way from Dunlop Bridge to the School of Tropical Medicine, he found the road littered on both sides with rotting corpses, severed limbs, and charred remains of houses, the air thick with the stench of putrefaction.”

[Prof. Tathagata Ray, My People Uprooted]

CHAPTER—XII

WHERE AND HOW THE CORPSES WERE DISPOSED OF

FIGURES OF CASUALTIES VARIED FROM MAN TO MAN

“The riots started on the morning of Friday, the 16th. For three days there was a regular orgy of murder, loot and arson. According to the moderate estimates, nearly 6000 persons are killed and an equal number injured. The number of killed perhaps may be more. There are some who estimate that the killed may be as many as 15000. Many corpses have been thrown into the man holes and the river and hence it is difficult to make an accurate estimate. The roads were virtually littered with corpses which could not be removed for six days.

I had seen the riots of 1926 which were very serious. But the present one has no parallel in the history of India. Cruelty and fury was let loose without restraint.”

[G. D. Birlas's letter to Major Henderson]

“On the evening of the 20th I received the following figures from the Surgeon-General of casualties handled in hospitals upto the evening of the 19th :—

Total admissions (alive)	2931
Subsequent deaths in hospital	168
Discharged	569
Remaining under treatment	2194
Brought in dead	276

These figures give a total of 444 dead handled in hospitals, but this is only a very small proportion of the total number of fatalities as the great majority were left lying in the streets and in wrecked houses. No appropriate figure of the dead can yet be given : it must be 2000 at the very least and may be substantially more.

Though the consequences may be serious I think it is as well that things have come to a head. Calcutta with its 4,400 dead, 16,000 injured and over 100,000 homeless showed that a one party Government at the Centre was likely to cause fierce disorders everywhere. Far from having any sobering effect it has increased communal hatred and intransigence. If Congress intentions are as Gandhi's letter suggests the result of their being in power can only be a state of virtual civil war in many parts of India while you and I are responsible to Parliament."

[vide Transfer of Power]

"Fortnightly Report of the Govt. of Bengal, 2nd Half of August, 1946. Sir Henry Twynam, the retired Governor of the Central Province, told Reuters at Liverpool that it has been estimated that the Calcutta riots had caused more than 40,000 casualties rather than 4,000 officially stated. He said, "It is within my knowledge that at least 4,000 dead were counted in the streets of Calcutta and I believe that more than that number was thrown into Hooghly river."

[vide Amrita Bazar Patrika, Oct. 11, 1946]

IN MAULANA AZAD'S VIEW

"He (Maulana) began by speaking of the recent riots in Calcutta. He alleged that Suhrawardy had organised the hooligans of Calcutta's underworld into his supporters, and that the declaration of a public holiday made them believe that they had the licence of the Government to act as they liked. He said that though on Friday there had been more Hindus among casualties, since then the Muslim casualties had been greater."

[Note on interview with Moulana Azad, 19.8.46]

"Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Taker, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of India's Eastern Army, called the killings "Unbridled savagery with homicidal maniacs let loose to kill and kill and maim and burn. The underworld was taking charge of the citythe police were not controlling it". Major Livermore observed that Calcutta was the battlefield of a battle between mob rule and civilisation and decency. When the 7th Worcesters and the Green Howards (both British troop formations) were called out they found College Street ablaze and the few unburnt houses and shops completely sacked, in Amherst Street the litter of mass looting, in Upper Circular Road the rubble left by the fire-bugs, on Harrison Road the cries of wounded and terrorised residents."

[Prof. Tathagata Ray-My People Uprooted]

WHERE ARE THE CORPSES

“Wavell complimented Burrows : Frederick, we were told that the streets of Calcutta were littered with corpses. We have seen none so far.” Burrows mumbled something which no one could understand. George Abell, the Viceroy’s Secretary, standing next to me, also joined in, “It is so amazing, isn’t it?” I could not restrain myself, and told Abell, “The Viceroy has come eight days too late and we did not get sufficient notice to produce fresh corpses.”

We had gone about wearing iodine masks for three days and nights preceding this visit and picked up from the street 5,869 dead bodies, whole and mutilated, and disposed of them through mass burials and cremations.”

[P.S.Mathur : Illustrated Weekly, dt. 15.8.1973]

HOW THESE WERE DISPOSED OFF

“I took some part in the disposal of corpses. I was informed on the 20th that the military were going to assist in their removal and wanted the necessary implements. I was aware that we had laid in a stock of equipment for this purpose in 1942 for A.R.P purposes and I made all this available to the military 10 and to those officers also doing this work. Later it was reported that the graves dug by the Local Self-Government Department were almost full and could take only about eighteen more bodies. Again remembering some large graves dug at Dhapa in 1942 I sent an officer at once there to inspect them and report on their condition. He phoned a hour later as instructed by me from the phone nearest to that place and reported them to be still in good condition. I then phoned to the Fire Brigade and ordered them at once to send six trailer pumps with a guide whom I provided to pump these graves dry. These graves were capable of holding several thousand bodies.”

MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN PEACE*Report of the Officer-In-Charge**Corpse disposal**Statement of corpses collected and disposed of*

By		By		By				
Government Organisation		Anjuman Mofidul Islam		Hindu Satkar Samiti				
August		August		August				
18	129	16	12	221, reported by	16th-23rd	1,047		
19	53				17	34	24th-31st	33
20	82	18	Nil	Anjuman to be	Total	1,080		
21	247	19	50				all Muslims	
22	224	20	*125					
23	166	21	264	540, reported by	At Howrah	150		
24	102	22	189				Anjuman to be	
25	9	23	87					mostly Hindus
26	38							
27	28							
<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		
1,078		761		1,230				

Add 104 bodies, brought to Bagmari by the Military on 19th night and 20th morning and disposed of by Government Organisation by the public

*Includes 11 from Howrah General Hospital, and 21 brought to the Burial Ground

Includes 108 Hindus and 42 Muslims

1,182

Total of the Three Organisations

1,182

761

1,230

3,173*Source : Miscellaneous Reports on the Calcutta disturbances, August, 1946*

NOAKHALI

A PICTURESQUE LAND OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS

Geologically speaking the youngest district in the Gangetic delta, Noakhali constitutes the south-western part of the Chittagong Division in East Bengal. The principal crops are rice, jute, coconut and betel-nut. There is a heavy rainfall. An intricate network of *khals* or canals covers the whole district and provides a cheap means of transport for six months in the year. Other communications are bad. Rail links are few and far between and even good motorable roads are a rarity. The scenery is gorgeous. The whole landscape presents a smiling garden-like appearance. The tops of densely-growing coconut and betel-nut trees, rising to stately heights almost meet overhead, forming a natural umbrella through which even the midday sun scarcely penetrates. Buried in the thick mango woods, the cuckoo fills their sultry silence with its feverish, plaintive call. Plaintain and papaya, licchi and pineapple, luscious jack-fruit and mango, and coconut with its cooling, refreshing milk—not to mention citrus—grow in abundance and are within almost everybody's reach. There is an endless variety of pot-herbs and vegetables, unrivalled in size and flavour that can be grown with the minimum of labour, and about half a dozen varieties of roots and tubers practically growing wild. Tanks abound in fish and lotuses of many hues while patches of bright heavens mirrored in the molten glass of the water-filled jute-fields and fringed by countless reflections of greenish, straight-growing, translucent jute-stems under the cloudless autumnal skies, present a vision of ravishing beauty which once seen can never be forgotten.¹

CHAPTER—I

COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS

VIRUS OF COMMUNAL HATRED SPREAD FROM CALCUTTA TO NOAKHALI

Noakhali, a small district with an area of 1,658 sq. miles was inhabited by 1,803,937 Muslims and 406,261 Hindus. The scene of “Direct Action” embraced six police stations (Raipur, Lakshmipur, Ramganj, Begamganj, Senbag and Sandwip) inhabited by 996,455 Muslims and 220,507 Hindus. It is clear that this overwhelming numerical superiority of the Muslims placed the Hindus absolutely at their mercy.

From Calcutta the “Direct Action” spread to East Bengal.....Dacca was almost immediately affected, Noakhali and Tipperah suffered next. In all these districts the Muslim peasants were excited by false propaganda systematically carried on by men representing or speaking in the name of the Muslim League. Ignorant villagers were told that the Hindus had killed almost all the Muslims living in Calcutta and they were asked to kill their Hindu neighbours in retaliation. In Noakhali the Leader of this crusade was a prominent Muslim Leaguer of the district, Pir Golam Sarwar who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly for several years (1937-45). The Muslim Ministry which were in power during the period, allowed this man complete immunity against all laws, full freedom to preach *zihad* against the Hindus and means to organise local hooligans under his leadership.²

MISCHIEF WAS PRE-ARRANGED

‘The attack on the Hindu population of Noakhali and Tipperah was previously arranged and prepared for and was the result of League propaganda—it was absolutely communal and one-sided, the authorities had warnings of what was coming beforehand; the Muslim officials connived at the preparations going on, and a few encouraged, the Police did not function during the riots, there being no orders to fire except in self defence; ** there have been many cases of forcible marriages and religious conversion *en masse*’.^{3**}

BIASED POLICE OFFICERS AND UNION BOARD PRESIDENTS

Most of the police officers in the district (including the S.P.) were Muslims and the Hindus could not rely upon them for adequate protection. Even the Presidents of the Union Boards were Muslims who desisted from using their power and influence to protect the Hindus.⁴

APPREHENSION OF MR. F. BURROWS, GOVERNOR OF BENGAL

“The communal situation in Eastern Bengal, particularly Dacca, is worsening day by day,in almost all the riots in Bengal the Hindus suffer the most.... In many places in East-North Bengal, the immersion ceremony of images could not be held owing to the demand of the Moslems to stop music before mosques. Formerly they demanded the stopping of music only during prayer-time, but now they demand it for all time. This has been the cause of disturbances almost every year. Please advise us what to do in the matter.”

(Gandhi-Bose papers, Vol-II, pp. 199-203)

REPORTED TO LORD WAVELL : THENCE TO PETHICK-LAWRENCE

“Burrows in his last letter points out how little attention has been attracted to the riots in the mofussil towns of Bengal where there have been 300 killed. I am afraid Eastern Bengal is a really dangerous spot, and if “direct action” by the Muslim League started, a large number of Hindus there would be massacred. Communal tension and bitterness is acute everywhere in India and unless we can get a settlement with the League, the consequences may be very serious,”

(From Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence; dt. 10.9.46)

FALSEHOOD AND RUMOUR-MONGERING :

MUSLIM CHARACTERISTICS INTIMIDATION OF HINDUS BEGINS

On the 29th August, 1946, there was a sudden flare-up in the town of Noakhali. It was Id-ul-Fitr—a Muslim festival. A rumour had been set afloat that Sikhs, hired by the Hindus, were killing the Muslims *en masse*. Infuriated crowds of Muslims poured into the town from various suburban mosques, armed with whatever weapons they could lay hands on. Some Hindu fishermen were manhandled. The next day came news of the harm done by similar rumours throughout the district. The son of an important Congressman of Babupur village was murdered in broad daylight and the Congress house set on fire. Stray cases of waylaying and murder of Hindus on high-roads, village-ways and *khals* were reported from the mofussil.⁵

PREPATORY MEETINGS TO START RIOT-PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED

A joint meeting of the Ulemas (Muslim divines) and the Muslim League was announced by Mian Ghulam Sarwar on the 6th September by beat of

drum to “devise ways and means to wreak vengeance for the Great Calcutta Killing.” Exciting speeches were made and it was impressed upon the gathering that the time was now ripe for fabricating weapons and wielding them against the Hindus. The meeting took place on the 7th September at Shahpur.

The next day, another meeting was held at the village of Dasgharia and the mob were told to await the directions of the “High Command” before starting “Direct Action” against the Hindus of Noakhali. Breaking of idols and desecration of Hindu places of worship was openly preached at this meeting. On their way back from the meeting, the mob took away the idols from the family temple of a well-known Hindu resident at Shahpur and desecrated the temple. On the following day about a thousand people in three batches, carrying Muslim League flags, looted Hindu dealers in fish, betel-leaves and molasses in Shahpur bazar.⁶

***HINDU LEADER’S REQUEST FOR ARMED PATROL TURNED DOWN
MUSLIM S.P’S HOBNOBBING WITH LEAGUE LEADERS***

A few days later, the Superintendent of Police met the Muslim League members of Shahpur, Karpara, Lamchar and adjacent villages in a huge gathering. The attitude of the League representatives was defiant. The Hindus of the locality asked for an armed patrol on bazar days. But nothing came out of their request. From the next day it began to be given out by the ring-leaders that the Muslims could do whatever they liked with Hindu lives and property for a week; government would not interfere.

A large proportion of the intelligentsia and well-to-do people in Noakhali have either jobs in Calcutta or do business or send their children for education there. During the Puja holidays in the month of October, people returning from Calcutta to their mofussil homes in Noakhali found to their surprise that boats were being searched at every bridge and at every turn of the *khal* by people styling themselves as “League volunteers”, “Muslim National Guards”, and so on. Boat-drivers in Noakhali are mostly Muslims. They were directed by the ring-leaders not to carry Hindu passengers. The latter were sometimes manhandled and their belongings snatched away from them. Muslims held secret nightly meetings from which Hindus were rigorously excluded. All Hindu newcomers on their arrival in a locality were interrogated, their movements shadowed, and their freedom of movement restricted. They were prevented even from meeting or calling on one another by their Muslim neighbours. There was an odour of something ominous, evil brewing in the air. In desperation the President of the Hindu Mahasabha of Noakhali and the Chairman-in-charge of the Noakhali Municipality approached the District Muslim League leaders and appealed to them for peace and security. The latter’s answers were evasive. The deputationists invited them to tour the district with them :

***BELLIGERENT ATTITUDE OF MUSLIMS
REFUSED TO JOIN JOINT PEACE-MARCH WITH HINDUS***

I tell them that the District Magistrate has at last sanctioned a jeep and we may tour the district through and through for....communal harmony. But they hesitate and say that they would give....definite answer the next day. But the next day they refuse point-blank to accompany us and address joint meetings....I am....perturbed....I see the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police and try to make them realise the(magnitude) and nature of the impending disaster.⁷

***NON-CHALANT ATTITUDE OF THE S.P.
HINDU D.M. TRANSFERRED ON THE VERY DAY THE RIOT BROKE OUT***

But the Superintendent of Police only says that the incidents of which we spoke are baseless and false and there is no danger of anything happening which the force at his disposal cannot control. Military or more armed police, he thinks, (are) unnecessary.” The District Magistrate, N.G. Ray, was to have left Noakhali on the 12th October under orders of transfer. “I appeal to him to stay. He realises the gravity of the situation and the coming danger. But he cannot stay. He must go, he says, but he would do what he could to save the minority.”

And, instead of 12th October, the District Magistrate left the district on 10th October—the very day the great massacre broke out.⁸

SITUATION PREVAILING PRIOR TO RIOTING

The Secretary, Noakhali District Congress Committee, gave an account of the situation prevailing there prior to the rioting :

In some cases the officers have been poisoned with communalism. The Hindu officers are apathetic and studious, cautious not to incur the displeasure of the other community and for the matter of that the Muslims..... Government and almost all Muhammedan officers are inclined towards the Muslim League and do not hesitate to condone the aggressive acts of the Muslim hooligans by helping suppression of evidence against them submitting false reports.⁹

IT WAS LAWLESSNESS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT BEFORE RIOT

Meanwhile the Pujas came near. Almost all the boats carrying Hindu passengers from Chandpur, Hajiganj and Sonaimuri and other railway stations which passed through Ramganj thana area were thoroughly searched at Chatkhil, Kochua, Sahapur and other places and their contents looted. Sometimes ornaments from the person of the women passengers were snatched away. Often boatmen were

forced to make the Hindu passengers get down from their boats. As these incidents took place shortly before the Pujas, the hooligans got many valuable articles, clothings, ornaments and money which the Hindu passengers carried with them. During this period some dacoities were committed in Hindu houses in different parts of the district. The images of the Goddess Durga in some places were broken and buffaloes were butchered near mosques and other places.

The following are only a few of the incidents that took place after the 29th August and before the 10th October last :

Debi Prasanna Guha of Babupur was murdered on the "Id" day and the Congress office in front of his house was burnt to ashes; one of his brothers and a servant were also assaulted.

While fishing in the Feni river a group of fishermen were attacked with deadly weapons resulting in the death of one and serious injuries to two others.

Chandra Kumar Karmakar of Monpura, found missing from the "Id" day while proceeding to Amarpur, was murdered near Jamalpur.

Jamini Dey, a servant of the hotel while proceeding to Ghoshbag on the "Id" day, was murdered on the way. A dead body in a decomposed condition with his clothes was found later.

Nine fishermen of Charuriah less than a mile off from the town were seriously assaulted by deadly weapons. Seven of them were admitted into hospital. They were prevented from coming out and lodging any complaint with the police.

Shops of Kamini Kumar Paul and Jadav Chandra Saha were looted at Chandraganj and Jadav Chandra Saha was beaten.

Hindu shops of Koresh Munshi Hat in Feni subdivision were looted.

Three boats full of clothes were looted at Bholakot.

Temple of the family deity of Harendra Ghose of Raipur was desecrated by butchering a calf and throwing the same inside the temple.

Shiba Temple of Dr. Jadunath Majumdar of Chandipur was similarly desecrated.

Family deities of Nagendra Majumder and Rajkumar Choudhury of Dadpur were similarly desecrated and stolen.

Many Hindu shops and two pharmacies of Kankirhat were looted.

All the properties of some 6 and 7 families of Kanur Char were looted.

A gang armed with deadly weapons entered the house of Jadav Mojumdar of Karpara, assaulted Nakul Mojumdar and looted properties worth Rs. 1,500.

Hindu shop-keepers of Tajmohammad Hat were victimised and driven away.

Some Hindu shops of Shahapur Bazar were looted.

Ashu Sen of Debisingpur was severely beaten near Tajumiarhat at Char Parbati.

House of Sj. Prasanna Mohan Chakravotry, B.L., at Tatarkhil was looted and Durga image was broken, buffalo butchered.

Rajkumar Choudhury of Banspara was brutally assaulted on his way home.

Durga images of Sj. Iswar Chandra Pathak, Kethuri, Sj. Kedareshwar Chakraborty of Merkachar and Sj. Ananta Kumar De of Angrapara were also broken.

Houses of Nabin Chandra Nath of Miralipur and of Radhacharan Nath of Latipur were raided. Nobin Chandra and Radha Charan including five members of his family were injured.

Shop of Subal Chandra Banik of Nandanpur was looted at Sonapur Bazar.¹⁰

WELL-PLANNED PREPARATION AND EXECUTION

The rioters everywhere came well prepared. They showed a high degree of organisation, acted under leaders, and the various batches were named after the villages from which they were recruited. Nearly all their crimes were perpetrated in broad daylight. In very few cases they continued after nightfall. They invariably attacked in great force, with a lightning suddenness, and acted with inconceivable ruthlessness, especially when they encountered resistance. The slogans they used were : “Allah-o-Akbar”, “Pakistan Zindabad”, “Larke Lenge Pakistan” (we shall take Pakistan by force), “Muslim League Zindabad” and “Kalikatar Pratishodh Chai” (we want revenge for Calcutta). Their *modus operandi* followed a well-defined and uniform pattern. The various phases of action followed each other in waves. First came extortion. Subscription was demanded in the name of the Muslim League. Assurance was held out that those who paid would be spared. The promise was not always kept. Even when life was spared, property was not.

After extortion, surrender of all arms was demanded; the penalty for withholding a single weapon, even a scythe or a sickle being instantaneous death to the whole family. Everything that could be removed was then plundered and the houses set on fire with kerosene and petrol. It was locally reported that for a month before the riots, kerosene could not be had at the ration shops in the affected area for love or money.

After arson there was looting again. Everything that had escaped fire or was not completely burnt, e.g. door-leaves, window-frames, corrugated iron sheets etc., was looted. This went on for days together. The survivors were

asked to accept Islam if they wanted to live. The victims were sometimes required, as a proof of the genuineness of their conversion, to give their unmarried, widowed and sometimes even already married daughters in “marriage” to Muslims selected by the mob. In all these cases the village Maulvis, who accompanied the mob, were ready with their services, thus acting at the same time as hooligans and priests.

After conversion, guards were placed at the residence of the victims, ostensibly for their protection but actually—as some of the “guards” themselves afterwards admitted to us—to prevent their escape and make their conversion permanent. In some places the ring-leaders had the temerity to issue “conversion” certificates as “safe conduct” passes to the families of victims going out of the cordoned areas.¹¹

There was a systematic attempt to exterminate the intelligentsia and in the case of well-to-do families all the male heirs.

THE WHOLE STRATA OF MUSLIM SOCIETY TOOK ACTIVE PART IN RIOT

Among those who took part in the disturbances, figured presidents and members of Union Boards, Muslim National Guards, Muslim schoolmasters and students of schools and colleges, local criminal elements of the community and a sprinkling of ordinary Muslim village-folk including women and children. Later the hooligans quarrelled among themselves over the division of the spoils and sometimes gave information against one another.¹²

CHAPTER—II

GATHERING STORM BURST OUT :

HOLOCAUST AT KARPARA CHAUDHURY HOUSE—THE HINDU KARBALA

The holocaust commenced on the 10th October, the Lakshmi Puja day. The rainy season was far advanced. *Khals* were overflowing with water. The rice fields were flooded. The District Board road was breached owing to heavy rains. Smaller roads were under water. The *shankos* (bamboo bridges) were all guarded by the hooligans.

Rai Saheb Rajendralal Chowdhury of Chowdhury badi, Karpara, President of the Noakhali Bar Association, had made himself an eyesore to the local Fuehrer by organising defence against the growing lawlessness.

There used to be in his *badi* in those days a sadhu of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Tryambakanand by name. He had been trying to revive the institution of Sitala Puja in Hindu *badis* with some success. A rumour went round that the Sadhu had bragged that on the forthcoming occasion he would perform the Puja with the blood of the Muslims instead of the usual goat's blood.

A short run from Karpara was Shampur, the headquarters of Ghulam Sarwar, the Fuehrer. On hearing the news, he turned berserk and threatened that he would have the heads of the sadhu and Rai Saheb Rajendralal Chowdhury cut off.

“I WANT THE HEADS OF RAI SAHEB AND SANNYASI”—SARWAR

On the morning of the 10th October, he sent a chowkidar with a letter summoning the two to meet him in Shahpur bazar. The Rai Saheb suspecting foul play, refused to go. The Fuehrer became excited. At 8 a.m. he addressed a gathering of several thousand in Shahpur bazar when, it was alleged, he demanded the heads of Rajendralal and the sadhu and incited the the mob to arson and loot. A *thana* officer of Ramganj, a Muslim, was present on the scene. He was ordered by the Fuehrer to return with his men to the boat that was moored in the *khal* below and wait there. He sheepishly obeyed. The mob

then set fire to the Kali temple in the bazar and cut the sacred banyan tree (*Kali gach*) under the very eyes of the *thana* officer. All Hindu shops in the bazar were looted and burnt.¹⁴

VALIENT BUT FUTILE RESISTANCE
BY SURENDRANATH BOSE, ZAMINDAR OF NARAYANPUR
—THE FIRST VICTIM

After finishing Shahpur bazar, the mob divided itself into three sections. One section proceeded in the direction of Ramganj bazar, to the north-west. The other looted Hindu shops in Dasgharia bazar and burnt the Thakur Mandir (temple) there. The third attacked the *katchery* of Suren Bose, the zamindar of Narayanpur. Suren Bose had been warned of the coming danger by a friendly police officer that very morning and advised to flee. But he refused saying, **“I do not want to leave my brethren behind....I must....face death with them.”** When the attack came he opened fire. He was set upon by the mob and killed, the *katchery* set on fire and the dead body thrown upon the flames. Five other occupants of the house were killed likewise.¹⁵

HEROIC RESISTANCE AT CHOWDHURY HOUSE :
RAJENDRALAL CHOWDHURY WAS BEHEADED AND
HIS HEAD WAS PRESENTED TO GHULAM SARWAR

On the morning of the 11th October, at about 8 a.m., Chowdhury *badi* itself was attacked : first by a small batch of 30 to 40 rioters shouting “Allah-o-Akbar”, “Hindur Rakta Chai” (we demand the blood of Hindus) etc. Rajendralal Chowdhury and his son with some young men met them some distance from the main building. Three of the attackers were killed. The mob then fell back and returned after about three hours with reinforcements, not less than ten thousand strong. In the meantime the members of Rajendralal’s family and a number of men and women and children from adjacent *badis* had taken refuge on the roof of the Rai Saheb’s house and barricaded themselves. From there one Kali Prasanna Raut, by a skilfully directed fire from his muzzzle-loader, kept the rioters at bay of several hours, till his ammunition was exhausted. He then broke the gun across his knee and threw it into the building. Thirty to forty of the attackers, it was said, were killed and several hundred wounded.

When the firing ceased, the rioters returned and piling up wood, bamboo and pieces of fencing etc. against the building, set fire to it with the help of petrol and kerosene. “Fire breaking out immediately, women, children and the aged began to scream desperately in terror.” Some rioters from below let fly among them. One person was killed. Those who had escaped injury tried to save

themselves by lying down on the roof but were subjected to a fierce fusillade of brickbats, bottles etc. from below. A part of the building consumed by fire then collapsed and crushed to death a number of those who had taken shelter below and some on the roof. When the blaze became too fierce, those on the roof piteously begged the mob below to rescue them. The Fuehrer stood watching at a distance. At his orders a ladder was ingeniously improvised by felling a coconut tree against the wall of the building and all male members from the burning building were brought down one by one, stripped naked, roped to trees and butchered with *daos* in the presence of their womenfolk. Rai Saheb Rajendralal Chowdhury was led off separately from the rest to a log of wood and beheaded. The severed head was carried in procession to be presented to the Fuehrer—“the mad crowd shouting and yelling in a terrible manner.”¹⁶

A VIVID DESCRIPTION OF THE GRUESOME HAPPENINGS

The violence of such magnitude broke out on 10 October. “The immediate occasion for the outbreak of the disturbances was the looting of a Bazar in Ramganj police station following the holding of a mass meeting and a provocative speech by the person now arrested”, wrote the Governor, “Alleged to be the organizer of the disturbances—Gholam Sarwar Hussein.” Gholam Sarwar, one victim claimed, had incited people to avenge the Calcutta killings in a public speech. This included an attack on the “Kutchery bari of Babu Surendra Nath Bose and Rai Saheb Rajendralal Ray Chowdhury of Karpara”. The crowd in Sahapur Bazar “10 to 12 thousand Mussalman” resorted to looting and destroying. Sahapur Bazar which the touring officer, Gupta, found completely devastated. The next action was the attack on the house of Rajendralal Roy Chowdhury, the erstwhile president of the Noakhali Bar and a prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader in the district.¹⁷

A victim (Mahendra Mohan Ray, an inmate of Chowdhury house) gives a graphic detail of the attack :

RAMGANJ P.S. GAVE FULL CO-OPERATION TO SARWAR

On 10th Oct. 1946 at about 8 a.m. a Muslim crowd of several thousand men, in batches of about 200 persons armed with deadly weapons passed by our house shouting Muslim League and other slogans such as “Pakistan Zindabad”, “Larke Lenge Pakistan” [sic], “Want Hindu Blood” and “Calcutta Retaliation” and moved towards the ex-MLA’s house. At about 12 a.m. another mob including both outside and local Muslims passed by our house shouting “Want Rai Sahib’s head”, “Sanyasi’s Head” and on their way towards the ex-MLA’s house forcibly tried to drag away one Monoranjan Bose of our house who was taken back by Rai Sahib and others. Immediately we sent one Sailesh Roy of our house to P.S.

Ramganj to lodge an ejahar but to our utter misfortune he could never come back. On the same evening the mob looted and set fire to Sahapur Bazar.

On 11 Oct. 1946 at about 10 a.m. a crowd of about 700 Muslims looted and set fire to all the houses of Southern Karpara and then attacked our house with deadly weapons and shouting Muslim League slogans. In the scuffle that ensued in trying to repulse the attack, one Brojonath Das of our house instantaneously [sic] died as a result of an injury caused by a *konch* thrown by one Monnu Mia of Nakaribari and sometime after that the mob left our house and proceeded towards the house of Golam Sarwar. After about an hour a mob of about eight to ten thousand Muslims led by Sarwar with a gun in hand, proceeded towards our house shouting League slogans, “Sarwar Zindabad”, “Hindur rakta chai” (want Hindu blood), “Rai Sahaber matha chai” (want the head of Rai Sahib), “Sanyasir matha chai” (want the head of sanyasi’s). The numerical strength frightened us a great deal. We, however, organised ourselves in two groups and took shelter in Rajen Babu’s building because the rest were kucha houses (about 100). The aged men including myself (68 years old) women and children took shelter on the roof trying to repulse the attack by throwing brickbats while the young men mostly guarded the building entrance with the only available crude weapons usually meant for home use.

On reaching our house Sarwar gave the lead by opening fire and the mob started wholesale looting and setting fire to all our houses. By about 4 p.m. our defence completely broke down and they set fire to the building by spraying petrol and kerosene oil of which they had an abundant stock.... They asked us to come down and talk matters over with Baromiya and Chotomiya (Sarwar and his younger brother), who, they said, had forbidden further killings.... *One Ledu Shaikh, one Rajen Babu’s client and others were persuading us to come down assuring safety on oath of the Koran. At this moment Sarwar ordered his men to go up by ladders and bring everyone down.*

***THE GOONDAS WERE ALL KNOWN NEIGHBOURS—
THERE WERE NO OUTSIDERS***

The Goondas (Ledu Shaikh, Shamsul Haque, Abdul Rashid, Khalek, Sikandar, Kala Miya, Muslim Maji, Abdul Kasem, Doctor, Abul Hossan Choudhury, etc.) then came up in strength. The ladies were forced to get down. As soon as they got down they were struck and wounded, their ornaments and cash money being snatched away. The scattered men were overpowered, their hands were tied and forced to get down and murdered. Sarwar had declared a special reward for Rajen Babu’s and Sanyasi’s head. As soon as Rajen Babu was forced down, his head was chopped off and a batch ran away with it making a terrific shriek of joy [sic].¹⁸

***SAD END OF KALIPRASANNA RAUT — THE HERO OF KARPARA
WOEFUL PLIGHT OF TWO GIRLS OF CHOWDHURY HOUSE***

All other adjacent houses, in the meantime, had been first looted and then burnt. Kali Prasanna Raut tried to escape by jumping into a tank close by, but was discovered, dragged out of the tank at the end of a *teta* (many-pronged fishing spear with sharp hooks) and killed. The womenfolk were led away to different places, “a crowd in front and a crowd behind” to the accompaniment of taunts, jeers and other unmentionable indignities. Late at night, some of them were brought back and left in a neighbouring *badi*. Rai Saheb Rajendralal’s wife with some others took refuge in the *badi* of one of Rajendralal’s Muslim servants, from where they were rescued a week later, on the 18th October, by Abdul Gofran, the Minister of Civil Supplies. Two girls of the family were brought by a gang of ruffians to Shahpur high school, where they were violated. One of them was then taken to Shahpur bazar and murdered.¹⁹

BETRAYAL BY THE PROTECTOR

The other escaped, lost her way and was directed by a kind-hearted Muslim shop-keeper, who was moved to pity by her plight, to Rajbadi in Shahpur, where she took refuge. The hooligans traced her there and demanded her surrender under threats. The poor girl with tears begged her Hindu hosts to give her poison and end her life. But they thrust her out into the pitch-dark night, out of craven fear. The sky was overcast and there was deep mud everywhere. In despair she turned from one to the other of her captors and ultimately invoked protection of one of them, who was a schoolmaster. He reassured her, called her sister, afterwards betrayed her, kept her confined in his house for some days, then moved her from place to place. Finally, she was taken out in a boat into the flooded rice fields and murdered near Khalispara, a village about half a mile from Shahpur Rajbadi, the corpse being thrown into the water.²⁰

NUMBER OF CASUALTIES IN CHOWDHURY HOUSE

The next day, under the cover of night, the rioters chopped off the heads from the dead bodies. On the 12th October, the headless trunks were likewise removed, put into sacks and thrown into a tank near Lamchar village from where at the time of Gandhiji’s visit to that place on the 13th January, 1947, sacks containing 13 dead bodies were dragged out by the boatman of the present writer. Post-mortem report by Dr. Sushila Nayar revealed that two of the corpses were those of women. The number of casualties at Chowdhury badi that day, that could be identified was, killed 24, wounded 69, and missing 93.²¹

SWAMI TRYAMBAKANANDA BROUGHT THE NEWS TO CALCUTTA

The mysterious sadhu Tryambakanand, according to his own version, slipped out of Chowdhury badi after the first attack by the hooligans. When he returned he found the building in flames and the dead bodies of the inmates, and those who had taken shelter there, strewn all over the place. He then quickly left the place, hid himself in the jungle and swam across the adjoining *khal* shortly after midnight. It was then raining heavily. Wending his way through paddy fields and jungles, he reached Ramganj. From there he was conducted under armed police escort to Noakhali and ultimately reached Calcutta to give colourful accounts of his adventures to the Press.

A five-year old child belonging to the Chowdhury family who had survived the massacre was presented to Gandhiji when he took up his residence in Dattapara refugee camp. She became the mascot of the camp, including the Government officials, and brought tears to the eyes of many by her innocent prattle about the ghastly happenings in the Chowdhury badi to which she had been witness.

The charred barrel of Kali Prasanna Raut's muzzle-loader was picked up from the debris by one of the rioters and made strange history two years later. Blackened and twisted masses of corrugated sheets covered the whole place for months afterwards, giving it the appearance of a blitzed city. Heaps of ashes, cinders and charred remains of household belongings lay at scores of places where the houses had once stood. Here and there one stumbled upon half-calcined human bones among the ashes. In one of the burnt huts, Gandhiji found a child's skull and the remains of the finger-digits and the fore-arm of a little baby.²²

SARWAR'S HYPOCRISY

After the havoc in Shahpur bazar, the Fuehrer sent information to the authorities that "goondas from outside" had come and done it and that his life and the lives of the local people were in danger! He even started giving relief out of the loot to his victims, who, having been converted to Islam, were now his flock! He was arrested and taken into custody by the military on the 22nd October.²³

DEPOSITION OF JYOTIRMOYEE DAS, WIFE OF RAMANATH DAS

—A FEMALE EYE-WITNESS

(Collected From Saurendra Kumar Basu)

On the day of Laxmipuja, Friday at about 10 a.m. many people came armed with Teta, spear, two guns. Then we all women got on the roof. Then

the rogues set fire all around. Manindrababu, Kanu Roy (son of Pyari Roy) went forward to seek forgiveness. Hardly had he sought forgiveness but at once cut Manu into two and pierced the spear on the breast of Kanu. Then went on uninterrupted shower of brickbats and a brick struck on the eye of describer. Then both men and women prayed for forgiveness from roof top. When the ruffians began to hurl weapons, all lay down on the roof. All of them were injured more or less and getting up prayed for life; agreed to give whatever they wanted. At this the crowd said, "At first you come down." Then womenfolk said, "How can we come down, when fire is burning all around. Then coming up with the help of a trunk of a coconut tree cutting down they presented themselves before us and said, "Will you be converted to Muslim or not?" We agreed at once provided no oppression was meted out on us. Then they assured us to come down without fear; even they helped us to come down extending their hands and snatched away all the ornaments from our body at the time of coming down.

Before that they began to beat the male members and search for Rajenbabu. Rajen Babu was hidden under the cover of banana leaves. Rajenbabu's wife said, they would not be able to kill Rajenbabu before killing her. A few of them caught hold of her and Rajen Babu was brought down binding his hands. As soon as he was brought down, a teta was thrown at him and it struck on the hip of Rajenbabu. Then he said, "My head is reeling, I can not stand". Then Rajenbabu was taken under the mango tree and made to stand 20 yards away from Golam Sarwar who shot him on the breast for which he succumbed. Taking him at a little distance his head was cut off. Then Golam Sarwar blew the whistle and all stopped.

When such heinous work was going on, all other male members were being murdered one by one bringing them from the roof. Nagen Roy's eight year old son was thrown into fire from roof-top but he did not die by sheer chance. When Golam Sarwar left the place, all womenfolk were taken with him. When I was going, a turning on both sides I found Nagen Roy's chopped body had been kept in the rice bowl and half of the body of Satishbabu was kept in the container for pulses. It was night when we reached Gholam Sarwar's house. On seeing he asked the escort why we had been brought there and ordered to repatriate to our house. But our house was burning. Then we were kept in different Hindu and Muslim houses. In the morning we were returned back and took shelter in a small room.

At 8 in the morning a few persons brought big cane baskets and daggers and filled the baskets with cut-off heads. Only Kanubabu being seriously injured was thrown into a bush; they could not see him. Hearing his groaning cry at

night, the members of Majumdar family rescued him. On next monday all the dead bodies were removed; Kanubabu died on that very day and the murderers buried him. Thereafter, one day Mr Gofran came and accompanied with him Rajenbabu's wife and daughters but he refused to take others with him.

After seven days the police appeared for the first time. In this massacre three died due to wall collapse and the rest died of injury with weapons.

[Among them was Kalachand Roy's wife Namita (Khuku), who was snatched away.]

List of the dead :

(1) Kalikumar Roy, two others died of house collapse, (4) Rajendrababu, (5) Chintaharan Babu, (6) Satish Babu, (7) Manindrababu, (8) Gopal, (9) Nagendrababu, (10) Joychandra, (11) Manmohan, (12) Harendra Roy, (13) Brojanath Das, (14) Jasoda Dhupi, (15) Two boys of Baruipara, (16) Prasanna Roy, (17) Kalu Roy, (18) Akshay Roy, (19) Surya Roy, (20) Mona, (21) Khoka, (22) Nepu, son of Surjya Roy, (23) Majumdar, (24) Kalipada Roy.²⁴

(Translated from Bengali)

Source : *Satchallisher Diary* of Prof. Nirmal Kumar Basu

HOW THE DECOMPOSED BODIES/SKELETONS WERE DISPOSED OF

“On 11 January, 1947, Gandhiji reached my birthplace Lamchar with a team of his followers. In the afternoon not less than 2000 people assembled at the prayer meeting held at the premises of Lamchar High School. Before the commencement of the meeting 21 half-decomposed bodies of men and women, many of whose skeletons only, recovered on that very day from the marsh, were brought in the courtyard. Local people identified these dead bodies as my relatives and male members of my neighbour, late Rajendralal Roychowdhury.

The prayer being over, at dead of night all the dead bodies were cremated according to religious sanctions on the open field on the eastern side of open field belonging to Lamchar Chowdhuri family.”

—(Manoranjan Chowdhury, *Secretary, All India Hindu Mahasabha*)

CHAPTER—III

ANNIHILATION OF SOME OTHER PROMINENT HINDU FAMILIES AND PERSONS

(A) GRUSOME HAPPENINGS OF NOAKHOLA CHAUDHURY HOUSE

The refugees brought with them tales of gruesome happenings on a scale unprecedented in India's recent history. There had been burning of houses of almost all well-to-do and respectable Hindu families, systematic extortion of money under false assurances of protection, murder, brutal assaults on hundreds of innocent people, forcible conversion of entire families, forcible marriages of unmarried and remarriage to Muslims of already married women in the presence of their nearest and dearest ones. People who had been subjected to conversion and all sorts of tortures were now seen wearing Muslim dresses. They were forced to take forbidden food and perform Muslim religious rites.

Typical of the barbarities practised was the account given by a young girl of a well-known family from the village of Noakhola in the Ramganj police station. On the morning of the 11th October, a group of the village people came to their house and held out the threat that if they did not contribute Rs. 500 to the fund of a local organisation (Muslim League) at once, they would be murdered, their property looted and their houses burnt. The money was immediately paid. After a short while, a huge menacing crowd surrounded the house. One of the members of the family tried to pacify the crowd. Hardly had he uttered a word than the hooligans beheaded him with a *dao* (heavy, curved knife). They then attacked the oldest man in the *badi*. After butchering him, they seized his second son and forcibly placed him on the body of his father. The mother threw herself on her son and besought them not to kill him. Enraged by the intervention, they gave her a heavy blow with a *lathi* and removed her unconscious to another place. **After dealing with their captive as before, they turned their attention to the father (of the girl). The girl rushed out of the house where she had been hiding and gave her father's would be assassin some ornaments and Rs. 400 in cash as the price for sparing her**

father's life. "The man took the money and ornaments in the left hand and gave her father a fatal blow with the right."²⁵

Sibaprasanna Narayan Chowdhuri who was then a boy of 10 years, later told that immediately after the riot in the house they left for Calcutta. To a query, whether his mother told anything later on the happenings in their house, Sri Chowdhury replied with folded hands, "Mother did not utter a single word on this incident later. She lived only for one year after the riot. Her reluctance to speak anything further signified the indignities she had to endure."²⁶

In this house a boy of 13 or 14 years of age sitting on the verandah, was preparing for the ensuing examination. Suddenly the Muslim goondas entered the house and chopped off his head with a single stroke. In all eight persons were murdered in the house including his father and uncles. Mother and aunts spent two days in the jungles. Everything in the household were looted and burnt out.²⁷

***(B) UNPRECEDENTED BARBARITY AT GOPAIRBAG
SIMULTANEOUS BURNING OF HUSBANDS AND GANG-RAPING OF WIDOWS***

Gopairbag is a large populous village near Sompara bazar under PS. Ramganj. There lived a big family of three brothers named Kalikamal, Ram Ram and Sashi Patwari. It was known as Gopairbag Das's house. It was a well-to-do family. They had a monthly income of Rs 2000/- by selling betel-leaf, betel nut and rice.

Md. Kasem, one of the king-leaders and right-hand man of Golam Sarwar was a resident of that village. Under his leadership thousands of goondas attacked Das's house. About 22 unarmed male members of the family resisted the attackers but soon they were overpowered. Well-armed and numerically stronger, the assailants murdered 19 members of the Das family and thus widowed 19 ladies at a time. Where the male members were tied with rope and thrown into fire-pit and pressed with bamboos, their women-folk were gang-raped beside the fire-pit.

Sometime after the riot, Barrister N.C.Chatterjee, Congress leader Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, Prof. Nirmal Bose and Gandhiji visited the village and witnessed the trail of destruction. Even after three months half-burnt bones of those who were burnt alive were seen scattered here and there.²⁸

GANDHIJI WITNESSED THE DEVILISH DESTRUCTION OF GOPAIRBAG

Gopairbag was the first village to be visited. Here, buried deep in thick groves of area and coconut palms, in a clearing were five clusters of huts of Hindu families surrounded by nearly fifty times that number of Muslim families. One of these was a rich Patwari's house—his estate being valued at several lakhs

of rupees. Silken plantain leaves spread out in graceful arches under a sapphire-blue sky. The loveliness of nature was all around. The air was delightfully fresh and cool. But the human scene that met the eye froze one's blood. One of the worst massacres during the disturbances had taken place here, twenty-one male members out of the total of twenty-three being butchered in cold blood. The two survivors had managed to escape when the massacre took place. In a corner of the courtyard, the corpses of the slaughtered men were said to have been piled up in a heap and burnt. Charred remains of what was once flesh and blood bore witness to the grim tragedy. There were bloodstains on the doorsteps of some of the huts. The kutchra floors in many houses had been dug up, presumably in search of hidden cash or jewels. The odour of death hung strong over the place. It was a picture of utter desolation. The organiser of the massacre was said to be a next-door neighbour, Quasim Ali by name, who had served in the Royal Air Force and was graduate of a University. He was absconding.

(C) MURDER OF RAJENDRALAL GHOSH, MANAGER OF SAYESTANAGAR ESTATE

Rajendralal Ghosh who hailed from the district of Jessore, was the Manager of Sayestanagar Estate, PS. Raipur, Noakhali. How cruelly he had been murdered and his family members tortured and humiliated, was stated by his son, Prof. Ajit Kumar Ghosh :—

My father informed us in a letter in the month of September, 1946, that the situation in that part of the district was becoming alarming. The local Muslims were talking of taking revenge for the loss the community suffered in the Calcutta riot. There was complete change in their attitude and behaviour with the Hindus. They, however, played tricks with my father. They formed peace committee with my father as the president and assured him not to be panicky; there would be no disturbance in the locality. My father being a simple-hearted man was deceived at their pretence of honesty and sincerity.

But the situation gradually and rapidly deteriorated and we from Jessore repeatedly wrote to my father to return home from Noakhali without delay as it has become impossible to control and console mother. Father replied that he had a large amount of money realised from the ryots as revenue to be paid to the Zamindar living in Calcutta. We wrote back—Do you think that the Zamindar's money is more precious than your own life?

There was no response to this letter. Meanwhile riot broke out virulently in Noakhali. Having received no further communication from father, we were at a loss as to what to do. Ultimately I and my elder brother met Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and sought his advice. He at first rebuked us for sitting idle at Jessore, while our father was in great danger in Noakhali, and then ordered us to proceed to Noakhali along with the volunteers of the Hindu Mahasabha,

who were being sent there to rescue Hindus from the affected areas. Accordingly we two brothers started for Noakhali.

On arrival at Chandpur, we witnessed a horrible scene there. Thousands of riot victim Hindus who had lost their everything were coming to the town by train, boats or on foot from Noakhali, Comilla and Chittagong. They were crying, beating their breasts, rolling on the earth. They had only torn cloth on their body.

Being very much distressed and disturbed at this horrible scene, we enquired of them about the whereabouts of my father. Some one in the crowd said, "Oh, he had been murdered." Hearing this heart-rending news I fell down on the railway track and fainted. 'Mejda' and some others brought me to senses. The same news was also confirmed by another group coming from Sayestanagar area.

Still we were willing to see my dead father's body. More so, there were a few members of our family at Sayestanagar. We were unaware about their fate. So we decided to proceed to Sayestanagar; but how that could be done. All source of communication had been blocked and disrupted. So we gave up the hope of going to the interior of the district.

The condition of the destitute Hindus at Chandpur beggars description. The victimised Hindus took shelter in the station premises, railway tracks and on the open vacant lands. We were moving among them in search of our remaining family members. Suddenly we met a group of ghost-like people who, as if, returned from the hell. We found our family members amongst them almost lifeless, except our beloved father.

We heard from them the heart-rending story of untold miseries and cruelties done on them. The assassins, after killing my father were dragging all other members of our family and did not heed to any appeal for mercy. The ladies, tired and exhausted sometimes fell on the rough and rugged road, still the assassins were dragging them like beasts. They were somehow saved from the clutches of the ruffians with the help of a kind-hearted Muslim and when their family teacher was leading them secretly to Chandpur by boat, a military party rescued them and brought them at Chandpur town.

Along with them we returned to our home in Jessore—as an utterly ruined family.²⁹

(D) SELF-SACRIFICE OF CHITTRANJAN DATTA CHAUDHURY OF SAYESTANAGAR

On the third day (12th October) of the holocaust, Sri Chittaranjan Datta Chaudhury, grandson of Rai Bahadur Pyarilal Roychaudhuri, zaminder of Sayestanagar, P.S. Raypur, sacrificed his life but not his honour. He with his family and servants lived in a palatial three storied building. He knew that he would be next target of the blood-thirsty rioters like the manager of the Sayestanagar Zamindari, Sri Rajendralal Ghosh.

Apprehending immediate danger he sent his wife and children to one of his trusted ryot's house and they were saved. But his old mother said that she would not leave her son alone in that dangerous moment. When the marauding Muslims attacked his house, he took his position in one room of his building. Chittaranjan desperately shot at the attackers therefrom. He continued firing for hours together.

When bullets were almost exhausted, and only two bullets left, Chittaranjan asked his mother whether she would like to die in her son's hand or at the hands of the Muslims. Getting his mother's consent, he killed her with one bullet and killed himself with the other bullet, but did not surrender his self respect.

His heroic sacrifice reminded the self-immolation of the Rajputs.

Later the goondas beheaded him and played football with the decapitated head.³⁰

***(E) DESTRUCTION OF NANDIGRAM :
HUSBAND MURDERED ON THE CHEST OF THE WIFE***

The house of the distinguished Nag family, the Post Office building, and the R.K. Nag High School established by benevolent Ramanikanta Nag had been fully demolished. Many riot-victims of adjacent villages were given shelter in the Nag's house under police protection.

One day the hooligan forces of Golam Sarwar made an attempt to attack this camp; but their attempt was foiled as the armed police resisted their attack. While retreating, the goondas attacked some other houses and killed some persons. They tied up the hands and legs of old Kunja Karmakar and threw him in fire.

The wife of a teacher of Basudeb Bari, resisted the hooligans when they tried to kill her husband. The miscreants forced the lady to lie down on earth and by placing her husband on her chest, they killed the teacher brutally.³¹

***(F) ESCAPE FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH
MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF NALINI RANJAN MITRA,
HEADMASTER OF KHILPARA HIGH SCHOOL***

“That year during the tumultuous communal situation, I reached my own house at Sindurpur from Khilpara with my family with great mental agony and anxiety after closing the school for the Puja Vacation.

The distance between Rajendralal Roychoudhury's Karpara residence and mine was four miles. On the occasion of the Puja all members of the prosperous Chaudhury family, viz, Lawyer, Mukhtiar, Professor, government employees came home from their respective places of work. The way the entire family of Rajendralal Roychoudhury had been diabolically butchered the next day after the Lakshmipuja, came to my knowledge instantly. I also heard that my name was in the hit-list of Golam Sarwar after Rajen Babu”.

“The next day after Rajendra Babu’s murder, I accompanied by my wife and two young sons Manotosh and Usharanjan Mitra went out in search of a safe shelter with the help of a faithful boat-man. Hardly had I gone a little distance from my house, the miscreants who kept watch on us, raised a hue and cry—“Nalini Master is escaping, catch him, catch him.”

A crowd (nearly two hundred or more) immediately surrounded the boat and dragged it to the shore and attempted to enter inside to catch hold of Nalini Babu so that he could be presented before Golam Sarwar. But Nalini Babu’s wife Sobhanabala Mitra could well-understand the motive of the attackers and valiantly resisted them. Then appeared in the scene a good-hearted Muslim youth named Kader Mian who was very faithful to Nalini Babu. He brought out two trunks from inside the boat and threw them before the ruffians and ordered the boat-man to take back Nalini Babu and his family to their house. Thus he was saved from imminent danger of his life.

Ultimately he had to flee from his house again by boat at dead of night and reached Nandigram Police Camp with the help of two youths—One Hindu and one Muslim—Ali and Ramesh by name, who were devotees of “Master Mashai.” When the goondas came to know of this event, they instantly killed Ramesh and spare Ali’s life after a good beating, as he was a Muslim.

Late Sri Nalini Ranjan Mitra was a renowned Headmaster of Khilpara High School. A revolutionary from his school-days he was a political sufferer as also a social worker, well-known through out the district of Noakhali. At the insistence of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, he stood as a Hindu Mahasabha candidate for election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1946 from Noakhali Hindu Constituency. He was an outspoken critic of the misdeeds of the Muslim League Government in Bengal and its oppressive and suppressive measures against the Hindus of the district. Consequently he became an eye-sore of Golam Sarwar, a League MLA and resident of neighbouring Shampur village.³²

***(G) SOME PROMINENT HINDUS WERE PROMISED SAFETY AND
THEN TRACEROUSLY MURDERED***

The followers of ‘Direct Action’ policy began to implement the politics of the Muslim League with lightning speed by spilling Hindu blood. On the other hand League hypocrites began to visit Hindu houses and assured them by saying— “Do not fear, no one will dare to touch your body so long we are alive, Do not leave your hearth and home; otherwise you will invite your death on the roads.” Such assurances began to pour in. In fact such assurances turned horrendous; assuring some Hindus to accompany them to safer places across the river, they snatched away money and ornaments on the boat and ultimately killed them.

In such a way the inhabitants of Kalikapur, nearest to Nandigram like Jatindra Babu and Satindra Babu, Jasoda Das of Naori; Sarat Das and his brother Chandrasekhar Das, Satish Babu of Sibpur (Police Personnel) and many others were assassinated.³³

(H) Sreemati Baramala Roy, husband late Monomohan Roy, vill. Govindapur, PS Begumganj, Dt. Noakhali, deponent.

On last Monday (14-10-46) in the morning, many persons all (Muslims) attacked our house. Seeing their face I can identify but do not know their name. One man's name is Mucha. All of them were armed with fatal instruments. As soon as they reached the courtyard of our house, we closed the door of our corridor. When they began to break open the door of the corridor, we climbed the roof of the house. Then we could see all the outside rooms were being set on fire, some groups were setting on fire. The rogues began to drag us down from the roof of the corridor and threw down some of us. When we were climbing up the roof, then we found many male members of our family were tied up and someone was beaten, stabbed or struck with spear. Womenfolks and many of our children were taken to the northern bathing ghat. **The ruffians had already struck on the head of my husband's elder brother Dinanath Roy. He was with us and his wife was nursing him. Snatching Dinanath Roy from us the ruffians took him to the canopy meant for Durga Puja and hurled him into fire. From the bathing ghat we saw many were killed in such a way. Calling Ramanimohan Roy, younger brother of my husband from us, the rogues struck him with lathi (strick) and threw him alive into fire. Binod Majumdar, brother-in-law of Jasoda Roy was among us. He was taken from us, struck with stick and spear and then thrown into fire. In this way many inmates were killed. The front place of the Durgamandop can not be seen very clearly from the ghat and there was a big crowd. From partial view we could see some of our members were being thrown into fire; they were coming out from the fire in half burnt condition; again the rogues were throwing them into fire. Bringing the next door neighbour Bharat Bhowmik from his house, he was killed in front of Durgamandap. Seeing this devilish sight some of womenfolk became unconscious.** For this reason we were taken to Bhowmick's residence. In the meantime the ornaments of our body were snatched away; as a result ear and nose of someone were bruised; even clothes were taken off making someone naked. Thereafter the members of Pataribari took us to Bhowmik's garden and subsequently sheltered at Pataribari. Yesterday in the afternoon we were rescued by the Police from Pataribari and reached Noakhali town from that

place. We can not say whether many women got shelter anywhere or rescued therefrom. Seventeen of us have been rescued from Pataribari. This description has been read out to me. I sign here understanding the meaning.³⁴

Yours,
Sd/- Sreemati Baramala Roy
Noakhali., 17/10/46

(I) Sree Krishnamohan Roy, father late Golok Ch. Roy, Vill. Boro Gobindapur, 7 Manikyanagar Union, PS Begamganj, Dt. Noakhali, deponent of the incident.

Before the commencement of Durga Puja we were informed that our diety shall be destroyed and pandemonium will be created. The diety of Sri Prasanna Mohan Chakraborty residing in the next Mouza Tatharkhil, was destroyed and we too apprehended that our diety also will be destroyed. Within a few days it was risky for us to go out for shopping. We tried to shift women from house to another place but failed.

After going upto Amisapara market by boat, the Muslims prevented us from going and we were compelled to return back with them. It was agreed that we shall have to pay two rupees for each boat. Generally the boat fare upto Sonaimuri Station from our house was 1½ / 2 rupees. But we were charged Rs.24/- for 4 boats at Amisapara Bazar itself and the boats laden with women were returned back home without taking them to Sonaimuri destination. Every night Muslims tried to raid our houses before the Puja till the day of riot. We began to guard our house well and resisted raid every night. We had brick built house and as we possessed a gun, each time we were able to drive away the attackers. In the meantime after Lakshmi Puja in many villages of Ramganj and Begamganj Police stations, looting, arson, murder and forcible conversion elewere enacted. The riotous activities began to spread in our areas as well. Yesterday being Monday (14-10-46) in the morning at about 7, about five hundred Muslims of our village and surrounding areas attacked our house. We know all of them. Many of them are our tenants and engaged in household work. The crowd was equipped with sword, chisel and petrol.

The crowd demanded ten thousand rupees. We agreed to that in lieu of lives. The crowd said, “we will exterminate the Hindus & slaughtering the Hindus we will establish Pakistan. Such directive has been sent from higher authorities.” We agreed to accept Muslim religion. Then they ordered us to leave the arms and come downstairs. We kept the arms on the roof and came down. Then they took womenfolk in their custody and divided into two groups. We and they were taken in front of our house Durgamandap (shed for Durgapuja). **My son Manoranjan Roy, B.A. (29 year) would work in the Railways at the**

Amingaon Station. At first he was struck down on earth with a stick and pierced to death after binding hand and feet. In the meantime each room was set on fire; doors and windows of corridor were broken and entire goods stored in the corridor were plundered. After killing my son, he was thrown into burning fire. Thereafter my second son Prafulla Kumar Roy was thrown into fire after binding, piercing, slaughtering him. Thereafter my cousin brother Jasoda Roy (30/32 years) was caught. His financial condition was sound in our family. He had approximately rupees 80/90 thousand cash at home. He too was thrown into fire the way former persons were killed. Thereafter another cousin brother Dinanath Roy met with same tragic end. Next my fourth Son Amit Ch. Roy (9/10 years) was struck on the head with hammer and killing him was thrown into fire. Next another cousin brother Kshetranath Roy (25/26 years) being bound was laid down on the ground; sitting on his chest he was slaughtered and thrown into fire. Thereafter my other two cousin brothers Prasanna (20/22 years) and Chitta (17/18 years) were able to escape taking two children of one brother and another of the other. The murderers caught them about half a mile away from our home. They jumped into water for fear of life. They were killed in water striking on the head with clubs and piercing the body with spears. The three children were killed as well. One of my brother's son Chenu witnessed this incident. He too had been able to escape. My 95 year old uncle Uday Chandra Roy was struck on the head, killed and thrown into fire thereafter. Thereafter my own younger brother Ramani Roy (30-32 years) was bound hand and feet, struck with spear and was thrown into fire. Next killing Jasoda Roy's sister's husband Binod Majumdar (30-35) of Babupur and Binod's one son too were thrown into fire. Jasoda's daughter's music teacher (cannot recall the name, of Kalyannagar Bhuinabari) was thrown into fire killing in the same manner mentioned above. Our next door residents Bharat Bhowmik, Indra Bhowmik, his son Manilal Bhowmik, Mahendra Bhowmik, Nobin Bhowmik, Sandhu Bhowmik too were killed and thrown into fire. There houses were looted and reduced to ashes.

Throwing the sackful of murdered children into water they dragged it afloat. What they did with it I can not say. So far we know women of our house are in the shelter of Aminaddi Mian, Idris Pandit (both of Barahinagar), Karimbox Master of Bara Gobindapur and Chhabarali Patari and Fakir Mahammad Bepari's house. I think it is possible to rescue them with the help of Military force. I can't say about the whereabouts of a few women.

When the massacre was going on, then I managed to escape silently. Hardly had I reached a little distance when I came to the notice of murderers. They

ran after me. Jumping over a canal I hid myself in the toilet room of Bharat Bhowmik. There too I came to their notice; I entered into the cell under the toilet seat and waited there silently keeping my nose up. They began to search with the help of *Teta*, *Konch* etc. Being despaired and thinking me dead they left me. Then climbing up a tree I began to watch the sad incidents of my house. Later at night descending from the tree I went to Aminaddi Mian's house in search of my wife and daughter-in-law. Dressed me like a Muslim, Ajjur Rahaman, son of Aminaddi Mian arranged for me safely to reach Amisapara Bazar. Everyone in the village thought I was dead. From there I came to Noakhali town.

The half-burnt corpses in my house were not cremated. Probably the jackals were tearing the dead bodies. Many women members of our family had been safely sheltered in the said Muslim houses. Many of them could not be traced.

The names are :—

1. Khukurani (Age 13/14 years). Unmarried, Jasoda Roy's daughter.
2. Mona (Age 13/14 years) Father, Late Radharaman Roy. Unmarried
3. Another daughter of Jasoda Roy (Junior to Khuku, Age 11/12 years)
4. My son Prafulla's wife (13/14 years) The rogues have taken them away.

I can't say about many of them. The names of those who took leading part in murder :—

1. Muchlim, Father late Jabbar Ali of Manikya Nagar.
2. Chakka, father late Amiraddi of Satgharia
3. Alahi, father's name unknown, of Baliadhar
4. Mucha, father Dula Mian Bapari, of Sukurpur, Abirpara.
5. Mucha (Acchrak Ali's Saugti's son) of Manikya Para.
6. Eldest Son of Baldya's father. of Abirpara, house on the canal side
7. Habiulla, Can't recall father's name of Sukarpara
8. Eldest son of Acha, guard of our Union.
9. Fazter Rahamian, father Asrab Ali Bhuna, S-Manikyanagar.

More or less I know them all but at present I can't recall their names for my disturbed mental condition.

The minimum total loss in cash and kind, valuable ornaments, cows, house property will be to the tune of two and a half lakhs. Major part of the booty can be recovered if investigation is made.

Reading fully the description, I sign here on Tuesday dt.15-10-46 at Noakhali town.³⁵

—Sri Krishna Mohan Roy

CHAPTER—IV

PLIGHT OF WOMEN

PATHETIC TALES OF OPPRESSION OF HINDU MOTHERS AND SISTERS

Miss Muriel Lester, the English pacifist and well-known social worker of Kingsley Hall fame, happened to be in India at that time. On hearing news about the Noakhali happenings, she straightway proceeded there. In a report from a relief centre in Noakhali, in the first week of November, she wrote :

The worst of all was the plight of the women. Several of them had to watch their husbands being murdered and then be forcibly converted and married to some of those responsible for their death. These women had a dead look. It was not despair, nothing so active as that. It was utter blankness.... The eating of beef and declaration of allegiance to Islam has been forced upon many thousands as the price of their lives.... Perhaps the only thing that can be quite positively asserted about this orgy of arson and violence is that it was not a spontaneous uprising of the villagers. However many goondas may live in Bengal, they are incapable of organising this campaign on their own initiative. Houses have been sprayed with petrol and burnt. Who supplied this rationed fuel? Who imported stirrup-pumps into this rural area? Who supplied the weapons?.... The goondas seem to think that they really are the rulers of this beautiful area of Bengal. *One sees no sign of fear among those who had stood by and watched destruction, tyranny and aggression; anxiety as to future punishment does not seem to exist.* (Italics mine.)³⁴

IT IS HARD TO HELD BACK TEARS

1. We found an expecting mother in her mature stage, at Jayak village vacantly looking at us for an extra piece of dhoti other than a rugged piece she had in her body....women folk of Panchgaon, Dasgharia, Raipura, Nandigram and other places bitterly wept before us for an extra piece of cloth to change their ugly ones.³⁵

2. It is better to reproduce Thakkar Bapa's statement about Charmandal—
“Between the two villages Charmandal is big. Many houses of the two villages

have been **looted** first and reduced to ashes later. The minimum amount of loss of each 301 Charmondal house and of 57 Charruhita houses is approximately Rs. 33,700/-. Everyone is well-to-do farmer householder. The amount of loss of low middle class family is at least Rs. 1,000/-. The total loss of this two villages will at least reach the figure Rs. 5,46,503, average Rs.1745. In this statement it is found that **two thousand persons have been converted, six were married by force** and one was murdered. Even six weeks after the riot he realised that people wanted to leave village because the P.S. did not entertain complaint, even if complaint entertained they were either arrested on any plea or threatened.³⁶

3. My experience is the same. When crossing the river, one or two fellow passengers were whispering identifying the boatman—put on badge of the Red Cross, that man led the riot in that village. I could not dare to speak before him. With great efforts I took one couple to police station to narrate what had happened, to Lodge a complaint. Then it was dead of night : Drawing a big veil over her face very cautiously his wife said **even two months after the riot, every night two or three persons forcibly used to take her with them and returned her towards late hours of the night. Everyday such things happened but in fear neither her husband nor any member of the family could protest, nor dared to lodge a complaint before the police.** Giving encouragement when brought to Lakshmipur police station, **no words came out from her lips, not to speak of giving written statement. Then the O.C. said** “I have heard about the incident, if you tell your name, disclose identity and put in signature on your statement, then the complaint will be entertained.” The woman was crying profusely much. She said, **“save me from daily torture. The husband lamented if name was disclosed, they would kill him. It is better to leave the country. Really that family had been compelled to abandon the country village at last. I had not the power to punish the culprit or protect the tortured. We remained silent spectators.”**³⁷

[Translated from Asoka Gupta’s book—Noakhali Durjyoger Diney]

4. Once a news came that an abducted girl had been living as a daughter in-law in a local family of a Noakhali village. The district Magistrate was coming to make an on-the-spot study. Sucheta Kripalani was told to be present at that time. The District Magistrate was Mr. McInerney, ICS, an Irish officer. When he reached there with police force, Sucheta too was present there. The head of the family said, “It is a fact the girl is with me. But she is adult and has married my son of her own accord. It is no abduction. This is love marriage.

McInerny brought the girl before him and talked with her since he could speak Bengali well. There was an impression of torture all over the body (the girl had muffled figure, very weak) she replied with a nod—she would stay here; she had come willingly.

Sucheta told the Magistrate, “You cross examine her in a separate room; real truth will come out. The Magistrate said, it is a love marriage; what’s the need of cross examination? At once Kripalani flew into rage and said, **“Please McInerny, please give me one concrete case of love affair between the communities from 10th October to this day after the riot. This is not a case of love marriage. Take evidence in a separate room so that the girl can speak the truth”**

On her pressure the girl was taken in a separate room; only the Magistrate and the girl were present, the rest were outside. Entering into the room when the girl looked around & found none anywhere, **she fell down crying at the feet of the Magistrate and said, “Immediately take me with you from this place; I seek your shelter.”**³⁸

The Magistrate realised the whole situation. In spite of that he told Kripalani “Where shall I take her now?” Let me study the matter. Sucheta told the Magistrate, “You can keep her in a rescue home, even in jail by virtue of your power. But in case of delay, this news will spread all over the state. Even people of whole India will come to know that you failed to give shelter to an abducted girl. The more you will make delay, the more agitation will gather momentum, then law and order will go out of control. Try to send her to another place from this district with police escort. The girl is adult; so if she denies love marriage, what authority have you got to detain here? Needless to say this protest bore fruit. Taking her in police custody she was kept two nights in Jogendra Kumar Majumdar’s residence of Chaumuhini; thereafter she was kept in Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust’s Kanyalaya Shikshalaya of Comilla. She was made fit by rendering medical treatment & an ideal boy married her. I have heard that they were living happily.”³⁹

5. STORY OF A FRESH CASE AND MORE OTHER CASES OF RAPE COMMITTED DURING THE RIOT IN LAMCHAR-JAGATPUR AREA. D/6.12.46

Last night (Thursday the 5th of December) at about 8 p.m.. one of my workers returning from Lamchar-Karpara gave me the story of how a woman was taken away from her bed at about 9 p.m. the previous night and left outside a few paces from the house. This is within the Lamchar camp. The woman is a refugee from Darbeshpur, 5 miles distant from Lamchar. I was told that three male persons were in the room and that the woman was not actually raped.

I could not believe the story. The case disturbed me. So I along with the same worker started walking for Lamchar at 6 a.m. and reached before 8 a.m. today (6th).

I found Manoranjan Babu (Chaudhuri) there with Messrs N.C.Chatterjee and Debendranath Mukherjee. They could not stay long, so I had to conduct part of the enquiry by myself. Dr. Amiya Chakrovarty was with me. What I got bit by bit. out of the three persons present in the room at the time of occurrence and from what I got from the woman and also from the man who discovered her after the occurrence a few paces from her door, I give below in a form.

The name of the woman is Monomohini Devi (35) widow, these 15 or 16 years. Her son's name is Krishnalal Debnath aged about 18 years. They belonged to Darbeshpur. They had taken shelter in the Lamchar camp a month ago. Her people possess tanks where there are fishes. The Chief of the Lamchar Camp, at the request of Ramani Ranjan Debnath, a relative of Monomohini, arranged for a party of fishermen to go and fish in her tank. The party was escorted by a military man, for it was feared that the tank being in Muslim quarters the fishermen may not be allowed to fish. This was on the 3rd instant. The Muslims of the locality took offence at this fishing with the help of the Military with the guide Ramani.

On the 4th some Muslims came to the vacant house of Jyotsna Ray, now used by refugees, in which Monomohini with her son Krishnalal, the above Ramani and Radha Govinda and a little girl lived in one room. The Muslims came on the pretext of buying supari and went away.

At 9 p.m. of the same day, Monomohini was sleeping on the floor of the room with a little girl and three male, her son Krishnalal, Ramani Ranjan and Radha Govinda were sleeping on Charpoys in the same room. Some miscreants cut open the mat wall of a verandah behind this room and entered the room, threatened the males with death and took the woman away after partly gagging her. All the males kept silent and allowed her to be taken away without resistance. **She was lifted away by 2 persons and some one held her mouth.**

She was laid on the ground about 20 paces from the room. **She was asked to keep quiet and held by the head and was kept gagged by one while another man raped her. She says she can identify the man who raped her and a man with a bald head who held her. Her people gave some names by which the Muslims called each other while going away.**

The next incident is a shout of Allah-Ho-Akbar by the miscreants. It appears to me that the shout was a cry of victory after having completed the crime and may be as a mark of having arranged the fresh catching incident. People from other houses came out on hearing the shout of Allah-Ho-Akbar. After this shout the men in the room shouted also. Manmohan Dey of Lamcahr was first

on the scene of occurrence. The three men did not stir out of the room even then. **Manmohan discovered her half naked and unconscious and in tremor under a mango tree. She was brought inside the room.**

Dr. Amiya Chakravarty arrived at the place at this time and found her in an unconscious state. She regained consciousness in about a couple of hours. Dr. Chakravarty found the three males in the corners of the room and they were all dumb with terror and one was found to be almost in hysterics on being questioned by him.

After hearing part of the story from the males I took Monomohini to a secluded room in company of Manoranjan Babu and a female member of the Choudhury house. I gave a swab to this lady and instructed her to get the swab pushed in her private part to get a smear herself. We left her and subsequently got the smear of the swab. I do not know if the smear was effectively taken. The swab was sent by me on my return to camp about 2.30 p.m. to Dr. Das Gupta at Madhupur for examination.

Dr. Amiya Chakravarty and I returned through Jagatpur and Tamta. **We were taken to a Bhowmick house which was wholly burnt during the riot. He told us that a B.Sc. brother of his was murdered and the house looted and burnt and the women of the house were taken away and raped. So ghastly, was the raping that one woman was left dying near the burnt house after about a week. She died there in a few hours. She was put in a grave with the usual Muslim rites by the local Muslims. Other women of the house were returned after 10 days or so. They gave a story of organised relay raping as they were moved from house to house. None of these raped woman, it is said, could leave their beds in a week after return. This fate was meted out to about 40 or more women of Jagatpur.**

Another man of Tamta who accompanied us from Tamta related how all the five Hindu houses of Tamta were burnt and how the women were raped for a week or more at different places and then left half-dead.

Satish Chandra Dasgupta

6.12.46

I have read this report. I was with Satish Babu the whole of this morning at Lamchar and back through Jagatpur and Tamta to our Kazir Khil camp which we reached after 2 p.m.⁴⁰

Amiya Chakravorty

6.12.46

6. I, son of Babu Jogendra Kumar Bhowmik of Gobindapur P.S. Begumganj. dt. Noakhali beg to report that my house was attacked by the

hooligans on the 10th Oct. 1946 at about 11 a.m. in the morning. A gang of hooligans first entered my house and they demanded a subscription from my father in lieu of which they threatened us with murder, arson etc. Accordingly my father was reluctantly compelled to pay a lump sum forthwith. Even in their presence another gang of greater force and equipped with dangerous weapons entered into our house with similar motives. Giving absolutely no time to speak a word even, they dragged my father away, meted him a barbarous murder. Next they turned to my cousin of most robust physique. His hands were tied up, poked him with sharp spear, and then he was thrown into fire thrice. But my cousin was strong enough to sustain for a long time. The nature of his murder can better be imagined than described. **The rest of the family members took their shelter in a neighbouring house and succeeded to escape sure death giving unwilling consent to the marriage of my sister Miss Anila Bhowmik with one muslim young man.** A report was lodged with officer in charge Begumganj Police Station by mother Mrs. Promila Bhowmik at the time of her rescue.⁴¹

Protection and justice solicited.

Pijush Kanti Bhowmik. 24.10.46

***THEY PREFERRED DEATH TO GIVING UP FAITH
CASE RECORDS : VISWARANJAN SEN'S FILE***

(3) Sri Jaychandra Bepari (age 90) of Tamta village (2½ miles south of Ramganj) was murdered on 10.10.46 at 8 pm. The oldman's house was looted. *He refused to be converted and died fighting.*

(Reported by a relative and noted by Sj. Surendra K. Basu)

(5) At Abhirampur (2 miles from Ramganj) 50 washerman families were forcibly converted. Their houses were looted and burnt on 16.10.46. including their places of worship. The conch-bracelets of women were forcibly broken by muslims and marks of vermilion were wiped out in most humiliating manner. **Hemaprova, a girl of 14, daughter of Prasanna Kumar Podder brother-in-law were about to be forcibly married to Abdul Bepari.** *They were also threatened and asked to slaughter cow and big deg was brought for cooking. At this time the police came and rescued them.*

*(Reported by Nagendra Kumar Das of that village (eye witness)
noted by Sj. Surendra Kumar Basu)*

(7) At Muraim (4 miles from Chatkhil) Sri Ananda Chandra Gop was first forcibly converted on 30th Aswin (17.10.46). *He was afterwards asked to take beef and on refusal he was murdered and buried according to Muslim rites.*

*(Reported by Prasanna Kumar Majumder of that village, noted by
Sj. Surendra Kumar Basu at Chaumuhani)*

(8) At Dashgharia a big village of Nath families (weavers) an old man (aged 70) father of Sri Ramani Nath (Jalar Bari), *was asked to come out of his Thakur Ghar and get converted. He refused to come out of the house leaving his deity. The deity was then trampled and the house was set on fire. The old man still refused to come out of the house and was burnt to death.*

(Reported by Sri Birendra Kishore Bhowmik of Bhatialpur village at Duttapara).

(10) At Narayanpur on 10.10.46 at 3 pm the Kutchery houses of Sj. Surendra Kumar Basu were attacked. Suren Babu was asked to come down. Suren Babu fired 4 rounds for self protection. He asked for more cartridges. The servant who was going to him to supply them was shot dead by Kasem, the leader of the mob. The house was then set on fire by petrol. Suren Babu then jumped on ground. He was then murdered and his head was cut off and taken away. All the houses of Kutchery and Bazar were burnt and looted.⁴²

(Reported by Dhirendra Kumar Baidya, eye-witness at Duttapara)

8. LABANYAPRABHA MAJUMDAR DESCRIBES HER HUMILIATION

My name is Labanyaprabha Majumder; father Sri Chandramadhab Pandit. I am 18 years of age. During riot my two brothers—Bilaschandra Majumdar (23) and Jogendrachandra Majumdar (26/27) were murdered.

Thursday was Kojagari Lakshipuja day. Two days after that day many Muslims surrounded our house, began looting. We were standing on the lawn. The looters soaked jute-sticks with kerosene and started setting fire to houses.

At that time my brother's wife Nanibala (23/24) and myself rushed into the jungle behind our house. After the houses were burnt out, Kala Mia detected me and shouted—"Mahammad, Atar Ali! I have found a girl."

Then they also came and took me to Kala Mian's house. Mahammad and Atar Ali's house was near our house. On the way I saw many Muslims. After knowing to which family I belong, they said that the girl should not be let go.

Atar Ali and Mahammad caught me by hand. Kala Miah was behind me. He pushed me from behind and I fell down. I was speechless and weeping.

The Muslims ladies of the house laughed over my misfortune.

Then the trio took me to the room. Mahammad and Atar Ali went out. Before leaving they took off my cloth and tore off my blouse. I was forced to lie down and was outraged. I had no option but to endure all the humiliation.

Then came Mahammad and Atar Ali was standing on the door. Atar Ali put his hand on my breast and did nothing other.

At midnight Atar Ali and Kala Miah raped me again. Throughout the day they tried to feed me but I refused to take food. Then in the afternoon they left me on the eastern side of our burnt out house.⁴³

Sm. Labanyaprabha Majumdar, 10.1.1947

N.B.—This statement of Sm. Labanyaprabha Majumdar was taken by Prof. Nirmal Kumar Basu under instruction of Gandhiji.

9. EXTRACTS FROM VISWARANJAN SEN'S DIARY

The workers saw one boy turned mad during the disturbances shouting Darar Mia (another name of Golam Sarwar). They heard of another lunatic case.

28-10-46 : At Ramganj I saw and took statements of two girls aged 7 and 12 who were forcibly married to the son of Ledhu Mia and another to a Hindu newly converted. The girls were rescued by the K.M.D. with the help of police on 27.10.46 and brought to Ramganj. The girls were living with their parents.

29-10-46 : Sri Gourhari Kaviraj (Seal), the father of Pushpalata (aged 7) came to Ramganj and stated that he and his family were threatened with dire consequences by the Muslims of his village who demanded **that the girl should be immediately brought back to the village.** The father sought for police and military help for rescue of his family but failed to secure any help. The S.D.O. who arrived there was approached for help but to no effect. The S.D.O. told me that the military authorities were to control the situation and they should be approached in these cases. In order to console the extremely nervous and perplexed father we offered to go with them to his village and face the Muslims. He and some of his neighbours agreed and when we were about to start they got frightened and refused to go.

30-10-46 : We two (Viswaranjan Sen and Bhupal Chandra Kamar) left Ramganj on 30.10.46 for Shahapur and Karpara along with two persons of that village. We were warned by all not to go there, without any police as we would surely be murdered. On the way one of the villagers stayed on out of fear. Near Shahapur we were encountered by some Muslims who interrogated and searched our bags. Some of them suggested that we should be forcibly stopped and others suggested that we might be stopped at Shahapur Bazar. At Shahapur Bazar we were seated in a shop and found ourselves besieged (by) a Muslim crowd. They began to interrogate us fiercely and were angry with us and expressed surprise for our going there unprotected by the police. We told them calmly and fearlessly that we were sufficiently warned about the danger but we were prepared to face the worst consequence in doing our duty. We found the number of the crowd increasing up to 4/5 hundred all eager to have a look of our face. We saw murderous looks on the faces of

some of them. Our bags were searched. I showed them the statement issued by Sj. Satish Chandra Dasgupta on the eve of our tour in Noakhali and told them that we were out to tour into the affected villages without any police escort; our main object was to relieve the people from fear which made them lead a Muslim life against their will and we would like to meet the Muslim leaders to tell them that it was their duty to remove fear from the minds of the Hindus. Our second object was to take note of the distress of the people and to find means for relieving them. I also told them that if they disbelieved me or displeased at what I said they could do whatever harm to us and we would suffer them fearlessly and without any malice. They told us that they could neither believe nor disbelieve us about our object. This went on for an hour. We were told that the S.D.O. had arrived there from Dasgharia and they asked me to talk with the S.D.O. The S.D.O. asked them not to suspect us and warned them not to insult us in any way. I invited the S.D.O. to go to the Hindus who were forcibly converted and in fear, even for a few minutes accompanied by some local Muslim leader to ask the Hindus to get rid of fear and to adopt Hindu dress—which they refused to do for lack of time. He then started for Dattapara in a boat along with Mr. Huq the Circle Officer. One among the crowd produced one small cloth bag belonging to the person who accompanied us and produced a dagger and complained that the dagger was found inside the bag. I at once protested and told the S.D.O. that this was malicious lie as I was present when his bag was searched an hour back. The S.D.O. at once disbelieved the complaint but did not take a stern attitude towards him. When questioned he said to me in whisper that he himself was afraid of the mob to speak or do anything harshly.

When he went away I talked with the local Muslim leaders who said that there was peace inside the village. I pointed out to them the state of forced conversion of the Hindus and asked them to accompany me the next morning inside the village to relieve the Hindus of all fear. When I enquired about the house where I should stay in the night, a young man Sri Manoranjan Pal was asked to take me to that home. I saw him wearing a Muslim dress. I at once told Kudrus Mia and others to begin our work immediately and requested them to ask the young men to change his dress then and there. They avoided to do so and when I insisted the young man was afraid to do so. Then I went to their home. We two recited our prayers and Ramnam. After that I had a talk with one Matin Chowdhury who told me that the Muslims of that place were lieutenants of Golam Sarwar, their leader and would not listen to my proposal.

31-10-46 :Next morning we talked with a munshi, an old man Noor Mia who had come to their house to hold his usual namaj class. I told him that it was against all religions to forcibly convert anybody and to teach anybody

against his will, and also pointed out that all the Hindus were converted against their will and pointed out that the S.D.O. who came there also admitted this fact to me.

I came to Shahapur Bazar but found that nobody would be available or willing to accompany me to meet the Hindus. We then went to Karpara alone and saw the devastated houses of late Rajendra Lal Chowdhury. I talked with some Hindus and took some food, who said to us that ours was the first non-official visit to that place. We also talked with some Muslims. At Karpara we found people wearing Hindu dress but learnt that they were compelled to wear Muslim dress a few days back and even now when they went to Sahapur Bazar. Some people were even then afraid to wear Hindu dress....

Shahapur bazar was the most dangerous zone in that area. The Hindus were found to be extremely panic. We found in other villages more or less the same panicky, tortured and humiliated condition of the Hindus. They are getting more or less extremely nervous as the Bakrid is approaching when they apprehend forced slaughter of cows and eating of beef. They also apprehend more forcible marriages and proposals of marriages. The military people are against rescue work as they claim they will be able to restore normal condition. But their activities have been found to be very slow and unsatisfactory producing very little reaction in the interior. The people want to be rescued for fear and humiliation and when they find that is not possible, they want to be rescued to other places. But that is discouraged by the military.⁴⁴

**10. BROTHERS SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES
IN SAVING THEIR SISTERS' HONOUR**
(Original given to Gandhiji)

C/o, Shree Kashi Vishwanath Seva Samity
50, Burtolla Street
Phone : BB. 5899
Dated 5.11.1946

I, Kailash chandra Chakraborty of village Kethuri, P.S. Ramganj, Dist. Noakhali beg to state that on the 19th October 1946, 2000 Musalman goondas attacked our house and looted all valuable property and burnt it to ashes. We being unable to resist ran away to an adjacent jungle. When the goondas assaulted my daughters I lost my senses and did not know what they do with my daughters. When I regained my senses, I came to know that on seeing the goondas **assaulting my daughters, my two sons fought with them and lost their lives.** After three days I was taken to Chandpur by some Hindu gentlemen. There I found my two daughters in a relief centre. Therefore we

started for Calcutta and reached the Kashi Vishwanath Seva Samity where we are getting all sorts of facilities. Now, I wish to give my unmarried daughter to a Hindu young man of cultured family.⁴⁵

Sri Kailash Chandra Chakraborty
5.11.1946

11. I, Sreemati Ranibala Debi, daughter of Sj. Kailash Chandra Chakraborty of Vill : Kethuri, P.S. Ramganj, Dist. : Noakhali beg to state that on the night of the 19th October 1946, 2000 Musalmans of our locality entered our house and we entered the adjacent jungle to save our lives. I am a married girl of 14 and my sister Sreemati Narayani Debi is a married girl of 17. **Both of us were snatched away by the Musalman goondas and they committed outrage on us one after another and we were completely senseless for sometime.** Seeing this two of my brothers could not tolerate and they fought with the goondas who killed them. When we regained our senses we moved to the paddy field and with great difficulty walked to a short distance. On the next day we kept ourselves concealed in the paddy field and during the next night we advanced to a great extent towards Chandpur. On the third night we with the greatest distress caused by hunger and fatigue reached Chandpur. When the two brothers died my father who is aged 60 yrs. was senseless. On the way to Chandpur, we were helped by some Hindu gentlemen who carried us with them to Chandpur where we put up in a relief centre. The members of the relief centre took much care for my father and brothers, the volunteers of the relief centre managed to go to our village and bring my father and brothers to us. With my father and one brother I and my sister reached Calcutta and are residing at the Kashi Biswanath Seva Samiti. The authority of this Samiti is taking utmost care for us and we do fare well here in all respects.⁴⁶

Sreemati Ranibala Debi
(as in previous statement)
23.10.46

12. I, Sreemati Narayani Debi, wife of Sj. Sasadhar Chakraborty of village Gopalpur, P.S. Begamganj of Noakhali, at present residing with my father at Kethuri village, beg to state that on the 19th October 1946, 2000 Musalman goondas attacked our house and burnt it to ashes. We fled to an adjacent jungle but the goondas did not spare us. They tried their utmost to convert us to Islam and to marry us with two of them. But when we refused they assaulted and committed outrage on us for sometime and when we were senseless they went to small distance. In the meantime we regained our senses and hid

ourselves in the paddy field. Then we walked during the night and remained concealed during day time for three days and then with the help of some Hindu gentlemen reached Chandpur where we put up at the relief centre and the members of the relief centre were moved to hear our woeful story and when we began to wail loudly for our father and brothers they managed to bring my father and brothers to us. Then we started for Calcutta and reached Kashi Biswanath Seva Samiti. My husband has come here and is taking me with him.⁴⁷

Sreemati Narayani Debi

Same

23.10.46

13. We the undernamed three married women of village Haimchar, P.S. Chandpur. Dist Tippera beg to state that on the 17th October, 1946 at about 12 a.m. about 3000 Musalmans looted all properties from our house. On seeing them coming towards our house, we left the house and ran away to a paddy field under knee deep water. One male member of our family went along with us and others went away to other directions. Then the goondas came to us and broke all conch-ornaments on our wrists and rubbed off vermilion from our forehead and forced us to embrace Islam and marry a Musalman husband. Through fear we did not say anything and for a while the goondas went to a short distance, but they came again to us and committed various sorts of assaults on us, but when we did not agree to any of their proposals, they went away to bring some other leading goondas. In the meantime we fled away to a distant paddy field and with untold misery we passed three days and nights sometimes hiding ourselves in the garden and sometimes in the house of some neighbouring Hindus. Then the goondas traced us and carried away by force to a Musalman house and did whatever they liked against our will and converted us to Islam. Our husbands went away to wherever they liked and we do not know of their whereabouts now. Then one day some volunteers of the Chandpur Relief Centre came and rescued us from the clutches of the goondas and carried us to Chandpur wherefrom we started for Calcutta and at present we are residing at the Kashi Biswanath Seva Samiti where we have worn conch ornaments and have put sindur on our foreheads and the authority of this Samity is trying their level best to remove our wants and relieve us.⁴⁸

Thumb impressions of

Sreemati Tulsibala Das

Sreemati Charubala Das

Sreemati Labanyabala Das

14. MOTIVE BEHIND FORCED MARRIAGE & ABDUCTION OF HINDU WOMEN

While the acts of forced conversion attacked the religious sentiments of the Hindus and brought communal violence to a high psychological pitch, it was the acts of violence against/on women, i.e., abduction and forced marriages that transported the Noakhali riot to a totally new arena of communal discourse. It gave credence to the Hindu communal discourse which had been depicting Hindu women as victims of the violent Muslim male. The instances of forcible marriages and abductions during the riot **provided a retrospective justification for the Hindu communal argument which saw Muslim male violence on Hindu women as one of the primary reasons for the rapidly increasing Muslim population.**

J.M.Datta, a statistician who wrote a series of articles on various aspect of the census figures, and during the 1941 census headed the campaign for “impartial enumeration”, started by Hindu Mahasabha, wrote : “The surest way to destroy a nation or a community is to confiscate its women.” He calculated the average number of abductions of Hindu women as 700 per year and concluded by saying, “...in any view, abduction of Hindu women by the Mohammedans and their continued loss to the Hindu community, so far as it affects the growth of the Hindus is a matter which cannot be neglected any longer without serious consequences.” The large number of abductions of women and forcible marriages during the Noakhali riot may easily be placed within the ambit of this discourse. What was more significant was that it gave credence to, and validated, the hitherto debated and contested discourse.

The news of violence on women shook the Bengali Society. This is reflected in the appeals made by the provincial leaders. Labanya Prova Dutt issued an “appeal to the public and dealers for contributions of vermilion and Conchshell bangles for the riot affected women of Noakhali”. The Muslim League ministry also understood the importance of this fact. But it preferred to deal with it by minimizing the gravity of the occurrences to the lowest possible degree. Answering the question on facts of abduction and forcible marriages, the Chief Minister delivered the figures of two in Noakhali and five in Tippera. His assertion came at a time when one of his own officers, Simpson, had announced 716 cases of rapes and 157 cases of restraints from the three police stations of Tippera i.e., Faridganj, Chandpur and Hajiganj.

What was important in Noakhali was not only the aggression on women but also the consideration of women as repositories of the honour of the community and its traditions. Conversion and forcible marriages together meant that the entire religious complex of a population was sought to be forcibly changed. They were not just being forced to convert into Islam, but also abducted and forced into marriages with Muslim youth.

The local Muslim population either actively or tacitly participated in these acts. Muslim women in the affected areas, at times displayed their covert support. When Hindu women sometimes rushed into neighbouring Muslim homes in a state of panic, it was the women of the households who removed the vermilion mark and broke the conch shell bangles. This was, however, not out of any altruistic motive of hiding their identity from the attackers. N.K.Bose narrated the experience of a girl who told Gandhiji about how the ladies in a Muslim household asked her to become like one of them.⁴⁹

15. MOTHER TRAINED DAUGHTER HOW TO HANG HERSELF

Aratiprova Sur Roy, Father Sri Ananta Kumar Roy, Vill.-Panchgharia, P.S.-Ramganj, Dist.-Noakhali, 14 Ramnarainpur.

Two days after Laxmi Puja, Rajkumar Pal of our village was beheaded & his house was set on fire. From that time forth the Muslims of our village began to threaten us that Muslims of other village would behead us. If you agree to give marriage of your daughter with Jillur Rahim (Kadira) and be converted to Muslim, we shall save your life. At first we disagreed; all the members of our family decided to commit suicide rather than be killed at the hands of muslims and lose our dignity. The elders were ready to die by hanging and the juniors by taking poisoned root of *Karabi*. *We were taught how to hang oneself* and my mother handed over rope to my hand. It is everyone's bitter feeling in what situation a mother advises her child to get ready for dying. I bowed, to my mother before taking last farewell. Then clasping me mother said, "you will be born again as my daughter in the next birth—this is my blessing".

When I was about to hang myself, then the muslims rushed to **kill us with swords in hand. Then we lost the way of ending ourselves. Finding no other alternative, my father agreed to give the hands of his daughter in marriage and embrace muslim religion. On that very day we were taken to muslim's house and all were converted to muslim, practising muslim rituals.** On that very day I was married with Rahim Chowdhury (Kadira). I was not previously acquainted with this boy. The marriage being over, I was kept confined in muslim house and **tempting with different things and at the point of dagger that boy forcibly raped me.**

A few days after this, the S.P. came from Noakhali. Then the boy taught me to say that I embraced muslim religion willingly and married as well. If I did not say, he would kill me—so saying he showed me dagger. S.P. asked me, "Have you married of your own accord? Was there any coercion?" I

said, I have willingly married; there was no coercion”. For fear of life I was compelled to say such words. I did not marry of my own accord. My father gave consent to give marriage lest my relatives should be killed. The SP directed me to give in writing that I willingly married and am willing to stay here. Then I gave him written declaration. That Jillur Rahim as well got a written declaration from me. At first I refused to write. Then the boy brought a dagger to kill me. In fear I wrote but what I wrote I can not recall.

The boy has directed the written matter and I have written. 5/6 days after, the Magistrate came. The boy informed me that Magistrate had come to ask me. You will say—I have become a Muslim, put on veil. You come at night. Thereafter you say—I have married willingly and desire to stay here. Thereafter I was brought before the Magistrate. The Magistrate asked, “Do you want to stay here? If your life becomes happy here you can confess without fear. Then my uncle and father were with them. Seeing my uncle, father with the Magistrate I became courageous. I refused to stay there and came back with the Magistrate. It is my guess that I was confined for 14/15 days. When I was forcibly taken away from my house, in the contingent there were Loni Mian Pandit, Jillur Rahim, Aminullah, Ismail and many others. I can identify them but am unable to tell the names.⁵⁰

Kumari Aratiprova Sur Roy

16. FRUITLESS WAILING OF MOTHER

Gandhiji refused to accept the heart-rending appeal of Sm. Binarani Raychoudhury, ill-fated mother of ‘Khuku’ (Namita) of Karpara Choudhury house.

Calcutta, 26th August, 1947

Revered Mahatmaji,

Let me introduce myself as the unfortunate uncle of the more unfortunate Namita Roy Choudhury who with her grand mother Kironbala Debi was abducted from late Rajendra Roy’s house at Karpara, Noakhali, in the disturbances in October 1946. On the 21st August 1947, I learnt from Sj. Chapala Kanta Bhattacharyya, Editor, the Ananda Bazar Patrika, that, in a press conference on the 20th Aug. 47 you remarked that while you were in Noakhali, not in a single case definite facts about abduction of Hindu women in Noakhali were given to you. Chapala Babu immediately reminded you that at least in one case definite facts were supplied to you and that by the mother of the abducted girl. He referred to the case of Miss Namita Roy Choudhury (Her mother wrote you two letters and personally saw you in Chandpur, in February/47 and urged you not to leave Bengal without rescuing the unfortunate girl.) In reply to Chapala Babu you said that you did not remember the case and asked Chapala Babu to send you all the relative papers. Accordingly with a letter from Chapala Babu I, with Sj. Subodh Kar, (maternal cousin brother of Namita) went to see you at your Belighatta Residence

with some papers on the 22nd instant. On our reaching your residence, I was taken to Sj. Nirmal Kumar Bose. I showed him Chapala Babu's letter and requested him to give me an opportunity to see you to hand over the papers. Chapala Babu's letter so far as I remember was as follows :-

“Revered Mahatmaji”

Regarding the abduction of Sm. Namita Roy Choudhury and Kiron Bala Debi of late Rajendra Lal Roy's family of Karpara, Noakhali, which came up in our conversation yesterday (20th Aug/47), I am sending Sj. Amulya Raton Roy Choudhury, Namita's uncle, who will place before you the facts and papers you kindly asked for.

Respectfully yours
Sd/ C.K.Bhattacharyya

But Nirmal Babu did not arrange the interview and stated that you had already all the necessary papers. We asked him why then Mahatmaji had called for papers from Chapala Babu to which there was no satisfactory reply. We came away disappointed, saw Chapala Babu at his office and reported to him what had happened. **He requested us to make another attempt to see you and hand over the papers. He explained to us that it was an unavoidable necessity. You had already formed the opinion that not a single case of abduction was proved to you in Noakhali. And if after this the papers asked for were not forthcoming that would only go to further confirm your erroneous impression.**

Accordingly I went to your Belliaghata Residence again 9 a.m. on Sunday, the 24th instant and learnt that Nirmal Babu had not yet arrived. So I sent a slip praying for permission to see you. After a little while a non-Bengali gentleman came out and having known my object asked me to give him the necessary papers. I told him that I was instructed to hand over the papers personally to yourselfes as you had personally asked for these. This was necessary because being Namita's uncle and conversant with all the facts of the case I could adduce any further information you might ask for. I told him that I would not take much time and only a few minutes will suffice for me but the gentleman was unmoved. **Over and above he sermonised me that question of rescue of the abducted women was not so important. This was the unkindest cut and you can easily imagine, Mahatmaji, how much I took it to heart.** Perhaps the gentleman himself realised the impropriety of his remark and on second consideration asked me to wait to enable him to arrange an interview within 3 to 4 minutes. With this he went in but to my disappointment did not come out although I waited for more than an hour. I had again to come away disappointed.

After this sad experience, I do not know whether I shall have any opportunity to see you and give you the papers you have asked for from Chapala Babu regarding Namita's case. I am writing this letter to you because no other way is left to me. We who are Namita's relatives definitely believe that the girl is still living and can be recovered only if the Muslim Leaders interest themselves in restoring her to us. Here is an opportunity for a test of sincerity of the professions of love and amity that are being heard all around. Will you kindly see that the leaders of Muslim society and Muslim public opinion do not fail in this test.

Respectfully yours
Amulya Ratan Roy Chowdhury
26.8.47

12B, Lansdowne Road., P.O. Elgin Road, Calcutta

Copy to : Sj. Chapal Kanta Bhattacharyya for his information.

(True Copy)

Chandpur
Date 8.11.46

Bapuji,

*I am a widow and a victim of the disaster at KARPARA HOUSE P.S. Ramgonj Dist. Noakhali where the entire male persons were butchered by the Muslim Hooligans. My husband died 4 years ago and I lived with my father-in-law Sd. Man Mohan Roy of Karpara killed on the 11.10.46 at Karpara. My daughter Kumari Namita Roy alias 'Khuku' aged 15 years was snatched away from me by the miscreants after causing me a grievous injury on my head. The girl somehow managed to escape from their hands and took shelter in Sahapur Raj Bari one mile and a half distant from Karpara. After 2 days i.e., on the 14th October last, the miscreants again forcibly took my daughter away from that house and she could not be traced ever since. One of the miscreants Abdul Quddus, B.A. by name as identified by the people of Sahapur Raj Bari has been placed under arrest. The said Abdul Quddus gave a statement in presence of A.S.I. Abdul Gafur Biswas of Dattapara Camp and my nephew Subodh Chandra Kar Choudhury who went in quest of my daughter Namita alias 'Khuku'. While Abdul Quddus was going to give the statement in writing the said A.S.I. Abdul Gafur Biswas told that oral statement would do as he had no time to wait. Abdul Quddus admitted it to also to Lieut. Grant and he confessed that there was another person in the boat by which my daughter was carried away. That person was one Salim s/o, Mr. Khabiruddin Ahmed, District Inspector of Schools, Comilla. Although we moved authorities concerned for rounding up all the miscreants, no action has yet been taken and unfortunate as I am, my daughter could not be rescued. I am a widow and the main prop of my family my father-in-law is killed. I do not know whom to approach in my plight but at last you have come, I find a ray of hope. I WANT TO KNOW DEFINITELY EITHER MY DAUGHTER IS DEAD OR SHE HAS COME TO MY BOSOM. I REMEMBER THE WOEFUL SCREAM OF MY DAUGHTER WHEN SHE WAS SNATCHED AWAY FROM MY BOSOM. YOU CAN EASILY REALISE "MAHATMA" AS YOU ARE, THE AGONIES OF A MOTHER'S HEART. **I WILL NOT LET YOU GO AWAY FROM THIS PART OF PROVINCE UNTIL I GET BACK MY BELOVED DAUGHTER.***

A copy of the 'Ejahaar' (Complaint) lodge with the authorities and also a petition addressed to superintendent of Police. Noakhali are enclosed hereto for your reference. I PLACED MYSELF ENTIRELY AT YOUR FEET.

*Yours affectionately oppressed,
Sd/- Binarani Roy Choudhury, Widow mother of Kumari Namita Roy alisas
Khuku, at present residing in the house of Hiranmay Majumdar,
P.O. Chandpur, Dist. Tippera*

Chandpur
Date 25.11.46

Encl : 2

TO
MAHATMA GANDHI
CHOUMUHANI CAMP

Bapuji,

I do not know whether you have received my letter dt. 8.11.46 at Choumuhani Camp wherein I have expressed my sorrowful tale how my daughter Kumari Namita

Roy Alias Khuku was snatched away from my bosom on the night of the 11th Oct. '46 from the house of Rai Saheb Rajendra Lal Roy of Karpara P.S. Ramgonj, one of the victims of the Karpara dissaster on 11.10.46.

You can easily realise a mother's heart when her dear one is in such a horrible plight.

Bapuji, shall I not get back my child who is pining for me in strange company, in alien surroundings and in other horrid conditions? I want she has come back to my bosom. Do, please, bring her back to me. It has become impossible on my part to bear such a horrid plight of my dear daughter.

Today I have also addressed a letter to the Chief-Minister, Bengal, appealing him to return my child to me, a copy of which is also enclosed herewith for your information and to do the needful.

*Yours affectionately oppressed,
Sd/- Binarani Roy Choudhury, Widow mother of Kumari Namita Roy alisas
Khuku, at present residing in the house of Hiranmay Majumdar,
P.O. Chandpur, Dist. Tippera*

*Chandpur
Date 6.11.46*

To
The Superintendent of Police
Noakhali

Sir,

I beg to state that an Ejahar (complaint) was lodged with O/C, Ramgonj P.S. on the last 30th October '46 through Abdul Gafur Biswas. A.S.I. Dattapara Camp regarding abduction of Miss Namita Roy Choudhury alias 'Khuku' in which several names were mentioned who actually committed the crime.

It is a matter of great regret that uptil now no action has been taken to round up the accused persons one accused namely Abdul Quddus made a statement in presence of Abdul Gafur Biswas, A.S.I. and admitted to Lieut. Grant who had been there to search the house of the accused Abdul Quddus. Names of other accused persons were disclosed by the said Abdul Quddus to the party consisting of Mr. Biswas, A.S.I. and Lieut. Grant who searched the house of one of the boat-man Mahabatali of Khalispara P.S. Ramgonj, who was found absent. The girl cannot be rescued untill all the accused persons are immediately arrested. But I know that nothing more has yet been done to rescue the above abducted girl 'Khuku' after the arrest of the said Abdul Quddus on 30.10.46.

A Copy of the 'Ejahar' (complaint) lodged with O/C. Ramgonj P.S. is enclosed herewith for your ready reference and immediate action.

I remain,

sir;

Yours obediently,

(Sd/-Subodh Ch. Kar Choudhury)

Cousin-brother of miss Namita Roy Choudhury, Galimpur, P.S. Barura (Tippera)

Copy to :-

1. Brigadier, 161, Infantry Brigade, Chandpur HQ.
2. District Magistrate, Noakhali.
3. O/C, Ramgonj P.S.
4. B.P.C.C.
5. Hindu Mahasabha

*(True Copy)*Chandpur
Date 17.11.46

To
Mahatma Gandhi
Sreerampur Camp. P.O. Ramgonj (Noakhali)

Enclo : 1

To
The Deputy Inspector General of Police,
Bakhargonj Range,

Sir,

I am a widow and a victim of the disaster at Karpara Rajendra Lal Roy's house, Karpara, P.S. Ramgonj Dist. Noakhali. My husband died 4 years ago and I lived with my father-in-law Sj. Manmohan Roy Choudhury of Karpara, P.S. Ramgonj, killed on the 11th Oct. '46 at Karpara.

My daughter Kumari Namita Roy alias 'Khuku' aged 15 years was snatched away from me by the muslim miscreants on the night of 11.10.46. from Karpara House after causing me a grievous injury on my fore-head. My daughter 'Namita' some how managed to escape from the hands of the goondas and took shelter in Sahapur Raj Bari P.S. Ramgonj, one and half mile distant from Karpara. On the following day i.e., on 12.10.46. 1. Abdul Kader alias Kadira s/o Ismail Bepari 2. Ali Hyder Atia; 3. Mamta Atia of East Sosalia P.S. Ramgonj came to Sahapur Raj Bari for my daughter Namita's information. On 13.10.46. 1. Badial Alam Bhuia of East Sosalia P.S. Ramgonj 2. Asadlai Chamra of Bhatialpur P.S. Ramgonj 3. Abdul latif employee of Kumud Guha's tailoring shop at Sahapur Bazar P.S. Ramgonj, also came to Sahapur Raj Bari for Namita's information whether she was still in that house. In the evening of the 14.10.46. 1. Abdul Quddus, B.A. Asst. Head master, Sahapur H.E. School, of East Sosalia, P.S. Ramgonj; 2. Abdul Khaleq, Clerk Karpara D.S. Board, of Bhatialpur P.S. Ramgonj; 3. Mojibul Haq Molla, clerk Karapara D.S. Board of Khalispara. Molla Bari, P.S. Ramgonj; 4. Saroar Alam s/o Badial Alam of East Sosalia, P.S. Ramgonj and also boatmen; 5. Mahabatali of Khalispara; 6. Habibulla came to Sahapur Raj Bari and demanded for my daughter Namita who was still in Sahapur Raj Bari. As the inmates of Sahapur Raj Bari refused to hand over my daughter to the above named accused persons, they had forcibly taken away my daughter Namita from them who are my relatives.

An Ejahar (Complaint) to this effect was lodged with O/C, Ramgonj P.S. on 30.10.46 through Abdul Gafur Biswas, A.S.I. Dattapara Camp by my relative Sunil Kumar Kar regarding abduction of my daughter Namita Roy alias Khuku in which the above names were mentioned who actually committed the crime. It is a matter of great regret that uptil now no action has been taken to round up all the accused persons as mentioned above except 1. Saroar Alam and 2. Abdul Quddus, B.A. Asst-Headmaster, Sahapur, H.E. School, who made a statement in presence of Abdul Gafur Biswas, A.S.I. and admitted to Lieut. Grant who had been there to search the house of the accused Abdul Quddus. Names of other accused persons were disclosed by the said Abdul Quddus to the party consisting of Mr. Biswas, A.S.I. and Lieut. Grant who also searched the house of one of the boatmen Mahabatali of Khalispara P.S. Ramgonj who was found absent.

Now, I have been definitely informed from Ramgonj by a very reliable source that my daughter Namita alias Khuku is still in the hands of above accused persons in the village Bhatialpur P.S. Ramgonj which village is inhabited by Muslims only, a strong hold of the Goonda elements and very near to GOLAM SAROAR, Ex. M.L.A. 's House.

So, I fervently pray that you would kindly arrange at once a strong Military search party to search throughly the village Bhatialpur P.S. Ramgonj where penetration of non-official rescue party without sufficient military escort is impossible for rescuing my abducted daughter Namita Roy alias Khuku and also arrest immediately the remaining accused persons as mentioned in the 'Ejahaar' namely.

1. Abdul Kader alias Kadira s/o Ismail Bepari; 2. Ali Hyder Atia; 3. Mamataz Atia; 4. Badial Alam Bhuia, Vill. East Sosalia P.S. Ramgonj; 5. Asad Ali Chamra of Bhatialpur, P.S. Ramgonj; 6. Abdul Latif employee Kumud Ghua's tailoring shop at Sahapur Bazar P.S. Ramgonj; 7. Abdul Khalek-Clerk Karapara D.S. Board, of Bhatialpur P.S. Ramgonj; 8. Mojibul Haq Molla-Clerk Karapara D.S. Board, of Khalispara Molla Bari P.S. Ramgonj and boat-men; 9. Mahabatali of Khalispara; 10. Habibulla.

In this connection I also beg to request you to please arrest 11. Billayet Ali alias Belu Master s/o Makramali Master, Asst. Head master, Karpara M.E. School, of Karpara P.S. Ramgonj, who was one of the ring-leaders of Raid-party of Karpara House on 11.10.06. and also our servant 12. Amrik Ali of Karpara P.S. Ramgonj, who are also actively connected in abducting my daughter Namita Roy alias Khuku as I apprehend, delay in respect of immediate and prompt action may not be possible to rescue my abducted daughter Namita. I would therefore pray that you would kindly take whatever action you deem proper in rescuing my abducted daughter Namita from the hands of the goondas for which act of your kindness I shall remain ever grateful to you.

A copy of the letter addressed to Superintendent of Police, Noakhali, in this connection by my relative Subodh Chandra Kar Choudhury is enclosed herewith for your kind perusal.

I remain, Sir

Yours most obidiently,

*Sd/- Binarani Roy Choudhury, Widow mother of Miss Namita Roy alias Khuku
at present residing in the house of Hiranmay Majumdar
P.O. Chandpur, Dist. Tippera*

(True Copy)

*Chandpur
Date 25.11.46*

*To
The Hon'ble H.S. Suhrawardi,
Chief-Minister, Bengal
Writers' Building,
Calcutta*

Sir

If at long last your words of assurance as spoken at Lakshmipur in Noakhali District recently in a meeting have reached my ears through Press Reports and where hope there was none, to me the deepest gloom has penetrated as by a ray from Heaven,

may the wail of a forlorn widow touch the right chord of a father's heart for father is above case, creed and nationality-and, in this belief, I, a nondescript would venture to snatch a few moments from the busy hours of a man with whom the civic fate of several millions of human being is entrusted.

I, Binarani Roy Choudhury of Karapara, P.S. Ramgonj, in the district of Noakhali, now already famous for certain happenings which came as one of nature's cataclysms, am the mother of Kumari Namita Roy Choudhuri who was forcibly taken away from my bosom on the night of the 11th Oct. '46 after causing a grievous injury on my forehead by men in a sudden frenzy which is beyond me to account for. I was an inmate of the house of Rai Saheb Rajendra Lal Roy, one of the victims of the diabolical mania unto death by violence.

I would not further pester you by the details of the incident-for I have already submitted them to the proper quarters. But I take the liberty of enclosing a copy thereof for reference.

I know little of history. But within living memory no ourburst of such mass atrocity ever took place; nor did we hear anything of the mind having occurred from our grandmothers' tales. For generations we womenfolk did our washing and cleaning and cooking and went to bed and slept secured. We had been giving suck to our children and rearing them up for life's battle. About our doors and yards our children had been playing with mahomedan children who came to us and we mothered them as mahomedan women mothered ours. In the name of that mother-hood which knows no politics-which never took note of elections and Governments. I appeal to you with all the fervour I could command, to have my child restored to me.

For the elders have told that ISLAM was a religion of peace and your prophet was the First Man to discourage intolerance and that he would brook no such things with the report of which the press is full to the brim these days.

Then do return my child to me the child who is pining for me in strange company, in alien surroundings and I know not in what other horrid conditions. For God's sake, bring back her to me for He has given you the hand that weilds power to do so, and may He shower on your own children thousand fold the blessing that I crave you to bestow on me.⁵¹

*Yours affectionately oppressed
Sd/- Binarani Roy Choudhury
Widow mother of Miss Namita Roy alias
'Khuku' at present residing in the house
of Hiranmay Majumdar, P.O. Chandpur, Dist. : Tippera*

CHAPTER—V

CONVERSION UNDER COERCION

However, what was more significant was the fact that there existed, with some noble exceptions, a total collaboration and co-operation of insiders, i.e., neighbours of the same village and people whom the victims knew. In most cases, people were attacked by inhabitants of their village. The Maulvi who converted people was often a local, and the hooligans who were also of the same village were supported by crowds coming to attack from outside. Thus, we need to correct the understanding of this riot put forth by the authorities, that it was “activity apparently organised of a body of hooligans who have exploited existing communal situations. Attackers were most often known to the victims. In cases where the victims sought help from people they knew, some facet of communal ideology was ever present in the way help was rendered conditional. **Lakshmi Majumdar of Panchagaon stated that when he asked for help, his Muslim friends advised him to get converted first. In most cases, the victims were asked to convert to Islam by the persons whose help they had sought. This third group of people were the tacit supporters and included even police officials.** This was evinced by the latter’s inaction on complaints to be present at moments of violence, thereby, tacitly supporting acts of commission of violence. In fact, when the house of the zamindar of Panchagaon, Lakshmi Majumdar, was looted and he was asked to convert, the Superintendent of police was present there. Hindu policemen’s houses were burnt too, and people in the vicinity of police stations were not spared.⁵²

1. Statement of The Zamindar of Panchagaon, Babu Lakshmi Chandra Mazumdar :

On 12th morning I called in some leading Muslim gentlemen for help and advice, notably Gholam Kibria, Latu Mia of Bhaor, our Union Board President (U. No. 12), Nure Rahman (dismissed sub-inspector of police) and other people. They promised to save our life and property on conversion to Islam. Surrendering our guns and our agreeing to abide by their decision....I was told by a known Muslim to go to the nearby mosque with some other leading Hindu gentlemen

like Chandra Kumar Mazumdar and others whom he named and told us that if we decided to save our life and property, we must not make delay in making up our mind but must go to the mosque to be converted. We went to the mosque as we had no alternative where we found several Muslims armed with weapons.⁵³

2. *A Victim's account states :*

The same night local Muslims in batches of 5 to 7 came to our house and asked us to get converted to Islam. We, out of fear, did not meet them. On the Saturday morning of 12 October around 200 Muslims came to our house and *threatened that if we do not convert ourselves they would kill us*. We, to save our lives, agreed to their proposal. Thus, the Maulavi Saheb of Shahapur High School converted me, and other members of my family into Islam. Then from amongst the crowd, the particular Maulavi Badu Mian and Mahmud Mian Patari forced us to *destroy the images and photographs of all Gods and Goddesses*. On 13 October they constructed a mosque in front of my house and *later on Kudur Mian, Mujibul Huq Kerani and Khaliq Mian demanded one thousand rupees from me as contribution to the League. (Italics mine)*⁵⁴

3. *Statement of S.C.Ghosh, S.Ghosh and Aswini Kumar Bhatta of Karpara, P.S. Ramgonj :*

On the 12th, these miscreants planned to attack our house, one of the biggest houses with populations of about 250...In order to save our lives and properties...[we] agreed to their proposal of conversion to Islam which they advanced as a condition precedent to our protection.

It was also tried to make the conversion permanent by forcing the victims to show adherence to their new faith. A victim's account denotes this clearly :

All the images of Gods and Goddesses have been broken and thrown away from the temples and dwelling houses. In brief, we are prevented from offering prayers and uttering *mantras* and cannot lead the Hindu mode of life. We are treated like slaves...The Maulvi [sic] appointed by the Muslims, come every now and then and teach the Namaj. On Fridays, the Hindus are compelled to accompany them to the Mosque for Jumma. Wearing of Muslim caps and growing of beards have become the order of the day...**Muslims are asking the Hindus to purchase cattle and slaughter them with their own hands in Hindu houses on the coming Id day.**

It is clear, therefore, that irrespective of the fact whether the riot was organized or not, the attack on religion was complete.⁵⁵

4. Though no circumcision was reported, the Hindu population was generally forced to perform certain practices as part of their allegiance to the new faith. The formula, as Simpson calls it, was the same almost everywhere. It included

compulsion to wear a cap upon which was inscribed Pakistan, a *lungi* as worn by Muslims, to eat beef, recite the Kalma and offer prayers. Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President, on touring the affected villages wrote in his report :

“Even after looting and arson and murder, the Hindus in the locality were not safe unless they embraced Islam. The Hindu population, further to save themselves had to embrace Islam en masse. As a sign of their conversion they were supplied with white caps used by the Muslims of the locality. Very often these caps were new and were stamped with the map of Pakistan with the words Pakistan Zindabad and Larke Lenge Pakistan.”

Thus, after conversion people were supplied with caps and copies of the Quran. The President of the Congress party noted that in one particular village, Khilpara, all the Hindus had been compelled to embrace Islam. Copies of the Quran had been distributed and people were compelled to wear the Muslim dress.

New caps with the League flag, a map of Pakistan and carrying the slogan “Pakistan Zindabad” had been distributed in thousands. This clearly proves that all the arrangements were made by some very resourceful organization in advance, accounting for the enormous quantity of cloth made available in days of strict cloth control. Simpson, Samar Guha and his associates also found the operation of a similar pattern in the method of conversion.⁵⁶

5. A notable case of conversion was that of Haren Ghosh, Secretary of the Congress Committee, Raipur. Arson started in Raipur *thana* on the 13th October. Ten ruffians came to Raipur and said that if all the Hindus embraced Islam they would be spared, except a list of six named persons, three of whom were afterwards murdered. On 14th October, a crowd of 500 ruffians armed with daggers, *lathis*, *ballams* and *ram-daos*, kerosene and petrol, shouting “Allah-o-Akbar” and “Pakistan Zindabad” attacked Raipur. They first of all took away all movable property, then destroyed Hindu temples and idols and last of all set fire to the village with kerosene and petrol. Harendra Ghosh escaped and hid himself in the jungles, ponds and paddy fields in the daytime and at night reached the house of two Muslim workers, who told him that the only thing that might save him in the coming critical days was conversion. He had to agree. Accordingly, they wrote out a “Pamphlet No. 1” and put his signature to it. On the 15th October, they brought him to Raipur mosque and confined him there. Here another pamphlet, “Pamphlet No. 2” was written, printed in the local press in thousands with his signature and like the previous pamphlet, distributed amongst Hindus and Muslims of the locality. He was confined here for 12 days. “My daily food was rice and beef which I was forced to eat. **I was**

taught Namaz and had to give lectures on Fridays in front of thousands of Muslims on the subject of Islamic creed and culture. Among the leaders who took part in this barbarity and met daily in the mosque morning and evening to issue directions were a local M.L.A., Secretary of the Thana Muslim League, two secretaries of the Union Peace Committee, two Presidents of Union Boards and a zamindar.⁵⁷

6. Statement of Sj. Radhamohan Nath, S/o Late Brindaban Chandra Nath, inhabitant of Vill. Kalsama under union No 3. Bhadur, P.S. Ramgunj.

I am 52 years old. I am a weaver by profession. In our family we are seven members; my brother's wife and children also live with me since my brother died five years ago. My son is 21 years old, and nephew about 24. All three of us work on looms, of which we have two.

Trouble started in our village on Sunday, the 13th October. Early in the morning our house was attacked and we all fled and ran into hiding. Mahabbat Ali Munshi, Kala Mia, Khalil Rahman came to our house and argued with the mob who had started plundering. We were then taken care of by the above persons. I was in Mahabbat Ali Munshi's house for more than two hours. After the mob had left, we came back home and cleaned the house and started cooking. The mob had broken the images of gods and looted whatever they could lay their hand upon; paddy, utensils, quilt, suitcase etc.

At midway the robbers came again and we again took refuge in Mahabbat Ali Munshi's house. The crowd caught hold of us and carried us back to our home. They did not beat us, but asked us to tear our *mala*, *sacred thread*. Then they ordered us to come along with them to set fire to other houses. In fear we accompanied them to Govindanath Kaviraj's house, which they looted. Two nephews of G.K. were converted to Islam, we came back about evening.

After that a man named Rahim Bux Bhuiya came to us and said, a meeting will be held in the Nath Bari : a dacoit had been arrested for demanding League subscription, he would be tried. We went there but found it was all false; but we were asked to become Musalmans. For fear I agreed. Then they went from house to house and made us read the Kalma. The Muslims numbered about 70 or 80, they were all men of our own village; they were armed with spears etc.

Soldiers reached our village on Monday (14 Oct 1946) in the evening all Musalmans ran away except Mahabbat Ali Munshi, Kala Mia, Khalil Mia. They aksed us to stay on. But the members of our family left with police to Ramgunj; only I remained at home. Khalil slept with me at night. I left home on Tuesday in the early morning for Ramgunj camp, with whatever food had

been saved. The friends again argued with me. I told them I would come back, & so went away.

In the afternoon, I returned home to gather what was still left, when I was persuaded by dacoits.

A Muslim boy of our village Latif Mia saw me being persuade. He jumped into my boat, he accompanied me to my home, and after I had gathered some rice etc. three Muslims—Jitu Mia, Asad Mia and the above Latif Mia—reached me to Sonapore bazar.

From that day on (15 Oct) I didn't go home till about 16 to 17 days afterwards. Then I found everything had been robbed. Thus things went on for sometime I used to go home during the day now and then. On the (14th agraayan) 1st Dec. my uncle who had gone home, reported that 10 pieces of tin had been taken away. My uncle is angry with me because I don't yet go home for fear. Musalman friends have given the name of the thief to my uncle and he asked me to lodge a complaint.⁵⁸

I have come to Gandhiji for advice.

—Radhamohan Nath

7. Statement of Mathuramohan De Majumder of Changirgaon, Union No. 5 Fatehpur, Ramgunj P.S. Dt. Noakhali

I am an inhabitant of Changirgaon village, and after I left Kanchrapara five years ago, I have been living here. In Kanchrapara, I owned a stationery shop; but now I look after my property here, which consists of 12 Kanis (bighas) of paddyland and 5 Kanis (bighas) of areca-nut, coconut and lemon garden. I also did some trade in these articles. We were five brothers, of whom the eldest was killed on Sunday, the 13th October, 1946.

In-fear, we sat up the whole night in suspense. Chandipur village was burnt on the 12th. On the following morning eight persons of our villagecame to our house in the morning, and told my eldest brother Sri Haranath De Majumdar that, the male members should go to Fatehpur and meet Maulavi Ibrahim who would convert them and then they would be safe. They did not threaten us, but told this to us as of advice, then about one, in the afternoon, a huge crowd reached our house. There were probably a thousand or more persons.

Haranath De Majumdar, Srinath De Majumdar, Brajanath De Majumdar and myself went with them to Fatehpur, and were converted to Islam. Maulavi Ibrahim altered names and gave us caps, we wore our cloth like lungis and returned to our village together with about 200 more persons of Changirgaon, who had already gathered there for the same purpose. I was then in the front room with my eldest brother, Haranath Dey. The following persons (table B) demanded a subscription of 1000/- from my brother for League and said that

we should also kill a cow. My elder brother said, "I have not the heart to kill the cow, nor have I got money now on hand." Karim Bux of village Chandipur was in the crowd, he said this was a lie. Karim Bux's son, Soltan Ali, immediately hit my elder brother on the knee; my brother fell down. Then Jamal Mia pointed me out and told the crowd to catch hold of me, for I would otherwise file evidence. Shamsul Haq caught hold of me and with a sickel (used for cutting paddy) gave a stroke to my throat. Nur Mia, Sadullah, Panchkori Mia, Shahadali Mia were round me, and they hit me on the back of the head with ballam, after that I do not remember anything.

When I gained consciousness, I found myself in the garden, my left hand was paining me very much. I saw it had been burnt, and there was blood all my body, I lay down. Then my brother Anath, Srinath carried me to the house north of our own belonging to Sj. Harendra Dutt. There I was treated by Babu Kanai Mohan Das. When I recovered I came to Chandipur Refugee Camp. This was about ten days after the event.

I learnt about the death of my eldest brother two or three days after I was in Harendra Dutt's house.⁵⁹

—Mathura Mohan Dey Majumdar

8. REFUSAL TO CONVERSION LED TO SURE DEATH

Refusal to get converted was often met with violent reactions, as this particular experience details :

...these leaders assisted by the Mohammedans of the locality and neighbourhood localities joined the mob and looted everying they can. When this was finished they attacked my sons late Jasoda Kumar Roy, Prosanna Kumar Roy at Kergah and Chitta Ranjan Roy and my son-in-law Binode Behari Roy Mazumdar of Babupur and asked them to get converted into [sic.] Islam and to take beef. **When they expressed unwillingness, Mendi Meah of Abirpara cut the throat of my eldest son Jasoda Kumar Roy in the nature of Jabai and killed my two other sons like wild beasts.**

Against this general background of devastation, darkness and despair, there stood out instances of individual courage and heroism, fidelity and undying faith, reminding one that the divine spark in the heart of man may be eclipsed but is never extinguished and the law of non-violence operates even in the midst of carnage. There were instances of Hindus who preferred death to conversion. There was the noble instance of Navadwip Pandit of Raipur. He had taken shelter with a sum of Rs. 20,000 in cash on his person in the police

station at Raipur at the invitation of the *thana* officer. When the mob approached the *thana*, the *thana* officer pushed him out. The mob relieved him of all his cash and demanded his conversion. He refused and chose to be killed with the name of God on his lips.⁶⁰

9. SAMPLE OF PUBLIC NOTICE AFTER CONVERSION

Village—Debnagar Pakistan Jindabad

This is to inform all Muslim brothers that Gourhari Kabiraj, resident of Debnagar has reposed faith in Muslim religion after his entire family willingly read Kalma (Practised Namaz Prayer) and has donated Rs.200/- to our committee. Changing each and everyone's previous name, new Muslim name has been given. Kaviraj's present name is Mahammad Nuru Islam Chaudhury. Kabiraj has given marriage his eldest daughter to Abdul Waheb, son of Leda Mian of that village. We the signatories now believe that said Nuru Islam Kabiraj has been fully converted to Muslim religion. Henceforth you will not hesitate to take medicine from him.

<i>Previous name</i>	<i>New name</i>
Sree Swarup Ch. Bhowmik	Sarafat Ali Bhuina. Debnagar.
Sree Nitya Nanda Kabiraj	Nur Mamhamad Patari
Aliler Rahaman	Debnagar
Achlama Mian	of Bhola Chok
Aiar Ali	of Bishnupur
Abdur Rahaman Pal	of Debnagar
Leda Mian	of Debnagar
Passport—original in Possession of Sj Debotosh Dasgupta.	
Golam Rohaman Father Abdur Rahaman.	

The said person subraced Islam religion yesterday (15-10-46). His previous name was satyendra Kumar Majumdar. At present he will be known as golam Rahaman.

It is declared that their family has accepted Islam Religion.⁶¹

(Sign)

MD. Hamidulla
Kesarkhil

Md. Hamidulla
Vill. Ayspur.

28.10.46

***LYING IS NO SIN IF TOLD IN FAVOUR OF ISLAM
AND AGAINST A INFIDEL NEIGHBOUR***

Abdul Gofran, the Civil Supplies Minister, visited the affected area on the 20th October. He reached Ramganj in the forenoon but found no time to visit the refugee camp, and proceeded to a village two miles away instead, where he breakfasted with a Muslim who was said to have been a ring-leader in the disturbances. Throughout, he tried to make out that it was the “outsiders” who were responsible for the disturbance and that the local Muslims had opposed it always.

On the 25th October, some members of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, giving their impression of a tour of the affected areas in Noakhali, stated that “the happenings were not as serious as they were made to appear. There was no case of rape or abduction of women and *there was not much evidence of arson and destruction of property.*” (Italics mine). On the same day, the Chief Minister of Bengal made a statement to the Press saying that “the situation was definitely under control” and that “most of the news” was “expression of apprehension instead of being based on any foundation in fact.”

(Pyarelal–Mahatma Gandhi–The Last Phase)

CHAPTER—VI

HELPLESS HINDU LEADERS : NEWS OF NOAKHALI RIOT REACHED DELHI

LEADERS' COMPLAIN AGAINST THE GOVERNOR & VICEROY

Sri Haranchandra Ghosh Choudhuri, the only Hindu MLA from the district sent the following trunkcall message to Pandit Nehru and the latter apprised Lord Wavell about the situation prevailing in Noakhali :

“I am now writing to you because I have just received a trunk call from Calcutta from Haran Chandra Ghosh, M.L.A. He states that stabbings and murder and looting have spread to Noakhali District in Bengal, and he mentions a number of towns and villages which are seriously affected. He further stated that families of middle-class people have been murdered including the President of the local Bar Association.

I do not know what I can do in this matter. But I hope you will realise how exceedingly distressing this is for all of us.”⁶²

Telegrams on the similar lines were also received by Pandit Nehru from differnt sources. In helplessness and anguish, he wrote to Lord Wavell :

“I have been receiving daily telegrams from East Bengal and sometimes from Calcutta giving distressing accounts of the conditions there. There have been details of stabbings and murder and looting round about Dacca and elsewhere. People have also come to me who have given exceedingly painful reports of these happenings. It is possible that in their excitement they have exaggerated. But what struck me most was that some of these persons talk to me as the victims of Hitler used to talk in the early thirties. **I have not thought it worth-while to trouble you with these reports as my previous references to Bengal have not borne fruit.**”

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose who was at that time a member of the Interim Government, received the following two telegrams from prominent Hindus of Noakhali giving detail to some extent, of atrocities committed on the Hindus.

He on his part forwarded those telegrams to Lord Wavell with the request to take necessary action :

“I enclose herewith two telegrams from Noakahli 14 October 1946 (East Bengal) received by me this evening—one from Kshitis Roy, Chairman, Municipality, Kirti Ghosh, Vice-Chairman, and Dr. Sudhir Roy, Secretary, Hindu Sabha and the other from Prafulla Bhoumik, Manager. Bhulua. The telegrams speak for themselves. It appears that the Government of Bengal have entirely failed to give protection to innocent citizens of Noakhali and that whole families have been murdered. May I request you to take immediate action?

Thanking you,

Enclosure 1 to No. 452

Telegram from Mr. Kshitis Roy, Chairman, Municipality, Kirti Ghosh, Vice Chairman, Dr. Sudhir Roy, Secretary, Hindu Sabha, to Sarat Bose, Member, Interim Government, New Delhi.

Organised hooliganism, loot, arson, murder, forcible conversion going on large scale in Ramganj Thana, portion of Begumganj, Lakshipur. Rai Sahib Rajendralal Roy with entire family, Zaminder Surendra Bose and many other notable persons murdered. Communication to Thanas, Headquarters made impossible. No police help available. Unless immediate military help rendered, entire Hindu Population will be extinct.

Enclosure 2 to No. 452

Telegram from Mr. Profulla Bhoumik, Manager, Bhulua, to Mr. Sarat Bose, Member, Interim Government, New Delhi.

Whole of Noakhali District devastated. Respectable Hindus including President, District Bar Association killed. Several thousand Hindus' houses burnt, looted, ladies, girls taken away forcibly. Forcible conversion. Police helpless. Military urgently needed. Pray save livings and destitutes.⁶³

VINDICTIVE GOVERNMENT & WORTHLESS GOVERNOR

The Muslim League Government of Bengal kept the news of communal disturbances of Noakhali suppressed almost for 5 days. But soon after, through the print media, it got nation-wide, nay world-wide publicity.

When Calcutta was burning on the Direct Action Day, Burrows, the Governor was fast asleep and when mass killing, looting, burning, raping, abduction and conversion were going on in Noakhali & Tipperah, he was holidaying in Darjeeling. Although this sort of heinous activities were taking place in a province under his governance, he had no remorse or regret; on the contrary, he informed the Governor-General, Lord Wavell after the Calcutta riot with satisfaction :

14(1) Though “Direct Action Day” was intended to be a gesture against the British, there was not, as far as I know, a single case of any attack on a European, or even an Anglo-Indian as such. European shops, which had suffered seriously in February (and which incidentally presented a very tempting target to the crowds at the Ochterlony Monument meeting) were left severely alone. It is almost uncanny how in the European shopping centres the Indian shops had been selected for destruction.”⁶⁴

WHAT ANSWER SHALL WE GIVE?—NEHRU
EITHER REMEDY, OR EXIT FROM POLITICAL ARENA DESIRABLE
THE SEED OF DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY WAS SOWN
ON THE SOIL OF NOAKHALI

It appears there is no administration of civilized world—the way mass slaughter, plunder, arson and oppression on women have been allowed to continue two months ago in Calcutta and subsequently in the district of Noakhali and in this grave situation the Central Govt. is a silent spectator.

“Surely it serves little purpose to say that all this is due to communal friction and to divide up the blame between various parties or groups. **Conditions are difficult in various parts of India, but it has become the special province of Bengal to indulge in this horror and frightfulness. There was the famine three years ago. There was the Calcutta killing two months ago and there is now this mass slaughter, etc., in Noakhali and surrounding districts which, if reports are correct, is far worse than the Calcutta killing.** Law and special and other responsibilities have no meaning when they become completely incapable of controlling such a situation. It is a terrible responsibility for all those in charge. But it is also a terrible responsibility for us and we too have to answer before the people of India. **What is the good of our forming the Interim Government of India if all that we can do is to watch helplessly and do nothing else when thousands of people are being butchered and subjected to infinitely worse treatment?**

I am greatly perturbed. I feel that we must face this issue somehow or else we retire from the public scene.”⁶⁵

Nehruji expressed his mental agony by saying it is better to take leave of the Govt. instead of being a silent witness to such intolerable situation. In fact the thought of division of country dawned up the minds of Congress leaders after the incidents of Noakhali.

NEHRU TO WAVELL :
REIGN OF HOOLIGANISM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN BENGAL

On 16th October, 1946, Nehru wrote a long letter to Wavell, expressing his great concern for East Bengal, particularly Noakhali :

15 October, 1946

“Thank you for your letter of today’s date about East Bengal.

I am going to the Frontier tomorrow morning, but my mind is full of what is happening in East Bengal. Both the reconstitution of the Interim Government, important as it is, and my Frontier visit, which I have looked forward to for so long, have suddenly become of secondary importance. Indeed I have come seriously to think whether it serves any useful purpose for me to be in the Interim Government if an important part of India sinks to barbarism or something much worse. The accounts we have received and are receiving from hour to hour and incredible and yet there can be little doubt that they are largely true. A vast area of Bengal has ceased to have any Government functioning, any security, and has just become the happy hunting ground of the worst elements in the community. **Mass slaughter, arson, burying of human beings, rape, abduction on a large scale, forcible conversions and all manner of other horrible things are happening.**

‘For at least two or three weeks past we have been receiving warnings that this was going to happen in East Bengal. Indeed it began in Dacca some time back. Instead of being stopped in time it was allowed to grow and it is now spreading to other districts. **Bengal, which has long led India in many ways, is rapidly becoming a shambles and a ruin.** It is a small matter to discuss legal responsibilities when such a horrible catastrophe overtakes a people. It is evident that the Bengal Government is completely incapable of controlling the situation. Indeed, many people think that they have no desire to control it. You have told us that this is the domain of Provincial Autonomy and that for the rest it is a special responsibility of the Governor and the Viceroy. It may be so, but I should like to know how that responsibility is discharged either by the Provincial Government or the Governor when these conditions that are worse than war are allowed to prevail over wide areas and for indefinite periods. It would appear that not only Government but also general and special responsibilities have all ceased to function in these parts of Bengal. Only the gangster, the hooligan and other anti-social elements function there.’⁶⁶

***PATEL PREVENTED FROM MAKING ON
THE SPOT SURVEY IN BENGAL***

After Nehru it is turn of Sardar Patel. Calling on Wavell on 16 October, Patel expressed his desire to visit Bengal in order to generate confidence in the minds of Hindus. But Wavell did not agree to this proposal. That will prejudice provincial autonomy. Then Patel was Home Minister, of the Interim Government but he had no right to visit Bengal administered by Muslim League Ministry.

“Patel then said that he proposed to go to Bengal himself. I said quite firmly, No, that he was not to go; it was a provincial matter and interference from the

Centre would be quite out of order. He said that if I had not been going to Bombay he would have suggested that I should go myself. I said that while I was always prepared to go anywhere where I could be of service, I did not propose to interfere with the Governor's functions unless the situation really required it."

In this way the concept of momentous necessity of division of the country began to take shape. But in spite of taking decision of joining the interim Government, germs of communal hatred were conspicuous in journals of Muslim League and speeches of leaders; and when this thing was brought to the notice of Wavell, he accused both sides shirk his responsibilities.

"Patel then produced this morning's copy of Dawn, and pointed out to me the photographs there of the murdered Pathans in Bombay, and asked how it was possible to keep communal peace when this sort of thing went on. I said that I entirely agreed that such provocation was deplorable, but it was not confined to one side only."⁶⁷

***SARDAR PATEL'S INDIGNATION AT THE CALLOUS AND
IRRESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNOR :
LETTER TO SIR STAFORD CRIPS***

"You will, I am sure, remember that, when you were here, we had a long conversation on the likelihood of communal trouble in India, in case there was no settlement with the Muslim League. I told you that there was no possibility of any trouble except in Bengal and Sind, and you told me, 'You need not be afraid of Bengal, as we have a Governor who would immediately put section 93 into operation in case of any serious trouble'. You have heard, I believe, of the "Great Calcutta Killing". Those who have seen the thing can along realise what it was. But now what is happening in Eastern Bengal is much worse and the Calcutta incident pales into insignificance before Noakahli."

"My point just now is that the Governor did nothing to prevent the mischief if he had wished to avoid it. At least that is the general impression. I will not bother you with the details, but I am just sending you a copy of a letter which Jawaharlal wrote to the Viceroy on the eve of his departure to the Frontier. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter from another friend who has been a Member of the Working Committee for many years."

***Sardar Patel's mental agony for his inability to do anything
as Member, Home Dept.***

"Would you believe that the Governor of Bengal has, all throughout these terrible happenings, been enjoying the bracing climate of a hill-station known as Darjeeling?"

"I myself received many letters and telegrams from the terror-stricken people of the unfortunate area. Similar warnings were addressed to the Viceroy and the Governor but the Provincial Autonomy serves as a screen to prevent

Government action. You would realise how difficult it is for an Indian Home Member to sit in his office quietly day by day, when innumerable piteous appeals and complaints are received for some kind of help which would give these unfortunate and helpless victims some protection.”⁶⁸

***BURROWS WOKE-UP FROM SLUMBER :
WROTE TO LORD WAVELL***

IMMEDIATE CONFIDENTIAL : DARJEELING, 16 OCTOBER 1946,
7-20M P.M. Received : 16 October, 10-45 P.M.

No. 266. Disturbances in south-east Bengal.

The communal situation deteriorated in the district of Noakhali generally during the past fortnight. Mass meetings have been held at important places urging Muslims to enroll in a national guard. Some of the speeches were violent in character. A strong movement for economic boycott of Hindus developed and Muslims found purchasing from Hindus were beaten up.

The situation was at first thought to be particularly bad in sub-division of Feni, and troops (one company) were moved there from Chittagong about October 9th and armed police were asked from outside the district.

Actually trouble did not develop in Feni but broke out on October 10th in police station of Ramganj in north-west corner of Noakhali. Trouble spread from there and situation as it now presents itself appears to be as follows :

Large bands of Moslem hooligans are moving about terrorising Hindus and committing acts of arson, loot and murder, kidnapping and forcibly converting Hindus. Villages have been cordoned and booty and money extracted under threats. The gangs appear to be organised. Roads have been cut in places and communication, difficult at any time at this period of the year, has become even more difficult. Difficulty of movement (largely by boat) has hampered operations. The areas affected in Noakhali district are police stations of Ramganj, Lakshmipur and part of Begumgunj, Sonaimuri and Senbag. The trouble has spread to southern part of the Tippera in police stations of Hajiganj and Faridganj where there has been looting and arson on a wide scale. Refugees have left the affected areas in large numbers. 2,000 refugees are being provided [for] at Comilla and another 1000 are being sent by special train from Chaumohani in Noakhali district. Relief arrangements are being made and extra food is being despatched to the tip. Up to date some 250 additional armed police have been sent to affected areas and two companies of troops are also operating there. The Minister for Civil Supplies, who has great influence locally, has left for Noakhali. The Inspector-General of Police and Senior staff Officer of Bengal Area flew to Chittagong today to pick up the Commissioner and from there they will proceed to affected area to concert plans with local officers.”

CHAPTER—VII

THE RAPE OF NOAKHALI AND TIPPERA : REPORTS AND REFLECTIONS IN THE PRESS

The Hindusthan Standard wrote :- The “Grievous misconception and faulty appreciation of the communal situation which the Governor of Bengal had permitted himself led to the more tragic happenings in Noakhali and Tipperah exactly after seven weeks of the Great Calcutta Carnage. The whole thing betrays secret preparations by evil doers, aided and abetted, deliberately or unconsciously by overt and covert acts of irresponsible omission and commission by men in position of responsible authority. The open misuse of the Muslim League’s flag by hooligans was the main feature of such preparations. With opinions divided among the leaders, constituting the High command itself of the Muslim League, as to the non-violent and peaceful manner of their ‘modus operandi’ a careful watch on the excitable sections of the public, particularly in East Bengal, was certainly indicated. But as in Calcutta so also in East Bengal, the authorities miserably failed to do their duty in this respect.”

As the president of the B.P.C.C. (Sj. Surendra M. Ghosh) had reported : “Civil administration has almost ceased to exist for a particular community in some riot-affected areas in the district of Noakhali.” He further proceeded to state that people belonging to the ‘minority community’ who happened to be marooned in the affected areas were living under strict surveillance of local hooligans and in some areas permits were issued for agression from one village to another. When any military or civil authority visited the area, “people have to say that they have changed their religion of their own free will. Sometimes people are compelled to live in houses not their own, but sent to their own houses on the approach of any official party. Subscription for a ‘particular political organisation’ and ‘protection tax’ are being realised in some areas.” Continuing, the report said that “with one or two exceptions nowhere was the mob confronted by the officers entrusted with the maintenance of Law and Order and no attempt was made to check their progress.”

The attack was cruelly planned and thoroughly executed in all details, viz. slaughter of male adults, forcible conversion and re-marriage of women, destruction of property and cattle of the minority community. This is borne out by so many statements, speeches, reports and correspondence (all published in the local papers) that it is not possible to enumerate or reproduce them here.

10th to 15th October 1946

It started with organised hooliganism by “riotous mobs with weapons,” affecting a total area covering over 200 square miles of the Sadar and Feni Sub-divisions of Noakhali, beginning from Thursday Oct, 10.

“Enquiries at official sources,” a Bengal Press Advisory Committee note said, “reveal that military and armed police have been rushed to the affected areas which comprise the entire Ramgunj, parts of Begumgunj, Raipur, Senbag, Feni, Chagalnaiya and Sandwip Thanas.”

A deputation of Calcutta-residing Noakhali People waited upon Mr. Martyn, the Home Secretary, who informed them that a new Magistrate, Mr. McInnery, I.C.S., had been flown to the district and more police and military had also moved to the localities. A Government of Bengal Press note also admitted receiving “preliminary reports of serious lawlessness” in the district of Noakhali.

From New Delhi, S.J. Sarat Chandra Bose, the then Member-in-charge “Works, Mines & Power portfolios in the Interim Government of India telegraphed to the Governor of Bengal intimating ourbreak of the outrageous disturbances in Noakhali and also stating that “communication to the Thana H.Q. had been made impossible” and immediate military aid was sought for, S.J. Bose implored the Governor to take, “strong action immediately to put down the violence.”

The Secretary, All India Hindu Mahasabha, issued a statement detailing the horror and distress of the victims of “this organised gigantic hooliganism,” also mentioning inter alia that he had a few days ago himself apprised the Governor of Bengal personally of the “explosive situation” without any “Preventive action” being taken thereupon. He also laid stress upon his complaint in the course of this statement, that “an ex-M.L.A. had been openly inciting the people for the last three months to acts of lawlessness and numerous public meetings had been held for this purpose. But in spite of repeated demands from the public, no restraint was put on the activities of these mischief-mongers and they were allowed freely to inflame the passions of the ignorant and fanatical masses.”

16th October, 1946

The Bengal Press Advisory Committee released a telegram received from Messrs. Kamini Kumar Dutta, Leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Council, and Dharendra Nath Dutta, Dy. Leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. The telegrams referred urgently to unchecked distress caused by hooligans' atrocities adding : The District Magistrate and the Police Superintendent of Noakhali took no steps to prevent the wholesale destruction of properties and lives of innocent villagers," and "all ingress and egress of the persecuted people to and from the affected areas, covering about 200 sq. miles, are completely stopped and all approaches to these areas are being closely guarded by hooligans, armed with deadly weapons."

The telegram also referred to "the planned organisation behind this terrible carnage, arson and loot" and urging "immediate posting of military in Noakhali, Tipperah and Chittagong." It stated : "Troubles have spread over other thanas of Noakhali and portions of Hajigang, Faridganj and Laksham Thanas of Tipperah District have also been affected."

"Serious lawlessness in Ramgunj, Begumganj and Lakshmipur in Noakhali, and in the Hajigunj Police Station area in Tipperah" was also admitted in a Bengal Government Press note which stated that "strong action" was being taken, that Sec. 144 had been promulgated in Feni and that "additional armed police are being sent to East Bengal for use in Noakhali and Tipperah."

Admitting "very serious operation" in Noakhali, the Chief Minister at a Press Conference in Calcutta said that it had become somewhat "difficult for the troops to move in the affected area as canals had been dammed, bridges damaged and roads blocked." Apart from rushing "more battalions," if needed, to the affected areas, he said, he contemplated dropping "printed appeal and warning from the air" to the people to stop these things.

The Chief Minister also stated that the situation in Noakhali was extremely bad and that there had been forcible conversion, plunder and loot, "but these things had to be stopped." But he had "no idea." he said, "why these things had taken place."

"At least over 5000 persons have been killed in the lawlessness in certain areas in Noakhali and Tipperah Districts since Oct. 10" stated the President, B.P.C.C., adding : "Over 50,000 others have been affected by other acts of the rioters, namely, forcible conversion, forcible marriages and abductions." An idea of the extent of rape and abduction committed in the affected areas can be had from the following report published in the *Hindusthan Standard* of Nov.5, from its Comilla correspondent :

“Mr. Simpson, I.C.S. who was deputed by the Bengal Government to prepare a statistical record of losses and atrocities perpetrated in Chandpur Sub-division has, it is understood, completed his work.

“It transpires from authoritative sources that in one area more than 300 cases of rape and in another area about 4000 cases of rape on defenceless women were recorded. A Deputy Magistrate deputed by the District Magistrate, recorded statements of about 40 women of ages ranging from 12 to 60, who narrated painful stories of brutal outrage on their modesty.”

18th October, 1946

Issued in the evening of the previous day (Oct 17), a Government of India Press note declared : “The disturbances have tended to move northwards away from the northern parts of Noakhali to the south western parts of the Tipperah district to Hajigunj, Chandpur and Laksham.”

But at a Press Conference in Calcutta on Oct. 16, the Chief Minister had said that the “tendency for it to spread has been definitely stopped”. “Once more,” commented ‘The Statesman’ (Calcutta) editorially, “the administrative system in Bengal shows up in the ugly light of inefficiency.” Continuing, it went on to say : “It seems odd that despite evidence of administrative breakdown in a part of the province, for weeks notoriously menaced by just this sort of catastrophe there should have been no movement of the Governor or Chief Minister to the point of catastrophe. The one remains at Darjeeling, the other has gone to join him there.”

The total number of refugees were reported (unofficially) to have reached up to about 12000 at Chandpur and Comilla, 3000 at Ramgunj and at least 1000 at Calcutta.

19th October, 1946

Acharya Kripalani, S.J. Sarat Chandra Bose and Surendra Mohan Ghosh flew from Calcutta to the areas affected by the disturbances in Noakhali. Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani, Maj-Gen. A.C.Chatterjee and Kumar Devendra Lal Khan, M.L.A. (Central) also accompanied them.

A telegram, received from Chaumuhani and dated Oct. 17, to the President B.P.C.C. stated that murder, looting, arson and conversion were still continuing in the area. It added : “Unconverted people are being slaughtered on mass scale. No help is available from the local authorities for rescue and protection. Full Military administration is required. People are starving for want of ration. Immediate action is solicited.”

At New Delhi on the previous (Oct 18) evening, Mahatma Gandhi who had been contacted personally by Dr. B.C.Roy on the morning of the same

day and apprised of the situation in Noakhali, referred to the atrocities being perpetrated in Noakhali and the plight of the women there, in his usual after-prayer address, stating : “If one half of India’s mankind was paralysed, India could never really feel free. I would far rather see India’s women trained to wield arms than that they should feel helpless.” Honour, he said, knew no surrender to any power on earth. “Self-immolation by taking poison” was a better way out, he suggested, than surrender to dishonour.

And, as a matter of fact, it was soon revealed that this was exactly what the women had been forced to do. “The history of the heroic Rajput ladies was repeated in Noakhali,” wrote the “Hindusthan Standard,” “when a large number of women in order to save their honour jumped into fire and many took poison and some committed suicide by hanging.”

20th October, 1946

“The Governor of Bengal accompanied by his Chief Minister and the Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, visited Feni by plane and flew over the affected areas of the districts of Tipperah and Noakhali yesterday” (Oct 18), declared a Government of Bengal Press note.

“According to the refugees,” wrote a correspondent from Comilla in the course of a despatch released for publication on Oct. 19 evening by the Bengal Press Advisory Committee, “not a single arrest was made during all the 5 days of lawlessness in Noakhali, nor was a single shot fired except in one case. The military and armed police since posted are extremely inadequate.” The despatch also said : “The hooligans are now reported to be adopting new tactics. They go to one or two houses in a village, ask people to change their religion and slaughter their cattle and set fire to their houses. These are generally followed by wholesale evacuation of villagers in panic.”

21st, October, 1946

In London, on the same day, the Under-Secretary for India (Mr. Arthur Henderson) read in the House of Commons a report from the Governor of Bengal wherein His Excellency Sir Frederick Burrows had stated that “the number of dead from the rioting (in East Bengal) were expected to be low in the three-figure category.”

Acharya Kripalani’s impression

The President-elect of the Indian National Congress (Acharya Kripalani) in company with S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose returned to Calcutta on Sunday (Oct. 20) and revealed his first impressions of the tour. “it was impossible for us to ascertain the exact number of casualties, but we have no doubt whatever that the figure mentioned by the authorities are an under-estimate,” he said.

“Neither the public nor the authorities have any means to estimate these figures at present,” he continued. “The area of disturbance seems to be closed not only to the public but to the authorities also.”

The Editor of the ‘Ananda Bazar Patrika’, who had accompanied the Congress President-elect’s party also returned with them in the same plane.

Gandhiji’s decision to visit riot-torn areas

A Wardhagunj message, dated Oct. 19, received by the “Hindustan Standard” from its own correspondent, was published, announcing Mahatma Gandhi’s decision to visit East Bengal.

Caused by a body of hooligans (it was “no general rising” of the majority community against the minority community) who have exploited the existing communal feeling and who, as they range the countryside, are temporarily joined in each locality by ‘belligerent roughs’ (in the words of the Under-Secretary of State for India, Mr. Arthur Henderson, speaking at the House of Commons on Oct. 11) the “disturbances” continued; and the authorities responsible for law and order and the Government in the province plaintively declared that ‘restoration of order is hampered by bad communications which make it difficult to establish contact with the main body of rioters.’ In course of the same statement, Mr. Henderson asked the (Conservative) Opposition to appreciate that law and order is a provincial subject, and, therefore, the responsibility was primarily of the Bengal ministry and the legislature.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose’s reaction

Commenting on the amazing report of the Government of Bengal as read out to the House of Commons, S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose challenged the “low in the three figure” statement about Noakhali casualties of the minority community arising out of the open and unprovoked war of extermination launched against them by the majority community. “At one place, namely the Cutchery and residence of S. J. Surendra Kumar Bose, 400 persons are reported in the Press to have been murdered in one day. A large number of persons, including Rai Saheb Rajendra Lal Roy, President of Noakhali Bar, were murdered at S. J. Roy’s house on the third day of the disturbances. “No police help.” continued S. J. Bose, “was given to the persons and families attacked, although timely appeals for help were made. The disturbances were caused by organised bands consisting of ex-military men. Information was sent in writing to the local Magistrate and the police of the preparations that were being made by persons mentioned above, but no action was taken.”

“On the Azad Hind Government declaration day,” said **Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose** in course of another Press statement, ‘I solemnly appealed to the fighting clements and revolutionary forces in India to consolidate and organise themselves immediately to resist this mad orgay of internecine violence and to defeat it.’”

“From what I have seen and heard the day before and yesterday,” said the President elect of the India National Congress (Acharya Kripalani) on Oct. 21, “I am clearly of opinion that whatever the Government, Provincial or Central, may or may not do, every Bengalee, male or female, has to defend himself or herself by whatever means he or she can think.”

He also instanced the example of “Shri Rajendra Lal Roy and his family who defied a mob for two full days and fell fighting.”

On October 24th, A Bengal Government Press note boasted of “active operations to round up the hooligans.” But on Nov. 13, the following message came from Chaumuhani :

“Two persons who were returning home after attending Mahatma Gandhi’s evening prayer on Sunday (Nov. 19) are reported to have been murdered on the way about six miles from Duttapara (Mahatmaji’s camp) by one of the alleged notorious miscreants. Police and military searches are going on, but the alleged assailant has not been found.”

Reaction of Parties and Leaders

A request for “effective remedial measures” to the Home Department of the Interim Central Government was made by Sj. Kamini Kumar Dutta, Leader of the Congress Party, Bengal Legislative Council, after giving “a broad outline of the devastation and lawlessness in Noakhali.” In the course of a statement Sj. Dutta said : “No one from outside can enter the affected areas without peril of life and that area has been cut off from civilised world.” Sj. Dutta also stated that after a personal visit of enquiry undertaken on the 13th, he met the Minister of Civil Supplies on the 15th as the latter was on his way to Noakhali. He had also interviewed the Superintendent of Police before. “The authorities,” continued Sj. Dutta, “are very anxious to shroud the whole affair from public inspection, lest their criminal inefficiency will then be fully established. No force was sent to the affected area till October 14th. There was the mockery of some police officers visiting the area before 14th, but by their inactivity they encouraged depredation.”

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee adopted resolutions at its meeting held on Tuesday, October 22, stating ‘inter

alia' that : "Widespread and organised lawlessness in many parts of the Province, particularly in Calcutta, Noakhali, Tipperah, Dacca and other districts of East Bengal" were noted by it with deep concern; all Congress Committees and all Congress workers" were enjoined to organise such defence "as were feasible and practicable under the present circumstances" so that the people might not yield to panic and terror; S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose was empowered to form a Central Committee and do the needful for relief, rehabilitation and protection of the people affected or who may be affected by the communal disturbances. Condemning "the Government dominated by the communal Muslim League Ministry", and for the Government's failure to check murder, loot, arson, forcible conversion and vile offences against women that had become 'matters of daily occurrence,' the Executive Council called upon "all law-abiding citizens to organise themselves for self-defence, instead of depending on the Governmental machinery which has failed to discharge its primary obligations of maintaining law and order."

A representative of the Bengal Press Advisory Committee, reporting after a tour of the riot-affected areas in Noakhali said : "It is a misnomer to characterise these happenings merely as 'lawlessness' or 'communal disturbances.' They are nothing short of a total war upon the minority community waged in the name of a political organisation with the Ministry under its control and with the officialdom either in collusion or as a conniving party."

"The principal motive behind these acts," wrote "**The Statesman**" of Calcutta, was "looting and conversion of people to a new faith."

"This outburst of hostilities is the direct result of the politics of hate and strife that the Muslim League has practised for the past months and of the threats of violence that it has held out in the past months," declared the Congress working Committee's resolution on the Bengal situation adopted on Oct. 24. "Further, added the resolution, the Governor and the Governor-General who claim to possess special responsibilities in such matters must also share the burden for events in Bengal."

Hence by the third week from the commencement of the East Bengal "disturbances" in Feni on Oct. 8, the country had no room for doubt that the so called "minority" community of Bengal were being barbarously victimised by joint negligence of the representatives of the British Crown and the established Muslim League Government of Bengal. A direct outcome of this mad marauding to Pakistanise Noakhali has been the following, a mere instance out of innumerable such tragedies :

“I remember the woeful scream of my daughter when she was snatched away from my bosom,” said an agonised mother to Gandhiji at Noakhali, whose daughter had been carried away by an educated youngman of the majority community. “You can easily realise, Mahatma as you are, the agony of a mother’s heart. I will not let you go away from this part of the province until I get back my beloved daughter.”

Further study of the situation must be proceeded with from this focus in perspective.

At a mass meeting at New Delhi on Oct. 25, held under the presidentship of the **Managing Director, “Ananda Bazar Patrika” and “Hindusthan Standard” (Sj. Suresh Chandra Majumdar)**, “immediate recall of the Bengal Governor, dismissal of the Suhrawardy Ministry and intervention of the Centre with a view to stopping the present lawlessness in Bengal” was demanded in a resolution.

Meanwhile things were by no means quiet in East Bengal despite the actions of the police and the military. The total areas affected now exceeded over 500 square miles. Reports of hooligans hampering relief work were received from unexpected places, for instance, Comilla. “It is impossible to estimate” declared Lt. Gen. F.R.R. Bucher, G.O.C., Eastern Command, addressing a Press Conference on Oct. 26, in Calcutta, on the situation in Noakhali and Tipperah Districts, “how long it will take to restore confidence in the disturbed areas.” But he appeared confident that with a strength of 1,500 military forces in the disturbed areas, confidence would be restored in 10 or 14 days.”

In the course of a speech broadcast from Delhi, the Viceroy also had said “inter alia” on Oct, 28, “I want to impress on you that with the formation of a Coalition Government, India has taken another great stride forward on the road to freedom. Let us not look backward to old hatreds and injuries and recriminations, but forward to the prospect of a free, powerful and prosperous India.”

In plain and simple language, His Excellency was inviting the country to accept the “fait accompli” of Pakistan which had been obtained by the Muslim League’s well-demonstrated “Direct Action” and thus accept the “status quo.”

No wonder that the Viceregal announcement encouraged the Bengal Government to fresh demonstration of their “primary responsibility,” in the matter to withdraw “the exemption granted to the publication of matter communicated to the Press by the Press Advisory Committee, Bengal.” The

full mischief of this order was illumined by the receipt, on November 4 at Calcutta of a telegram by the President, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, from **Mr. Ananda Mohan Poddar, M.L.A. (Central)**, and Chairman, Naraingunj Municipality, stating that incidents had happened in several moffusil areas in the sub-division and in the town itself.

At the House of Commons, on the same day (Nov 4 Mr. Arthur Henderson admitted that **Mymensingh** had also been affected by communal rioting, although the “general situation in East Bengal was under control” and ‘hooligan bands’ did not appear to be ‘operating’.

We shall conclude with two quotations from two distinguished people. **Miss Muriel Lester and Dr. Amiya Chakravarty** who had gathered first-hand information for themselves before making their statements.

On Nov. 6, Dr. Chakravarty interviewed Mahatma Gandhi, prior to the Mahatma’s departure for Noakhali, at Sodepore (Where Mahatmaji was held up so long because the Government could not make proper arrangements for his transport to Noakhali) “The most urgent and imperative need now, said Dr Chakravarty, ‘is to rescue the numberless abducted women who are entombed in ‘burkha’ and who, for obvious reasons, could not be approached by the military.’” It was a very trying time for Mahatmaji. Reports from Bengal and Bihar had driven him to the despair of threatening a “fast unto death” but he consented to put it off and place himself “on reduced diet” during his sojourn of the affected areas.

Writing from a relief centre in an East Bengal village, Miss Muriel Lester stated : “....worst of all was the plight of the women. Several of them had to watch their husbands being murdered and then be forcibly converted and married to some of those responsible for their death. These women had a dead look. It was not despair, nothing so active as that. It was blankness... The eating of beef and declaration of allegiance to Islam has been forced upon many thousands as the price of their lives....Perhaps the only thing that can be quite positively asserted,” she continues, “about this orgy of arson and violence is that it is not a spontaneous rising of the villagers. However, many goondas may live in Bengal, they are incapable of organising this campaign on their own initiative. Houses have been sprayed with petrol and burnt. Who supplied this rationed fuel? Who imported stirrup pumps into this area? Who supplied the weapons?”

“The goondas seem to think that they really are the rulers of this beautiful area of Bengal. One sees no sign of fear among those who had stood by and watched destruction, tyranny and aggression, or anxiety as to future punishment does not seem to exist.⁷⁰

PRESS NOTE RELEASED BY BENGAL PRESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On the 14th October, the day before the Muslim League's entry in the Interim Government was announced, the following Press note was released by the Bengal Press Advisory Committee :

Reports of organised hooliganism in the district of Noakhali have reached Calcutta. Riotous mobs with deadly weapons are raiding villages, and looting, murder and arson are continuing since....October 10, on a very large scale. Forcible mass conversion, abduction of women and desecration of places of worship are also reported.

Areas affected so far are reported to be over 200 square miles of the Sadar and Feni Sub-divisions. Approaches to the affected areas are being guarded by armed hooligans.

Among the large number of people reported to be murdered or burnt alive are the President of the District Bar with family, and a prominent zamindar of the district.

Inquiries at official sources in Calcutta reveal that military and armed police have been rushed to the affected areas, which comprise the entire Ramganj, parts of Begamganj, Lakshmipur, Raipur, Senbagh, Feni, Chagalanaiya and Sandwip *thanas*.

According to another message, all ingress and egress of the persecuted people to and from the affected areas, was completely stopped and all approaches to these areas were closely guarded "by hooligans, armed with deadly weapons." The telegram also referred to "the planned organisation behind this terrible carnage, arson and loot".⁷¹

"For the 13th day today, about 120 villages in Ramganj, Lakshmipur, Begamganj and Senbag thanas in Noakhali district with a Hindu population of 90,000 and nearly 70,000 villagers in Chandpur and Faridganj thana in Tippera (Tripura) district remained besieged by hooligans. Death stares the people in these areas in their face and immediate rushing of supply to these areas with the help of military, who alone could do it, would save the lives of these people, most of whom have been without food for the last few days."

[Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23.10.46]

In an area of about 200 sq miles the inhabitants surrounded by riotous mobs, are being massacred, their houses being burnt, their womenfolk being forcibly carried away and thousands being subjected to forcible conversion. Thousands of hooligans attacked the villages, compelled them (Hindus) to slaughter their cattle and eat.

"All places of worship in the affected villages have been desecrated."

[The Statesman, 16.10.46]

THE MODERN REVIEW [NOVEMBER, 1946]*Noakhali*

The plans followed out in Noakhali differ from the methods adopted before by the League staff, and their advisers, elsewhere, sometime after the main Calcutta riots—called the “Great Calcutta Killing” by the British-owned daily *The Statesman*—severe restrictions were put on the Press by the League Ministry under the plea that the reports and comments appearing in the press were inflaming communal passions. “Inspection” of letters and messages transmitted through the Post Offices was also stepped up in action. Despite all restrictions alarming reports started coming in from outlying districts of East Bengal regarding the growing communal tension due to the action of a great-provocateurs of the League touring those areas and inciting violence. Needless to say, officialdom did nothing whatsoever to allay these fears nor did they take any precautions against outbreaks. This, of course, was nothing to be surprised at, since the administration of Bengal is now in the hands of firmly entrenched League-minded officials, hand-picked for their strong communal leanings with no regard for efficiency, backed by a group of the senior British I.C.S. officers of the reactionary type.

In Noakhali this period of intense alarm was followed, late in September, by the formation of “Peace-parties” led mainly by the leading men of the majority community. In passing it should be mentioned that the Hindus of Noakhali form only 17 per cent of the population, and even this figure does not represent their strength if the outlying areas be considered. For, in places they are in a 10 per cent minority and less, surrounded on all sides by the majority community. These “Peace-parties” went all over the area, assuring the minorities that they were quite safe, and that the majority will look after the minority. The aforesaid “Peace-parties” were welcomed by the minorities, helpless as they were in the face of the indifference and obduracy displayed by the executive and the police. A few days later the self-same “Peace-party” leaders, some of them school-masters, came on their rounds again, but this time with a different tale. The younger members of their community, they said, were getting out of control due to incitement by “outsiders” and the only way to quieten them would be by paying substantial donations to the “League” funds. They could not be responsible, they said, for any mishaps or unfortunate occurrences if this demand was not complied with. Though aghast at this sudden change in the attitude of the “Peace-makers,” the helpless minority community had to submit to pay blackmail. Letters and telegrams were sent in sheaves to the officials of the Police and the Executive, and some even went to make personal representations. The letters and telegrams were mostly stopped at the offices of despatch, where the men in charge were also League

members, excepting a few that went through Chaumohani where the Postmaster was a Hindu.

As for, those who went in person to make representations, they were told to their faces that they were panic-mongers and the officials could not waste their time listening to them. The fleecing of the minority went on systematically and thoroughly, as everyone had been assessed previously by the master-planners, and only those few that could creep through the tight cordon drawn around them by the “Peace-party volunteers” could escape.

Then on the 10th of October came the mass attack on the minorities. *The attack was made on the same day at the same time and in the same fashion* on all the main villages. Very large mobs armed with deadly weapons, including fire-arms in many cases, surrounded the localities where the Hindus lived. Their leaders were the selfsame “Peace-party” chiefs and head blackmailers, and in each case they were accompanied by Maulvis with registers. Further they had large quantities of new ‘Pakistan’ caps and new ‘loongi’ loin-cloths worn by the Moslems, with them. All Hindus were called upon to embrace Islam at once on the pain of death. Whoever refused was severely beaten up and some were butchered publicly in a particularly brutal fashion, in order to terrorise the rest. Looting was universal for conversion to Islam did not, by any means, save the newly-converted from being despoiled of all their belongings. Ornaments were torn from the ears and noses of the women-folk. The “converts” were then lined up by the mob leaders, the Maulvis entering their previous names and new names in the registers brought for that purpose, and then the final “ceremonies” of conversion were gone into, such as the reciting of the Islamic attestation of faith, forced killing of cows—their own—by the newly converted and the cooking and eating of beef. There was no organised resistance as the people were hopelessly hemmed in after being given a false sense of security against anything excepting exaction of blackmail. Still in some places individual families fought to death, after prolonged resistance, in the defence of their honour and faith.

Stunned and overwhelmed, the unfortunate victims of this well-organized and carefully planned mass outrage were then left to grieve over their misery but not for long. They had been beaten up in many cases, terrorised by the brutal murder of their leading men, thoroughly despoiled of *all their belongings* including food-grains, cooking utensils and clothing and were left completely at the mercy of their neighbours of the majority community, but even at that there were fresh horrors in store for them. Very soon the same mobs returned led by the self-same “Peace-party” leaders and Maulvis. This time the demand was that the “converts” should hand over all their women-folk to the soldiers of Pakistan. Conversion had dissolved all marriage bonds, the Maulvis said,

and as for maidens, it was but proper that they should be wedded to the valorous warriors of Pakistan. There could be no organised resistance as groups had been segregated and totally deprived of all means of resistance. But even at that there were very many attempts at the saving of the honour of women. Then followed an orgy of bestiality of murder, slow torture, “mass” rape in the open and of arson, that is difficult to describe in these days of inflamed communal passions. It will suffice to say that this orgy was widespread, and it surpassed any description of Japanese atrocities in the early days of their occupation of China. Far greater cases of murder, by horrible methods in most cases, occurred on this occasion than before, as resistance was far more general. No description in detail is possible under the present circumstances but a quotation from a recent statement made by Mr. Fazlul Huq, ex-Chief Minister of Bengal and newly re-enlisted and redoubtable champion of the Moslem League, would show how the behaviour of the Noakhali brigades of the League is viewed by him. In a statement in the Moslem League press, apropos of the communal riots of Bihar, he says :

Even my most stringent critic will, I hope, most certainly agree with me *that the fiends in human shape of Noakhali and Bihar* are such creatures under Allah, that no language on earth can give a correct nomenclature to them. They are neither Hindus nor Moslems. They are the most degraded specimens of humanity.

Noakhali is only an hour and a half by air from Calcutta. Yet no aid reached the stricken people until after a long time had elapsed. The Press was gagged and the Posts and Telegraph services in Noakhali were in the hands of Leaguers. The Officer-in-charge of the Police was a Moslem as was the temporary Magistrate, who held office during the fateful days between October 10th and October 14th. Ample time was given to the misereants to hide traces of their crimes and to thoroughly cow the victims into such an abject state of submission that they were mortally afraid to give any evidence or testimony.

Despite all efforts to the contrary and all attempts at minimising, the news spread far and wide, carrying a wave of horror and anger with it all over India. Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President, hurried to the scene with his wife. The Governor of Bengal, after prolonged goading descended from the Olympian heights of Darjeeling and after an extremely cursory aerial glance, from a plane, at part of the scenes of this tragic calamity, returned to Calcutta. In Calcutta, his mentors and advisors had a report ready for him to sign, which was duly signed and forwarded, without even any attempt at a real investigation being made. The League Ministry, backed by their press and their attaches in the news-agencies, worked overtime to suppress, obscure and obliterate the news. They were helped in this matter as in the Calcutta

Killing, by the British “old-guard” of the I.C.S. and the Police. Then Mahatma Gandhi came down to Bengal, at the end of October, determined to do all he could to help the stricken and suffering victims. *Lord Wavell had gone to Bombay on the 17th of October, after the news of Noakhali had reached him. Evidently he thought the minor riots of Bombay were more important since Moslems were in danger there.* But later on he came to Calcutta, when Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Mr. Nishtar and Mr. Liaquat Ali had already arrived. The Press, outside Bengal, having already given wide publicity, the hands of the administration were forced and police and troops had to be sent to Noakhali. Precautions had been taken however to ensure the gentlest of kid-glove handling of the depraved criminals and as a result no improvement is visible, even now, so far as the victims are concerned. With Mahatma Gandhi’s presence, however, there might be some improvement later.

Noakhali has given the clearest picture of Mr. Jinnah’s Pakistan to the non-Moslems. In this earthly heaven of the Moslem Leaguer’s dreams, the status of the non-Moslems would be that of absolute helots and worse. There will be no safety for their lives or property, and the honour of their womenfolk will be at the mercy of the lords of Pakistan. We say this deliberately because up till now we have neither seen nor heard any open condemnation of the widespread fiendish activities of the Leaguite hordes of Noakhali, from any member of the Moslem League High Command. Further, as days pass, it is becoming increasingly clear that careful planning had been done for months ahead by brains far superior to those of the depraved beasts that carried them out, even though they were led by school-masters, Maulvis, Union Presidents and such like. The stoppage of all communications, by cutting deep ditches across the few roads, blocking the access to the boat-landing places and by erecting substantial bars across the minor channels over an area of a thousand square miles, was done systematically within a few days. The holding up of all letters and telegrams asking for help or carrying urgent messages at almost all Posts and Telegraph Offices within the area during the period of “action” and until the military had forced open the communications, is also significant in the extreme. Then the simultaneous attack on all major localities, and the same procedure, the Maulvis, the registers, the masses of Pakistan caps and loongies—in these days of acute clothing shortage too—and the subsequent simultaneous demand for all women not past “marriageable” age, cannot be believed to have happened by chance-coincidence by any stretch of imagination, so if the area involved and the difficult nature of the terrain be taken into consideration. The primary steps, of lulling the suspicious of the unwary minorities by means of the “Peace-party” ruse was a cunning move to gain time. The levying of blackmail from the helpless victims, who had been

hemmed in by then, for the defraying of “expenses” for the “campaign,” also goes to show how carefully each move had been considered. The indifference of the authorities at the primary stage, their extreme reluctance to take vigorous action later on even up to date, when the whole world is cognizant of what had happened, their hurried minimization of the holocaust without waiting for even an apology for an investigation, these are all clear pointers to all but the most gullible specimens of the genus *Homo*.⁷²

***PEN-PICTURE OF DEVASTATION OF A PROSPEROUS
VILLAGE—PANCHGAON***

On the 22nd October, *The Statesman* staff correspondent reported that according to information recorded in a *thana* which he had visited, 22 men had been butchered on the previous day. The bodies were half burnt and thrown into canals jammed with water hyacinth to avoid detection and identification : “Every moment counts, and only prompt action on the part of the military can save thousands of lives.”²¹

Giving a pen-picture of **Panchgaon**, a village on the border of Begumganj and Ramganj *thanas* and the surrounding area after the devastation, the same correspondent proceeded : “Once a prosperous village but now a deserted place with burnt out houses standing out as a mute witness to the depredations of hooligans is Panchgaon...Almost similar is the condition of other villages in a *thana* with a total area of 159 square miles and a Hindu population 127,000

(Pyarelal—Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase)

CHAPTER—VIII

STATEMENTS OF HINDU LEADERS ON ACTUAL HAPPENINGS

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee

Syamaprasad Mookerjee, President, All India Hindu Mahasabha, toured the affected areas of Noakhali and Tipperah districts and made a statement in Bengali which is quoted in Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sinha's "*Noakhaliir Mati o Manush.*" A freely translated version of the same is given below.

"What happened in Noakhali and Tipperah have certain features which have no parallels in the history of communal riots in India. The carnage at Noakhali was, of course, not a communal riot in any sense. It was a planned and concerted attack by the majority on the minority (the name for this in Eastern Europe, when practised against the Jews, was 'Pogrom'—Author). The central purpose of this attack was to effect mass looting, conversion and total desecration of Hindu temples and deities. Killing was mainly for the influential Hindus and for those who resisted the rampage. Rape and kidnapping of Hindu women was an essential part of the plan. From the slogans used in the attacks it is clear that the design was to cleanse the district totally of Hindus, and to establish Pakistan. The attackers were all Muslim League supporters and knew that it was their own Government which was ruling at Calcutta. This had emboldened them in their task to a very considerable extent.

It is not a fact that this pogrom was the act of a few hoodlums or that they had all come from somewhere far away. Practically all the atrocities were committed by local Muslims and the Muslim population of the district was generally sympathetic to what they were doing. There were a few exceptions among the Muslims who had managed to save Hindu lives. Their number is negligible. The Hindus who had been saved in this manner but who had not been able to run away have all been forcibly converted. Those who have run away have been looted of all their belongings. That such a carnage was in the offing had been brought to the notice of the district administration repeatedly and well in time, but the administration took no steps against the persons who

were inciting hatred. These administrators have proved themselves to be totally unfit to hold their posts. So long as they continue in their posts it would be very difficult to restore peace in the district. After such a calamity only some fifty persons in Noakhali and a few in Tipperah have so far been arrested. Thousands of people have run away from their homes with only the clothes on their backs. They are now housed at camps at Comilla, Chandpur, Agartala and a few other places. The total number of such destitutes would be somewhere between 50,000 and 75,000.

Apart from these people another 50,000 or so are still marooned in areas where the administration has no say. These people need to be rescued immediately. They have all been forcibly converted. Their belongings have been looted, their spirit is broken. They are hardly human beings any more. Their names have been changed, their women have been ravished. They are being forced to wear Muslim clothes. The men have to attend mosques. The women are given religious instructions at home by Moulvis. All steps are being taken to ensure that they are totally cut off from their moorings and made to surrender completely to their tormentors.

They have lost the courage to even protest. They dare not meet any Hindus from outside who come to visit them unless they are with armed guards. Handbills are being printed in the names of influential Hindus in both their Hindu and Muslim names which say that they have wilfully embraced Islam. They are being forced to write to the Sub-divisional Officers to that effect. They can leave their villages only with the written permission of the local Muslim leaders. A few of them managed to meet me at Choumuhani near Noakhali and told their heartrending tales.

The immediate task at hand is to rescue the minorities who are still marooned, and completely in the clutches of the majority community. Until recently the rioters had kept the villages inaccessible by cutting off the means of communication. This has now partially been set right by the Military, but just access is not enough. Our volunteers will have to visit the villages to restore the morale and confidence of the thousands of Hindus.

It is a welcome development that the Military have decided to visit each and every village. They must remove certain officials from these villages, failing which they will find it very difficult to do any work. Punitive taxes must also be imposed. Such taxes were imposed on Hindus alone during the 1942 movement. This time punitive taxes upon the Muslims alone would be in order as they have not been able to give protection to the Hindu minority. When I discussed this aspect with officials I was told that there were a lot of Muslims

who had helped the Hindus. I propose that if any Muslim can produce sufficient proof that he had helped the Hindus then he may be exempted. The destitute Hindus must be compensated from the money, realised by way of punitive taxes and also from general funds.

Rehabilitation must be taken in hand immediately. Harvesting time is near. Those who have been ousted from their homes may not get their share of harvest, in which case they will have nothing to eat. In order to be rehabilitated the Hindus must be made to feel secure. They must be housed in temporary camps for the present until their homes and temples in their villages are rebuilt and their deities are reinstalled. This alone will restore their morale.

I do not accept that so many brothers and sisters of ours who had been forced out of the Hindu fold have left that fold. They were born Hindus, they are still Hindus, and they shall die Hindus. I have said this to all and sundry : there cannot be any question of any *prayashchitta* (atonement for sins) for them to come back to the Hindu fold. There shall be no talk of any *Prayashchitta*.

Any woman rescued from a disturbed area and found to have been forcibly married to a Muslim shall go back to her family. All unmarried women and girls should be given in marriage as far as possible. Hindu society must get out of this horror with a clear sight and a view of the future. Else, its future is dark.

I have constituted committees for rescue, assistance, and rehabilitation at Noakhali and Choumuhani. Ten groups of five volunteers each, together with armed escorts, will shortly leave for the affected areas.

I make this statement only upon observing a small part of East Bengal. What we have seen and heard have no parallels in civilised society. There are disturbances and tension in many other parts of Bengal, including Calcutta. The administration has practically collapsed, for which the Governor and the Provincial cabinet are squarely responsible. We have warned them repeatedly, but with no effect. We can clearly foresee that lawlessness will get worse if these people continue in the administration.

In this hour of peril Hindu society will have to realise something very important : it must stand unified, or else it will perish. It is perhaps God's will that from this destruction the reawakening of Hindus will begin.

We are not to forget, at this hour of darkness, that we are 30 million Hindus living in Bengal. If we organise ourselves, and if at least some of us dare to brave all odds with resolution and without fear then we shall be able to vanquish our enemies and restore our rightful position in our motherland.⁷³

Rastrapati (Congress President) Acharya Kripalani's Statement :

After visiting the disturbed areas of Noakhali, Rastrapati Acharya Kripalani made arrangements for a Press Conference on 26 October to make statement about prevailing condition of those areas. Witnessing the plight with own eyes and personally collecting informations from different sources, he arrived at certain conclusions like who were the schemers (plotters) of the attack, their motive and the course of action to be followed, and the amount of loss and destruction. He said that his conclusions were exact and true, if security were assured to witnesses, the veracity of his conclusions could be easily proved before independent tribunal.

Acharya Kripalani arrived at the following conclusions :-

(1) The attack on the Hindus of the district of Noakhali and Tripura was perpetrated according to premeditated plan. Although Muslim League did not openly organise the riot but it was possible because of thier publicity. From the evidences of the local people it transpired that prominent League Leaders of different villages were behind this riot.

(2) Apprehending dangers, the authorities were warned. The respectable Hindus of adjacent areas, at first verbally, later by writing alerted the authorities about impending dangers.

(3) In the brewing conspiracy some muslim Govt. Officials were involved, many of them fomented it.

There was a belief current among the Muslims, if any horror was done on the Hindus, Govt. would not take my action.

(4) The modus operandi of the attackers was to split up into groups, each group consisting of a few hundred persons attacked Hindu villages or Hindu houses of Hindu-Muslim mixed villages. In each group there was a leader and a spokesman. They used to raise subscriptions first in the name of Muslim League and in some places in the name of riot victims of Calcutate. In this way they collected huge money by force and in some places the amount exceeded ten thousand rupees. In spite of giving subscription, the Hindus were not spared. After collecting subscriptions that very group or another group looted those Hindu houses. They set fire to majority of the plundered houses. The ruffians plundered not only money, ornaments and other valuable goods but also household necessaries like eatables, utensils, clothes. Among the plundered booty they themselves drove away domestic cattle. Before plundering any house in some places, they told the inmates of the house to accept Islam. But in spite of conversion their operation of plunder and arson did not stop.

(5) The attackers began to raise slogans—Muslim League Jindabad, Larke Lenge Pakistan, Marke Lenge Pakistan (Pakistan will be snatched away by fighting, letting loose oppression).

The Hindus were reminded that this murder, plunder, arson had been undertaken in retaliation for the dead Muslims in Calcutta riot. Those who resisted were butchered en masse. As the ruffians were armed with guns, in some places they shot the persons who resisted them. These guns either belonged to Muslim Zamindar or had been stolen from the Hindus or snatched away. In some places Hindus were killed although resistance was not offered to them.

As I had very little time in hand, it was not possible for me to count the number of the dead. I believe the Govt. had made no statistics. Certain Govt. employee said that number for the dead was only one hundred. Another higher officials and a Govt. employee said the death toll might reach five hundred.

(6) The residents of neighborhood Muslim villages continued plunder, arson, murder, en masse conversion. In the villages where Hindu-Muslim lived together, Muslims of those villages joined in the dirty game against the Hindus. The oppressed victims could easily identify the accomplices. They had given me a list of those names; even if someone came from outside; their number was negligible.

(7) In spite of looting, arson, and murder the Hindus were not spared till they were converted to Muslim. For fear of life they en masse courted Islam. As a mark of newly convert, they were given to put on used white caps of the Muslim villagers. Many of those caps were new and the map of Pakistan, the slogans like “Pakistan Jindabnd” “Lorke Lenge Pakistan” were stamped on them.

The Hindus were taken to Friday prayer gathering and were compelled to pray and embrace Islam religion. Breaking Sankha (bangle made from Conch Shell) and wiping vermilion, women were initiated to Islam. As a mark of conversion they were ordered to touch cloth sanctified by Mohammedan clerics. They were also to read codes of Koran. All the idols of the Hindus and temples of the disturbed areas were plundered and set on fire.

(8) By force many marriages had been solemnised. At present it was impossible to give statistics of marriages. On getting detailed report from Mrs. Kripalani, the European Magistrate of Noakhali rescued one girl. In a rescue camp at Dattapara, a certain woman told Mr. Kriplani about the incident. Many women were kidnapped. But as I had little time in hand, it was not possible for me to determine the exact number.

(9) It was not possible for me to know the number of rape victims. Many women narrated their story of oppression to Mrs. Kripalani that their marriage symbol Sankha (bangle made from conch shell) had been broken and vermilion removed from their foreheads. In one place the ruffians felling women on the ground wiped vermilion from their foreheads with toe.

(10) In these places the Hindus could by no means live without fear whether they courted Islam or not.

(11) The League watchmen were guarding the entry point of the disturbed villages. In some cases the newly converts were allowed to go out of the village with issued permit. I had seen such permits.

(12) Those who were outside the disturbed villages during riot, could not enter into their own villages.

(13) Men, women, boys and girls of many families were untraced. There were no means of getting information of their whereabouts. Village Post offices were not working.

(14) At the time of riot the Police was inactive. They were on patrol. They said they had no order to open fire except in self-defence and that order had not been violated. They did not think it necessary to defend themselves since they did not interfere in the activities of the rioters.

I can give proof of arson which continued till 20th instant. On 19th and 20th instant I could see burning fire in Chandpur and Noakhali areas from the aeroplane. The Prime Minister too witnessed those fires. Only I could see houses reduced to ashes and helpless Hindus. The totally ruined Hindus had no food, nor clothes to put on.

From Govt. Officials I could gather that only 50 persons had been arrested from Noakhali till 25th instant.

In reply to one question Acharya Kripalani opined (that) whatever happened in East Bengal, was not because of economic reason, since not a single rich Muslim's house had been plundered. To him it appeared it was totally communal and one-sided.

In conclusion he appealed to each Bengalee Hindu to remain calm and restrained as also advised not to think of retaliation for indescribable tragic incidents of riot-torn East Bengal.⁷⁴

THOSE WHO STOOD BESIDE THE BY OPPRESSED MOTHERS & SISTERS

In the critical moment of the lives of Hindus at Noakhali, particularly hearing indescribable oppression on the womenfolk, a few noble-hearted women stood fearlessly by the oppressed mothers and sisters of ruffian-infested areas

throwing into winds their own honour and prestige, without thinking for their husbands and family interest. Those caption hearted leaders wiped tears off the oppressed, lent courage in their minds. Among those unalloyed, firebrand daughters of Bengal, **Sucheta Kripalani, Ashoka Gupta, Sneharani Kanjilal, Bina Das, Kamala Dasgupta, Bela Mitra, Bakul Guha Roy, Malati Chowdhuri, Kalyani Dutta** were conspicuous. Among them Sucheta Kripalani gave a statement after visiting the disturbed areas of Noakhali and it contained authentic picture of interior events.

HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE OF MRS. SUCHETA KRIPALANI

A few days after oppression Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani reached there (20 October) for relief work. Engaging herself in relief work for a few days at Noakhali she went to Delhi for official purpose. She again returned back to Noakhali on 2nd December. She felt unbearable pain, anger, disgrace at women's humiliation and with distraught mind, she engaged herself in relief work in remote villages endangering her life in order to rescue and mitigate sorrows of womenfolk.

Before starting for Noakhali for the second time she said that she had no mind to return back from Noakhali. Although large-scale looting, killing, arson had been stopped, women of minority community could not feel themselves least safe. Even Gandhiji gave vent of his feelings that he could not expect a ray of hope even after his stay of three weeks.

Mrs. Kripalani said, "I have seen women of minority community of many villages have been forcibly converted. In such a way many girls of converted Hindus have been compelled to marry men of other community. They are compelled to practise rituals of other community and eat meat inhibited by *sastras* (religious law)."

"Though I am staying far away from the disturbed areas, I am very much anxious about hapless women of East Bengal. Merciless oppression has been showered upon them and they have been undergoing various kinds of torture and sufferings till to day. As ordered by Gandhiji, I shall start for Noakhali on 2nd December and stay there till situations improved in Noakhali and adjacent areas."

During my one month's tour of disturbed areas of Noakhali & Tripura, I have gathered personal experience of those places. But I am to say with regret that there was no improvement during my stay. Men and women of minority community of nearly 400 villages have been living, but they are leading imprisoned life. Guards have been posted adjacent to their houses to restrict free movements of members of minority community.

Generally such measures have been adopted for educated and rich members of minority community. The ruffians think if they are able to go outside, the internal events will be exposed.

Sporadic killing, oppression on women, & extortion are still going on. In spite of presence of the Army & the Police, people of minority community are least benefitted because the majority hooligans and their leaders are moving freely till now.

The hooligans consist of powerful men of the village and leading persons, school teachers, lawyers and members of union Boards. So, it is very easy for them to punish and oppress the members of minority community. In some cases it is found if members of minority community make deposition about events in the Police station, the complainant has to tolerate severe torture.

The Police is reluctant to arrest anyone. I have very often seen the Police and the head of ruffians are hand in glove with each other. Because of such prevailing situation, I have seen during my stay that people of minority community have been leaving hearth and home in groups. From the very beginning the relief organisations had realised that in order to bring back confidence in the minds of people of minority community, the volunteers of those organisations must reside and work among them.

But it had not been possible. The local inhabitants and authorities of majority group could not realise, if volunteers of minority organisations resided there, that would foster healthy atmosphere. They drove away the volunteers of minority group from the village on one plea or the other. Even, a few volunteers had been murdered. No investigation was made in spite of recovering their dead bodies.

It is very difficult to ascertain the exact number of raped and kidnapped women. But as a result of investigation, I have come to know their number is innumerable. Such things are still happening in remote villages. In this matter a news has come out in a few newspapers that I have rescued one kidnapped woman. But it is a matter of sorrow that I have rescued only a kidnapped girl.

It is believed many kidnapped women have been sent away to distant places. I believe if authorities do not help in rescuing operation of the kidnapped, majority of kidnapped women will not be rescued. Of course assurance of co-operation has not come till today.

Sometime ago a statement, made by district Magistrate of Noakhali had been published in a newspaper. It is said the district magistrate gave some information of shocking events of Noakhali. When drawn to this statement, he informed me in a letter that his statement had been misinterpreted. A portion of his letter is given below :—

“In the given report I was compelled to say that the number of kidnapping of women and forcible marriage was very little and such type of news was not informed to him. I am sure I have not given such statement. You, too, know I personally rescued a girl named Arati, forcibly given marriage, on 25 October. As far as I can remember, perhaps the reporter asked me—the number of raped and kidnapped women is very few. In reply I said—I do not know the number. Perhaps I let him know—I hope few such incidents occurred. I can’t remember whether I informed him about rescue of the girl named Arati.”

Besides killing, plunder and arson the minority community has been boycotted in the field of economics. As the people of majority community do not buy the produce of minority community, farmer’s products remain unsold. Most of the shops of minority community have been destroyed; in the remaining shops there is dearth of buyers. People of minority community have to buy goods from the shop-keepers of majority community. Often they are turned down to buy goods or to pay excessive prices. I know one match box costs eight annas in a certain village.

So, for improvement of present communal tension, the concerned authorities should have to change their attitude thoroughly towards past events as also present incidents taking place every day. Needless to say Gandhijee himself failed to indicate any note of optimism after three weeks’ stay. Instead of getting verbal co-operation, if official co-operation of Bengal Govt. is assured, he will be successful in his mission. If such co-operation is extended, local people of majority community will start behaving reasonably; otherwise East Bengal will remain as an ulcerous wound.⁷⁵

A. V. THAKKAR’S STATEMENT

The general secretary of Delhi Harijan Sevak Sangha Sri A. V. Thakkar gave a statement about Noakhali:— “After coming to Noakhali on 7th November as a member of Gandhi’s Party, this is my first statement. To maintain discipline, I am to suppress my feelings and I do not like to divulge anything in haste about oppression on minority community, especially on Scheduled Castes unless I study in detail. I have been staying in Charmandal village for four days. About 400 scheduled caste family and 100 majority community family live here. My desire was to act independently in *char* area separating myself from Gandhi’s party.

Here mostly Namasudra, Patni, Das families live. They have been oppressed at the hands of majority community and in reality this locality is surrounded by the majority community.

This region of East Bengal is very fertile and betel-leaf, betel-nut coconut etc. grow in abundance. A large quantity of coco-nut is possible to send out

upto January because canals do not dry up completely till then. The Namasudra community of the *char* village areas and regions is comparatively well-to-do.

The four Police Stations of the district of Noakhali have been attacked by the hooligans. Those band of hooligans planned to take revenge on the minority community and let loose their insidious plan for one week.

Three weeks after this incident one college student has sent a telegraphic message narrating—his villagers are starving and need clothes because their houses are plundered and gutted, not to speak of conversion under duress. Even six weeks after this incident, fear psychosis prevails everywhere. In spite of at least 250 houses being plundered and burnt, not a single deposition has been made.

Unfortunately Govt. is not taking remedial measures to put down such anarchy. Interested persons are filing false suits against some armed Gorkhas and Sikhs. Although a high official has been sent to submit report about plunder, arson, murder and conversion but up till now no official announcement has been made in regard to reasonable compensation. If such things go on, the minority community shall have to bow down to other groups. It is rumoured that external humanitarian agencies are to be driven out on the plea of inciting people; but it has no concrete proof at all.

Gandhiji is trying his utmost to effect peace and amity between the two communities; but minister Samsuddin has been engaged to get rid of active role of this great personality because the attention of the whole country is directed towards Noakhali. There has been obstacles in Gandhiji's efforts for various reasons :—

(a) As anarchy is still going on, the honest persons of minority community can not divulge the names of hooligans for their own safety.

(b) The Hindu leaders are not joining the peace committee because they can not rely on the sincerity of the ruling administration.

(c) The majority community is bringing charges against armed Police and armed forces.

(d) Charges of oppression on Muslim women are brought before Minister for removal of armed forces.

(e) Both Gandhiji and Cabinet members are eager to remove Police and armed forces from different areas, but they do not see eye to eye.

“Though I am an upholder of non-violence, I support deployment of the Police and the Army because if they had not been deployed in groups to disturbed areas, partial normaly would not have returned back. Still sporadic killing is going on and the hooligans are openly saying the moment the Arm and the Police are withdrawn, they will take revenge on the complainants.”⁷⁶

ACCOUNT OF MS. MURIAL LESTER

The account given below had been prepared by Ms. Murial Lester after visiting remote village areas of Noakhali. In London Mahatma Gandhi accepted the invitation of Ms. Muriel.

“I am writing from Dewanjibari impromptu shelter in East Bengal. In this non-governmental shelter, thousands of men have got food and shelter for a few weeks. Many of the shelterless people have come with horrendous experience. But the condition of the womenfolk is very shocking. Husbands of many of them have been butchered under their very nose; they have been forcibly converted.

The shadow of lifelessness stares in their faces. The shadow is not of despair; zest for life is much in want. It is as if sign of conscious state of mind. Thousands of people have been compelled to eat beef in lice of life. They look forward but in that look there is no liveliness nor emotion. Some of them were injured. For this purpose I visited them in well equipped hospital one mile away from my lodging. They tried to resist the ruffians but in vain.

The relief workers and Govt. employees are trying to rescue those women who are putting up as married women in Muslim houses, but their efforts are not successful. These ruffians are threatening the womenfolk that they shall have say to the Govt. employees that they prefer this present life; otherwise they will kill the entire family.

Analysing the cause of the riot in this area, Ms. Lester has come to definite conclusion about widespread death and destruction—it is not spontaneous misdeeds of the villagers. The misdeeds would not have been possible by themselves even if Bangladesh had innumerable hooligans. Houses have been set fire by sprinkling petrol. Who have supplied them. The ration goods? Where from did they secure stirrup pumps? Who supplied them arms and ammunition?

In the report it has been stated—one day these ruffians raided Dewanjibari and demanded one lakh rupees for Muslim League as consideration for protecting this house. The house owner refused to accept their demand. There were many young men in the house and the owner possessed four guns. Hearing a news that one person has been killed in the next village, one young man of the family at once started for Noakhali town 23 miles away from the village in expectation of Police help. The next day the Police Superintendent came to the village and assured them security. But when he was engaged in conversation, the hooligans again attacked the house. Then the S.P. made a blank fire to drive them away, arrested two of them, **assured** help and left.

After two days the ruffians accompanied by hundreds of accomplices attacked the house. They knew the house-owner possessed guns, but how

many in number they did not know. In the circumstances when they were discussing among themselves whether to attack the house or not, at that moment 22 armed Police appeared there. On seeing the forces they took to their heels. But within moments refugees from adjacent villages poured in to take shelter in houses, temples, and verandahs.

When I had written upto this incident of the account, three women entered into my room, stood silently and started crying. Their husbands and sons had come with them. They lived in Calcutta and came to village home on Puja holidays. After reaching homeland they experienced horror all around. Panic in the village abated to some extent because army had reached Shyampur the previous day. But when the army had departed at night, the band of ruffians again raided and plundered everything of the family. They had come here with only cloths to put on. The local people were spreading rumours about the cause of riot. Someone opined it was sheer fanaticism. They heard the rumour—doomsday was impending and only Muslims would survive. Those who could kill or convert men of other religion will be assured of eternal place in heaven.

The available White papers of the Muslim League is similarly fictitious, most probably forged. The incidents which have taken place till this moment, have similarity with that of the directive, many deem it to be real.⁷⁷

CHAPTER—IX

DEBATE ON THE FLOOR OF BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Mr. Haran Chandra Ghosh Chowdhury : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that this Assembly do adjourn its business to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the situation created by the failure of the Government to prevent a mass uprising of the Muslims of Noakhali and Tripura resulting in (1) forcible conversion of Hindus *en masse* of some portions of Noakhali and Tripura, (2) mass abduction of the women of the minority community, (3) forcible marriage of a large number of Hindu women and girls by the majority community, (4) murders of a large number of people of the minority community, (5) destruction of a large number of houses and properties of the minority community by loot, arson, etc. and (6) desecration of temples and objects of worship *en masse*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the Calcutta disturbances in August last, the tension of communal feeling in Eastern Bengal districts rose very high and in the district of Noakhali it reached its climax. There was a tendency towards lawlessness in general. Hindus of the district who form a small minority and who were living in a scattered manner, isolated from one another surrounded by hundreds of Muslim families, felt absolutely helpless and insecure and apprehended danger every moment from the rowdy elements of the majority community. The great killing in Calcutta was attributed by the League leaders to the Hindus which naturally inflamed the Muslims. Further, exaggerated newspaper reports about Calcutta incidents and spreading of utterly false and unfounded rumours deliberately planned and engineered by a set of mischief-mongers including the designing supporters of the League still more aggravated the situation.

On the 29th August last, which was the “ID” day, the designing men and mischief-mongers spread throughout the district a false and flying report to the effect that the Hindus stealthily imported Sikhs and arms and kept them

concealed in some important houses though not one was ever found. All these rumours spread throughout the districts with electric rapidity. **These designing men further seized the opportunity of "Id" congregations in many parts of the district and openly incited the illiterate masses to violence. At this, the infuriated mobs armed with deadly weapons raided many Hindu houses and places of worship, killed some, assaulted and injured many more, looted some houses, shops and bazars in different areas of the district and subjected the Hindus to various forms of oppression and indignities. Idols and temples were broken or desecrated.** Cases of conversion and attempt at conversion were also reported. Extortion of money from the terror-stricken Hindus in the name of subscription for the Muslim League became a common factor. Journey by road and boat became difficult. All business was at a standstill due to uncertainty of the situation. In many cases, Hindus did not dare lodge any complaint with the police for fear of further oppression and harassment and some were actually harassed and assaulted. Often for the same reason statements made or reports submitted by the Hindus were withdrawn or contradicted. This was the state of affairs in the first week of September last.

Pir Golam Sarwar Sahib of Shyampur, police-station Ramganj, who was then opposed to the Muslim League and who actually oppsed *hartal* in his area on the 16th August last joined the Muslim League about the first week of September. Soon after this, big public meetings attended by thousands of Mussalmans were held in many places in the Ramganj thana and its neighbouring areas. These were reported to have been addressed by the Pir Sahib generally and often by Maulvi Abdul Kasem of Gopairbag. The audience in these meetings were exhorted to take revenge of the Calcutta incidents by robbing the Hindus of all they have, by ruining the rich, by removing the educated and intelligent leading men from the face of the earth so that those who would be left behind would either be absorbed in their own society or live a life at their dictation and Pakistan would then be an accomplished fact. The police officers were also threatened if they reported otherwise than what was given by him for report. This state of things continued for days together unchecked. Reports of these meetings were sent to the Superintendent of Police and other high officials from many of the places of the district.

The district authorities were further approached often by the respectable and important citizens of the town and informed of the general situation and often of particular incidents taking place in the far off mofussil areas of the district, and specially of the activities and provocative speeches of the organisers and speakers of these meetings, but no effective steps were taken to prevent their mischievous activities. I hastened to rush to some of the places of

occurrence in the district and saw the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police later on the 12th of September last and placed before them reports of some of the incidents in mofussil areas of the district and suggested among other things posting of armed pickets at important centres and armed patrol parties to move round villages at regular intervals, prohibition of such public meetings and processions and carrying of offensive weapons, etc., I further informed the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police of the apprehension of serious trouble by the Hindus during the Pujas.

While agreeing with the suggestions the district Magistrate informed me that in spite of repeated requisitions he could not secure additional forces for the district. The Superintendent of Police, Mr. Abdullah, however thought otherwise. Though welcoming contact and suggestions, whenever possible for me, he argued with me and minimised the whole situation telling me, all the while that there was nothing wrong in the district beyond panic and excitement. According to him the people of Noakhali behaved themselves in a very decent manner up till then. He told me however of having received two reports of provocative speeches delivered by the Pir Sahib of Shyampur up to that time and intended to meet him in a day or two.

What transpired in their meeting at Pir Sahib's house later is not known to the public. But the Pir Sahib and his lieutenants went on with their activities more vigorously. When the Superintendent of Police met the Muslim population of Sahapur, Karpara, Lamchar and the other adjacent village in a huge gathering the same day, many Hindus approached him with their grievances and asked for armed patrols, but the Superintendent of Police waived away all arguments remarking that everything they said was inference and imagination. As a sequel to these speeches and activities of the organisers of the meetings and inaction of the police, the miscreants and the hooligans were encouraged to go on with their depredations with redoubled energy.

I tried to draw the attention of the Government and the members of the Assembly to the serious matter during the last Budget Session by a cut motion on the Police Grant on the 23rd September last. No notice of this however was taken even after warning.

Mr. Haran Chandra Ghosh Chowdhury (cont.): On 1st October 1946, about two thousand Muslim mob surrounded the houses of Hindu leading men of Sandwip town, viz., S. Rajendra Kumar Nag, Debendra Kumar Nag, Sarada Kanta Banerjee and Jogesh Chandra Banerjee and got signatures forcibly on a piece of paper purporting that they would never perform the Durga Puja in the Local Kalibari in future. At this very late hour when almost every boat passing through Ramganj was looted, the Superintendent of Police

issued an appeal and warning to the public on the 7th October last, to the effect that if they circulate rumours, carry on goondaism and loot, etc., no good to anybody would come out of it. They were asked to inform the police about the goondas, otherwise collective fines might be imposed and leaders might be asked to serve as Special Police Officers. Though the order was dated the 7th October, printed copies of the same did not reach the people before the organised riot at all. Beyond issuing notice what active steps were taken by the Superintendent of Police are not known to us. The whole situation of course was gradually worsening and heading towards a crisis.

Then came the fateful day 10th of October, the Lakshmi Puja Day. This day a big meeting was held at the Sahapur High English School ground which was attended by about fifteen thousand Musalmans. They were exhorted by the Pir Sahib to attack the *kutchery bari* of Rai Sahib Rajendra Lal Roy Chowdhury of Karpra, loot their properties, murder them and present their heads to him. Immediately after this the mob burnt down the Hindu shops at the Sahapur Bazar in front of Sub-Inspector of Police who was present all the time. After this the mob proceeded to Narayanpur Kutchery with deadly weapons and surrounded and set fire to it. When the double-storeyed house was in flames Surendra Babu jumped down from the first Floor and fell before the Muslim mass who immediately cut him to pieces, and threw them into the flames and are reported to have presented the head to the Pir Sahib who was waiting at a distance. Some of his attendants shared the same fate.

Telegraphic messages informing the activities of the masses were sent to the Superintendent of Police and other high officials of the district. Representative men from several parts of the district saw the Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate and sought immediate protection and Police help. But the Superintendent of Police disbelieved many of them and told them that the report of murder of Suren Babu was a pure myth.

Even on the night of the 11th October the Superintendent of Police disbelieved the story of a midnight loot at a village near Duttapara where his own car was also blocked about an hour afterwards. He was the type of a high official of the district to whom the Hindus had to seek for protection of their lives and properties!

Next day, in the morning, when Rajendra Babu and his family were taking the morning tea a gang of about two hundred attacked their house, but was repulsed with difficulty. Rajen Babu informed the Ramganj Police of the explosive situation and sought police help. The District authorities were also telegraphically informed but no help was to be had. In the afternoon several thousands of Musalmans armed with guns and deadly weapons and led by

some ex-soldiers who had military uniforms on fell upon his house for the second time, looted their properties and set fire to the corrugated tin houses. Meanwhile all the inmates of this house and the neighboring houses took shelter in his building for their lives.

(At this stage the honorable member reached his time-limit but was allowed to continue.)

After the destruction of the houses Rajendra Babu's building was set on fire with petrol. At this the inmates climbed upon the roof. Taking advantage of this the hooligans fired a few shots. The inmates saved themselves by going behind the garret. A few minutes afterwards a portion of the roof collapsed and some went under the debris and lost their lives. Meanwhile the hooligans devised a way to get upon the roof by felling down a high coconut tree and using the same as a ladder. One by one the male inmates were brought down and mercilessly butchered on the spot. The female inmates were brought down and cordoned off and taken to the Pir Sahib who was waiting in a boat at a distance. He ordered them to be taken to some other house. Heads of Rajendra Babu and some others were reported to have been presented to Pir Sahib. Thirty four persons including about half a dozen unknown figures were killed on the spot. Similar incidents took place in other places in the district. From this quarter as centre, the organised fury of the Muslim mob broke out in a violent form and spread in all directions to the other parts of the Ramganj thana, and neighbouring thanas, namely, Raipur, Lakshmipur, Begamganj and Sandwip in the Noakhali district, Faridganj, Hajiganj, Chandpur, Laksham and Chaudagram in the Tippera district.....⁷⁸

Mr. Dharendra Nath Datta : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is really painful that in a motion like this it is impossible not to refer to the communal situation in the country and it is impossible to talk with restraint in the midst of so many lies that have been propagated by the other side. It has been stated by Maulvi Majibar Rahaman, Secretary of the **District Muslim League, that since the outbreak of the incidents in Noakhali no further incidents took place after the 16th of October. Sir, Mr. Rahaman is a criminal legal practitioner for the last twenty years and knows the art of lying very much.** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. R. Gupta, a senior member of the I.C.S., was deputed as a special officer by Government to enquire into the incidents and he was attacked by the Muslim mob there. He would have been killed but for the police firing on the spot by one Satish Chandra Chakravarty, a police officer. This Satish Chandra Chakravarty who saved the life of Mr. Gupta was suspended by this Muslim Government. Sir, this incident took place after the 16th of October. Then on the 6th or 7th of November Mr. Haran Ghose Chaudhury's cousin, Sachin Ghose Chaudhury, was murdered.

ON the 29th October, five villagers were murdered. On the 10th November two men were murdered. In the 8th November, Suren, Akhoy, Khitish and Satish Saha were murdered and a relief officer was found missing since 8th November. It is impossible in this short time at my disposal to enumerate the incidents that had taken place after the 16th October. Sir, after the 16th October, within a month the unfortunate Hindu population of Noakhali were marooned and they were not allowed to get out of that area without a passport. He has said that the Muslim League has got nothing to do with the occurrence. How is it that it was an organised affair? **It is useless to deny the fact that from the 10th to the 16th October large numbers of Hindu population of Noakhali, about 150,000, were focibly converted to Islam.** That was the case of forcible conversion. All the houses of the Hindu population were looted during this period. And what is still more painful is that Hindu women were abducted. Mrs. Ashalata Sen has told the House that the Muslim League, that the Government which is in power, wanted to minimise the gravity of the situation. Any attempt to minimise the gravity of the situation is to put a premium upon lawlessness. Even today they are not repenting.

Mr. Mujibar Rahman was telling the house that nothing had happened in Noakhali and Tripura—very slight things happened. He can tell like this. He is the Secretary of the District Muslim League of Noakhali. He is reported to have told the other day that Mahatma Gandhi should leave Noakhali very soon. Mahatma Gandhi is trying his utmost to restore good feeling between Muslims and Hindus and Maulvi Majibar Rahaman. Secretary of the Muslim League, is now describing today that nothing had happened in Noakhali and that Mahatma Gandhi should leave Noakhali.

Mr. Salam, another Secretary of the Chandpur Muslim League, is reported to have told on the 12th November that nothing had happened in Chandpur. I know, Sir, Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy will tell like this. Sir, immediately after the occurrence the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed went to the locality and he is reported to have said that such things did not happen during the British rule, such things did not happen during the Moghul rule. That was the version of a Minister after going there after the incidents had happened. What is the use of telling that nothing had happened. Where are the reports of the two officers? Mr. Simpson is a senior officer. He was a District and Sessions Judge, not only a Sessions Judge, he was a Judge of the Hon'ble High Court for some time. His report was not published. Why his report was not published? His report will not be published. What had happened at Haimchar? Such destruction had not taken place by the Atom Bomb. Only the other day I went to Haimchar and I saw the scenes of destruction. All the houses had been burnt and it is impossible to describe

here today sitting in the Legislative Assembly the scenes of destruction that was committed upon the innocent people. It is impossible to describe the scenes of destruction committed upon the Namasudra community, 20,000 Namasudras in Haimchar in the district of Tripura. I ask the Government not to minimise the seriousness of the situation. They should repent for it.⁷⁹

Mr. Jogendra Chandra Das. MLA (Tipperah) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, In last October, the atrocities done to the minority Hindu community by the majority Muslim community in Chandpur, Hazigunge, Faridganj, Laksham and Chaudagram thanas of Tripura District is unprecedented in the history. They have torched the houses of the Hindus and looted all the belongings by driving them from their houses. By beating the Hindu men and women brutally, converted them into Islam, and forced them to wear Pakistani cap. The hooligans raped the women, kidnapped them, broken the conch shell bangles (Sankha) of the married Hindu ladies, wiped out the mark of vermilion and killed those who declined to be converted. They have desecrated the Hindu idols, broken some, burnt temples, plundered the shops and torched which was amounted to loss of crores of rupees to the Hindus.

On the 13th October atrocities held first in the Chandpur subdivision and when I heard the news of attack in the villages of Dhamra, Ashatoli, Ragoi, Sorshap, etc. under P.S. Hazigunj and informed the Govt. Officials. But none of the local officials took any action for the security. Hence I sent a telegram to the Prime Minister. Sir, I read the telegram—“Ruthless attack made on hundreds of Hindus of Ramgunj thana, Noakhali and villages Hazigunj thana, Chandpur by thousands Muslims proceeding from Ramganj area. Hundred of houses burnt looted and several casualties reported. Further depredation is being carried on in Chandpur villages. Situation most terrible. Implore immediate protection. Pray proceed to area—Jogendra Das, MLA.”

But I am sorry to state the Prime Minister did not reply. We do not believe that after having received the telegram, the Hon'ble Prime Minister did not take any measure to protect the properties and honour of the people. Because for about a month after 13th October the incidents of torching houses, plundering, arson, rape of women continued unabated. Thousands of Muslims unitedly murdered, loot, arson, forcible conversion and other offences against women that had become 'matters of daily occurrences.' From 15th of October they in thousands raised slogans—Ladke Lenge Pakistan, Marke lenge Pakistan etc. and attacked the villages (under P.S. Chandpur) of Haimpur, Charsoladi, Gazipur, Manipur, Charhasadi, Charbhanga etc. under P.S. Chandpur. All of them carried dangerous weapons—some of them possessed guns also. About 95% of the population were scheduled caste who are said to be Namasudras and in taken all the villages they are accounted about 35

thousands. You might have heard the inhuman torture of these people in the newspapers. Due to the riot they have been uprooted from their houses and became beggars overnight and while 19 villagers refused to accept Islam, were brutally murdered. There were continuing arson, loot, kidnapping of women, rape for three days. Those villages were within the radius of 10-11 miles from Chandpur Headquarters. Sooner we received the news of atrocities, we informed the nearby police stations, Sub-divisional officer and District Magistrate and demanded police and military enforcement. But no positive action was taken by the authority. Timely requisitions of military then such carnage could have been resisted. As the civil authority failed to take any measure to protect us, I again on 16th October sent a telegram. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already read out the telegram to you— **“Inhuman attack by Muslims on thousands of Hindus irrespective of scheduled caste, Noakhali villages, Haziganj, Chandpur, Faridganj thanas thousands of scheduled castes rendered homeless destitutes. Houses looted, burnt, forcible conversion, several casualties reported. Most Namasudra houses Haimchar circle burnt. Apprehension spreading throughout districts. Situation most terrible. Pray immediate protection. Proceed area—Jogen Das, MLA.”**

In spite of our report conveyed to the local administration and the Honourable Prime Minister no action was taken for our protection and resistance. I have personally visited devastated area and found that in every Hindu village there have been destruction as if by an atom bomb. It is also to be observed that the inhabitants of the Tripura district who were the victims were mostly poor tillers and fishermen. The hooligans forcibly took away the bullocks, plundered everything, even the plough and seeds have been destroyed by burning. The houses and thin nets have been burnt in Ramchar, Charmugra, Mandartali, Kanchiara etc. all the villages under Police Station Faridganj. The only assets of these poor illiterate fishermen who are dependent on the boats and fishing nets for their earnings have become penniless overnight and turned into beggars due to the riot.⁸⁰

Mrs. Ashalata Sen, M.L.A.: Honourable Deputy Speaker, I don't want to cite again what had happened in Noakhali and Tripura, because a lot have been discussed and deliberated upon those incidents in the House. However, I want to express my sincerest grief about the oppression of women in Noakhali.

I haven't come to talk about communal or sectarian partisanship. I have always worked for Congress and talked against the British imperialism. I have no inclination to create division among our countrymen. We always struggled against British imperialism and now we are witnessing how we are

fighting within ourselves which is a matter of indefinite shame. The women are always the true representative of human kindness. They showered their affection and kindness upon everyone, irrespective of religion or caste. Today, the women are the worst sufferers. Today, in Bengal, we are resorting to communal violence. The Hindus and the Muslims raising fingers against each other. Consequently, our Bengal is witnessing a downslide. Carnage in the name of religion is the death of humanism : I wish to draw everyone's attention to that. I visited many relief camps in Noakhali and Tripura to get to know more about the sufferings of women. It is a matter of great regret that nowadays we often try to cover up communal strife or violence; But a covered-up wound like this can destroy the whole national fabric of our country. **At Noakhali and Tripura many women were abducted and made to undergo the crudest form of torture and the number of these oppressed women is kept under the wraps. Some people are trying to conceal the truth.** We should try to rectify our ways. I have visited many home of the Hindus and Muslims. No righteous Hindu or Muslim will tolerate the inhuman torture upon women. In our culture, we always respect women as the 'mothers'—full of the milk of human kindness. At Noakhali (which is my birthplace) the Hindus and the minorities are living for ages and generations together. So, what has happened all of a sudden that resulted in such inhuman acts? We should not deny the truth. Those who are trying to gloss-over the whole issue or to over look the incident are actually going against human values and running through a path of self-destruction. People of all religions and communities should join hands together to put an end to what had happened in Noakhali and Tripura and should try to bring the perpetrators to justice.⁸¹

Mr. Haripada Chatterje, MLA : Honorable Deputy Speaker Sir, the Govt. of Bengal is seated here. We make arrangements of the administration and judiciary of Bengal from here. So in, one respect we opposition are also responsible for the acts of governance.

What we are doing at present on behalf of the government of Bengal is really pathetic. We have already set some remarkable precedents—in case of building, boats, wastage and pilferage of food grains, in controlling famine and starvation, in mishandling the civil supplies department. However what we had done in maintaining the law and order of the state is unparallel in the history of the world. eg : The communal riot in Calcutta. I don't want to be bothered about the fact who started it—the Hindus or the Muslims. Every government have the primary duty to give security to the people, to protect the weakest from the strongest. We failed to deliver that. After that what had happened in Noakhali and Tripura only put us in further shame. Communal violence is a national scandal. The incidents of violence in Noakhali, Tripura,

Bihar, North Western Frontier province. Garmukteshwar etc. have failed us. Only the third party reaped benefits. Those who have read the letters of Morley, Minto etc. have already—understood how much elated the third party is today. The day when they made us to gulp the bait of separate electoral system, they made no efforts to hide their elation. If we can truly unmask the ulterior motives of the third party and make people aware of them, then we can justify our position. The Hindus and the Muslims are the ‘same-boat-brothers’. When we have almost crossed the ocean and reached the shore of freedom, we have resorted to in-fighting and violence. But if the Govt. himself is communally inclined, then who will exorcise the ghost of communal feelings? Whatever happened in Bihar is snrely regrehabable. But how can we overlook our faults? The Bengal Govt. has become a puppet in the hands of the third party. The last weapon of the imperialist is the venom of communalism. Their weapon is far more lethal than Atom Bomb or Bacterial warfare. Atom Bomb or Bacteria can kill several at a place at a particular time. But this poison of communalism which the imperialists have poured upon us, will act for many many years. It is getting severe day by day and if we still do not become cautious, then the poison will spread all over the body of the race and we will die, contaminated by it.

I have direct experience of Noakhali and Tripura. I have visited the four thousand square miles of the affected area. I started cycling from Chandpur and visited many parts of the affected area of Naokahli and Tripura. I will never forget the heart-rending scenes. Please listen to what I am saying and if you have got hearts and brains just think. I went across several devastated villages and thought that I was going across a necropolis. Every house was gutted. The coconut trees were standing singed or burnt. Palatial Buildings were even turned into debris. Everywhere one could find ashes. I have brought with me burnt remains of a little boy, an old men etc. I have seen at least twelve gutted houses. At one village. At places like Chandipur, Mosimpur, Changirgoan eighteen hundred and thirty five houses were annihilated. In four thousand square miles area the villagers, mainly Hindus, suffered a lot. The League Secretary Hasem Sahib said that no woman was assaulted. But it was a lie. **From my direct experience, I can say that in devasted area mass raping on hundreds of women committed; hundreds of women were kept in custody for 8/10 days and raped. Many women are yet to return home. At one home eight members were killed. Sons were killed in front of their mothers. At another place nineteen out of twenty one members of a family were killed I have seen skeletons and skulls there. Skeletons could be found in ruins as well. In some places people were burnt alive. Husband was killed on the lap of the wife.**

Hasem Sahib has said that Congress supported Gholum Sarwar is responsible for the carnage at Noakhali and Tripura. I thank him for not saying at least that Congress perpetrated violence. I don't know when did Sarwar Sahib became a staunch supporter of Congress. Why are we making him the scapegoat? Was he not ably backed by the police? Were not the League and the third party connivers of the act? If it was not so, how could Sarwar Sahib instigate people by his speeches so freely? If we can evict thirty thousand homes in no time for fear of the Japanese, why can't we prevent Sarwar Sahib? Police could be seen nowhere in the vicinity when violence ripped apart Calcutta. Police actually instigated the violence—at Noakhali and Tripura. For fourteen days there was no govt. Repeated pleas to the police had fallen into deaf ears. However, it is a pity that we have enhanced the administrative efficiency of the police by procuring arms, aeroplanes, wireless systems for them.

At one place the locals showed me two persons as the prime accused of mass-killing. They also showed me the petitions submitted against the two to the police and the Magistrate. Surprisingly, no investigation has started so far. Several petitions of serious allegations of plunder, murder, rape are lying with the police with no actions taken. "Everything is fair in love and war"—I suppose. At our district (Santipur) the police have arrested only people belonging to a particular community. Whereas, both the communities are equally affected. People ranging from a 10 year old boy to a sixty year old man are sent behind the bars. In most cases, the bail petitions are rejected outrightly.

Hindus and Muslims both belong to the same motherland. They in-fighting between us should be stopped immediately. The third party wants us to be engrossed in violence and in-fighting. They have planted the poison-tree of seperatism which has grown up to become a full-fledged monster which will destroy the whole country. The Govt. should take stringent measures to stop riots and communal clashes. Jai Ho!⁸²

CHAPTER—X

ENQUIRY REPORTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHICH WERE NEVER RELEASED

(1) BY MR. R. GUPTA, I.C.S.

In the last week of October, 1946, the Government of Bengal appointed two high officers of the Indian Civil service, Mr. Simpson and Mr. R. Gupta, to inquire into and report on the actual conditions in the affected areas. Their reports, which were pigeon-holed by the Bengal Government, make revealing reading. R. Gupta's tour diary gives a vivid picture of the stranglehold of the miscreants in the interior of Sadar sub-division of Noakhali district three weeks after the outbreak and under the very nose of the armed police and the military. Here are a few excerpts :

1-11-46, *Dayanantpur* : These people residing so close to the *thana* are in such a state of terror still that they are reluctant to talk about what they have suffered...Only when they were able to be closeted alone with me could I make a few of them talk. The quarters of a Hindu constable of the *thana* who was residing there with his family is among the gutted houses within 200 yards of the *thana*.

Keroa : The same tale here. About 90 percent. of the Hindu houses destroyed by fire, all houses looted. Mass conversions. The local Hindu population wanted arrangements to be made for them to evacuate in a body.

Nandanpur : Literally every Hindu house has been destroyed.

3-11-46, *Chandipur* : About 70 per cent. of the Hindu houses have suffered from arson and 95 per cent. from looting.

Shahpur bazar : The only human being we could find was the postman. ...There was not another soul in sight and all the shops were closed.

MOSQUE SET ON FIRE TO IMPLICATE HINDUS

At Dasgharia, R. Gupta came across an instance of what later came to be adopted by the rioters as a common tactic, viz., to set fire to the mosques and blame it on the Hindus to harass them in order to compel them to withdraw

their first information reports. As R. Gupta's party passed through Dasgharia bazar, one of the constables noticed that the rear side of a mosque was on fire. "The state of the fire indicated that it had been lighted a few minutes earlier. I immediately ordered the constable to put the fire out. Some of us also ran towards the back of the mosque, to the water's edge, to see if we could spot anyone who might have done this. We at once saw two men clad in *lungis* move out on to the district Board road from the waters of the *khal* and run towards the east. One of them disappeared. The other stood a long distance away shouting '*Police shala ko maro*' (Beat up these rascals of policemen), etc.

ENQUIRY PARTY ATTACKED : FLEEING HINDUS PREVENTED FROM LEAVING

Before the fire had been quite extinguished, some local Hindus came running up saying that a large mob shouting slogans had gathered on the south side of the village and were advancing. They came on brandishing their weapons, *daos, lathis, tetas etc.*" The police fired several rounds whereupon the mob fled back into the jungle. "In the meantime, the inhabitants of the village...in a body began to leave their houses with their women and children and such luggage as they could carry, announcing, it would be unsafe for them to remain there for the night and they would accompany us to Ramganj." Altogether about 125 persons started back with the party, 75 per cent. being women and children. All were on foot.

On the way, they were repeatedly attacked by the mob, and the police had to be ordered to open fire twice. After several rounds had been fired the mob dispersed. But only a small proportion of those who had got ready to go could be escorted out. The rest had to be sent back. On returning to their village they were looted, maltreated and subjected to all the horrors of frenzied mob-rule.

ROADS BLOCKED TO PREVENT ENTRY OF ENQUIRY PARTY

As we approached the junction of two District Board roads at Kachua, we could see a large mob gathered on the Duttapara road mainly in the vicinity of the bridge. Their numbers were augmented every minute by the number of men who were coming in on boats from the direction of Dasgharia as also from the west. We found that the mob had erected a sort of barricade of sheets of corrugated iron pieces of furniture, planks, etc., blocking the mouth of the roads. The mob began advancing forward. I noticed that those in the front ranks carried sheets of corrugated iron which they held in front of themselves as shield." Gupta described the destruction of the house of Rajendra Lal Roy Chowdhury of Karpara in similar words. He wrote, "At present it

looks as if it has received a direct hit from a h.e. [sic] Bomb.” The rioting crowd, according to eyewitness and victims’ accounts, used petrol to set the houses on fire after looting them.²⁰ Looting was complete, as evinced by the condition of those houses which remained unburned, and the survivors who escaped. One touring party described the completeness of looting in these terms:

“The *char* area in Tipperah district was in some respects the worst hit. R. Gupta of the Indian Civil Service, who was appointed as Special Officer by the Bengal Government to inquire into the actual conditions in the affected areas, reported on the 4th November, 1946, after a tour of the Raipur *thana*, that arson had been committed on 80 to 90 per cent. of Hindu houses and 99 per cent. of houses were looted. “Conversion was if anything on a bigger scale than in Lakshmipur and Begamganj. Even at *thana* headquarters large number of converts were still compelled to wear Muslim dress.”

In Haimchar area, R. Gupta found that “hundreds of families of Namasudras (Scheduled Castes), who were forcibly converted, were completely marooned and virtually prisoners.” The Haimchar area consisted of three Unions in the Chandpur sub-division of Tipperah district. Haimchar bazar was the nerve centre of this area. Immediately adjoining it to the north was the Charsoladi group of villages, while about two miles to the south-east lay the Charbhanga circle of villages. In Haimchar there was a flourishing bazar. It was established some fifty years ago. Business was almost exclusively in Hindu hands, Muslims had very little share in the general prosperity. The attitude of the Hindus towards the Muslims on all accounts was overbearing and supercilious.

On the 14th October, the Hindus who went to Hydergunj bazar in Raipur police station returned with disquieting news. Close on their heels came refugees from Noakahli with horrible tales of loot, arson and murder. From the bordering villages fires could be seen burning all day long, and wild rumours travelled from hour to hour. One such rumour was that 40,000 to one lakh Muslims armed with guns, swords and spears were coming to attack the Hindus. On the night of the 14th October, Hindus of Charbhanga decided to send a deputation to the Muslims of the neighbouring village of Gandamara. They were told that they would have to embrace Islam and pay a large sum of money to the Muslim League. They agreed. On the morning of 15th October, Muslims in batches of 50 and 200 came to loot and convert. Conversion was nominal but looting was complete. The Hindus of Charsoladi, on the other hand, offered resistance but it was overcome by a deceitful ruse. The whole of Haimchar bazar was then given over to arson and loot for three days. Mr. Simpson of the Indian Civil Service, who was appointed by the Bengal Government to tour the area in the first week of November, in his report

observed : ‘I was appalled by what I saw in such villages as Paikpara and Haimchar. In all the affected village, the scene of wreckage cannot be adequately described. Large homesteads have ceased to exist. No description of the condition of Haimchar bazar can be sufficiently vivid. It must be visited to be appreciated. Nearly all shops have been destroyed by fire and the wreckage is appalling. When I visited the bazar on the 30th October, one of the fires was still smouldering. The bazar might well have been destroyed by high explosive missiles from the air.’⁸³

(2) MR. E.S. SIMPSON’S ENQUIRY REPORT :

DEVASTATION BEYOND DESCRIPTION

Mr. Simpson’s report of 5th November, 1946, is more comprehensive. It deals with the conditions in Tipperah district. He found the villagers “disinclined to speak of abduction or rape” but “information as to forcible conversion was readily supplied.” In a large number of instances, he was shown the caps which the “converted” were forced to wear in token of their embracing Islam. He found the plea that the conversions were “voluntary” to be untenable. “I ascertained that in some cases, Hindus whose womenfolk had been temporarily restrained, volunteered to embrace Islam in order to effect their release, but the result of inquiries suggested that people were compelled to become ‘converts’ under threats of death and other harm.” What “other harm” worse than death to Hindus “whose womenfolk had been temporarily restrained” meant can be easily imagined.

As regards looting, he had no doubt that “looting was on a very wide scale” and that even in cases where homesteads were not destroyed by fire, they had been “thoroughly and efficiently looted.”

During his visit to the villages, he endeavoured to discover if the assailants were persons known in the locality or whether they were hooligans or goondas of unknown identity from elsewhere. “I was almost invariably told that the persons concerned were Muslims living either in the villages themselves or in the adjoining villages. When I asked for names, they were readily and quickly furnished. *I was told that these persons were ordinary villagers who, before the disturbances, lived a peaceful, tranquil and quiet life, respected by their Hindu brothers.*” (Italics mine).

Morale in the affected areas of Faridganj and Chandpur was “very low.” There were large numbers of refugees at Faridganj, Chandpur and Comilla. At Faridganj, on the 2nd November, there were about 6,000 refugees, “huddled on boats and sheltering in huts ashore. Many were suffering from bacillary dysentery and other diseases.”

The damage to homesteads and huts, however, was complete. Simpson's report indicated the trend in some villages, viz., Paikpara in Faridganj Police Station, where 62 out of 66 homesteads and 496 out of 530 huts were destroyed in fire. He reported destruction of altogether 1,073 homesteads and 4,798 huts in three police stations in Tippera. His description of the devastation of Haimchar Bazar was succinct: "It looks like destroyed by a high power Bomb."

Giving a general picture of the devastated areas, Mr. Simpson observed :

In the affected villages there is chaos, destruction of the homesteads, an absence of any sign of movable property, despondency and apprehension; the few who have remained are anxious to leave. The destruction is so complete that except for sheets of corrugated iron, the looting of which is in progress even at present, nothing remains of the wreckage. The interiors of brick-built houses have been burnt out and the door and window-frames have disappeared in the flames. Large number of small personal temple-huts have been burnt out, images have been pulled down and smashed and at least one large and ancient brick-built temple has been looted and desecrated. In some villages I visited, the few remaining Hindu inhabitants were living on *dabs* (coconuts), bananas, where available, and what is known as *kachu*. The scene at refugee centres such as that at Faridganj cannot be easily forgotten. People are herded together on boats, men, women and children, structures ashore are overcrowded, there is sickness and despair. There is no confidence, sense of security and hope for the future so far as these people think and act.

Under the circumstances, concluded Simpson, there could not, in his opinion, be any immediate repatriation to the affected villages, unless certain essentials which he outlined, or measures of "the same character", were fulfilled. Unfortunately, most of Simpson's recommendations remained a dead letter and never got beyond the pigeon-holes of the Bengal Government's secretariat.⁸⁴

CHAPTER—XI

BEASTLY BEHAVIOUR OF MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS : THE VICTIMS TOLD THEIR OWN SUFFERINGS - FUTILE APPEAL TO GANDHIJI

DEPOSITION (STATEMENT) BROUGHT FROM CHAUMUHANI (NOAKHALI)

(1) I Sri Upendra Chandra Dey, son of late Girish ch. Dey of Shibpur, P.S. Ramganj, Union No.15 Khilpara, Noakhali, submit a deposition to you today that last Sunday (13-10-46) at about 2 P.M., nearly 4/5 hundred Muslims hailing from adjacent villages attacked our house and told the members of our family to be converted to Muslim and demanded Rs.2000/- as subscription for the League, in default threatened to kill us by setting fire to our houses as also to unleash indescribable oppression on the womenfolk. They were armed with weapons and sticks. For fear for life we agreed to become Muslim and donate Rs.500/- for the League but prayed for one day's time. In the meantime they took away one gramophone and gold ring from Chandrasekhar Dey (bench clerk) and laid their hands on spectacles donned by him and few deeds kept in his hands. On this very day they compelled us to undertake *namaj* after putting on lungi, cap on head and ceremonial washing and at the time of going, they told us of coming the next day for subscription. The next day they came and took Rs.50/- from Chandrasekhar Dey, Rs.15/- from me, Rs.8/- from Mohini Mohan Dey & Rs.2/- from Jadunath Dey and more money from other members and at the time of going away, they assured us that there was no possibility of any fear because we had accepted Islam but the remaining payment we must have to pay. Next day on (15-10-46) some of the said attackers came and kept Muslim names changing Hindu names of all male and female; conch bangles were broken of married women to bring them on a par with married Muslim women; even destroying pictures of gods and goddesses of all rooms as also domestic deity room; threatened that from today we shall not be allowed to worship idol and must attend Namaj (prayer services) five times a day. They cut off trees consecrated to goddess Sitala and dwelling deity standing at the entrance and took with them thumb impression of all entering in a book. On the next day (16-

10-46) some Muslims came to my brother Jatindra and told him to make arrangement for a feast for the Muslims in our house today and to give a cow. Then we gave them a cow worth about Rs.100. Then they ordered us to bring chopper and knife and slaughter it with our own hand. In the meantime some more persons began to pour into our house raising slogan—Allah Ho Akbar, Long live Muslim League. On entering the house they cried aloud, “where is the rascal? Why has he not raised subscription for us?”

Entering into the room of bench clerk they demanded Rs.1000 immediately and threatened that he shall have to give the hands of his daughter in marriage with Makbul, the son of Abdul Mian of Abir Para village. Then the bench clerk said that he had no money in hand. He assured them if any one went with him he would give there money after withdrawing money from bank. But they did not pay any heed to his words and dragging him out from the room they beat him, taking him near the door struck him with knife and stick and slit the throat with sharp weapon. Thereafter they burnt the butchered dead body with the help of kerosene oil, wood and quilt brought from inside the room repeatedly chanting slogans—Allah Ho Akbar.’ Then they ransacked all rooms and decamped with booty worth about Rs.8000/- in cash and kind. So long we hid in a place and for fear of life my brother Khagendra Chandra Dey, nephew Shibsankar Dey and I moved from one place to another under cover of darkness and today I am writing this statement. All the members of our family & I can recognise the miscreants and know the name of many of them. We give below a list of names whom we know. I came to know at present all the members of my family are interned; even retired Pension-holder police Satish ch. Dey had been murdered by the miscreants on that day. At present all the Hindus of that area are passing their days without food and sleep.

(2) My name is Sri Sarat Chandra Chakrabarty Thakur (Kabyatirtha) of Sonachaka village, PS Ramganj, Dist. Nalkhali. I had been working for nearly 24 years as Head teacher (Head Pandit) in Raipur (Noakhali) High English School. Since after Calcutta riot on 16 August, almost all the places of the district, particularly the Hindus of Raipur were tortured in different ways. On 13 October it was announced that Golam Sharowar would hold meeting in the Raipur market. From 10 October onwards plunder, murder, arson started in some parts of Ramganj and Raipur PS. On last 14 August at 9 A.M. about 3/4 thousand Muslims armed with fatal weapons assembled at the Raipur market from all directions raising slogans—Muslim League Zindabad, Pakistan Zindabad. Seeing arson of adjacent villages and hearing cry of the crowd from the market place, we all took shelter in Police station. The crowd destroyed all the deities and temples of the market and looted all the Hindu shops. Thereafter, the Muslim crowd went to the Police station and demanded the O.C. to turn out

the Hindus from the Police station : The O.C. (one Muslim fellow) forcibly drove out all the helpless male members from the station. We nearly two hundred Hindus were thrown before two thousand blood-thirsty devils in human form and they seized us with the softness of a hungry tiger finding its prey. The crowd beat many of us mercilessly and taking us to chief mosque by force compelled us to adopt Islam. The local famous businessman Nabadwip Chandra Nath took shelter in the said police station and stayed there for fear of life although all the Hindus went out. After converting all the Hindus of market place of Raipur, the said crowd again surrounded the Police station in order to drag out Nabadwip Babu. The goondas dragged out Nabadwip Babu from under the very nose of officer-in-charge and began to beat him black and blue and ultimately stabbed him to death. Thereafter the band of human fiends tying ropes on the legs of Nabadwip Babu dragged on the north like a carcass.

On last 15 October at about 12 P.M. **they butchered my calf and compelled the newly converted Hindus to eat the said beef and taking me to Naba Pakistan club and threatening me got my consent form signed declaring that I have received Rs.15/- for the calf as price.**

The Imam of chief mosque of Raipura and the Munsif of the boys of Masjidbari converted us into new religion. We the residents of Raipur were cut off from other places of the district, being surrounded by goondas for ten days; thereafter a few families somehow reached Chandpur with life for Magistrate's help & Police protection.

(3) I, Sri Umesh Ch. Paul son of Sri Prasanna Kumar Paul, village Narayanpur, PS Ramganj, union No.14, dt. Noakhali, dated 10-10-46 beg to report that at about 2-30 in the afternoon we were attacked by nearly 2000 thousand Muslim goondas. Our Zamindar of Naraiyanpur Kachari (Zamindar's office) Sri Surendranath Bose and his four employees were killed by the said Muslim goondas. After looting cash and goods of *kachari*, the goondas set fire on the house.

From next day (Friday) gang of goondas began to forcibly raise subscription of the League entering into each Hindu house of the village. From day fourth till next day repeatedly raising of subscriptions and looting went on. Thereafter taking thumb impression from each Hindu, they converted us to Muslim religion unjustly destroying our religion. We were taken to mosque against our will, otherwise we were punished. At present we were taught to say that we embraced Muslim religion willingly in presence of military or police force. They reminded us that the police or military will not guard our house for ever. They threatened if any member of the gang was accused of looting, murder and arson or anyone's name was reported, we shall be killed after the departure of officials.

At present every night Sayedulla Patari, Lutfor Rahaman Patari, Abul Kasem, S/O, Wachok Munsii and many Muslim goondas **forcibly take with them elderly women coming from Gopairbag Barajbari and after satisfying beastly hunger, leave them again to their residence in the morning. If anyone dared to protest against this, he was threatened with murder. Confining them inside the room locking from outside, women were taken away. Till now a few male members had been killed in the said Barajbari.**

We have lost our religion, honour and wealth. It is our request to the authorities to save our life and to make quick arrangements for rescue. In the said gang among the leaders Chheru Patari, Wabadulla, Habibulla, Tuna Mian Munsii, Sekendar Master and many others have been guarding our exit path coming in groups every day. Many of those, who have indulged in hooliganism or are still indulged in rowdyism are either inhabitants of our village or the next village. Kasem Mian is conducting the gang.

Sri Umesh Ch. Paul
Vill. Narainpur, P.O. Do
Dt. Noakhali. 24.10.46.

(4) My house is in Narainpur village under PS Ramganj (Ramnarainpur 14 Union). On last 24 Aswin a few rowdy minded Muslims entering into my house threatened me to embrace Islam religion. Among them Jana's Bap alias Akramali (Ajirbari) 2, Lalmian, father late Jobrali Kabiraj of Narainpur, 3, Kalu of Sibrampur, 4, Abdul Rahaman, father late Komruddin of Sibrampur, 5, Abdul Azil of Narainpur etc. local people and a few unknown goondas threatened us on that date in the morning and compelled us to accept Islam at about 1-30 noon. Thereafter on Saturday they and some strangers smearing faces with black colour entered into my house and decamped with ornaments of my wife and other women. They did not spare our movable property, rather they left us penniless. There was no way of escapiong to any other place since these hooligans compelled us to stay there at the point of threat & dire consequences. We were compelled to starve for days together. We incurred loss to the tune of three thousand rupees. Particularly a few documents had been destroyed. These were briefs of my court cases. **Keeping in a Muslim house they oppressed my wife for two days and returned her back uncouscious after two days.**

Debendranjan Kar, Amin,
Narayanpur, PS Ramganj,
14 UB 26.10.46.

(5) Our house is situated in Hazipur village under PS Begumganj.

On Tuesday 15 October at 9 at night a gang of goondas entered into our house. They seriously struck my father, mother & younger brother & sister with dagger and butcher's knife. My father and mother died instantly and hospitalised brother and sister. Next day I tried to give deposition at the PS but they did not hear my deposition. Later I submitted a written complaint but till this moment they did not investigate at all. On enquiry they advised us to bury the dead body. Finding no other way, the dead body was buried after four days.

On that very date another gang of goondas entered into Ratul Vaisnab's, room on the eastern side of our house and after hurting him seriously fled away with money and goods. For this incident many families including Krishna Sunder Majumdar, left the house. Unable to reside alone, I live in a house at Uttarpara. So, I earnestly request your goodself to help the shelterless person.

In this connection I like to add that the goondas have left in my house one dagger, one sword and two rulls.

Yours faithfully

(Sd) Ananta Kumar Nath
S. Hajipur, PS.: Begumganj
25.10.46

(6) My name is Sri Harendra Kumar Chakrabarty, village Batagram, PS Begumganj. On last Monday i.e. 14-10-46 a few local Muslims forcibly converted me and members of my family to Islam and extorted Rs.20 from our family as subscription of the League. Three days after this incident i.e. on Thursday, 17 October at about 11 at night 8/10 Muslim goondas entering into house forcibly dragged my old uncle Sri Akshoy Kumar Chakraborty (served lifelong as teacher of Batagram High school) out from the front of his room saying, "Now you are a converted Muslim but you have not given up taking the name of Durga: A letter of yours has reached our hand. At the salutation the name of Durga is mentioned. You shall be sacrificed along with Durga. I have clearly heard all these words from my room. And the goondas threatned those who wanted to save uncle coming out of their room by saying—tomorrow you shall be duly rewarded. Another uncle of mine Sri Debendra kumar Chakraborty came out of his room but similarly too he was driven inside at the point of threatening. When the ruffians were taking my uncle with them, he importuned them with tears, "My dear, many of you are my students, you spare my life, forgive my wrong." But the ruffians did not pay head to his words. Till today no one knows where he was taken and what was his ultimate

end. A rumour is afloat that after killing him he was given burial at the south eastern corner of the pond situated in front of the house of south Jugi family and recently that dead body has been shifted to another unknown place. I have recognised many of the rogues and can indentify them. Their names are :-

1) Annarulla. Father late Abdul 2) Anwarulla's brother, one name is not known to me 3) Mahammad 4) Allsi (pet name) residence Karimpur. He resides at Enaetulla's house of our village 5) Muslim, Father late Rajab Ali, Vill. Batagram.

Yesterday on 26-10-46 the Police rescued us from our house and brought to Begamganj. My uncle's age was 73. I have given deposition at the police station.

Sri Harendra Kumar Chakraborty
27.10.46

(7) Sri Upendra Chandra Gop, father Sri Ramballav Gop, Caste—Milkman, Vill. Chhaiani Tobga, 13 Tabga Union, PS Ramganj, Dt. Noakhali.

Description of Deposition :—I serve as a Peon in Coomilla Collectorate. I came home on Puja holiday. On last Friday (11-10-46) at about 9 A.M. five hundred Muslims attacked our house. They were all local people. I know most of them. They told me, "If you accept our religion, your life and property will be saved; otherwise you shall lose everything. If you want to accept our religion, then you come to our President's house (Ali Azzam Bhuina, father late Ebad Ali Bhuina, Vill. Chhaiani Tobga) We male members agreed to go with them. Thus male members of six families having same caste were brought before the President. The President asked us, "Are you agreed to be Muslims? For refusal I can not say what will happen to you" Finding no other way we had to agree. Then we were initiated to Muslim religion at President's house; thereafter we returned back home. **On Sunday morning some members of our family were compelled to get a cow slaughtered.** In some houses such coercive tactics were adopted as well. **The widow daughter, (having two daughter's aged 20/20 years) of my cousin brother late Mahim Ch. Gope was married with Suresh Ch. Gope (18/19 Years) son of another cousin brother late Girish Ch. Gope according to Muslim rituals. That type of marriage was solemnized in some other houses as well. After that marriage feast was arranged in our house and we were compelled to take food with the Muslims sitting in the same row. We were exempted from eating beef after much entreaty.** On the other hand as Collectory opened, I prayed for permission to go to Coomilla. He advised me to pray to Collector for leave on the ground of sickness. As Postage stamp was not available, I made application without attaching ticket. Thereafter I came out of my house on Friday (18-10-46) without informing the supped.

To day I have reached Noakhali. Immediately around police or army should be sent for the safety of the Hindu residents of our village. Reading the description and understanding its contents I put in my signature. yours etc., Noakhali, dated-19.10.46.

Sri Upendra Ch. Gope
Surveyer of Collector.

(8) (Through Debotosh Dasgupta)

Sri Satyendra Sundar Basu
4th year Commerce Dept. Jaipuria College. Calcutta.

My house is situated at village Karaitali, PS Faridganj under Chandpur Sub-division. My father and uncle are Zaminders of that place.

Hearing the news of anarchy in our village my cousin brother and I set out for Chandpur from Calcutta on 18 October. Reaching Chandpur we could not enter into village, in spite of our best efforts for three days. Our village is situated 10 miles away from Chandpur. We could not dare to approach by boat. Dignified person of our village, Sri Abani Kumar Guha and famous Congress worker of Chandpur, Sri Mankumar Nag repeatedly appealed to SP, SDO and DIG and after three days, with the help of a few military personnel, we twenty one local youths started for Karaitali by boat to rescue common men of village and reached in the morning on 21 October. Reaching there we witnessed :—

1. We could not see any member of our family. The rooms were reduced to ashes, attempts were made to set fire to corridor, doors and windows were turned into ashes. The immovable property and papers concerning Zamindari were looted. Goddess Kali was installed on the northern side of our pond. Marbled Kali and Shiva were shattered. All the idols of our household temple were plundered. Goddess Kali and Idols of our house were decorated with ornaments worth about two thousand rupees. All the Hindu shops of our market standing on the sides of pond were plundered.

2. Finding no member in our house, when we went to get information about them in the neighbouring Hindu houses, we found everything plundered and reduced to ashes like our house. There was no trace of human being in those houses.

3. While searching I found our family members and young and old of other two, three families confined in one of our Muslim tenant's house standing on the south-western part of our house. I came to know they had been starving for three days undergoing severe oppression. They managed to save their lives giving written declaration of marriage and conversion.

4. All were plundered and reduced to ashes except one or two Hindu houses of our village. Many of our Hindu villagers were staying in jungle, hiding in pond, and majority were residing in Muslim houses. We could rescue those Hindus whom we could trace. They were left only with a cloth to put on. During our visit in the village we found three half-burnt dead bodies and we have been able to bring five injured persons to Chandpur. I believe many Hindus are still residing in village after conversion in the reign of goondas.

Yours faithfully,
Sri Satyendra Sundar Basu
4th year, Commerce Dept,
Jaipuria College, Calcutta
4-11-46

(9) I am a resident of village Ashar Kota under 2, Paniala Union, PS Ramganj. On Saturday the 25 Aswin (English 12-10-46) at about 10 at night 7/8 hundred Muslims attacked our house armed with various fatal weapons. Then they raised slogans Allah-Ho-Akbar, Muslim League—Jindabad. Then I hid my mother, sister, younger brother in the neighboring village. To protect our house my father and I returned back. At first they began to plunder our room and later they were about to set fire our room. When my father and I earnestly sought forgiveness, then they wanted to spare our life and house provided we agreed to embrace Muslim religion and give Rs.100 as subscription to Muslim League coffer. In lieu of life we agreed to accept Islam, and gave Rs.50/- as League's subscription and thus somehow managed to save life and house. The next day on Sunday the 13-10-46, some local Muslims offered us lungi and cap and breaking conch bangles of our mother and sisters wiped out vermilion from the forehead. Then they converted us to Muslim religion having us practised Kalma.

Next day on Monday, the 14-10-46 they invited all the Hindus of the village in a meeting in front of courtyard of Majumdar's house assuring us to protect from external Muslim goondas' attack. I was given this cap at the door of Majumdar's house. The moment we reached the meeting, they attacked us raising Allah-Ho-Akbor slogan. As a result five local prominent men were killed and 16/17 persons were injured; my elder uncle was among the injured as well. He was seriously injured; and we too undergoing severe beating managed to return back home with life.

Then (Wednesday the 16-10-46) a Police officer of Hajiganj PS under the district of Tripura came to inspect our village accompanied by a few policemen and at the time of his departure a few families of our village, (leaving their house hold), went with him to take shelter in the Hajiganj Police station.

A few days after a police camp was posted in our village and they told us to put off lungi and cap and later the Muslims also told us to embrace our own religion. In this circumstances it is our earnest request that the goondas be awarded condign punishment and arrangements for compensation to the poor be made.

Yours Faithfully,
Sree Asutosh Goswami,
Father, Sri Krishnagopal Goswami
Vill. Asharkota, Noakhali

The gave up the attached certificates of each (nearly 40/45 male/female)
Encl. proof : Stick, chopper, Left a copy with us.

Written in Urdu

On 25-6-53, we read today Kalma Bismillah Her Rahamer Rahim. We the following pessons with family willingly embraced Islam religion.

Vill. : Asharkota

Old Hindu Name

New Muslim name

1. Krishnagopal	Abdul Rahaman
2. Asutosh	Abdul Gani
3. Radhaballabh	Abdul Sobhan
4. Swarnamani	Jalka Khayetun
5. Nandalal	Abdul Kader
6. Krishnabandhu	Khaliler Rahaman
7. Jatindra	Ichhahaq
8. Harekrishna	Abdul Hafiz
9. Sita	Khan Chanenechhan
10. Lakshmi	Bahi Kebnechcha
11. Prankrishna	Jabar Ali
12. Jagabandhu	Jafar Ali
13. Rajendra	Rajjab Ali
14. Arati	Arachha Khatun
15. Binapani	Badarernehcha
16. Dinabandhu	Abdul Khaleque
17. Dinesh	Abdul Rasid
18. Asit	Abdul Hamid

19. Nani	Dood Mehar
20. Nabadwip	Nachhiraddi
21. Nani	Jalekha Khatun
22. Sadhana	Achia Khatun
23. Gopi	Ajieullah
24. Ranu	Rahina Khatun
25. Mantu (With cap)	Mohammed Ali

(10)

Srimati Sishu Bala Das

Father, Sri Surendra Kumar Das

Vill. Bhatialpur, P.O.Sahapur (Noakhali)

On last 5 Paus Saturday at about 10, I was alone at home. My father went to field to cut paddy. My mother stays at Dattapara camp. When I was going to Banyabari's on the northern side of our residence then a Muslim boy of 18/19, hailing from Aango Bari called for salt needed at his house. I gave him salt and he went away after getting salt. Next day it was evening time. On coming to the courtyard he wanted salt. When I went to bring salt from the kitchen, he followed me there. When I was a Hindu, he did not enter into my room. In the meantime when I was converted to Muslim, he used to enter my room. When I was bringing down salt container from the upper rack, then he caught hold my hand. I was cutting sticks. He said, "let's go to garden." I said, "Why?" The boy said again, "Let's go."

At once I gave a loud cry to draw the attention of my father who was engaged in cutting paddy, the Muslim boy immediately ran away over the land of Muslim House on the north. The womenfolk of that house had seen; later they told me about this.

(11)

Parimal Ch. Bose

Vill. Chauddagaram, P.S. Sadar,

Dist. Tripura, P.O. Nabagram

On 18-10-46 at 2 A.M. midnight about nine hundred Muslims set fire to our house; we were then sleeping. When I came to know I awoke my uncle Dr. Akshoy Kr. Bose. Coming out after a while, I found truncated heads of uncle & aunt lying on the courtyard. Then I began to shout. Hearing my cry the rogues rushed to catch me. Hastily taking ornaments and some cash I entered into nearest bamboo grove of our house. Wrapping the ornaments & money with cloth I kept it among the bamboos, and thereafter climbing down

I began to watch secretly the activities of the rogues. From there I could see the ruffians cut off my three sister-in-laws, three sisters and threw six nephews into burning fires. Killing my three brothers with bamboos they threw them into the fireplace. Seeing this sight I could not stand any more and at once I left the place. On the other hand after killing all my relatives the rogues began to seek me. Then I hid under the water just beneath the saolatree standing by the sides of the pond. The rogues began to search me around the pond. The moment I noticed them, at once took a dip inside water. In this way passed that day. Failing to trace me, the rogues left the place. The next day upto 10 A.M. I passed in that condition and thereafter coming out of the pond, I reached the aforesaid bamboo grove. I had a horse whom I brought in the bamboo grove earlier. Bringing down my clothes from the bamboos, I put them on. Then I had with me about 13 thousand five hundred urpees and 125 tolas of gold. Making a bundle with money and gold, I was going to take shelter in a hilly wood half a mile away riding the horse. The rogues had started shouting on seeing me and surrounded me before I reached there. Whipping fast the horse, I managed to save myself jumping thrice over the rogues but the rogues caught me in the fourth attempt. Then I jumped and fell into a canal. Then the rogues sitting on my breast snatched away all my ornaments and money. I had put on 5 rings, one gold watch, one set button, one designed armband, necklace and spectacles. The ruffians snatched away all my possessions and went away throwing me into water. I peeped from water and found that all the rogues had gone away. Then rising from water I began to walk through jungles and after sometime I reached Nangakot station. Hardly had I reached and got on the train, when I fell unconscious. What happened after that I don't know; even how I reached No.2 Congress Committee that too I don't know.

Many of the Muslims who attacked our house are known to me. One of their name is Mahammad Yusuf. I can not exactly say how much loss we had incurred. I submit what I know.

Bel Metal — 8 maunds.

The wooden box was filled with cash account (money was reserved under the earth)

2. Gramophones (His Master's Voice)

Record—150 records

There was Bank account (in uncle's name)

Yours
Parimal Chandra Bose

(12)

Sri Chinta Haran Dey

Vill : Chapila. P.S. : Chandpur
P.O. : Farkabad, Dist. Tripura.

We came out of our hiding place of our village three days after the rogues had entered our village. We had fled away to a distant place that means nearest village before they set fire to our house. The houses of many other villagers had been burnt. Many had been set on fire. It is said some persons had been murdered. We have not received any news of kidnapping of women or raping.

Loss :

Set fire to my grocer's shop—Rs.500

Household goods—Rs.150

one Tin roofed room (21 sq. ft.) &

Betel and Paddy—on tree & in field. Land—20 kara

Yours

Chintaharan Dey

(13)

Sri Bipin Ch. Sil

Vill. Paikpara, P.O. Paikpara
PS. Faridganj, Dist. Tripura

When the next door house had been set on fire, we left our home. On the way we were prevented from going; They said, "We would not be allowed to go; stay at Home, there is no apprehension of fear." At Chandpur station I have heard that Nishi Thakur is dead. Paikpara has been destroyed by fire. I have heard Hindus have been converted to Muslims by force. A few days ago they assured there was no apprehension of fear if Muslim religion is embraced.

Loss—Two bighas of Land

Tinned room, Cow — One

Other goods Rs.200

Yours

Sri Bipin Ch. Sil

(14)

Sri Nabadwip Ch. Sil

Vill. Charmagura, P.S. Faridganj
P.O. Nriddi Kalindi, Dist. Tripura

Then I was at home, Suddenly a crowd of 200 strong attacked our house armed with fatal weapons. Then it was night. On entering into house they

started converting us to Islam. In fear I hid myself in a jungle. The rogues destroyed temple of Hari and Manasa tree. The crowd destroyed a monastery (Math). In front of me the members of my family Harekrishna Sil, Punyachandra Sil, Satyabhama, Sabitri, Judhisthir Kumar Sil. Ananta Chandra Sil. Chandra Kumar Sil and Nagendra Kumar Sil, Jajneswar Sil—all were converted to Islam with full family.

Conversion rituals were followed—A cow was slaughtered at Tarak Ch. Debnath's house and forcible feeding of beef. After slaughter distribution of beef among all. **Harekrishna Pal's two 15 & 18 years aged window daughters had been forcibly kidnapped.** My wife's name is Bijula Sundari. She along with a son, were in father's house at Paikpara; till today they could not be traced.

The following muslims were in the management of conversion.

- (1) Allahbox Maulvi, (2) Sonamiah Jamadar
- (3) Sorad Ali Kazi (4) Hamid Bepari

Yours

Nabadwip Ch. Sil

(15) When half a mile away from my house, four houses of a village under PS Hajiganj, were set on fire; on that very day I send away my wife, wife of brother, one daughter, nephew's wife and an aunt to Chandpur and we three brothers and two nephews stayed at home. At this time the Muslims of our village repeatedly assured us that they would protect our houses. But when the riot gradually turned for the worse, then they expressed their inability to save, but they promised to protect us in case of our giving consent to accept Islam. For our refusal, nearly two hundred Muslims attacked our house and began to plunder. We left the place for fear of life and on next day coming alone found all our properties had been plundered. Then I left my residence and on the way I found a village burning. From people came to know all the Hindus of that place had **been converted to Islam and eight women had been kidnapped.** Thereafter, I reunited with my family members at Chandpur relief camp.

Loss : Land

Yours

Sarat Chandra Das

Adwaita Chandra Das

(16)

Nagendra Ch. Das

Vill. Alipur, Dist. Tripura

PS. Hajiganj, PO. Kamranga

At night on the day of Laxmipuja my three uncles and I went to a village house by boat to sing Kirtan and on our way back, forty five muslims stopped us and told us to go with them on some piece of business. After proceeding a little distance I found nearly 150 Muslims had assembled in a few boats. On disagreement even at the cost of our life, the rogues detained us for the whole night and untold oppressions were meted out to us. They beat us on the throat of one of us. Such oppression was continued till 12 noon of the next day. Then on request of three leaders of village, we were let off in lieu of fifty rupees bribe and promise of not reporting against them in the Police Station. On next day at night when three hundred Muslim's immediately attacked our village, then we prayed to Muslim leaders of the village for help. A combined Hindu-Muslim meeting was convened and it was decided that each community would help each other. But in the daytime they began to threaten us saying that if we did not embrace Islam, we should have to face the consequences. The other Hindus of the village had been threatened in the same way. Then we left the village making possible arrangements for our own safety measures. I along with my wife and one and a half year old daughter took shelter at Chandpur relief Camp. On my way I found many houses had been converted to Islam and those who refused to be converted had been detained. We have also heard that the Muslims had married the daughter of Chatkhil High School's Headmaster. The maternal uncles house at Nichhanpur had been set on fire and all the members of the house had been detained for conversion. All these incidents had occurred on my way to Chaudpur relief camp. Again when I was returning home, on reaching Balakhal Station, I found 4/5 hundred Muslims in a group preventing the Hindus from going out. Seeing this insecure condition, I returned back to Chandpur and reached Calcutta accompanied by my family.

Yours

Nagendra Ch. Das

(17)

Sri Krinabandhu Debnath

When the Muslims were setting fire to neighbouring village, we fled away. We had to leave all our wealth and property at the hands of Muslims. We had to cross over many hurdles on the way. I had sustained injury on my head and

feet to overcome that hurdle. On the way I came to know many Hindus had been converted to Islam. Many of our relatives had been converted to Islam and **one of my relative's daughter had been married by a Muslim.** More we heard the Paul's family being of Gobindapur attacked by Muslims, They fought with the Muslims. After that all the members of the family had been butchered and the **young spinster and the widows had been carried off.** Sabiulla Mian looted Rs. 1500 and 5 tolas of gold.

Loss : Land—10 Kani

Yours

Sree Krishna Bandhu Debnath

Vill : Ghoshkamta, P.S. : Begumgonj

P.O. : Bajra, Dist. : Noakhali

Profession : Weaving

(18)

At 11 at night two Muslims came to give us assurance that there was apprehension of fear. Immediately after their departure, our next door neighbour's house was set on fire and a gang of Muslims passing by our side said that our house also will be set on fire. Being afraid we fled away by boat. Three or four persons living in the house had to read Kalma after conversion and were compelled to practise Namaz, putting of Pakistani Cap. Then those Muslims requested us to bring back the members of the family and **pressed us to initiate matrimonial relation by giving hands in marriage.** Then they came to us with that objective. We refused to bring back our children to our country. and to tell them to return back home. Since then we did not get any information of theirs.

Loss :

Yours

Debendra Das

Vill : Chirka Chandpur, P.S. : Faridgonj

Dist. : Tippera

Profession : Cultivation

(19)

Many houses of the village had been set on fire In fear more Hindu families of village left the houses and took shelter in the forest and under water hyacinth. Passing the night in such a way, we took shelter the next

day at Chandpur relief camp undertaking much pain. We heard many Hindu families had been converted to Muslim; they had been fed beef and they had been given new names.

Loss : Paddy & Rice—total 60 maunds

Yours

Sri Bipin Ch. Das

Vill. : Gulisha, P.S. : Chandpur

Dist. : Tippera

Profession : Leaf Merchant

(20)

The Muslims set fire to adjoining village of ours. Many Hindu families had been converted to Muslims and fed beef. All the members of a few dignified families had been butchered since they refused to be converted. Young women were forcibly married. Many children had been thrown into burning fire. We used to get news of such atrocities everyday from the next village. In such apprehension, we left the village prior to attack of our village. When the next village caught fire, then many affected villagers took shelter in our village. From them we came to know the rogue Muslims were their neighbouring friends.

Loss : Land—7 Kani

Yours

Sachindra Kumar Bhowmik

Vill. : Jaykrishnapur, P.S. : Begumgonj

Dist. : Noakhali

(21)

15/16 days before coming to this place, a gang of unknown rogue Muslim came to our house at night to demand subscription for the Muslim League; otherwise our life, they threatened, will be in danger. In fear I gave them Rs. 100 to drive away those rogues. Thereafter one day they looted my shop in market and took away everything. In this circumstances it is impossible to stay on. I came to Calcutta with family. Many Hindu families had been ruined in such a way. For remedial measure I informed the police station but unfortunately they had done nothing. Many Hindus of our next village had been burnt and many children had been thrown into fire. Many Hindus had been converted and beef had been fed. Many women had been kidnapped. **Many women had been raped and the**

stretch from the groin upto abdomen had been cut and many women's breast had been cut off. Many women of our relatives are among the kidnapped women and they could not be traced. A gang of ruffians went to kidnap a girl of our known Saha family. They caught hold of the girl and the girl shouted at once. The elder brother hastily snatched away his sister from the grip of rogues. For this her hand, leg, head were severely injured. Seeing this condition and hearing the news, we came to Chandpur relief camp and since then for the patronage of Hindu Mahasabha, I am in the Congress Committee in ward No.2.

Yours

Sri Priya Nath Sen

Vill. : Ujialpur, P.S. : Sadar

Dist. : Noakhali

(22)

5/6 days before the commencement of Durga Puja, I went to visit Badarpur in the district of Sylhet. On reaching Badarpur Station I found nearly 1000 persons of Noakhali had assembled. Among them I could not find a single person of my family. From other people I came to know all the villages of our Lakshmipur police station had been burnt. All the booty had been taken away. Some persons had been taken with them after converting to Muslim. Those who did not agree to be Muslim had been butchered. Spinsters were married by force. Immediately I set out for my native place on hearing this news. I found many residents of Noakhali all along the road from Badarpur to Chaumuhani. Having walked a little distance after crossing Begumganj PS, a few Muslims unitedly told me if I agreed to eat beef after conversion to Muslim, I might proceed otherwise not. I thought if I could save all the members of my family after becoming a Muslim, I must agree but was sceptical about their survival. So I did not agree to be a Muslim. On my way back I went to Begamganj PS and requested the OC to give me two policemen as escort. He did not comply with my request; rather he ordered to bring permission from the Magistrate. Being helpless I came to Calcutta. I could not trace a single person.

I can not trace the following members of my family.

Mother—55 years.

Father—70 years

Brothers— Surendra Kumar Pal-35 yrs.

Sachindra Kumar Pal-24 yrs.

Jatindra Kumar Pal-20 yrs.
 Santosh Kumar Pal-16 yrs.
 Hemendra Kumar Pal-12 yrs.

Yours

Upendra Kumar Paul

Vill. : Majupur, P.S. : Lakshimpur

P.O. : Banchhanagar, Dist. : Noakhali

(23) My submission is —

Revered Mahatmaji, I am a resident of Bijoymagar village, Union No-1 under the Lakshimpur PS and Post master of Kali Bijoy Nagar Br. Post Office. The day before riot that means on Sunday the Muslim brothers of our village accompanied by a Maulavi came to our house and threatened all of us saying— if you want to remain alive become a Muslim after reading Kalma, break down all the idols and tear off all the religions books. For making protest, entering into the room they destroyed the idols and holy books with their own hands. Seeing this destructive acts, I made two Lungis out of my 20 yds. cloth that I put on. They helped me to cut the cloth with their own hands. The Maulavi told us to take bath and sit on one place and told women to come to another room after breaking the conch bangles, removing vermilion from forehead & subsequently taking bath. For fear of life we followed the directives of Muslim brothers and Maulavi. The Maulavi Sahib read out Kalma irrespective of men and women and told us to put on cap. Then we said, “where shall we get caps.” Then quickly taking off caps from their heads, they gave them to us. Being converted to Muslim we thought we were saved for the time being. As we have accept their Faith they will not harm us any more. But on next day i.e. 27 Aswin, Monday at about 9 or 10 A.M. those Muslim brothers came in a group and started looting and burning of Nagendra Bhowmic’s house on the northern side of our house. The moment they entered into our house after completing destruction of that house I told them—I have accepted your ‘DIN’ (religion) I am a petty Postmaster serving you. Do not loot our house and property & burn them. If you set fire to my house, it is as good as setting fire to Post Office. A little after saying this one Munsii, a resident of Mominpur came out of the crowd and taking me aside said if I did not pay Rs.200/- as subscription of the League and Rs.50/- as tips, my house could not be saved. I told them—I am a poor man, where shall I get so much amount? Then the Munsii said, “you are a Post master; you have huge amount with you. No one will believe that you have no money. Give me whatever you have in your possession and the rest afterwards. I gave him Rs.240 as there was no other alternative. I could have given Rs.250,

but decided to keep a little amount in hand; if they did not let off, then I would give that Rs. 10 under compulsion.

After giving that amount I asked him now if the rushing crowd start looting and setting fire then where shall I find you for security. Then the Munsii said, "Bring one piece of paper" swiftly moving I brought one cover page from among heaps of exercise books and gave it to him. Then he wrote whatever he had to write on the paper and advised to keep it with me. When the plunderers would come for looting, they would not loot if it was shown to them. The hand written paper is now in your possession. In it there are signatures of 2/3 witnesses. A little while after departure of Munsii Sahib, I showed them the paper the moment they entered into the house. They angrily told us to throw it away; they would not leave the place without looting. We are not shareholders of that money which the leader has extorted on behalf of Golam Sarwar. On entering they looted in all the rooms of our house without paying any heed to our entreaty. What more shall I write. The more I write the more I become emotional.

Sri Prakash Ch. Das

Post Master, Kali Bijaynagar

Vill : Bijaynagar, Dist. : Noakhali

N.B. After conversion I have been given new name Dulamia Post Master; that paper is kept with you; the names of three witness are there.

This is to inform all the Muslim brother volunteers—Dula Mian, Postmaster Sahib has accepted Muslim religion of his own accord; you will not mete out oppression or illegal threatment on them, for violation you shall be liable to punishment.

1. Kaji Chaid (Saiyad) Ali Golam Cherwar, Captain of Maminpur
2. Sri Ajibar Rahaman Miah, dt. 27 Ashwin, 1353 B.S. of Hasandi
3. Sri Majab Ali, Vill. Hasandi, Nusrer Rahaman, Vill. Hasandi.

Destruction of Temple And Idol At Dalalbazar— The Second Nabadwip

(24)

2/3 days before 14-10-46 from the whisperings of people the local people were apprehensive. On the other hand local Muslims assured us there was no cause for fear. But the day before the incident on Sunday, before evening, news of arson 5/6 miles away was afloat and someone spoke of cloud of fire. The news of looting also reached us. Then the local Hindus were engaged throughout Sunday night till morning in fleeing away to a safer place **unearthing** (digging)

the valuable things like gold, silver, bete metals etc. as also raising sackful of goods thrown into water on Monday, 14-10-46 at about 10 A.M. we got the news that thousand of people were approaching our village for looting and arson. Realising the grave situation the previous night local Zamindar Sri Satyendra Kumar Roy and Babu Nalini Kishore Roy accompanied by his family including his wife, children as 60/70 staff of the state came to Calcutta en route taking Khulna secret route of Meghna river crossing by boat. We have heard on being caught on the way, they were able to save their lives spending much money and adopting survival techniques. However when it was 10 or 10-30 A.M., the local Hindus could hear slogan of "Allah ho Akbar" and children, men and women fled away in a jiffy to their selective places. Someone from the tree top, someone from bushes observed the activities of the rogues. It was found that the rogues armed with gun, scythe, shell made from betel trunk, bamboo stick approached from the northern side and instantly untold Muslims from all sides began to proceed raising Allah Ho Akbar slogan. Hastily divided themselves into different groups they entered into villages of Dalalbazar and adjacent villages and at first looted Hindu houses and assembled all the valuables dug up from the earth as also thrown away goods from the water. Before departure they poured kerosin oil or petrol and set fire to all goods. Those who fled away to nearest places and when the rogues departed, then quickly coming out a few of us managed to save some thing. But majority people could not do such thing.

The Dalal Bazar is called the **second Nabadwip**, because many villagers of the said Nabadwip dham worshipped newly made deities and both in morning & evening the devotees worshipped idols to the accompanie of beating *kansi* and blowing conshshells and producing uluddhani. The ruffians did not spare a single deity. They, devils in human form, destroyed by setting fire, breaking down everything. After that destruction, the village looked no better than a burning ghat. Among the said deities, Sri Mahaprabhu's residential deity was very famous. All the Hindus of East Bengal and pious Hindus of other places made themselves sacred after seeing the holy deity. They had been enjoying during Jhulan fair for one century. When a Priest prevented the rogues not to enter into the temple since the deity had not done any wrong, then pouring petrol on his clothes, he was thrown into the burning temple. 400 yds. away from that place an innocent sweetmeat shopkeeper was thrown in the same way into a nearby big burning medicine shop, **since he refused to become a Muslim**. After that incident, coming to our house next day we found our house had been reduced to ashes; all the valuables of our house, even kept under earth and water had been plundered.

The Nandanpur village next to ours, had the same treatment. Three persons had been mercilessly killed in that place too and in one place tortures exceeded

the previous one. **A son being tied on his old mother's shoulder had been burnt together.** The ruffians catching fugitives beat them seriously for failure to meet their financial demands, if paid left with light punishment. All the records of Kachari of local Zamindar had been burnt. A co-operative Bank too of that place had been destroyed. And the big pucca building had been burnt pouring petrol. Now bricks are falling down as an aftermath. The buildings of inside the house could not be destroyed completely for want of petrol. Many brick built and tinned houses of the village had been destroyed. On the day of incident i.e. on Monday night and on Tuesday at Nandanpur village, next to ours, local 60/70 strong Muslims threatened us saying, "If you do not agree to embrace Muslim religion, we shall not be able to save you." of Course the people of the village helped the Hindus to reach the safe place and on the pretext of saving the goods of the Hindus, had taken away to their own house.

Today streams of people are pouring in. In this wretched condition we became puzzled and did not disagree to become Muslims and some of us went to Mosque and chanted religious words as per Munsiri or Maulavi's rituals. In some places we were tortured for giving consent to marriage between two communities and that oppression is still going on. Before leaving the country some one was trying most to get military help of Lakshmipur police station, because they could not come out of the village with their marriageable daughters. This time highly educated Muslims appeared in the picture. It seemed among the plunderers there were educated boys, because throwing aside other books, the sacred sreemat Srimath Bhagabat had been found to be thrown into dustbin after tearing into pieces. Even some educated Muslims had said that henceforth Hindus need not be tortured for getting consent of becoming Muslim, because a few days after the Hindus themselves would come forward to become Muslim holding our legs. Being afraid of such prevailing atmosphere, we left our ancestral house of many generations in penniless condition. Now they are stealing paddy, betel nuts, coconuts by force. In this connections it will not be out of place to mention, after 14-10-46 on 18-10-46 at about 8 at night, the cry of "Allah Ho Akbar" spreading from one end to the other in Noakhali district threatened us such that in the midst of water, mud, rain we along with wives & children fled away to take shelter in jungle. Later we came to know none had come to attack us. Then we returned back to fire ravaged shelter.

Sri Birendra Kumar Ray

Sri Gouranga Chandra Pal

Vill. : Dalalbazar, P.S. : Lakshmipur,

Dist. : Noakhali

(25)

Name—Sri Mohanbansi Banik

My name is Mohanbansi Banik, father Golok Ch. Banik, Nandanpur NO.6 Union, PS Ramganj, Dt. Naokhali. Reaching Calcutta from Naokhali I am submitting a report that on Saturday 25th Aswin at about 2-30 P.M. a big crowd (1000 to 1500) raising “Allah Ho Akbar” “Want Pakistan” slogans on the northern & eastern side approached our house. When they reached near the house, I found the crowd around with guns, stick; spear, tora, teta, scythe, chisel entered the house quickly and some persons surrounded the house and blocked the nearest District Board road. Those who entered the house, some are known to me, the names of some are known, and are acquainted with some. Among them Badsa Mian, son of Moji Mian, resident of Kalchama snatched away cash Rs.200/- from my son Sri Haricharan Banik at the point of dagger, When Tarif Ali, resident of Kalchama was about to strike me, I somehow saved my life offering Rs. 1200 and 20 tolas of gold lying with me. Among the crowd Nurul Haque, son of Aswad Pandit instigated the rogues to start looting without fear by showing signs. Because Golam Sarwar assured, they would not invite trouble since the higher authorities had consent. Then entering into room Abdul Rashid. Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Rahim, and others each entering into room said, “Hand over quickly the things which you have in your possession. For fear of life I handed over each and everything and somehow escaping from the house dipped under water for shelter. In the meantime the rogues snatched away all the gold ornaments from the body of women and one gang of rogues went away by boat with booty. The other gang removed vermilion from the forehead of women, broke conch bangles of hands and threatened to accept Muslim religion. Being oppressed in many ways later allowing women to be Muslim reading Kalma according muslim practices, I was able to get their release.

Thereafter pouring petrol in every room they set fire and reducing everything to ashes the rogue left the houses at night. So we along with family we took shelter in the last part of the night at Ramganj PS. The names of rogues and estimated value of plundered goods are given below :—

Names of looters —

1. Narul Haq. S/o Ashwad Pandit
2. Badsha Miah, S/o Abdul Majid
3. Aminaddi S/o Abdul Halim
4. Tarif Ali S/o Late Abdul Chhimad
5. Ahmad Pandit S/o Tamijarddi
6. Katu Miah S/o Hachan Ali

7. Abdul Rashid S/o Late Imarnaddi
8. Abdul Hakim S/o Late Maunaddi
9. Ahmad Ali S/o Late Jabbar Ali
10. Manu Miah S/o Hyder Ali

(26) Revered Sir, I am a resident of Paniala Village under No.2 Paniala Union, PS Ramganj, Dt. Noakhali.

On Saturday (13-10-46) at about 7-30 at night a crowd of 600 Muslims armed with different kinds of fatal weapons attacked our house. Then we were not at home. We had left for jungle half an hour ago. They were approaching raising slogans. We all hid in the nearest jungle. At first they started looting on entering the house; later they burned our house. There are 30 rooms in our house but they did not burn our small rooms. Then they had set up temporary camp with tin roof; still they are there. 23 rooms had been gutted. They looted left over burnt goods from 8 P.M. to 2 A.M. at night, tins were among the booty.

Next day (13-10-46) on Sunday in the morning the villager threatened us to convert to Muslim but on that day they could not be successful to convert us.

On Monday (14-10-46) the names of hit list had not been ready till then. In view of this all the Hindu were called with a view to holding a peace committee. The members of peace committee directed all the Hindus of the village to go to market. On our way to market at the door **my elder brother, first cousin, a cousin uncle Abani Babu, member of Peace committee were Standing. The two brothers were killed. Then they took us to mosque. They beat us severely on the way. Taking us to mosque they compelled us to undergo Namaz.** And then to read Kalma —later they made a list of all names.

For beating one uncle of mine Manoranjan Majumdar was seriously wounded. On that very day one of my sister-in-law (27/28), Niece (18/19), sister's (27/28) conch-bangles had been broken with sticks and removed vermilion with their hands.

On (15-10-46) wife of dead cousin brother's wife (Trailokya Mohan's wife) returned back home (She fled away to another's house), she began to cry. On getting this news the Muslims returned back oncd again and broke her conch bangles.

On (16-10-46) Wednesday 18/19 police personnel came to investigate from Tripura and called at our house. Then some villagers went away with them for fear of life. Thereafter the Muslims told us to put off cap as before

and put on clothes. When Police camp was set up, then who left the house came back with the help of police escort.

So it is my humble submission that these goomdas be awarded condign punishment and the poor be compensated.

Yours

Sri Phani Bhusan Majumdar

The following members were killed :—

1. Priyalal Majumdar—One brother (36 years) Divisional Controller of M/s Brook Bond India Ltd. Chittagong Division.

On hearing news of riot came on 13, died on 14. The Muslims caught him red handed. Blocked the side of ditch. At first struck on Priyalal's head, fell down (Boy was a few yards away) and prayed for mercy, I have accepted, don't kill, fled away to jungle. From there fled to road (50 yards), killed with dagger.

Priyalal's wife staying at father's house.

2. Trailokyamohan Majumdar (39), Post Master, Paniala jumped into pond, swam for a long time, assured not to be killed, getting on land and stabbed with dagger, didn't strike with stick.

3. Abani Mohan Majumdar (40-40), member of No.2 Pamiala Union Board—fled away and hid in a house. without beating with stick, he was let off after cutting (slitting) throat a little, died after 15 minutes writhing with pain. A boy witnessed ghastly scene from 50/60 yds.

These three members of our family had been killed.

23-11-46 (Encl a cap)

—Sri Phani Bhusan Majumdar

(27) To the Officer-in-charge

Ramganj, Noakhali

Dear Sir,

On last 11 October when riot, looting, disturbance, arson were taking place at Rajendralal Roy's house of Karpara, my maternal uncle's house i.e. i next house of Rajendra Babu my grand father died in rist and the deceased's son monmohan Roy's son my uncle (mattrial) late Indra Bhusan Roy's wife, daughter left their residence and took shelter in said Rajendralal's house. The riot being oever it traspired from investigation that many persons died in that house and a few women haed been abducted by the goondas. My uncle late Indra Bhusan Roy's second dauthter Kumar Namita was among then Her pet name is Khuku. Since then finding no tracd of her,

today I came to know from 1) Babu Sorosi Raja 2) Jit Raja 3) Amanga Raja of Sahapur Raj family that on the said 11 October towards the late hours of night the goondas secretly left Namita at Sahapur Raj Bari. Then all the residents of the family were lying in the garden next to the house. In the morning coming to the corridor and seeing an unknown girl with blood stained clothes on they came to know her identity after asking and they came to know all about how the goondas had abducted her from Rajendra Babu's house. On that very day i.e. on Saturday afternoon 1) Abdul Kader alias Kalia—father Ismail Bapari 2) Ali Haidar Hafia 3) Momota Matia Vill. East Josalia came to enquire whether Namita was staying in that Rajbari. Agani Next day on Sunday 1) Badial Alam Bhuma Vill. East Josalia 2) Asadali Chamra vill. Vatialpur 3) Abdul Latif, the tailor of Kumud Bhusan Guha of Sahapur Market came and enquired of Namita. The next day Monday on 14 October after the moon a servant of Namita came and talked with her and at the time of departure he said that he would come with a boat to take her to her mother. On the said day after the evening 1) Abdul Kuddus, B.A. Master Sahapur High School, Vill. East Josalia 2) Abdul Khalek, Clerk, D. S. Board, Karpara, Vill. Bhatialpur 3) Majibab Hoque Mollah, Clerk D. S. Board, Karpara Vill. Khalasi Para Mollabari 4) sanoar Alam, father Badiul Alam, Vill. East Josalia, all the said for persons and boat man 1) Mahabbat Ali, Vill. Khalsa para 2) Habibulla came to i) Sorasiraja ii) Jitansu moha Raja iii) Ananga Raja of the said Rajbari and told them that they had come to take Namita. When the inmates of the Rajbari gave different identity, the six including Abdul Kuddus threatened the Rajas saying if they did not hand over Namita in their custody, they would set fire to their house and make these wretched like Karpara Finding no other way and being helpless, Soroshi Raja and Jitansu Raja handed over Namita to Kuddus and Kuddus then said they too would have to go up to the river ghat. Then Sorosi Raja and Jitansu Raja proceeded up to the river ghat where the boat was tied after crossing the western side of the Pond. On reaching there Namita entwining Sorosi Raja said crying, "Don't hand me over to them; they will kill me." After much crying Abdul Kuddus said, "you need not fear. I shall take you to your mother" saying this forcibly snatching her away from the clutches of Sorasi Raja, She was made to embark upon the boat & taken towards the east. Thereafter when the boat turned towards the Sahapur High School, still then Sorasi Raja & Jitansu Raja could hear cry of Namita. She was bewailing, "you are brothers of my own religion." They returned back home when they could not bear her cry any more. On my coming here (Duttapara) and hearing about the incident from Sorasi Raja, Jitansu Raja and Ananga

Raja, I thought the way to Ramganj not safe for informing the Police and even if Possible it will be delayed. Thinking as such I lodge complaint with Abdul Gofur Biswas, ASI.

Dt 1946, 30 October,
Dattapara

Sd Sunil Kumar Kar
C/o Babu Jagadish Ch. Kar.
Railway Power House, Chandpur, Tripura

(28) Respected Sir,

I reside in Komortola village under the jurisdiction of Ramganj PS in Noakhali district. On 12-10-46, (Saturday) at about 9 P.M. approximately 700 Muslims armed with various weapons attacked our home. At that point of time only my father was at home. The other members of the family took shelter in a nearby jungle in fear. First they forcibly made my father to wear cap and lungi and demanded subscription for Muslim League from him. They also said that by paying said subscription we could buy safety and security. Then my father paid them rupees two thousand and accepted Muslim religion in order to save the house from being plundered and again on 13-10-46 (Sunday) at least ten male members of the family were forcibly made Muslim. Then the women members were also forcibly converted.

On 14-10-45 we were asked to attend a peace meeting at a bazar. When we were going to the bazar at about 3 P.M. approximately 400 Muslim people attacked us. In front of me my father was murdered. We were beaten severely and taken to a mosque at the bazar. We were enlisted as Muslims there. Because of the severe beating two old members of our family were seriously injured. On 16-10-46 twenty policemen visited our village. They saw our house. Some villagers went away with the police in fear of life under the above mentioned circumstances. It is my appeal to you to take appropriate steps to uphold justice.

Thanking you,

Dated : 23-11-46

Yours truly,
Shri Murarimohan Sharma
S/o. Late Radharaman Sharma
Vill. Komortola, Noakhali.

CONCLUSION

HISTORIC HEROIC BUT UNFULFILLED PEACE MISSION OF GANDHIJI

Anti-Hindu riot broke out in the most inaccessible areas of Noakhali on 10.10.1946. Gandhiji started for Noakhali on 6.11.46 and reached Chaumuhani—the biggest business centre and railway station on 7.11.46. He stayed there for two days in the house of Jogendra Majumdar and then started for Dattapara on 9.11.46 to see with his own eyes the magnitude of wanton destruction of life and property of the Hindus done by the Muslims. They had “slaughtered, raped, pillaged and burned, forcing their neighbour to eat the flesh of their sacred cows, sending others fleeing for safety across the rice paddies.”

For nearly four months of his stay in the riot-stricken areas, Gandhiji wandered the villages, talking with the inhabitants—Hindus and Muslims both—praying and preaching the message of love, peace and forbearance. “In seven weeks, walking barefoot he covered 116 miles, visiting 47 villages. Moving from village to village, from hut to hut he went among those enraged Moslems seeking to restore with the poultice of his presence Noakhali’s shattered peace.”

But unfortunately his hopes and beliefs have not been fulfilled. His earnest appeal for peace and amity made little impact on the Muslim mind. “The opposition of Gandhiji’s stay in Noakhali began to take a vulgar turn towards the end of February 1947. The roads over which he walked from village to village were deliberately dirtied every day, while Muslim audience began to boycott his meetings more persistently.” Lamenting over the misfortune of the East Bengal Hindus Gandhiji gave vent to his anguish thus—“My heart bleeds, my brain is strained to think that the East Bengal Hindus who were in the vanguard in the struggle for freedom, will be deprived of their ancestral home and hearth.”

Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani observed in the preface of a book-let entitled “Noakhali–Tipperah Tragedy”—Mahatma Gandhi has declared that he would not hesitate to bury himself in the village of Noakhali if the cause of peace requires such a sacrifice; and Gandhiji himself vowed—“I do not want to die a discredited or defeated man...I would rather die in Noakhali than go back a defeated man.”

But what was the actual position of not only Noakhali but East Bengal as a whole, at that time? A clear picture of the situation was available from the report of Lord Wavell, Governor General to the Secretary of State in London :

“The events in Eastern Bengal could not have been more unfortunate. We were immediately up against the usual Bengal difficulty that reliable information could not be quickly obtained owing to the lack of a proper administrative network and to the very bad communications. I see no prospect of securing a return of confidence in Eastern Bengal for very long time, and I doubt whether many Hindus will be prepared to remain in their homes there.”

The reason behind is obvious :—

“I do not get the impression that Moslems of South East Bengal are, generally speaking now in the least repentant over the Noakhali-Tipperia Trouble.”

Consequently Gandhiji had to leave Noakhali as a defeated man. All his untiring efforts and arduous labour did not bear the desired results. He had to discontinue his mission half-way and start for Bihar on 2nd March 1947 under extreme pressure and persuasion of Muslim League Leaders of Bengal and Bihar, never to return again leaving the destitute Hindus as helpless and hopeless as before.

Sir F. Burrows depicted a grim picture of the dark future of the doomed Hindus in just two sentences in his report which prediction ultimately proved to be correct to the letters :—

“...The scene did make me realise what an extremely difficult and slow task it will be to restore confidence. It will take a dozen Gandhis to make the Muslim leopard and the Hindu kid to lie down together again in that part of the world.” (6.12.46)

Anti-Hindu riot might have been stopped, but persecution of Hindus went on unabated as before even after Gandhiji's departure, which made their day to day life miserable. In this regard relevant portion from the Divisional Commissioner of the Chittagong Division (Mr. William Barret) to the Additional Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Home (Political) Department (Mr. P.D.Martyn) was revealing :—

“Hindu Persecution : Apart from being the main victim of the crime wave, the Hindus are being persecuted in many more subtle ways. The extent and intensity of this persecution varies, of course, from area to area, and in some areas, it is entirely absent. The persecution does not take the form of economic boycott (though this is still advocated by the more extreme Muslim leaders),

because the cultivating class cannot afford to allow any land to go untilled or to lose the returns which the cultivation of that land would bring them. **What is happening is that a section of Muslims is taking advantage of the demoralised condition of the Hindus to insult, threaten and cow them down into a state of resigned submission, after which they fatten on their property and treat them as an inferior race. It is quite usual for Hindus while moving about to be addressed as *Malaun or Kafir*.**

Sometimes they are searched by parties of Muslims and deprived of anything the latter fancy. Cases have occurred of Hindus returning to their houses with their daily bazaar and having their purchases snatched away; the removal of coconuts and betelnuts from the gardens of Hindu homesteads is a common occurrence, corrugated iron sheets and timbers are often taken from Hindu houses with the frightened consent of the inmates; cattle belonging to Hindu households have developed a habit of freeing themselves from their tethers and disappearing, the paddy plants of Hindus have been uprooted and thrown away. If an aggrieved Hindu reports these occurrences to the Thana, his sufferings are increased, and there have been cases in which such reports had led to the burning of the victims' huts; efforts are being made to have Hindu owned cinema houses closed, and although the vast majority of weavers in the District are Hindus (Naths), the demands are being made that 50% of the loom licences should go to Muslims. There is a move to rid the Bazaars of Hindu marchants and one of the larger Hindu merchants told me that he and many others had been receiving threatening letters. Long established Hindu shopkeepers are being ousted from the markets to make way for Muslims. Hindus who have rebuilt their houses (including even women) have been told that they will not be allowed to live in them and that it will be better for them to leave the District. There is reason to believe that complainants in cases arising out of the disturbances are being threatened by Muslims and compelled to agree to their cases being compromised. Much of this persecution is comparatively petty, but it is lawlessness nonetheless and it shows that the virus which was injected into the District before the October disturbances has not yet been eradicated."

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N.B. : Chapter XI of the book contains English version of applications written in Bengali, addressed to Mahatma Gandhi, by riot-victims-male and female, stating the cruelties, barbarities they have witnessed and endured; and loss of properties they have suffered.

Written in blood, sweat and tears by our victimised brothers and sisters, literal translation of these letters was done without caring for literary niceties and sometimes flouting strict grammatical rules.

ANNEXURE—A

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

GREAT CALCUTTA KILLINGS—NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

AGAINST SUHRAWARDY MINISTRY :

FULL TEXT OF DR. S. P. MOOKERJEE'S SPEECH

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Mr. Speaker, Sir, since yesterday we have been discussing the motions of no-confidence under circumstances which perhaps have no parallel in the deliberations of any legislature in any part of the civilised world. What happened in Calcutta is without a parallel in modern history. St. Bartholomew's Day of which history records some grim events of murder and butchery pales into insignificance compared to the brutalities that were committed in the streets, lanes and bye-lanes of this first city of British India. We have been discussing, Sir, as to the genesis of these disturbances. Time will not permit me to go through the detailed history and course of events during the last few years. But let me say this that what has happened is not the result of a sudden explosion, but it is the culmination of an administration, inefficient, corrupt and communal, which has disfigured the life of this great province. But so far as the immediate cause is concerned, rightly reference has been made by members belonging to the Muslim League and also to the Opposition that we have to look to the resolution that was passed at Bombay at the all-India session of the Council of the Muslim League. Now what happened there? It is said, on behalf of the Muslim League that the Cabinet Mission proved faithless to Muslim interests and thereby created a situation which has had no parallel in the history of Anglo-Muslim relationship in this country. What did actually the Cabinet Mission do? The Muslim League, the spoilt and pampered child of the British imperialists for the last thirty years, was disowned for the first time by the British Labour Government (Loud noise from the Government benches)—I know it that members, when they hear the bitter truth, can hardly repress their feelings, Sir, the fact remains that the old policy of the British Government of no-advance-ment without a Congress-Muslim League agreement was for the first time given up in 1946....(Loud cries from the Government benches) I have only stated the fact and I do not make any comment on it and still my friends become impatient immediately. Now, the fact remains that the Muslim League was bye-passed and the Interim Government has been formed at the Centre. Supposing Mr. Jinnah had been asked to form the Interim Government without the Congress, would my friends

belonging to the Muslim League have then blamed the Government for having betrayed the interests of the Hindu community?.....

Sir, what happened after the Bombay resolutions? I have before me a summary of the speeches delivered by distinguished spokesmen on behalf of the Muslim League in every part of India and although it was said that the Direct Action Day itself was not the day for commencing direct action, it was at the same time pointed out that the war had begun, the days of peace and compromise were over and now the jihad.....(A member from the Government benches : Against whom?) War against everyone who did not accept Pakistan. That has been made abundantly clear.

I would ask my friends not to misunderstand me. I am trying to put in brief their point of view as I would ask them also to appreciate our point of view. We are like poles asunder. You say you will plunge the country into civil war if you do not get Pakistan and we say you shall not get Pakistan by any means whatsoever. These two points of view are irreconcilable and what I am now telling the House is this that the members speaking on behalf of the Muslim League did not mince matters. Moslem leaders want civil war. Only a pattern of civil war, according to Mr. Jinnah, was witnessed in this every city of Calcutta, but whether civil war will ultimately help Muslims to get Pakistan or not is a matter that remains yet to be seen. It is said that British Imperialists are against the Muslim League. Why talk rot in this way ? Who gave you separate electorate and Communal Award? Who is helping the Sind Ministry to remain in power? Is not the Governor a British Governor? Are not the three European members of the Sind Assembly British members of that House? Are they not trying their level best somehow to keep the Muslim League in power and not allow the Congress to go to office although among the Indian members they are in a majority ?

Now, Sir, I shall leave this aside. I shall not refer to the detailed speeches which have been delivered by the Muslim League leaders barring one or two illustrative remarks. When Mr. Jinnah was confronted at a press conference in Bombay on the 31st July and was asked whether direct action involved violence or non-violence, his cryptic reply was "I am not going to discuss ethics". (The Hon. Mr. Mohammed Ali : Good.) But Khwaja Nazimuddin was not so good. He came out very bluntly in Bengal and he said that Muslims did not believe in non-violence at all, Muslims knew what direct action meant and there were one hundred and one ways in which direct action could be achieved in this province. Now, Sir, speeches like this were made by responsible League leaders. One said in the Punjab that the zero hour had struck and that the war had begun. All this was followed by a series of articles and statements which appeared in the columns of newspapers — the Morning News, the Star of India and the Azad, If you read those documents, particularly I would ask my friend Mr. Ispahani, if he reads these documents— I do not know whether he has learnt Bengali yet, if not, for his benefit a translation can be made of the Bengali articles in the Azad — he will be able to find out that there was nothing but open and direct incitement to violence. Hatred of Hindus and jihad on the

Hindus were declared in fire-eating language. That was the background. I am not going to quote the papers, for I have not the time. You have read them and the general Moslem public have acted according to the instructions.

Now, so far as the later events are concerned, what happened on the 16th? What were the pre-parations made? Mr. Ispahani says that they were taken unawares. In the Morning News on the 16th there appeared an announcement on be-half of the Pakistan Ambulance Corps and there full instructions were given as to how the Ambulance Corps was to act — mind you, Sir, this was done before the troubles started. This Pakistan Ambulance Corps was to be utilised in different parts of the city, they were to go out in batches, cars and officers would be available and from the 17th morning announcement was to be made every hour as regards the patients which were to be found in the different hospitals Calcutta. This was announced before any trouble started in Calcutta and Mr. Ispahani says there was no pre-parations. Of course, it was by the sheerest bad luck that you allowed the notice of this one among many kinds of preparation to be published in the newspapers.

Now, Sir what happened on the 16th? I shall not refer to the detailed speeches of other mem-bers, but I shall certainly hold responsible the Chief Minister of this province who so lost his mental balance as to have made that statement from Bombay saying that he was going to declare Bengal to be an independent State. A Minister who cannot control his British underling—the Commissioner of Police—is going to make Bengal an independent State! A Minister who comes forward and' says 'I am helpless, I could not save the people of the city because the Commissioner of Police would not listen to me' will declare Bengal an independent State! Now, that was Mr. Suhra-wardy. He said he was going to carry on a no-rent campaign in this province. He was going to disobey law and order. His speech before the Legislative Council goes to show that he knew fully well that troubles were ahead. If you analyse his speech it will appear that he knew that troubles were brewing and he said he wanted to be as careful as possible.

I am not raising the question in this debate as to how many Hindus were butchered and how many Muslims were butchered. Bhawanipore, Taltolla or Watgunge is not the main question in issue. The question in issue today is, did Govern-ment succeed in protecting life and property, no matter to which community that life and pro-perty belonged? Why did Government allow so many Muslim lives to be butchered if you look upon Mr. Suhrawardy as the great Muslim champion? Why did he allow the entire administration of law and order to collapse in the city? I shall say, Sir, it was a diabolical plan. I say, Sir, there was a well-organised plan that there was going to be a blitz attack on the city and Hindus were going to be taken by surprise, properties were going to be looted and lives were going to be lost. Then Mr. Suhrawardy found that he was caught in his own trap. When he and others were hit back in their own coin, he could not regain his lost ground and failed to do what his Muslim brethren asked him to do in agony and distress.

On the 16th, our case is that provocation came from the other side, their case is that provo-cation came from the Hindu side. That also I am not going to discuss today. Let us leave that for the time being, but let us proceed to the next stage. Mr. Suhrawardy said, by 12 noon he realised the situation was very bad. Was he not still the Chief Minister of Bengal ? What did he do at that time? Why was not the military called out at that time? I have got here a circular issued by the military for the information of its officers and employees in which clear information is given that the military was ready to come out on Friday noon but it was not asked to do so. The civil police failed to protect the life and pro-perty as it was expected to do and whenever the military was asked to come out, it came out and it did whatever it could do. But alas! Thousands had been killed meanwhile and crores of rupees looted!

On Friday Mr. Suhrawardy knew that trouble had broken out—no matter whether the Hindus were the aggressors or the Muslims were the aggressors. Why did he not immediately proclaim section 144? Why did he allow the whole city to be placed at the mercy of goondas, daco-its and murderers? Why did he allow the meeting at all to be held at the maidan in the afternoon over which he presided? He stands charged with the deliberate offence of having played havoc with the life and property of the citizens of this great city, no matter whether they were Hindus or they were Muslims. On Friday night he gives a message to the Associated Press that the condition in the city had improved. Does he remember it? It seems he has forgotten it. He is looking like an innocent child.

I have got here the Associated Press news from the next day's newspapers. I would ask my friends to forget for the time being that they belong to the Muslim League. On Friday night the Chief Minister announced

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : Me ?

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Yes.

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : No, no.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : If Mr. Suhrawardy says 'no', here Sir, is the statement of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Chief Minister of Bengal — I suppose that is the gentleman sitting over there (Laughter)—interviewed by the Associated Press of India to the effect that the situation was improving. (Uproar) (A voice from the Government benches: What paper?) Every newspaper. (Renewed uproar). I would ask my friends that they must observe the rules of the game and fair-play even in a discussion like this. Why don't you ask the Chief Minister to explain this?

Mr. Fazlur Rahman : On a point of order, Sir, these papers must be submitted to you for perusal by members.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Mr. Fazlur Rahman should know that is no point of order.

Mr. Fazlur Rahman : Yes, it is a point of order. A member cannot read from a document in this House and if he uses it he must submit it to you for perusal by the members.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Mr. Speaker, you can certainly look into it. I am not afraid of the truth.

Now, Sir, section 144 is supposed to have been promulgated on Friday but never enforced...

Mr. Speaker : You have to produce the paper, Dr. Mookerjee.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee: Yes, Sir. (Sent the paper to Mr. Speaker). I can produce it to anyone who wants to see it.

Then on Saturday the curfew order was inaugurated, but neither section 144 nor the curfew order was enforced. How is it that in spite of section 144 and the curfew order people were moving about committing loot and plunder and murder even? How is it that within a stone's throw, as Mr. Ispahani has pointed out, from Lalbazar Police Station shops were looted, people were murdered and all sorts of offence were committed without the police moving an inch ?

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : Am I responsible for that?

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Of course, you are responsible. If you have got the guts to say that you are not responsible, let us know that.

Now, Sir, that was on the 16th & 17th August. Later on what happened ? Mr. Suhrawardy knows it very well that he was speaking with a double face. On the 23rd he issued a broadcast message, a message of peace, for the people of Bengal and within half an hour of that he sent out a special message for foreign press through foreign correspondents and the things which are mentioned in that document are entirely different from the broadcast message which he issued to the people of Bengal. Can he deny that? (A voice from the Government benches : That is obvious.) He has stated that the Hindus have started the riot. (The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy: Certainly.) He has said that it is the Hindus who are to blame. He said it was the British Government which was to blame. Say 'certainly' (laughter) and lastly he said that he cannot yet tell what will happen in future if the Interim Government continues in office. Now, Sir, if that is the remark which he wanted to make on that day what was the use of his appealing to the people of Bengal for peace and harmony and saying "I have kept an open mind and I would like Hindus and Muslims to work together". Can history give us a better example of a double-faced Minister?

Sir, there are two matters here which may be mentioned. Mr. Suhrawardy said that he could not control the Commissioner of Police because he was not under his order. I shall give you, Sir, one instance out of many which are available from which it will appear how Mr. Suhrawardy interfered with the administration of the police officers in a manner which was unworthy of any Home Minister of any province. In the Park Street Police Station about seven goondas were taken by a European Inspector on Sunday evening.

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : I am sorry, but you are a goonda then.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Sir, that is the remark which Mr. Suhrawardy has made, namely, "I am sorry you are a goonda then".

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : Sir, I resent very much that any Muslim gentleman should be characterised as a goonda.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : I do not know who they are. These persons were found with looted properties. If Mr. Suhrawardy says that Muslim gentlemen took away looted properties I shall bow down my head to him, but if he says that I am a goonda then I too can say that he is the best goonda that is available not only in this province but throughout the world (uproar).

Mr. Speaker : Dr. Mookerjee, that is not a very desirable expression in respect of an honourable member of this House.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Sir, I shall withdraw it as soon as Mr. Suhrawardy withdraws what he has said about me (Cries of "withdraw, withdraw" from the Government benches). Let him withdraw first what he has said about me.

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : It is quite true that I can never think of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee as a goonda and I certainly withdraw that remark.

Syamaprasad Mookerjee : I withdraw too. Now Sir, let me pass on. So far as the Park Street incident is concerned, the important point is goondas or gentlemen, whoever they were, seven Muslims who were found in possession of looted properties were brought into Park Street Police Station by a European Inspector. Within ten minutes Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy appears on the scene. He gets these persons released. It is on record. Let him deny that.

(The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : Yes.) (Cries of "shame, shame" from Congress benches). Then he comes back and charges the Police officer for stealing a basket of eggs!

(The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : Oh! no.) This is the way, Sir in which Mr. Suhrawardy has behaved. This is one instance I am giving. (Cries of "you have cooked it" from Government benches). No, I have not cooked it. He has admitted it.

Then, Sir, the Muslim League party wanted 500 gallons of petrol from the Bengal Government. That was not granted, but petrol coupons were issued in the name of individual Ministers — general coupons— 100 gallons being issued in the name of the Chief Minister. Evidence is available that these coupons were used by lorries moving in the streets of Calcutta on those fateful days. That is how arrangements were being made under the very nose of the Home Department over which Mr. Suhrawardy was presiding. Can Mr. Suhrawardy deny that he himself went to Howrah accompanied by some Muslim League leaders, met local officers in authority there, and had chastised and taken them to task because Muslims were not protected there. Can he deny that? Did Mr. Suhrawardy give in any place or at any time the same sort of protection to the suffering Hindus? (The Hon. Mr. Suhrawardy : Certainly).

Mr. Muhammad Habibullah Chaudhury : You have allowed, Sir, 10 or 15 minutes to other members, but how is it that you have allowed Dr. Mookerjee to speak so long. He is not the leader of the Opposition. (Cries of "Ha, ha" from Congress benches).

Mr. Speaker : Mr. Chaudhury, please do not waste the time of the House in this way.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Now, Sir, it is quite clear that at least I have said some home truths which have made my friends opposite angry and impatient.

The Hon. H. S. Suhrawardy : They are not truths at all.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Sir, My point is that it is not a Hindu-Muslim question. The real trouble is that today Mr. Suhrawardy and the gentlemen who are with him are playing a most dangerous game. They are, in fact, playing a dual role.

The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : You are.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Sir, they, these Ministers, have taken oath of allegiance to the British Crown and they are responsible for the life and property of all alike. My friend, Mr. Mohammad Ali, admitted this very candidly when the Adjournment motion was not allowed to be taken up in this House. Mr. Suhrawardy is a great Muslim leader and he owes his allegiance to the Muslim League. The Muslim League has rightly or wrongly ordered that if something does not happen to its liking, it was going to resort to direct action. One cannot serve two masters. Sir, it has been proved beyond doubt that Mr. Suhrawardy and his other Ministers are unable to administer the affairs of this Province impar-tially and efficiently. They have failed hopelessly and wretchedly and on that ground alone they are not fit to occupy offices for a single moment. (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker : Order, order.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Sir, it is not in Calcutta alone that atrocities were committed in a large scale, but we find that troubles are spreading now in the whole of Bengal. The information which is coming from different parts of Bengal would make one shudder to think as to what will happen to this Province. These gentlemen, the Ministers over there, should not remain in charge of the affairs of this province even a day longer (Interruptions). If they remain tin office the future will be still darker. (Interruptions).

The Council of Action of the All-India Muslim League has ordered that preparations have to be made for giving effect to the Direct Action programme. Already Muslim League leaders from the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and also Sind have openly declared that they are ready with their scheme which can be put into operation at 24 hours' notice. Am I to believe that the Muslim League in Bengal which is a stronghold of Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League is not similarly prepared to give effect to the order of the Muslim League when the occasion demands it? In other words, my charge is that the present Ministry is utilising the Governmental machinery for the purpose of launching upon a direct action scheme. (The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy: No, no.) The consequence will be far more serious than the brutal scenes we had already witnessed in the streets of Calcutta. (The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy : No, no.) Mr. Suhrawardy is playing a dual role and this dual role of Mr. Suhrawardy and those who are supporting him has got to be exposed and brought to an end in the interests of peace and tranquillity.

Why does not the Chief Minister get the re-ports of the Commissioner of Police through the Criminal Investigation Department as regards some meetings which took place in the city? Mr. Suhrawardy has perhaps got the proceedings con-fidentially of the meetings which were held in the city where League leaders were invited to attend for the purpose of preparing a scheme for direct action. If he has got any report about what hap-pened on the 16th, he will find that even when the Calcutta Maidan meeting was being held, over which Mr. Suhrawardy presided, disturbances had broken out in several places. Now what happened in that meeting? Was there any C. I. D. officer present taking down notes? Where are those notes ?

Sir, it was an astonishing fact that a gun shop within 2 minutes' walk from the Government House had been looted. Not a single policeman turned up in the streets to control the situation in any part of the city. It will not help merely making the Commissioner of Police a scape-goat. It is suggested the city vhad been ablaze in so many places that the Commissioner of Police did not know how to act. But surely Mr. Suhrawardy knew how and where to act. (The Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy: "Yes, yes"). Mr. Suhrawardy says that he knew and we also know when he acted. If he had failed without making any effort, then he is charged with criminal negligence and if he failed inspite of any efforts, he is certainly inefficient and worthless and he should not be kept in that position any longer. There is no place for him in the Ministry.

Sir, there is one point which I would like to say with regard to the Britishers in this House. My friends are remaining neutral. I cannot understand this attitude at all. In a situation such as this they must say if the Ministry was right or the Ministry was wrong. If the Ministry was right, support them and if the Ministry was wrong, you should say so boldly and not remain neutral. Merely sitting on the fence shows signs of abject impotence.(Laughter).

My friend, Mr. Gladding, said that luckily none of his people was injured. It is true, Sir, but that is a statement which makes me extremely sorry. If a single Britisher, man, or woman or a child, had been struck, they would have thrown the Ministry out of office without hesitation but because no Britisher was touched, they can take an impartial and neutral view ! Are they so sure they will be left untouched next time? There is no question of partiality or impartiality here. The present administration has failed and it must come to an end. Anyone who remains neutral is an aider and abettor.

The Hon. Mr. Mohammad Ali : Then why did the Congress ask them to remain neutral during the Constituent Assembly elections ?

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : That is a different point altogether. I would ask my friends, what about the future. Pakistan will not be accepted under any circumstance. (Mr. Fazlur Rahman: It will be accepted). Mr. Suhrawardy said in Bombay after the 16th of August. "When a nation fights against another nation I cannot guarantee civilized conduct". If you are a nation fighting against us, another nation, if that is the attitude of my friends on the other side, then they cannot remain in office any longer. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition Benches). Mr. Suhrawardy must realise that his office is meant for

the good of the entire people of Bengal irrespective of caste, creed and religion and not for his own so-called nation. I would say, Sir, that is an abject treachery to the great responsibility that rests on Mr. Suhrawardy as Premier. (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker : Order, order. Mr. Mookerjee, your time is up.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : May I have two minutes more? I would say this very seriously before I conclude that....

Dr. A. M. Malik : এবার কিছু ভাল কথা বলুন।

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : Apparently I said many good things; otherwise my friends would not be so jubilant. The Chief Minister was dancing the other day on the polished floor of a Delhi Hotel and I have made my friends dance on the floor of this House. I will now say a few words in connection with the future. What about the future? My friends, the Muslims, say that they constitute 25 percent, of India's population, and that is so big a minority that they will never agree to live under Hindu domination. Now if that is their honest and genuine point of view, how can they expect that 45 percent, of the Hindu population of this province will ever agree to live under a constitution where that particular nation represented by Muslims, constituting only 54 per cent, will alone dominate. (The Hon. Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed: That is how the trouble began). I will not today enter into controversies as regards the real population of Bengal. I claim it that if a proper census is taken even today the Hindus will not be in a minority. That question cannot be settled by argument from one side or the other. My Muslim friends who are well-organised under the banner of the Muslim League have got to realise that if Bengal is to be ruled peacefully it can be done only with the willing co-operation of the two communities. I am not talking of all-India politics for the time being.

The Hon. Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed : Why not? What has happened to all-India politics?

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee: I would make this appeal to my friends that a choice has to be made by the Hindus and the Muslims together. There is no way out of it because what we witnessed in Calcutta was not an ordinary communal riot : its motive was political, but things may become even far more serious and drastic in the days, weeks and months to come. Now, if the Muslims of Bengal under the leadership of the Muslim League feel that they can exterminate the Hindus, that is a fantastic idea which can never be given effect to; three and a half crores can never exterminate three crores nor can three crores exterminate three and a half crores...(At this stage the red light was again on).

Mr. Speaker : For three times I have given you extra time.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : But I have been interrupted four times.

Now, Sir, if it is said that civil war will break out throughout India, will that help anyone, will that help in particular 25 percent, Muslims throughout India as against 75 per cent, of Hindus and other non-Muslims? It is not a question of threat at all; it is a question of facing a stern reality. Either we have to fight

or we have to come to some settlement. That settlement cannot be reached so long as you say that one community will dominate over the other, but it can only be reached by a plan which will enable the vast majority of Hindus and Muslims to live under circumstances which will give freedom and peace to the common man. After all, forget not who suffered most during the Calcutta Killing. It was mainly the poorer people, both amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. Ninety per cent, of them were poor and innocent and if the leaders lose their heads and go on creating a situation which they cannot ultimately control, the time will soon come when the common man will turn round and crush the leaders instead of being themselves crushed. It is therefore vitally necessary that this false and foolish idea of Pakistan or Islamic rule has to be banished for ever from your head. In Bengal we have got to live together. We say as a condition precedent this Ministry must go. Only then can we create a state of affairs which will make it possible to build a future Bengal which will be for the good of all, irrespective of any caste, creed or community.

ANNEXURE-B

“MASS CONVERSION WAS MORE HORRIBLE THAN PHYSICAL DEATH” ON NOAKHALI AND CHANDPUR RIOTS—DR S. P. MOOKERJI

Sir, I have no desire to refer in detail to the speeches of my honourable friends Mr Abdul Hashim and Mr. Fazlul Huq. (A voice from the Ministerialist party benches : Your friend!) And your friend for the time being who may be the cause of your doom also! (laughter).

Sir, Mr. Abul Hashim has congratulated the Bengal Ministry on its performance in Noakhali and Chandpur. Mr. Fazlul Huq has condemned the Ministry. I wish both of them the best of luck in the election speeches which they have made on the floor of this House.

I would like to deal with this motion and would also request the honourable members of this House to deal with it in a spirit of solemn seriousness. After all, what has happened in Noakhali and Chandpur is without a parallel in the history of any civilised Government. My charge, Sir, is that not only have the people of Noakhali and Chandpur who belong to the majority community failed to give the protection that was due from them to the minority community and oppressed it; my charge is that the Muslim League which undoubtedly is popular and powerful among Muslims in that district failed to give protection to the minority community; and my farther charge is that the Ministry also hopelessly failed to discharge its primary responsibility, and its officers, though previously informed, did nothing to protect lives and properties of the minority. It has been said that the Muslim League knew nothing about it, that whatever happened in Noakhali and Chandpur was in spite of the Muslim League. Golam Sarwar who forfeited his deposit in the election (Cries of “no, no” from Ministerialist Party benches) or at any rate who was hopelessly defeated (Mr. Muhammad Habibullah Chaudhury: Though you paid him Rs.20,000) -I paid nothing - but in spite of that payment Golam Sarwar who was defeated in the election became so suddenly popular that he could carry the Muslim masses with him only a few months later and incite them to violence. (A voice from Ministerialist Party benches : But he did not join the League). Go and narrate your fairy tales in a new edition of the Arabian Nights before you repeat them seriously on the floor of this Assembly. Now, Sir, what happened in Noakhali? It was a deliberate, well-thoughtout plan for mass conversion of the minority. You were making an experiment of the Pakistan to come. (A voice from ministerialist party benches : Yes) Somebody has the courage to say “yes” I am glad that

there is at least one honest man in this House on that side who says that he did it for the purpose of showing what Pakistan was like (A voice from ministerialist party benches : No.) The interruptor says there is no honest man on that side! (laughter). It was not mass killing. Mass killing was not in the plan. I admit that. The number of people killed was not correctly reported. But that does not justify any member of the League to say that what happened was not enormous in its intensity and barbarousness. Mass conversion was more horrible than even physical death. Whoever came and opposed it was slaughtered. (Cries of "question" from ministerialist party benches.) Every symbol of Hindu religious worship was destroyed. There was loot - almost universal. Arson was also of a widespread character. There were cases of outrages on women, the exact number of which is not yet available. Even a few weeks ago when I was in Delhi, we received information about the recovery of two unfortunate girls from Noakhali from some parts of the Punjab. How is it possible for any member of this House who has an iota of decency left in him to tolerate such abominable things happening in any part of the civilised world in the year 1946? I would have thought that members of this House whom I am addressing would get up one after another and express their regret, their humiliation, their abhorrence at the things which have happened in Bengal under the League Ministry.

Now, Sir, what was the method that was employed? It is proved that there was a demand for subscriptions for the Muslim League, which were actually paid by hundreds and thousands of men in Noakhali. Where has that money gone to? If Mr. Fazlul Huq and Mr. Abul Hashim get an opportunity, they ought to call for accounts from the District Muslim League of Noakhali and find out where the money has disappeared. Leaflets were circulated in print alleged to be signed by responsible Hindus who were forcibly converted and made to give a declaration that they had embraced Islam out of their own sweet will, and asking others to follow; thousands of such leaflets were circulated. How were such things possible? They were possible because the Muslims felt - and the leaders who incited them, instigated them, advised them, they felt that there was a Government sitting in Calcutta which would not come and do any thing to establish law and order, that Pakistan had actually come. Mr. Abul Hashim referred to Lakkhi Babu. Does he know that the village of Panchgaon was a burnt village. He did nothing to save the Hindus. Does he know that? When one military officer was rescued from that village and brought to the military camp, I was there myself at Chowmohani, and the statement that he made was of a staggering nature. No one would believe it unless he actually heard with his own ears the woeful tale of humiliation, misery and torture.

Now, Sir, all this could have been stopped. Indeed the officers were guilty of criminal neglect of duty. I could have understood the bona-fides of Government if Government had taken prompt steps to stop it. But Government did nothing of the kind. The very officers who were responsible for this horrid state of affairs and who failed to protect life and property, to arrest the offenders and to recover looted properties - those very officers were allowed to

remain there, and some officers were quickly transferred. Mr. Suhrawardy has taken the credit for bringing 150,000 people from Bihar to Bengal.

Look at the two pictures. There is one policy which affects the Muslims of Bihar and there is another which affects the Hindu minority in Noakhali and Chandpur. Here the Government threatened to stop rations and to withdraw relief measures unless the refugees went back to their homes immediately. Confidence was not restored but they were compelled to go back on the pain of stopping of rations and closing down of Refugees Camps. But from Bihar lakhs of Muslims were being brought into Bengal, (At this stage the blue light was lit.)

Sir, I have spoken only for six minutes. I thought you would give me 15 minutes.

Sir, I would ask Government one straight question I have before me the eleven points which have been enumerated by the All-India Working Committee of the Muslim League giving directions as to how relief is to be given to the minority Muslims in Bihar. If the Government of Bengal is sincere with regard to the protection of the minority Hindus in Bengal, will Government which is 100 per cent, a Muslim League Government, follow the same principles which have been enunciated by the Muslim League for the Muslim minority in Bihar. (Cries of "Surely, surely" from the Muslim League benches.) If that announcement is made, I know it would be possible for us to rehabilitate in Noakhali and Chandpur much sooner than many people would expect. I ask Mr. Surawardy at whose expense he has brought 150,000 Muslim from Bihar to Bengal? At the expense of the Government of Bengal, at the expense of the people of Bengal they have been placed in districts where the Hindus are in a majority. The object is not to give relief to the Muslims of Bihar but to increase the population of Muslims in those parts of Bengal where they are in a minority. Could anything be more diabolical? Could anything be more preposterous?

Sir, my demand before the Government is that the Government should follow strictly the principles which have been laid down by the All-India Working Committee of the Muslim League with regard to the protection of the Muslim minority in Bihar; namely, the imposition of punitive tax on the majority community, arrest and detention in jail and cancellation of bail of all offenders. This is the demand of the Muslim League. In the same way we demand the posting of Hindu officers and Hindu armed police in affected areas; establishment of big pockets where Hindu inhabitants will be consolidated in Noakhali and Chandpur; investigation should be in the hands of non-Muslim Officers; granting of licenses for firearms to at least 10 percent, of the Hindus in the big pockets; stationing of armed Hindu officers with at least 50 percent, of Hindu police in Noakhali and Chandpur. If Mr. Suhrawardy really expects a consistency in the treatment of the minorities which has been the demand of the All-India Working Committee of the Muslim League, it is only fair and proper that these demands which have been voiced by the All-India Working Committee of the Muslim League for the protection of the minority in Bihar should be applied for the protection of the minority Hindus in Bengal.

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দেশভাগ দেশত্যাগ	সন্দীপ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়
হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় কেন দেশত্যাগ করছে	সালাম আজাদ
লজ্জা	তসলিমা নাসরিন
দলিত নেতা যোগেন্দ্রনাথ মণ্ডল : কেন পদত্যাগ করেছিলেন?	দেবজ্যোতি রায়
মৃত্যুঞ্জয়ী শ্যামাপ্রসাদ ও আজকের পশ্চিমবঙ্গ	.....	অরুণ ভদ্র
নোয়াখালীর মাটি ও মানুষ	.....	ড. দীনেশচন্দ্র সিংহ
জনগণের সঙ্গে	.....	জ্যোতি বসু
নোয়াখালির দুর্যোগের দিনে	.....	অশোকা গুপ্ত
স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে ভারতের জাতীয় কংগ্রেস, ১৮৮৫-১৯৪৭	.....	অমলেশ ত্রিপাঠী
নোয়াখালীর ইতিকথা	.....	নলিনীরঞ্জন মিত্র
নোয়াখালিতে মহাত্মা	.....	সুকুমার রায়
বাংলা : ফজলুল হক থেকে জ্যোতি বসু	.....	সুখরঞ্জন সেনগুপ্ত
শ্যামাপ্রসাদ : বঙ্গ বিভাগ ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গ	.....	ড. দীনেশচন্দ্র সিংহ
পাক-ভারতের রূপরেখা	.....	প্রভাসচন্দ্র লাহিড়ী
পাকিস্তান প্রস্তাব ও ফজলুল হক	.....	অমলেন্দু দে
কাশ্মীর মধ্যে শ্যামাপ্রসাদ	.....	রুদ্রপ্রতাপ চট্টোপাধ্যায়
দেশভাগ : স্মৃতি আর সত্য	.....	সন্দীপ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়
জেহাদ	.....	সুহাস মজুমদার
হিন্দুর শত্রু হিন্দু	.....	প্রিয়রঞ্জন কুণ্ডু
বাঙালীর পরিত্রাতা শ্যামাপ্রসাদ	.....	ড. দীনেশচন্দ্র সিংহ
বঙ্গ সংহার এবং	.....	সুখরঞ্জন সেনগুপ্ত
শিকড়ের সন্ধানে	.....	কালীপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়
আশুতোষ মেমোরিয়াল ইনস্টিটিউট, কলকাতা		
ড. শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী ফাউন্ডেশন, কলকাতা		
অখিল ভারতীয় ইতিহাস সঙ্কলন সমিতি, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ		
ডঃ শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী স্মারক সমিতি		
কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কেন্দ্রীয় গ্রন্থাগার		
কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্পেশাল অ্যাসিস্টেন্ট প্রোগ্রাম গ্রন্থাগার (ইতিহাস বিভাগ)		
কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়া সেন্টার গ্রন্থাগার		
বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদ গ্রন্থাগার		
নোয়াখালি সন্মিলনী হীরক-জয়ন্তী স্মারকগ্রন্থ-১৯৬৫		
প্রবাসী, দেশ, ভারতবর্ষ, কৃষ্ণাণু, সমতট, শক্তি সমাচার, মায়ের ডাক, প্রণব, স্টেটসম্যান, আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা, অমৃতবাজার পত্রিকা, দৈনিক বসুমতী, স্বস্তিকা, বিশ্বহিন্দু বার্তা, যুগবাণী।		