

NEETI NAIR

changing homelands

HINDU POLITICS AND THE
PARTITION OF INDIA

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PARTITION OF INDIA

Neeti Nair

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In memory of my grandfather,
Mr. Bal Raj Nair (1915–2008)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIML	All India Muslim League
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CC	Chief Commissioner
CID	Criminal Intelligence Department
CP	Central Provinces
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code
DAV	Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (College)
DC	Deputy Commissioner
FIR	First Information Report
GOI	Government of India
HMG	His/Her Majesty's Government
HRA	Hindustan Republican Association/Army
HSRA	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association/Army
ICS	Indian Civil Service
INA	Indian National Army
INC	Indian National Congress
MEO	Military Evacuation Organization
MLNG	Muslim League National Guards
NJBS	Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PBF	Punjab Boundary Force
PPCC	Punjab Provincial Congress Committee
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SD	Sanatan Dharm (Sabha)
SGPC	Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
UP	United Provinces
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

At a certain point I lost track of you.
You needed me. You needed to perfect me.
In your absence you polished me into the Enemy.
Your history gets in the way of my memory.
I am everything you lost. You can't forgive me.
I am everything you lost. Your perfect Enemy.
Your memory gets in the way of my memory:
...
I'm everything you lost. You won't forgive me.
My memory keeps getting in the way of your history.
There is nothing to forgive. You can't forgive me.
I hid my pain even from myself; I revealed my pain only to myself.

There is everything to forgive. You can't forgive me.

If only somehow you could have been mine,
what would not have been possible in the world?

Agha Shahid Ali, *Farewell*



Map of South Asia, c. 1931.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty years after the Partition of India, the Punjabi Hindu leader Dr. Gokul Chand Narang let loose these freely flowing thoughts: “Jinnah, in a way, was wrong in asking for Pakistan. You know he wanted parity. You understand what I mean by parity. If parity was there, Hindus would have been absolutely nowhere. I was chairman of a public meeting. *I said that I would agree to Pakistan, but never to parity.* Pakistan was much a lesser evil than parity. Don’t you agree with me? We all knew that Hindus would never come to unanimity.”¹ When I first read his words in an archive in Delhi, I averted my eyes. It was my first meeting with a tiny important detail: some Punjabi Hindus preferred Partition to a united India.

Growing up in post-Partition India, I believed that Jinnah was responsible for Partition, for the two-nation theory, for the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, and for my grandparents’ move from Lahore. This was also, I learnt during fieldwork in Delhi in 2002–2003, the understanding among Punjabi Hindus who had crossed the newly demarcated boundary in 1947. But the reason for something that had forced millions to change homelands remained unfathomable. In memory, the move was always described as sudden; all claimed a measure of disbelief, of not having seen this storm come their way.²

I focus here on the politics of Punjabi Hindus and study the dynamics of their interactions with Muslims and Sikhs in the four decades preceding independence and Partition. It was the province of the Punjab—with its population unevenly divided into the “enumerated communities” of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—that posed a seemingly unyielding conundrum during the last and most definitive attempt to negotiate a transfer of power in 1947.³ Examining the multiple identities of Hindus as a minority in Muslim-majority Punjab and as a majority in India, I question earlier

histories that focus on Muslim politics and on the role of the British.⁴ I also contribute to debates on the rise of Hindu nationalism in India⁵ and provide an alternative assessment of the significance of Partition towards a few of South Asia's enduring problems.⁶

In 1947, some Punjabi Hindu leaders did seek to safeguard their interests by aligning with Hindus in the rest of India rather than with Muslims and Sikhs in undivided Punjab. However, their movement eastward was neither predictable nor inevitable: The details of their political concerns reflect the emotional range of their time and the temper of their age, and ultimately explain their choices at decisive moments such as 1947. Through archival research and oral histories, past the debates of historians and the acrimony of recent times, I can still hear the anguish with which minority Punjabis on both sides of the new border locked their homes and left the land of their birth and their homeland, scarcely believing it would never again be part of a united nation. I hear again their fears as they reasoned away their options and coped with the abruptness and force with which Partition swept away a shared world, disrupted the lives of generations, and sundered the deepest friendships, seemingly without any warning. Most Punjabis had not seen Partition coming.

However, that has not deterred historians of Partition from drawing straight lines connecting 1947 with the past to explain the eventual division. Thus, relations between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs have been described as steadily deteriorating, and political differences related to sharing power at the level of the region and a new all-India center have been reduced to a structural problem that could only be resolved via the formation of a separate state.⁷ Recent scholarship, however, is conflicted on the changes that affected social and political formations in early twentieth-century Punjab. Although it is now clear that certain Punjabis reformed their fluid religious traditions and drew sharper distinctions between communities,⁸ it is equally apparent that other Punjabis continued to share beliefs and practices in social, cultural, and political domains across lines of formal religious community.⁹ In addition, the clues towards understanding the decision to partition the Punjab do not lie at the level of political institutions or of shared public spaces, because Punjabis could and did accommodate their religious differences in both these arenas. Measured analyses in the fateful decade before 1947 always concluded that both freedom and unity were within reach. It was inconceivable that Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs would do anything but live together after sorting out their political differences. This much was *inevitable*.

Yet histories of Partition have been far removed from contemporary writings that repeatedly affirmed the inter-dependent principles of freedom and unity. Indeed, such histories glide over the acute sense of disbelief that accompanied Partition by explaining that both Partition and the creation of Pakistan were obvious consequences of an era of “communalism” or increasing conflict between religiously defined communities. So a first wave of scholarship equated the politics of communalists, somewhat tautologically, with those believed to be communal-minded: Muslims belonging to the Muslim League and Hindus who were loyal to the politics of the Hindu Mahasabha. It also was held that “religious communalists” who contributed to the Partition of India were loyal to British imperialists, while the “secular” nationalists of the Indian National Congress fought for the freedom of a united India.¹⁰

Less conventional explanations have been produced by members of the Subaltern Studies Collective who have laboured over the “historic failure of the nation to come to its own.” Partha Chatterjee resisted the attempts of Western scholars to limit the modular form of the nation by finding evidence of autonomy in the inner, spiritual lives of colonial subjects.¹¹ Chatterjee’s quest for “our modernity” and Ranajit Guha’s elaboration of two autonomous domains of politics—elite and subaltern—became, in the hands of Gyanendra Pandey, a study of communalism as colonial discourse: another way that colonial masters could classify Indians’ inability to rule themselves.¹² Locating the autonomous domain of the subaltern subject in the “fragment,” Pandey’s recent work emphasises the role of partition violence in reconfiguring the discourse of “community.” He asserts the existence of a sharp split between disciplinary and non-disciplinary understandings of partition and calls for scholarship to move beyond ascertaining the causes of India’s Partition. New historiography, he avers, “surely needs to explore the meaning of Partition in terms of the new social arrangements, new consciousness and new subjectivities to which it gave rise.”¹³ Such a move has begun to be made and our understanding of how violence was inflicted along lines of gender has increased appreciably as a result. Growing numbers of historians have now turned to examining the impact of Partition on subsequent transformations in the subcontinent. The split between “high politics” and history from below also has become institutionalized, although David Gilmartin has called for a narrative that can bridge these two seemingly impassable divides.¹⁴

Another set of interventions has drawn an analytical distinction between nation and state, as well as on multiple imaginings of the nation.

Ayesha Jalal's early work on Jinnah and the Muslim League argues that the Lahore Resolution of 1940 was not a call for the ultimate Partition of India. More recently, she distinguishes between religiously informed cultural identities and the politics of cultural nationalists. Through her detailed study of Muslim politics, Jalal strives to slay at least some of the demons that commonly associate the twining of religion and politics as communalism.¹⁵ Official nationalist historians also have re-examined the politics of the Indian National Congress in the decades leading up to Partition.¹⁶ The responsibility of the Congress in the practice of communalism, the importance of myths in history, and the recognition of the role of emotion in the making of anti-colonial nationalism have been powerful contributions in the writing of political history in recent years.¹⁷

After two decades of subaltern studies, it is hardly possible to exclude socially subordinate classes of society from our analyses. But the Punjab Legislative Assembly members who cast their vote in favour of Partition represented an elite and propertied few. And yet these elites, Punjabi Hindus in this book, were severely divided on the fate of their homeland. Some of the prejudices and fears that haunted them stemmed from their peculiar situation. They were a religious minority within the Punjab, but a majority in the rest of India; they were ahead of the Muslim majority in the Punjab in terms of education and its allied benefits, but they feared what democratization would do to their standing. Nevertheless, in the decades preceding independence and Partition, Punjabi Hindus continued to collaborate with Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs in anti-colonial movements. Clearly, their vote for Partition was not an easy decision that flowed naturally from an earlier politics.

The multiple identities of Punjabi Hindus were reflected in their shifting and contingent positions in the politics of the province and nation-in-making. Rather than succumb to labels like "loyalist," "communal," "liberal," "extremist," or "nationalist," I seek the meanings of these positions in the everyday concerns of Punjabi Hindus as they navigated a new world of opportunities and sought a greater say in the governance of their homeland. I show that "communalism" evolved and held multiple burdens in the four decades of this study. From a positive sensibility associated with preserving the interests of one's own community, communal concerns came to symbolize an exclusionary sentiment designed to "doing the other community down," a practice of religiously informed bigotry. Nonetheless, until the moment of Partition, accommodation be-

tween Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in the political arenas of the Punjab was always possible.

The Hindus of the Punjab

As a category of analysis, “Punjabi Hindu” is fraught with problems of definition. The community was fractured in multiple ways throughout the time period of this study. Comprising between 28 and 32 percent of the population of the Punjab, the Hindus also were sharply divided along lines of caste, sect, and class. Late nineteenth-century Punjab was a land of religious *shastrarths* or debates between reformist Hindu Arya Samajis, orthodox Hindu Sanatanis, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christian missionaries. A concern for strengthening the Hindu community co-existed with divisive debates on custom, ritual, and the inclusion of untouchables among upper-caste Hindus. In the early years of the century, the Arya Samajis, who criticized some aspects of Hindu orthodoxy, were widely described as split between those who favoured Western education and those who wished to emphasise an education in Sanskrit.¹⁸ Yet “Punjabi Hindu” remains a useful category of analysis for its retrospective value and because the colonial masters had invested the religious community with a valence and coherence that was unprecedented. Unlike the Hindus of the neighbouring province Sind, or those of Bengal, most Hindus were forced to leave a hastily carved up West Punjab in 1947. Did this unity in adversity forge a shared and common understanding of Partition? Had a unified politics led to their sudden migration? My research suggests that in their attitude towards the key debates of the day, Punjabi Hindus did not respond in a uniform way.

As a province, the Punjab held a special place in British imperial strategies. After the rebellion of 1857, it formed the main recruiting ground of the British Indian army. The loyalty of certain Punjab chiefs had helped forge what came to be regarded as the “Punjab tradition,” a tradition that necessitated a stable and loyal rural base.¹⁹ Binding the new “martial” tribes of the Punjab to the British Indian army required investing in irrigation since agriculture was the chief occupation of the families who lent their sons to the army. It also required, according to some administrators, an intervention in agrarian legislation that limited the sale of agricultural land to members of “agricultural tribes.”²⁰ Excluded from this new category were moneylenders and lawyers who tended to be Hindu.

I launch into a study of Punjabi Hindu politics by examining their reactions to the amendment to the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1907, which further restricted the “tribes” that could acquire agricultural land. In the words of Rai Bahadur Shadi Lal, a judge of the Lahore High Court and opponent of the act:

The serious disability under which an ordinary Hindu labours is evident from the fact that if he wants to plant a garden in a village he cannot get land for it, if he wishes to build a house for a residence he can do so in the air, but not on the surface of the earth. A philanthropic Hindu who is inclined to build a hospital finds that he cannot satisfy his ideas of philanthropy. A commercial man cannot get land for building a factory, nor can one desirous of building a school or a college purchase land for the purpose. Even the religiously inclined Hindu is debarred from having land to build a temple . . . at every moment of his life he is made to feel that his very existence in the village is at the sufferance of his fellow villagers who are better circumstanced in these matters, and the majority of whom are Mahomedans.²¹

In this provocative address to the newly founded Punjabi Hindu Sabha in 1909, Shadi Lal effortlessly connected the travails of urban Hindus with the allegedly better prospects of their Muslim neighbours. Others present went further, suggesting the time had come for Punjabi Hindus to focus on their rights as a religious community and disregard the anti-colonial politics of the so-called “national” Congress. The change in emphasis also was a result of the new announcement that, on account of its political and historical importance, the Muslim community would be granted “separate electorates”: a privilege that would enable Muslims with the franchise to be solely responsible for the representatives they elected; non-Muslims would have no say in the election of Muslim representatives.

So the first chapter of this book opens with a listing of urban Punjabi Hindu complaints, only to pit these against the backdrop of an anti-colonial agrarian agitation that included Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in 1907. My discussion of the British repression that followed this movement argues for a more nuanced understanding of both “loyalty” and anti-colonial nationalism. Following the foremost Punjabi Hindu congressman Lala Lajpat Rai’s pointed remark that “corporate loyalty . . . has no market value unless there is disloyalty or at least the appearance of disloyalty,”²² I read

official sources from the Home Department, as well as published letters and writings from the contemporary press to argue that the years between the anti-colonial agrarian movement and the First World War embodied a wide range of politics—a tactical loyalism, an emotive anti-colonialism, communal patriotism, and communal antagonism. I also discuss how other politically aware Punjabi Hindus dealt with the pulls and pressures imposed by conflicting loyalties towards their religion, the nation in formation, and, indeed, the colonial state.

In Chapter 2, I draw out the consequence of *sangathan* or efforts to strengthen the Hindu community in the 1920s by focusing on a riot in Kohat in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) in 1924. This riot led to the unprecedented evacuation of minority Hindus from Kohat and galvanized Hindus across the country. In subsequent debates, the fears and insecurities of these Frontier Hindus were emphasised over the solidarity of interest that came with being part of a region proud of its own traditions of protecting minorities. The attitude of the Indian National Congress towards the victims of this riot and its reverberations in the rest of India, particularly the neighbouring Punjab, encapsulate the tensions between a Hindu nationalism that felt Hindu interests were being disregarded by the all-India Congress, and the Gandhi-led Congress that held Muslims responsible for the riots despite evidence of British bungling and the provocations of *sangathanist* Hindus.

In the wake of the Kohat Riot, Lajpat Rai simultaneously advocated both the reduction of “absolute rights” and a partition of the Punjab along religious lines, suggesting this would be between a “Muslim India and a non-Muslim India.” Shortly thereafter, Rai resigned from the Congress and was nominated president of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1925. Insisting that “unity cannot be purchased at the cost of Hindu rights,” he fought the 1926 assembly elections against the Congress on a largely Hindu nationalist plank.²³ Yet only a year later, Rai returned to the Congress and agreed to grant minority Muslims reserved seats according to the terms of its Nehru Report. The peculiar position of Punjabi Hindus as a minority in the Punjab and a religious majority in India are revealed in my close reading of the shifting politics and alliances of Lajpat Rai. The different valences that inhered to the term “communalism” are further elaborated in this chapter. Apart from Rai’s numerous contributions to the *Tribune* and *The People*—a weekly he founded—I rely on writings in the press by other Punjabi and Frontier Hindus, and by prominent leaders of the

all-India Congress such as Gandhi. I also use official reports submitted to the British Commissions such as the *Nehru Report* and a *Memorandum on the Rights Claimed by Hindu Minority in North-West India* by the redoubtable Raja Narendra Nath—another leading spokesman of urban Punjabi Hindu interests.

Chapter 3 reflects on two more moments in the 1920s when Punjabi Hindus were drawn into movements that included the concerns of Muslims and Sikhs, revolutionaries and moderates alike. Swami Shraddhanand (earlier Munshi Ram), nowadays regarded in liberal historiography as a “communal” and bigoted Arya Samaji leader, led the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation in Delhi—a key component of the first Gandhian non-cooperation movement.²⁴ His anti-colonialism earned him the support of both Hindus and Muslims and the unprecedented honour of speaking from the pulpit of Delhi’s Jama Masjid. But the end of the bonhomie that characterized this non-cooperation Khilafat movement was marked by rival movements of proselytizing that often culminated in riots. Shraddhanand was at the forefront of these movements in North India and wrote and preached extensively on the imperative to convert untouchables and Muslims to Hinduism. Yet I find it astonishing and worthy of reflection that Shraddhanand, even in his most “communal” avatar, never repudiates his earlier emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity. In editorials to *The Liberator*—an English periodical he founded in 1926—Shraddhanand lingered on the meanings of his involvement in the 1919 movement, effectively challenging a narrative of steadily increasing communalisation through the 1920s.

The second moment I have chosen dwells upon the remarkable non-violent non-cooperation of hunger strikers led by Bhagat Singh in the Lahore conspiracy case between 1929 and 1931. Singh and his fellow hunger strikers represent yet another example of anti-colonial protest that included members of every religious community and, indeed, political affiliation. I analyse the meanings of their prolonged hunger strikes and demands for rights as political prisoners through their own writings and actions, and their reception and endorsement in the contemporary press. At least part of the alienation of the Congress in the Punjab may be traced to their failure to deal with the wave of indignation that swept the Punjab when Bhagat Singh and two of his comrades, Rajguru and Sukhdev, were hanged. The silence in Gandhi and Gandhian historiography on this remarkable strand in anti-colonial politics suggests that the Congress was increasingly unwilling to tolerate dissent, regardless of its similarities in anti-colonial strategy and motivation.²⁵

Spanning a critical decade and a half, Chapter 4 analyses the shifting relationships amongst Punjabi Hindus as they responded to new initiatives aimed at sharing power between religiously defined communities in the Punjab. The 1930s are an under-studied and enormously interesting time: A series of conferences and dramatic pacts made politics in the Punjab and the rest of India painfully unpredictable and exciting. My research reveals that various proposals to partition the Punjab were discussed in a bid to safeguard the interests of various communities. The archival evidence also points overwhelmingly to the many alternative meanings embodied in *Pakistan*.

Although written in a chronological vein, my narrative treats less-known attempts at reaching a negotiated settlement such as the Jinnah-Prasad talks of 1935 with as much fidelity as well-documented events such as the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946. Only such a narrative can reveal how close Indians were to achieving a negotiated political settlement that would preserve a united India, on the eve of Partition. This chapter relies on letters and opinion pieces published in the press, the papers of the All India Congress Committee, contemporary monographs authored by Punjabi Hindu academics and politicians, and memoranda submitted to official bodies such as the Round Table Conference and the Cabinet Mission.

In Chapter 5, I reinterpret the nature and trajectory of Partition violence, by using the *Transfer of Power* documents drawn from India Office Records and Viceregal papers, the private papers of British and Indian administrators and other onlookers, and some vignettes from the large body of writing referred to as Partition literature. I argue that Partition violence had little to do with religious fanaticism: it was, in essence, a tragic consequence of a breakdown in political negotiations that *had been anticipated* by British officers at the highest levels. Their failure to impose martial law and unwillingness to stay until proper power-sharing arrangements were negotiated between the Congress and the League endows them with much of the responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of lives lost—the lives of people simply unwilling to leave their homes on either side of the new international boundary line. At the same time, I emphasise the continuing salience of an older “moral community,” as it enabled millions of minority Punjabis to stay safe and finally leave as safely as they possibly could.

To leave their homeland for what seemed like a faraway and alien “nation” was a deeply difficult decision, especially for those who had never before stepped outside the boundaries of their village or city. Despite

the fear let loose by a seemingly uncontrollable wave of violence, I was confronted by a constant refrain both from materials in the archives and from interviews with those who had to flee West Punjab and the NWFP: *Raj palat jayega, ham yahin rahenge* (There will be a change of government, [but] we will stay here). What attachment was this that could transcend the steady polarization in communal relations and the anxiety of those months?

In the sixth and final chapter, I mine interviews with former refugees from rural and urban West Punjab, now residents of Delhi, to pause at a moment of fear, of equivocation, of being caught between divided loyalties and soon-to-be divided homelands. I call this a “moment of reckoning,”²⁶ suspended between Mountbatten’s Partition announcement of June 3, 1947, and evacuation, which lasted from later that June to several months hence; a moment when time itself seemed to move in slow motion, and every move and memory was burdened by a bitter gravitas.

“Remembering well,” writes the sociologist Richard Sennett, “requires reopening wounds in a particular way, one which people cannot do by themselves; remembering well requires a social structure in which people can address others across the boundaries of difference. This is the liberal hope of collective memory.”²⁷ Given the recent interest in the work of recording Partition memories from diametrically opposing ideological positions, this advice is useful. But how can one address others across the boundaries of difference when the scars of Partition remain, when its causes are still unfathomable even for those who crossed the border, and when every Hindu-Muslim riot in contemporary India harkens back to foundational myths that are historically inaccurate but resilient? In a different context, but relevant to my method, the historian Charles Maier tells us that “written history must be contrapuntal, not harmonic. That is, it must allow the particular histories of national groups to be woven together linearly alongside each other so that the careful listener can follow them distinctly but simultaneously, hearing the whole together with the parts.”²⁸

My chapter on memories particularly chimes with the Maier model: I juxtapose fragments of different interviews alongside different official narratives. These voices contend with, but also co-opt aspects of official narratives and draw meaning from these to make sense of a post-Partition world. In pursuing this method, I differ from Veena Das

and Gyanendra Pandey's valuable work on fragments: their fragments, they concur, cannot be brought into a larger narrative.²⁹ Working with memories collected several generations later *and* among different generations of Punjabi Hindus, I gather very different insights on how the memory of disbelief—an index of the contingent quality of Partition—influences interactions between Hindus and Muslims in contemporary India.

Since Partition, Punjabi Hindus have rendered themselves invisible in a history to which they contributed, even as a particular majoritarian strand of Punjabi Hindu nationalism has sought to impose its imprint on India. In their insistence that they spoke Hindi and not Punjabi at home; in the dissemination of a Punjabi Hindu minority narrative of Muslim “fanaticism” and pan-Islamism; and in their continually shifting politics that renders false any hard boundary between the “secular national” and the “communal,” they represent a Hindu nationalist vision that has come to dominate over other ideas of India. Influenced by post-Partition developments, this vision has morphed into a frightening beast—unrecognizable, surely, even to its founders. It is worth remembering that Swami Shraddhanand, an icon of the Hindu Right, was against the burning of Christian churches in Amritsar and Gujranwala in 1919 and deplored the use of coercion to effect conversions in the mid 1920s. A nuanced and archivally grounded study of Punjabi Hindus' fears about being treated as statutory minorities in a Muslim-majority province, and their tryst with earlier strains of Hindu nationalism, is critical to understanding the sharp differences between those strains and concerns in early twentieth-century India and the absurd claims of the Hindu Right in India today. It is also important to reckon with the *multiple* meanings of Partition among Punjabi Hindus today.

In recent years, the debate on loyalty and citizenship in South Asia has included historians who urge a reconsideration of the idea of the nation-state as it emerged in 1947. Yet other developments post-9/11 seem to necessitate the writing of a history that de-hyphenates the Indo-Pakistan equation. By engaging with a variety of debates on the accommodation of Hindu minority rights in undivided Punjab, this book seeks to disturb still-popular notions on what underlay the creation of Pakistan.³⁰ The arguments developed here have evolved out of conversations between contemporary sources and later-day histories written under the burden

of nationalist imperatives, and conversations between history and memory. I hope these will help explain some of the unresolved anxieties that continue to beset Hindu-Muslim relationships in the sub-continent, point to paths not taken, and suggest how we might accommodate political differences in our time.

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of flux for the Hindus of the Punjab. The long shadow of the famines of the 1890s; the tension produced by rival Christian and Arya Samaji orphan relief movements; the assassination of an Arya Samaji preacher, Pt. Lekh Ram, by a Muslim followed by a momentary coming together of the otherwise divided Hindu community; the discovery of an imperial policy that aimed to redress the imbalance in government employment by favouring Muslims; and the passing of the Land Alienation Act of 1900 all seemed to suggest to Punjabi Hindus that this was a time for caution, perhaps even a time to proclaim their loyalty to the British in unequivocal terms. The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900, in particular, impelled this line of reasoning.¹

Among the many controversial laws associated with the viceroyalty of Curzon (1899–1905) was the Land Alienation Act of 1900. This measure restricted the transfer of land from members of “agricultural tribes” to “non-agricultural tribes.” Since Muslims dominated among the former, some urban Punjabi Hindus believed that the act definitively sacrificed the much-vaunted impartiality of the British towards the protection of one “class”—the Muslims. For these Hindus, accustomed to being the strongest of the three communities, this was hard to swallow.² Worse, they were not permitted to pass a resolution protesting this act at the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress, albeit a weak form of protest.³ It is noteworthy that the first concrete steps towards the formation of a Punjabi Hindu Sabha were made as an amendment to the Land Alienation Act, which was being considered in 1907. By this amendment, the category “statutory agriculturist” would be removed, thereby disabling the only loophole through which rich urban Hindus had continued to own, buy, and sell agricultural land.

While this chapter lists urban Punjabi Hindu grievances and an argument to support the British in 1909, it also analyses an earlier moment in 1907, when Punjabis of all three religious communities attacked the British on specific grievances relating to the canal colonies, which then snow-balled into a much larger and more wide-ranging critique of colonial rule. What, then, marks the shift in attitudes between 1907 and 1909? I consider the debates around loyalty/anti-colonialism by focusing on the predicament of the individual Arya Samaji caught between multiple loyalties—to both a religious organization and a political cause, that is, nationalism. The debates around political representation are traced to a time before separate electorates were granted. These debates—informed, thoughtful, and often couched in a discourse of loyalty—seem not to matter after all, as the British cast aside native objections to proceed with their own vision of Indian society. Before assessing the changes in political discourse during this fruitful decade, I briefly consider the fiery *Ghadr* Rebellion of 1914–15 and the winds of change it seemed to portend.

Punjabi Hindu Claims and Qualms

“My objection against the Congress is that it makes the Hindu forget that he is a Hindu and tends to swamp his communal individuality into an Indian ideal, thus making him break with all his past traditions and past glory.”⁴ Rai Bahadur Lal Chand, the author of these lines, called for a changed orientation in Punjabi Hindu politics through a series of letters written under the pseudonym “Observer” to the newspaper *Panjabee*. The timing of the letters is significant; the first letter was written in February 1909, soon after Lord Morley’s announcement that Muslim demands for “excessive privileges and special treatment would be met in full.” Lal Chand argued that the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, had failed the Hindus by pandering to Muslim interests.⁵

Several laments came together in Lal Chand’s letters. To begin with, he reflected the concerns of a prosperous but threatened Hindu middle class by holding the Punjab Land Alienation Act responsible for forcing Hindus—“sons of the soil and its most ancient inhabitants”—out of agriculture and into professions where the competition was British.⁶ Lal Chand worried that Hindus were in danger of becoming a minority in all of India and not only in the Punjab, where this was a well-known statistical fact. He measured the gains made by the Congress since its founding, and held that this was a mere ripple in the life of a people as ancient as the

Hindus. If only the Hindus would recognize that the Congress's ideal of a united India was unworkable, they could still strengthen their community and move forward: "A person who believes in the Indian ideal would subordinate the Hindu interests as of secondary importance, and this has actually happened in the conduct of the Congress leaders . . . Whereas those who believe in the Hindu ideal must subordinate the Indian as of secondary significance and lend their support to it so far only as the ideal does not militate against the real Hindu interests."⁷

Lal Chand posed the problem simply: Which ideal was of primary importance—the religious or the national? He blamed the Hindus for studying Persian at the expense of Sanskrit. In doing so, he was equating Sanskrit with the "national" and Persian with the "foreign."⁸ Similarly, the pre-eminent Punjabi Congressman Lajpat Rai requested Urdu poetry while interned in a Burmese prison in 1907, but set up Hindi Elementary Education Leagues as a municipal councillor in Lahore in 1911, in the belief that popularizing Hindi alone was consonant with the ideals of "political solidarity."⁹ Partaking in these language debates throughout North India and drawing boundaries between Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism was part of an episteme commonly abbreviated as "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan."¹⁰ These Punjabis were in the process of appropriating the idea of a well-defined Hindu community that spoke or needed to speak Hindi. This community was normatively mapped onto the territory of *Hindustan* and viewed as having uniformly suffered the "tyranny" of Muslim rule. Such an interpretation of India's complex past was one of the most enduring inheritances of colonial scholarship and pedagogy.¹¹

To buttress his criticism of the Congress, Lal Chand turned to the problem of minority Hindus in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). He linked the Congress's resolutions of 1897 and 1898 that demanded a reduction in troops employed in the Frontier Province to a recent increase in raids on wealthy Hindus. A few years later, the then viceroy Curzon had reorganized the Punjab, carving out four districts to form the NWFP, a province that was meant to be administered separately from the Punjab. This was not a consequence of Congress's demands, and Lal Chand admitted as much, yet he asked why the Congress passed resolutions about Indians in the Transvaal in South Africa, whom he believed were mostly Muslim, but failed to speak on behalf of minority Hindus in the Frontier Province. Statistics of scholarships given to poor students, judicial and executive appointments, and the recent council reforms were brought together to prove that "*where the Mohammedans preponderate in numerical*

*strength they get the lion's share in the administration on the basis of their numerical strength. Where they are in poor minority, they get a share on the ground of political importance."*¹²

Lal Chand held that the British government helped Muslims because the Congress had begun to make too many demands. Although it was "really deplorable" that Hindus and Muslims fought each other, these battles took on a "graver aspect" when the government sided with the Muslims. Lal Chand demanded that the Hindu community "neutralise hostile combinations."¹³ This would necessitate re-defining both patriotism and loyalty to the British:

*Patriotism ought to be communal and not merely geographical . . . although patriotism has come to be understood as meaning love for one's country, the origin of the word implies as much communal love as geographical. In fact it appears to me the original idea was that of common descent as basis for the ideal, and as communities settled in different tracts, the tract absorbed their love and gave rise to the secondary sense. . . . The ideal, the predominant factor, ought to be communal rather than geographical interest. . . . The idea is to love everything owned by the community. It may be religion, it may be a tract of country, or it may be a phase of civilisation. But these are mere outward clothes of the inner feeling. This then is the fire I wish to rekindle."*¹⁴

Here was a possibility of communal love that was not predicated on rivalry. The "community" could take many different forms. But elsewhere in these letters, Lal Chand referred directly to the Hindus of the Punjab. He believed that the Hindus alone had incurred British displeasure for participating in an inter-communitarian agrarian anti-colonial movement two years earlier. Therefore, the only option for Hindus was to establish independent Hindu organizations that would eventually attract Muslims and enable the drafting of common demands.

In agreement with Lal Chand, the leading Congressman from the Punjab, Lajpat Rai, now argued that the "best Hindu opinion" of the Punjab was against holding the annual Congress session in Lahore, the capital city of the province. He also weighed in on the consequences of the recent split in the national Congress (December 1907) along lines deemed *moderate* and *extremist*: "The split reduces the position of the Congress to an organisation run by a section of the educated Hindus in the name of the united nation. The bulk of the Muhammadans are opposed to it. A strong section

of the Hindus disown its politics, being disposed to a policy of reaction. The majority have, since the split, become indifferent. The minority that still stand for a propaganda of Self-Government are divided. Under the circumstances it is futile to pretend that the Congress stands for unity and represents the united nation.”¹⁵

Reiterating that the Congress did not represent all of India, Lajpat Rai urged that the annual session be held in a province where “there is a practical unanimity of opinion, at least among the educated Hindus.” In Punjab, Rai held that the situation had changed from the time the Congress had been invited to Lahore in December 1908. Not too long before, despite differences with the Bengalis dominating the Congress, Rai had felt it “unpatriotic” for Punjab to “impair the unity of the movement by seceding from it.”¹⁶ So what now justified a suspension of ties with the purportedly all-India organisation?

Lajpat Rai and many other Punjabi Hindu Congressmen were irked by the Morley-Minto reforms that purportedly altered the balance between Hindus and Muslims. These reforms, enshrining the principle of separate electorates—a measure meant to protect the Muslims, a minority in India—had stung Punjabi Hindus, a minority within the province Punjab. Now these Punjabi Hindus blamed the Congress for failing to speak for their interests. So Lajpat Rai put all his weight behind the Punjabi Hindu Conference scheduled for October 1909.¹⁷ He toured the province, pre-empted the Congress deputation in the Ambala, Jullundur, Gujranwala, and Montgomery districts, and obtained a large number of signatures on an anti-Congress manifesto. The provincial press reflected personal animosities when Harkishen Lal, Lajpat Rai’s archrival in the province, launched the newspaper *Bedari* to counter the attacks against him in the Rai-financed *Peshwa*.¹⁸ Yet the rift between the Punjab Hindu Sabha and the Congress must not be overdrawn. The Punjabi Hindu leader Ram Bhaj Dutt, for instance, served as both secretary of a sub-committee of the Hindu Conference and as a member of the Indian National Congress Reception Committee.¹⁹

As early as 1901, Lajpat Rai had criticized the Congress’s “anxiety to speak in the name of all Indians.” He felt it “futile to attempt a chimerical and premature union of the various religious nationalities” in India and lamented that the Congress had diluted its resolutions on orphan relief and the *shuddhi* movement because of the presence of Muslims and Christians. He had not minced words: “Hindu interests . . . have been sacrificed for a false ideal of nationality.”²⁰

Yet such a re-definition of priorities and patriotisms in 1901 and 1909 was markedly distinct from the understanding that emerged during the 1907 rural movement. In the spring of that year, the Punjab Council introduced a bill to amend the Colonisation Act regarding the terms of tenure on which land was held in the canal colonies. This measure coincided with other proposed changes: an increase in land revenue in the Rawalpindi District and an increase in the Bari Doab Canal rates at a time when peasants along the canal were threatened with crop failure. In response, peasants threatened to stop revenue payments and compelled the British to abandon the contemplated Colonisation Bill. Although the peasant movement included Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, its aftermath was marked by a degree of polarization in Hindu-Muslim political relations.

The Textures of the 1907 Movement

Ajit Singh, an important leader of the 1907 rural movement, had begun his political career organizing famine relief with other Arya Samajis. Along with his brothers, co-founders of a *Bharat Mata* secret society, he studied the problematic bills and held large public meetings under the auspices of the *Anjuman-i-Muhibban-i-Vatan* (Society of the Lovers of the Homeland) in Lahore.²¹ He also claimed that senior leaders like Lajpat Rai were uncomfortable with using the Congress to mobilise public sentiment against the bills. Singh elaborated on their different methods at a meeting in Lyallpur District, chosen for its dominant military population, which he hoped would help spread rebellion within the army.

Although they took the same train from Lahore, Ajit Singh made sure that Lajpat Rai was not aware of his presence. Rai was greeted at the station by a large crowd, and in the procession that formed, men drew his carriage to show him respect. When Rai reached the meeting, he found Singh declaring that the “police and military were ours, that instead of paying enhanced land revenue we should not pay a penny to the Government.” Lajpat Rai “shuddered,” but went on to make “one of his finest speeches.”²² Consider his framing of the problem at this gathering: “The foreigners use one weapon against us. . . . That weapon is of ‘Divide and Rule.’ They would divide us by saying that we are Sikhs, Muhammadans and Hindus. Some of us they would make *lambardars* and *zaildars*; some they would make spies to watch over us. Brothers! Foreigners cannot rule unless people are divided and disunited . . . If one of you is dismissed from a *zaildarship*, or a *lambardarship* for taking part in this agitation, no one should

come forward to accept his place . . . *Take this vow of union on your Koran and Shastras and no power on earth can humiliate you.*"²³

Lajpat Rai was urging unity in a divided people. The ground for anti-colonial activity lay in the fact of a common enemy and the distinction between social differences and political commonalities. Contests over *zail-darships* were not to mar possibilities of cooperation in the political arena. Rai also was at ease with invoking religious faith as a guiding principle. Crucially, he was very clear on Hindu-Muslim differences and the limits of their cooperation; their religious ideals were too different, but they could work together in politics.²⁴

Ajit Singh's stump oratory typically listed the means whereby the East India Company conquered India and advocated the use of *swadeshi* goods. Singh compared British demands for increased revenue to a tailor "who after making a coat for a constituent, demanded an enhanced price because that coat exceeded the purchaser's expectations." He accused the British of tampering with the religion of Punjabis by mixing bone dust in manufactured sugar, disseminating plague scientifically to kill natives, crushing indigenous industries of cotton and sugarcane, and replacing the people's money with paper that would have no value after the British left.²⁵ He urged that government servants resign and soldiers either boycott the army or murder individual British officers in the name of a higher patriotism. Like Rai, he also focused on the need for Hindu-Muslim cooperation. One of his meetings ended with a rendition of "*Pagri Sambhal O Jatta*" ("Take Care of Your Turban, O Jat"), a Punjabi poem that evokes pride and honour in the soil and produce of one's own land and that would have resonated with Punjabis of all religious communities.²⁶

British officers sought to de-legitimise Hindu-Muslim cooperation during this movement. Between Lahore and Peshawar, *sadhus* and *fakirs* were followed as they talked to people in railway compartments, on the road, and in schools. Reports of efforts to organize tribes in the NWFP were countered by British censorship. Rumours of a jihad in the making and the possible assistance of the Amir of Kabul gained credence.²⁷

Prominent Muslims confirmed that Hindu-Muslim disputes would be decided by their *panchayats* in the future. Muslims were also asked to be patient and conciliatory, even if the government engineered a dispute between them and the Hindus at any time. Abdulla Sahrawardi, former secretary of the London Pan-Islamic Society and the newly appointed principal of the Islamia College at Lahore, and Abdul Kadir, a barrister who had recently returned from England with a decoration from the

sultan of Turkey, offered the support of Muslim organizations. At Amritsar, priests of the Golden Temple formed a committee to support the movement; committees of Sikhs also were formed at Lahore.²⁸

The British tightened the screws on anti-colonial opposition. In April, the Chief Court awarded the editor and proprietor of the *Panjabee* a sentence of six months' rigorous imprisonment for an article claiming that a native had been murdered by an English officer. En route to the jail, the policemen escorting the convicted were attacked by a crowd of Lahoris and pelted with mud; the convicted were garlanded.²⁹ In Rawalpindi, leading pleaders denounced the British at public meetings. When Deputy Commissioner P. D. Agnew responded by issuing notices of public enquiry against four main pleaders, a large crowd collected, forced shops to shut down, assaulted European officials, set fire to a mission house, and looted a post office before it was finally dispersed by troops. Agnew characterized the movement as: "a Pan-Hindu movement, engineered largely by the Arya Samaj . . . the rioters and abettors are practically all Hindus, and the trial was from the beginning looked upon as a tug-of-war between the Hindu and Musalman communities. Though the events of 2nd May occurred in open daylight in the face of the whole city, we find that practically all the witnesses are Musalmans; scarcely a Hindu could be got to give evidence. *Religious and caste feelings, which are the essence of oriental nature and society, were too strong for these people.*"³⁰

Pan-Hindu, Arya-led, or Hindu-Muslim, the movement had ruffled too many feathers across western Punjab. Despite their differences in method, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were clubbed together in Lieutenant Governor Ibbetson's Minute of May 3, 1907, which argued for their deportation. Although his public utterances and appearances had been few, Rai was believed to be "the moving spirit of the whole agitation."³¹ The draconian Regulation III of 1818 was deployed because it effectively overrode considerations of hard evidence; loyalists were allegedly aghast at government inaction.

A spate of prosecutions disheartened the resisters: Pindi Das, editor of *India* of Gujranwala, and Dina Nath, editor of *Hindustan* of Lahore, were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment. A few Hindus did find the prosecutions suspicious because the article for which the *India* paper was being prosecuted had been printed partly at the *Hindustan* press and partly at the press of the *Watan*. However the *Watan* press was bereft of seditious material when searched because its Muslim proprietor had been forewarned by a Muslim city inspector, Rahmatulla.³²

The private and public were deeply entwined in the postures adopted by prominent Hindus and Muslims. Personal friendships had been used to include Muslims in the movement, and Hindus employed in government offices had supplied copies of police diaries to resisters. An interesting insight into how the personal and political were related is offered in a conversation between Mahbub Alam of the *Paisa Akhbar* and Ganpat Rai of the *Hindustan*. Alam, who had paid his subscriptions to the movement but also helped the prosecution in its case against the *Hindustan*, explained that, first, the editor of the *Hindustan*, Dina Nath, was an old enemy of his and, second, since the authorities had begun to arrest the Hindu resisters for sedition, he had felt compelled to do something to ingratiate himself with the government to escape similar treatment. The Hindu resisters had themselves expressed loyalty to the government. If the disturbance had been on a bigger scale, which was expected at one time, he would have taken a different line. This episode shows how rivalries that were termed “Hindu-Muslim” by the press may have had a personal import.³³

More wide-ranging repression ensued. The Prevention of Meetings Ordinance of 1907 enabled district magistrates to obtain reliable reports of public meetings and the option to prohibit these.³⁴ The deportations of Rai and Singh, however, suggested that a stance of loyalism would be appropriate. Even as a formal deputation of the Arya Samaj waited on the lieutenant governor, intelligence reports continued to bring news of Hindu-Muslim organisation. A Hakim Rai of Gujranwala urged Hindus to lend Muslims money at moderate rates of interest; others stopped exacting compound interest from their Muslim debtors, refrained from suing them in court, and even proposed that if Muslims killed cows in their temples, they would take no notice of it!³⁵ Mixed deputations were scheduled to tour the country to preach harmony and cooperation between Hindus and Muslims.³⁶

Despite evidence to the contrary, the Criminal Intelligence Department (CID) summed up that this anti-colonial agrarian movement was drawn primarily from the ranks of the “educated portion of the Hindu middle classes—the lawyers, doctors, school masters and Government servants.” The aim of this Sinn Fein-like movement had been “not open rebellion, but the making of British rule impossible.” The use of itinerant lecturers and other religious preachers and the rapid increase in circulation of particularly “seditious” papers were noted: *India* of Gujranwala’s readership had grown from a few hundred to almost five thousand. The Arya Samaj was described as “nothing but a political society of the extreme type.” But

the British were confident of the limits of this movement. The national volunteers of the Punjab were not as organised as those in Bengal, and boasts that they had learnt how to manufacture dynamite were met with confidence that a campaign of violence was not on the anvil.³⁷

When the British ultimately withdrew the proposed increase in the water rate and the Colonisation Bill, the resisters read this as evidence of their success.³⁸ *Zamindars* were asked to continue agitating in areas where the Ordinance of 1907 did not apply. Punjabi leaders, including prominent women, raised funds for the defence of the convicted editors of the *Hindustan* and *India* newspapers, and to avenge the deportation of Lajpat Rai. Subscriptions for the "Revenge Fund" were levied at the rate of two rupees a head from shopkeepers and were collected by pleaders and the leaders of various bazaars. Extra funds to the tune of sixty thousand rupees collected from the movement against the Colonisation Bill also were credited with the Revenge Fund.³⁹ Funds raised, even covertly, signified continued resistance. Bhai Parmanand, a noted Arya Samaji preacher, collected funds in London, while Nazir Ghulam Hussain, superintendent of the vernacular office of the deputy commissioner in Lahore, presented two hundred rupees, of which one hundred rupees each were for the *Hindustan* and *India* funds. But the money was given on condition of anonymity.⁴⁰

Arya Samajis were divided in their response to the deportation of Lajpat Rai and the blacklisting of their community. The split within the all-India Congress in 1907 had prevented the broadening of this largely local agrarian movement. Mahatma Hansraj, the principal of Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) College in Lahore, published a resolution of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha stating that "the Arya Samaj has always been, and is, a non-political body . . . it has no connection of any kind with any political body or with any political agitation in any shape." But the CID remained unconvinced: the declaration had appeared after the deportations and there was undoubtedly a political side to the Arya Samaj movement that sometimes surpassed in importance the purely religious and social side.⁴¹

This ambiguity between the religious and the political left an opening that the Samajis were quick to seize. Even as the Samaj redoubled its efforts to procure Hindu-Muslim cooperation by appointing two hundred missionaries and opening new schools and branches, prominent Aryas began to sing a different tune. Mahatma Hansraj reflected that although the Muslims regarded the sultan of Turkey as their caliph, sent large sums of money for the Hedjaz Railway, and offered prayers every

Friday for the sultan, their extra-territorial loyalties were never held suspect.⁴² When Arya leaders called on the new lieutenant governor, Louis Dane, in late 1907, they were assured that the sins of a few members of the Arya Samaj would not lead to the blacklisting of the entire community. But anti-colonial defiance was now more circumspect; the *Parkash*, an Arya paper of Lahore, advised Samajes against providing the British with lists of their members unless given a written order to do so.⁴³ Similarly, sadhus belonging to the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharm in Hardwar began to fear that the anti-colonial movement had broken out too soon.⁴⁴

It was not only the threat of Hindu-Muslim cooperation, but the fear of “sedition” seeping into the ranks of the British Indian army that alarmed the British. A pamphlet in circulation invoked the rebellion of 1857 and reminded the British of their own judgment: “It is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmins and Shudras, Mahomedan and Hindu were united against us and that it is not safe to suppose that the peace and stability of our dominion in any great measure depends on the continent being inhabited by different races with different religious systems, for they mutually understand each other and respect and take a part in each other’s modes and ways and doings.’ Whisper unto us the nobility of such an alliance of Religion with Patriotism—the true religion which ever is on the side of patriotism, the true patriotism which secures the freedom of religion!”⁴⁵

The *India* newspaper carried a copy of a leaflet addressed to the “Men of the British Indian Army” by natives of India and Afghanistan from America. It invoked *Hubb-ul-vatan min al-iman* (love of native land that is an integral part of a man’s faith) and asked “Indian sepoys, brave Sikhs, Punjabi Mussalmans, lion-hearted Rajputs, and renowned Peshawari and Frontier Pathans, self-respect-seeker [*sic*] Afridis and Afghans of Azadistan (land of liberty)” why they were serving in the British army. The leaflet compared the pay of British and Indian soldiers and referred to a past when Hindus and Muslims were united and their soldiers occupied the highest posts in the military. Not oblivious of the tensions between these groups, it implored for unity “for some years at least” that would deliver them from “slavery.”⁴⁶

A secret report on the Arya Samaj claimed that the Aryas told their students not to join the army and encouraged possible grievances of soldiers. However, they recently had been enlisting in the army in order to make converts from within. The debate among the British on whether or

not to ban Arya Samajis from the army was prolonged. The Home Member wondered if the British were “prepared to say that the *political* side of the Samaj so overshadows the *religious* side that the society is essentially a political one.” Such timidity could be countered by native logic: “one fly would make a *maund* of sweet oil bad.” Yet the decision eventually taken reflected the British desire to avoid confrontation and capitalise on the ill-defined space occupied by “sedition.” A Jat who had changed his religion to the Arya Samaj was not to be recruited into a Jat regiment, but this was not to be announced publicly.⁴⁷

Munshi Ram’s Advocacy for the Arya Samaj

The most outspoken advocate of the Samaj in the Punjab press was Munshi Ram, one of the foremost leaders of the vegetarian branch of the Arya Samaj and founder of a *gurukul* at Kangri. Munshi Ram pulled together articles from a range of newspapers and denominational journals, obituary notices, opinions of British officials, and court judgments from the late nineteenth century to try and prove that the Arya Samaj was not a political organisation; the Vedic Church was not denominational but universal; the politics of individual Aryas were not representative of the Arya Samaj as a whole; and Indians would need centuries more of *Pax Britannica* before they could hope to rule themselves.⁴⁸ These were repeated through a detailed history of the Arya Samaj and a close treatment of recent British allegations of its “seditious” activities. Throughout, Munshi Ram adopted a tone of hurt pride, wishing to make the rulers understand the predicament of the unorthodox Samajis without in any way accepting the responsibility of having led an anti-colonial movement.

Munshi Ram asserted that the founder of the Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand, was a supporter of British rule because it afforded the reformer the immunity to preach against idol-worshipping Hindus. The long-standing battle of the Aryas against its enemies—“the Hindu ‘Pope’ robbed of his perquisites, the Mussalman fanatic deprived of the prospect of entering heaven by converting Kafirs, and the Christian shepherd robbed of the flock”—resulted in their “master-stroke”: the claim that the Arya Samaj harboured political aspirations. He deployed instances from the history of early Christianity to suggest that the Vedic Church, too, was merely a victim seeking to spread its message of universal truth amidst detractors. Munshi Ram lamented that the Aryas were held responsible for every riot and the circulation of every seditious tract. Arya celebrations of the ac-

complishments of the Vedic period had been deliberately misinterpreted to imply disillusionment with their present colonised status. Munshi Ram sought to set the record straight; he elaborated on the reasons for the Samaj's turn to the past, the common roots of classical European culture and Vedic India, and on the allegedly unifying effect of the Samaj:

The Arya Samaj takes us back to a period of Indian History long anterior to the birth of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mahomedanism. If we celebrate the valorous deeds of Pratap or Sivaji, the Mahomedans feel offended. If Shahjahan is extolled as the patron of national art some Hindus cannot bring themselves to participate in celebrations relating to the achievements of him who was of the race of the Moslem invader Timur. But *Rama and Sita, Krishna and Arjuna are national heroes and heroines of whose magnificent deeds and righteous activities all Indians—without distinction of caste, creed or race—might well feel proud*. . . . So patriotism, which is the handmaiden of Vedicism . . . tends to unite the rulers and the ruled in a *fraternal embrace* because it inculcates the valuable historical truth that classical culture directly and modern European culture indirectly were derived from Indian sources and therefore Europeans being the descendants of the disciples of our forbears, are our brothers in spirit—their traditions and arts having a common origin with ours.⁴⁹

By fostering patriotism, the Samaj was running along the lines that the viceroy himself preferred. If government college professors could recommend the reading of James Mill's *On Liberty* and *Representative Government*, the Samajic lectures on social reconstruction and governance could not make it "political."⁵⁰ Munshi Ram's status as a prominent spokesperson of the Samaj, but not from Lahore—the seat of sedition—helped him connect an increasingly voluble discourse with that of liberty: a principle allegedly only available to Indians under British rule.

The edge and persistence in Munshi Ram's claims that the Arya Samaj was not a political body stemmed from another celebrated judicial case lodged against the Aryas at this juncture. In the princely state of Patiala, a state official, Mr. Warburton, who combined in himself the offices of district magistrate, inspector general of prisons, and inspector general of police, arrested eighty-four Aryas on the pretext that they were plotting "sedition." Warburton juxtaposed several disconnected instances: Meetings of the Samaj were allegedly forums for the discussion of seditious

subjects; Swami Dayanand had written against other religions and therefore was a political agitator; Lajpat Rai was seditious because he had written biographies of the Italian revolutionaries Garibaldi and Mazzini; Shyam Krishnavarma, considered to have been one of the key sponsors behind the Dhingra murder of Sir Curzon Wylie and Lalcaca in London in 1909, had once been a trustee of the Arya Samaj; and Samajis in Patiala subscribed to the *Panjabee*, the *Indra*, and the *Saddharam Parcharak*, all papers deemed seditious.⁵¹

Munshi Ram formed a Defence Committee with other prominent Aryas to raise subscriptions for the Patiala defence. The random arrests and subsequent discharge of almost all those arrested showed that the case of the prosecution was weak. However, the maharaja of Patiala insisted that all those arrested who were in his employ leave the state and their livelihood on grounds of suspicion. This, to the Aryas, signaled they were still being penalised for the 1907 movement.⁵²

The dance of postures between loyalty and anti-colonial politics continued; Munshi Ram showed his dexterity in this uncertain terrain. He urged that social reform and spiritual regeneration alone would enable a nation to come into its own. Indeed, spiritual “righteousness” had enabled the Muslims and then the British to politically subjugate India: “Muhammadans were politically dominant in India, not because they were fanatics, but because there was a greater amount of social efficiency in their community, because they were less superstitious, because their faith was more manly, because they were more truthful. This may shock our national vanity, but it is a fact all the same . . . The British Government in India was established not on account of, but in spite of, the stupendous fraud that Clive committed . . . the British Empire does not exist because the editors of the . . . *Civil and Military Gazette* are members of the British race, but because Burke, Ripon, Macaulay, Wilberforce, Bright and Gladstone were Englishmen.”⁵³

Munshi Ram’s *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors* was meant to reassure the British. With the Patiala sedition case and the gradual blacklisting of Aryas from government service, Munshi Ram could see the need for spelling out the loyalist credentials of the Samaj. But even as he conflated Aryas with Hindus, there were internal dissonances among the Hindus of the Punjab. The Dev Samaj, another reformist organization, pointed out that the Arya Samaj’s political scheme of *swaraj* had no room for other Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Parsees.⁵⁴

The need to distance the Arya Samaj from politics was deeply felt. Even Lajpat Rai returned from his six-month-long deportation in late 1907 fully aware that his involvement in what was construed as sedition had sullied the reputation of the Arya Samaj. His first public speech during the anniversary of the Arya Samaj was studied and cautious: "Though I cannot leave the church in which I believe and to which I owe so much, yet if there are any leaders of it who tell me that it has suffered through my political views I am ready to sever connection at once."⁵⁵ Caught in the storm that would split the Indian National Congress in 1907, Rai refused the offer of its presidency.⁵⁶ In the succeeding months, he also sued *The Englishman*, a Calcutta paper, for suggesting that he had tampered with the loyalty of the troops during the 1907 movement.⁵⁷

However, Ajit Singh, who was also released with Rai, stayed vehemently anti-colonial. Along with other members of the *Bharat Mata* secret society, he published books on secret societies, colonial economic exploitation, and the effects of civil and military appointments on increasing tension between Hindus and Muslims.⁵⁸ In an extravagant display of religiously informed patriotism, Ajit Singh and his cohort—Sufi Amba Parshad, Lal Chand Falak, and Ishri Parshad—dressed as sadhus in mourning for the release of the Congress leader from Bombay presidency—Bal Gangadhar Tilak. With Amba Parshad, Singh co-edited the *Inquilab*, a Lahore paper that advocated the methods of violence, boycott, and national education. They also raised funds for an institution for the political education of India. In honour of their arrested hero, this would be called "The Tilak Ashram."⁵⁹

To a serious believer of the Arya Samaj and a leading member of its gurukul wing, this "garb of sanyas" was positively offensive:

It is . . . not honest that men . . . who do not only not believe in the Veda but have, also, their doubts as to the existences of God should trade upon the incredulity of the people by posing as members of an order which was instituted solely with a view to protect the Veda and to preach righteous principles of Godliness and deep spirituality. By the way, how can the assumption of the ochre coloured garment be regarded as a self-imposed penance? If a man, on account of utter lack of requisite mental and moral qualifications, cannot perform the stern duties of this order but is willing to claim all the privileges pertaining to it, he is a notoriety-hunting

fraud and ought to be denounced as such. It is a pity that all Hindu newspapers have published this news and yet none has displayed moral courage by recording a protest against this blasphemous act . . . even political movements cannot prosper if this latest development in Indian politics—a curious nondescript mixture of hypocrisy, irreverence, notoriety-hunting, low ambition, and vulgar desire for self-aggrandizement—is not nipped in the bud.⁶⁰

By the time the government of India had convinced the government of Punjab to undertake a prosecution, Ajit Singh and Amba Parshad had fled to Persia. Efforts to bribe the Persians and arrest them were in vain.⁶¹

The mixing of the political and the religious was endemic. The fact of colonial subjugation seeped into the hymn books used by the Arya Samaj.⁶² The Arya leader, Bhai Parmanand, now occupied the rooms of Ajit Singh's former Bharat Mata Book Agency. When these premises were searched in connection with the sedition case, a copy of the Manicktolla Bomb Manual was found, along with a letter from Lajpat Rai that made the latter's preference for revolutionary literature explicit.⁶³ Although dated by two years, this correspondence further frightened Punjabi Hindus into isolating Lajpat Rai. The subscription to publications deemed dangerous by the British could only be interpreted as disloyalty. India House in London—where Shyam Krishnavarma lived and from whom Rai sought such literature—was widely believed to be at the heart of all conspiracies to spread discontent in India. What could Lajpat Rai's affinity mean but support for such anarchism? In the aftermath of this house search and the discovery of the letter and bomb manual, Lajpat Rai had to resign from the Managing Committee of the Arya Samaj and the Arya Samaj Pratinidhi Sabha; Bhai Parmanand had to resign from the DAV College.⁶⁴

The problem of espousing loyalties both to the British and to the independent creed of the Arya Samaj split the Aryas; Lajpat Rai was not invited to the anniversary celebrations of the DAV College. Although aware that this would alienate some of the students, several trustees regarded his exclusion imperative in order to safeguard their institution from incurring the wrath of the government. However, a proposal by another Arya leader that would require all Aryas to sign a declaration promising not to join any political movement failed to get much support. The Arya Samaj at Rawalpindi countered that the Samaj would lose financially if members with political leanings were excluded. It evoked a

distinction between an individual Arya and the corporate identity of the Arya Samaj, between the religious/private and the political/public: "A member of political leanings is himself responsible for his own conduct; he has the sympathy of the Samaj only in so far as he is the member of a religious body and not for any political reasons."⁶⁵

This distinction between the religious and the political was born of expediency. Yet the stoicism with which the principal of the DAV College, Mahatma Hansraj, dealt with the conviction of his son, Balraj, in what came to be called the Delhi Conspiracy Case forces us to rethink rigid categorisations of the "loyal" and the staunchly "anti-colonial" and grapple, instead, with the reality of multiple and intersecting identities.⁶⁶ In a similar vein, Munshi Ram lashed out against those alleged Aryas who advocated the use of violence. He targeted Shyam Krishnavarma, of India House fame, calling him a "sneaking coward" and the "demoniac influence" under which the "unfortunate wretch" Madanlal Dhingra had committed the murders of Sir Curzon Wylie and Mr. Lalcaca in 1909 in London. He met the damning allegations that associated Lajpat Rai with Krishnavarma (as reflected in the letter requesting revolutionary literature) with the same call to separate the private and the public that had characterized the response of the Rawalpindi Samajis: Why should a church be called to account for the political proclivities of its individual members?⁶⁷

The 1907 movement had many textures; intra- and inter-communitarian strands wove into anti-colonial and loyalist threads. Maintaining the upper hand was crucial. The British drew the last card; they sought to win over less-"seditious" Hindus. The deputy commissioner of Lahore suggested that they distinguish between the likes of Lajpat Rai, Mahatma Hansraj, Sarala Devi, and Ram Bhaj Datt, and the more extreme Ajit Singh, Sufi Amba Parshad, Lal Chand Falak, and Swaran Singh.⁶⁸ For the long term, he advised: "The Muhammadan boom may be allowed to quietly die down . . . Much as I dislike the policy of divide and rule, if it is to be followed, I would far sooner hold the balance even as between the Hindus and Muhammadans and divide as between Hindus and Hindus or Muhammadans and Muhammadans."⁶⁹

During a related debate on retaining the Seditious Meetings Act VI of 1907, only the commissioner of Multan spoke out against its extension and permanent placement in the statute books. He advised against constant interventions that were unheard of in pre-colonial times. The seditious-aries were admittedly few: "It is a game of patience between the Indian

Government and a small body of its determined enemies: the stake being the sympathies of the mass.” Commissioner Fagan of Rawalpindi District declared that “insubordination” was “alien to the Indian mind,” but increasing association with democracy in Britain was bound to have consequences in the colony. But the lieutenant governor had the last word. Invoking Punjabi exceptionalism because the bulk of the Indian army was now recruited from the Punjab, he urged that the act be placed permanently in the statute books: “Anything else will be a standing invitation to agitation.”⁷⁰

A firm hand in a velvet glove; yet for Punjabi Hindus, these were constant reminders that they were regarded as disloyal. The introduction of separate electorates by the Morley-Minto Regulations of 1909 reinforced these fears, lent Punjab politics a shrill tenor, and wildly exacerbated fears of the political importance of Muslims in a province where they were already a majority. I will now examine this measure, paying special attention to the debates that preceded the introduction of separate electorates.

The Meanings of Representation

“The Regulations for the first time in the history of the British rule have recognised religion as a basis of representation and have thus raised a wall of separation between the Mohammedan and non-Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty which it will take years of earnest effort to demolish.”—Pt. Malaviya⁷¹

“The Hindu-Mohammedan trouble is getting more and more acute. The people are developing a habit of studied hypocrisy. They have a different face for the officials and the Government from what they have for friends from whom they do not fear a betrayal. . . . The Mohammadans are of course jubilant. Among the Hindus there is a general sense of sullen helplessness.”—Lajpat Rai⁷²

The years between the promise of safeguards for the Muslim community in 1906 and the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 that provided them with separate electorates witnessed the possibility of a different order of politics.⁷³ The focus here is on British strategies to create “Hindu” and “Muslim” as *primary* political identities in the Punjab despite resistances to that very idea.

The anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani has asked that we consider how colonial laws “breathed political life” and animated identities like

“tribe,” “race,” and “caste.”⁷⁴ Mamdani, among several others, shows quite clearly that these identities were a consequence of state formation. In the case of India, the categories “minority” and “majority” referred to the way that membership in a particular *religious* community related to the political institutions created by the colonial state. The categories emerged out of colonial censuses but gained consequence when they were appropriated into the very structure of municipal councils and the bureaucracy.⁷⁵ The Council Reforms of 1909 were crucial to this process. Despite evidence of multiple political identities, the British succeeded in emphasizing *one* such identity: that of belonging to a religious community.

What did it actually mean to represent the entire community of Hindus or Muslims in British-controlled legislative arenas? The British posed the question to their trusted lieutenants in the field and they, in turn, courted native opinion. To trace the formation of a seemingly evident monochromatic political identity, we must pay attention to the framing of the question. In the circular originally posted by the Home Department, the predominance of lawyers in district boards and provincial councils was identified as a problem. The circular noted that of the 338 non-official members who had been appointed to the provincial councils since 1893, 36 percent were lawyers and only 22 percent landowners. Clearly the elective principle had given the legal profession a prominence to which it was “not entitled, while it has signally failed to represent other important elements of the community.”⁷⁶ The counterpoise to their influence had to be through an additional electorate composed of the landed and moneyed classes. On the representation of special interests and minorities, the circular invoked the famous deputation of October 1, 1906, when select Muslims petitioned the government believing their representation was incommensurate with their “numbers and political and historical importance,” and reiterated that any electoral representation in India would fail if it disregarded the “beliefs and traditions of the communities” that populated this continent. The deputation held that Hindus predominated in almost all the electorates; although Muslims had been nominated to remedy inequalities, they had “failed to secure the appointment of Muhammadans of the class by whom the community desires to be represented.” So a special Muslim electorate was proposed, along with a request for alternate suggestions. Specific questions were framed for the method and basis for representation in four councils: Imperial and Provincial Advisory Councils and Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils. Some of the other questions related to the suitability of elections for the Punjab. Would members of a

particular community/class be expected to properly safeguard the interests of that community/class? What would be the appropriate moral and intellectual qualifications for council members?

The chief secretary of Punjab, E. D. MacLagan, also provided statistics of the population involved in agriculture, commerce, and government service along religious lines.⁷⁷ With such clear prefatory remarks, the exercise in soliciting educated native opinion was something of a farce. But a close reading of the opinions collected from the Punjab does provide some insights into how formally educated elite Punjabis framed their identities in the political public sphere. I focus on their attitudes towards representation via elections or nominations; representations in the Provincial Legislative Council along lines of religion, class, and occupation; and finally, on the idea that Punjab could be treated exceptionally. Although all-India calculations were evident in the way Muslims and Hindus referred to themselves as minorities' vis-à-vis the nation or the province, some Punjabis saw no contradiction between preserving the interests of the community and the nation. Such opinions underscore that the "communal" and the "national" were still in the process of formation.⁷⁸

Punjabis debated every concession in an endeavour to access more of the legislative pie. Almost unanimous on the need for change and real representation, Punjabis of all religions questioned the principle of granting the franchise on the basis of "beliefs and traditions."⁷⁹ This is particularly noteworthy given the British emphasis on a conflict-ridden and fractured late nineteenth-century India. A reading of British opinions might well suggest that all elites were debating conversions, publishing bigoted religious literature, and orchestrating cow-protection riots in northern India!

There were multiple views on representation for minorities at the level of both region and centre. Those Punjabi Hindus who were willing to countenance a reservation for minority Muslims in the Imperial Legislative Council also wanted minority Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab to have reserved seats in the Punjab Provincial Council.⁸⁰ Others demanded that Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs be allotted seats in proportion to their numbers in the province and that Muslims have no separate provisions at the all-India level.⁸¹ Pt. Amar Singh of Jullundur City believed that the protection of minority Muslim interest at the all-India level and the neglect of the Hindu minority in both Punjab and the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam smacked of "partiality" to Muslims and the old dictum:

divide et impera. All the representatives from Punjab to the Imperial Legislative Council would be Muslims. "Thus as far as the Punjab is concerned Hindus are nowhere." Rai Bahadur Jai Kishen Das, general secretary of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, pointed to the new claims being made by Sikhs, Native Christians, and others for reserved seats for their communities. He too demanded protection for minority Hindus in the Punjab.⁸²

Diwan Narendra Nath, an upwardly mobile civil servant in the Punjab, believed Muslims were more important than their numbers suggested: "But I do not think that it was ever contemplated or intended by Government that no regard is to be paid to the numerical strength of the Hindus in Hindustan, whilst in respect of education and wealth, though perhaps not in respect of solidarity, they occupy a much more important place than the Muhammadans. . . . It is . . . anomalous that, coming through the trap-door of a special provision for the representation of minorities they should secure as many seats as any other class including Hindus, who are numerically the largest."⁸³ Here, Narendra Nath was not speaking of Hindus in the Punjab, where they were a minority, but in Hindustan (his shorthand for the rest of India), where they were in a clear majority. Nath suggested a clause that would grant Muslims a maximum of six seats on the Imperial Legislative Council.

The foremost industrialist in the Punjab and onetime president of the Punjab Congress Lala Harkishen Lal also cautioned against the consequences of following a policy that gave special privileges to Muslims. He warned the government not to embark upon a process of protecting minorities by "bestowing special privileges. They will not know where to end, and they will be sowing the seeds of discontent among unprivileged classes which will be hard to remove by mere palliatives."⁸⁴

But there were Muslims distraught at being overshadowed both within the Punjab, where they constituted a majority, and in India, where they were a minority. Muhammad Hassan, president of the *Anjuman Islamiya*, Ludhiana; Abdul Ghafur Khan, divisional and sessions judge, Jhelum; Mian Muhammad Shah Din and Mian Muhammad Shafi, barristers-at-law, Lahore; Nawab Fateh Ali Khan, Qazilbash, president of the *Anjuman Islamiya*, Punjab; and Abdul Haq, vice president of the Municipal Committee, Multan, argued that Sikhs voted with Hindus and opposed the Muslims, so it was imperative that the numbers of Sikhs and Hindus not exceed the Muslims. The interests of the various "classes in this country are not identical." They were grateful for belated British recognition of

their lack of representation and reiterated that at least six seats be reserved for Muslims in the Imperial Legislative Council.

Some Punjabis agreed with the government that there should be some rule determining the proportion of seats to be allotted to each “class” of the population, but recommended no hard rule because of the limited number of seats available.⁸⁵ Others such as Abdul Aziz, editor of the *Observer*, and Mian Muhammad Shafi framed elaborate schemes for both the Provincial and Imperial Legislative Councils, demanding that a definite number of seats be allotted to each community. Then there were differences on how these proportions were to be determined. Rai Sahib Narayan Das was opposed to the idea that voting for a representative of one class should be confined to voters of that class. He worried that if elections were made the exclusive preserve of Muslims, some “mischievous elements” among that community might assume “an attitude of superiority based on religious considerations.”⁸⁶

Lawyers asserted their importance, criticizing the government for wishing to disabuse them of their privileged position. Punjabis of all religious communities welcomed representatives from the educated classes. Exhibiting a keen awareness of class, most Punjabis also felt that the generously defined franchise for municipal and district boards would not be appropriate for the newly expanded Provincial Councils. They believed that high-class men would not contest elections for fear of losing them to those well-versed in the arts of canvassing for themselves.⁸⁷ Nomination rather than election would secure the interests of all classes.⁸⁸ Almost all Punjabis agreed that their province was ready to discuss the budget in the new council. Lala Mul Chand, the public prosecutor of Sialkot, pointed to the new joint stock companies in the Punjab and the large numbers of students educated in England and other foreign countries as signs of improvement. Many demanded the power of interpellation in the Provincial Council.

However, critics of special representation for class interests failed to formulate an over-arching critique of colonialism. A notable exception was Lala Nihal Chand, a barrister-at-law from Sialkot. He traced the evolution of political activity and believed the British could not “stem the advancing tide” with their “terrorising” methods. The proposed Advisory Councils were “not only a huge mockery and a sham palliative, but a whited sepulchre breeding but loathsome maggots and ugly worms”; the proposed measures were “tinsel reforms”; and the chiefs of states in their finery would suit the “Show Rooms of a continental museum or the Chamber of Horrors

at Mde Tussaud's than the state chambers of a representative assembly." Even Mian Muhammad Shafi, who was in favour of an official majority in the councils and viewed the continuation of British imperial rule as natural, was sharply critical of having one ruling chief on the Imperial Legislative Council. "*Concessions* made from motives having their origin in pure sentiment are, in the process of time, liable to be looked upon as *rights*, particularly when embodied in Statutes, as I presume the present scheme will be. And I emphatically deny that any Ruling Chief has any *right* whatsoever to take part in legislating for the British territories." The same views were also articulated by Pt. Malaviya during his presidential address to the Lahore Congress of 1909.⁸⁹ And from his perch in California, the revolutionary Har Dayal noted that the appointment of Indians to executive councils would act as a bigger bribe to those who had hitherto squabbled over deputy commissionerships.⁹⁰

Many others cloaked their suggestions in a veneer of subservience. So Lala Mul Chand, the public prosecutor of Sialkot, paid his respects to British paramountcy while criticizing their policy to combine representation—"an essentially Western idea"—with "a desire to surround the representatives with the pomp and splendour of Eastern romance." He wondered why the freedom to choose a representative was "fettered": "The Sikhs might be supplying the Government with a splendid army, the Muhammadans might have had an important but long historical past, but the other diverse castes and creeds representing various other interests serve no mean functions in the general polity of the British Government, and it would certainly speak ill of the august British Sovereign if with all his strength and might of the Paramount Power it is considered necessary after the lapse of a century to recognise castes in the representation of different classes and interests of Indian community."⁹¹

Lala Mul Chand proposed representation by class—commercial, landed, professional, and other diverse interests—rather than any "unsavoury ideas of caste and creed recognition." Other Punjabis also desired representatives who were not chosen on the basis of special interests. Although several revealed a strong awareness of their class origins, they often transcended the confines of their own class and religious community in their alternate proposals.

In summation, the Punjab government reduced a range of very rich opinion to foreground their preferences. Attuned to viewing the Orient with religious- and racial-tinted lenses, native opinions were classified along

lines of religion and race; Hindu and Muslim, official and non-official, and European opinions were listed separately. But it was also evident that symbolic changes would not suffice. "On page after page of opinions the word 'representative' attracts notice by frequent repetition." On representation to the Provincial Legislative Council, the summary twisted the evidence to declare that "there is an undoubted demand for a rule, assurance or understanding in the matter of the number of seats for each religion." Some Hindus opposed a rule because they could probably secure more seats if appointment by religions was *not* the rule, and because their "political foresight deprecates any measure which might accumulate differences and retard the hoped for union of all classes in opposition to the British domination." After a cursory list of other principal interests entitled to representation, the Punjab government concluded that appropriation on the basis of religion alone would suit popular sentiment; appropriation along lines of occupation would be very difficult to work. There appears to be a preference for the tactical, easy way out: electing a member from the university would meet the demand for a more popular constitution; the urban representatives nominated would be "reasonable" men. The lieutenant governor concluded with a paean to the "backbone of our Indian army" and proposed that cantonments be provided some voice in selecting one member; the Punjab was home to "simple but brave peasant proprietors who are still happily for the most part unsophisticated."⁹²

In transmission, the opinions of the native elite mattered even less. The viceroy held representation by classes and creeds to be the only "practicable method of embodying the electoral principle" in the Legislative Council.⁹³ Rather than cite from the copious volumes of evidence collected, he harkened to the wisdom of Lord Kimberley, Northbrook, and Gladstone—"the notion of a parliamentary representation of so vast a country . . . containing so large a number of different races is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men." In their final details, the Regulations of 1909 proposed a different franchise for Hindus and Muslims and framed a special electorate for Muslims. They also scrapped the formation of an executive council for the Punjab, Eastern Bengal and Assam, and the United Provinces (UP) and Burma, as well as the Provincial and Imperial Advisory Councils that had met with overwhelming criticism for being merely ornamental. The regulations were dissected during the Congress session of 1909; they had succeeded in deflecting political energies from anti-colonial action towards enhancing the communal interest.⁹⁴

The Response of the Congress

The regulations were not happily received by the Hindus of the Punjab. The Congress session of 1909, scheduled to be held in Lahore, had met with considerable opposition both in the press and from the Punjab Hindu Conference that met in October the same year. Led by Lajpat Rai and Lal Chand, the opposition suggested that the disloyalty of the Congress, as evinced in the 1907 agrarian movement, had boomeranged with grave consequences for the Hindus, a minority in the Punjab. Thus, the first business of Lala Harkishen Lal, the chairman of the Reception Committee, and Pt. Malaviya, the president of the Congress session, was to challenge the idea that the Congress was disloyal or in any way responsible for these reforms.

As Congress president, Malaviya reminded his audience that the good intentions of the secretary of state and viceroy had initially been acclaimed. It was only when the final regulations were announced that the “educated classes” [read Hindu] protested that their interests had been marginalized. Malaviya then proceeded to highlight the inequalities with regard to Hindu and Muslim seats in his province, the neighbouring United Provinces. Since Muslims were allowed to vote in both the special and general electorate, they had eight out of twenty-six seats in the legislature, a proportion far greater than their share in the population. In the Punjab, they had won every seat against Hindus in the general electorate; it was a similar verdict in Eastern Bengal and Assam: “This is protecting the interests of minorities with a vengeance; it is a case of the exclusion of the majority by a minority. This advantage has, however, been reserved only to the favoured minority of our Muhammadan fellow-subjects. The Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam have been left out entirely in the cold. And yet they are found fault with for not waxing enthusiastic over the reforms.”⁹⁵

Malaviya criticized the different franchise for Hindus and Muslims; the high property qualifications placed on prospective candidates; and the clause that a member could be rendered ineligible if he had a “reputation and antecedents” that made him suspect in the eyes of the local government. However, he also was critical of those Hindus, especially in Punjab and the UP, who allowed “sectarian considerations to prevail over patriotic considerations.” He deemed the recent preference shown by government to the Muslims as “mere passing incidents, things of the moment.” This was clearly done to “keep them from standing shoulder

to shoulder with their Hindu brethren to agitate for reforms.”⁹⁶ If they had been genuinely partial towards the Muslims, there would have been some real concessions made to them, for instance, with regard to the Arms Act. In substance, however, Malaviya’s Congress address echoed the concerns of the Punjab Hindu Sabha. The latter also passed resolutions protesting separate electorates for Muslims and proposed that Punjabi Hindus receive representation equal to that of Muslims on the councils.⁹⁷ It is worth noting, if only parenthetically, that during the next Congress session in Allahabad in 1910, Muhammad Ali Jinnah also proposed a resolution deprecating the extension or application of separate communal electorates to municipalities, district boards, or other local bodies.⁹⁸

Even as the regulations were being dissected and accepted by minority Hindus in the Punjab, another piece of colonial engineering threatened their status. The Gait circular announced that the decennial census of 1911 should list the “debatable Hindus” or the depressed classes in a separate column. The suggestion alarmed urban upper-caste Punjabi Hindus with the spectre of becoming a further minority. The call for Hindus to unite began to sound shriller as the depressed classes threatened to secede from the General [Hindu] constituency.⁹⁹ The banking crisis of 1913–14, fueled partly by the lack of trust between Punjabi Hindu heavyweights, also ended the comforting myth of a consolidated Hindu community.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, the twists and turns in the relationship of the Arya Samaj with other Hindus, the Muslims, and the British found a partial resolution when in 1911 Lajpat Rai decided to use British opportunities to create a political space for “Hindu” progress. Not only did he win the elections to the Municipal Council decisively, he avoided saying anything “unpleasant on political subjects, and publicly contradicted the rumour that the CID was working against him.”¹⁰¹ In his autobiography, Rai acknowledged that his early training in Urdu should have made him its advocate, but after he grew convinced that “political solidarity demanded the spread of Hindi and Devanagari,” he swept aside all personal preferences and started promoting Hindi.¹⁰² As municipal councillor, Rai opened schools with free education in Hindi up to the primary standard in every quarter of Lahore City. He raised funds to the tune of fifteen thousand rupees, and formed a Hindu Elementary Education League for Lahore. The pleading for Hindi aroused the inevitable counter-pleading for Urdu

and Gurmukhi by certain Muslim and Sikh groups.¹⁰³ In the narrow political spaces provided by the Raj, narrow political aspirations found their niche.

It is useful to note the change in temper of the Punjab press. In the immediate aftermath of the Morley-Minto reforms, Punjabi papers reverted to an idiom of communal competition. The *Shanti* and the *Panjabee* commented adversely on the excessive employment of Muslims in the CID Police Department and reiterated the need for an all-India Hindu organization because, with the exception of one or two issues, everything affected and united Hindus as a whole. The proposed Sabha, after all, would not wish to raise “contingents for the defence of Tripoli or the Porte.”¹⁰⁴

The question of loyalty was, indeed, at the heart of new tensions between religiously defined communities. Dina Nath, editor of the *Hindustan*, noted that Hindus had to “remove the suspicion with which *Hindu loyalty*” was still regarded in order to improve relations between Hindus and the government. He also asked for more effective representation of Hindus in the Legislative Council.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, each paper, catering to a particular religious community in the main, proposed changes that would best serve the interests of their own religious community. The Muslim *Observer* mocked the proposal in the *Panjabee* to provide Hindus and Muslims with three seats each, with the remaining two seats as neutral. It pointed out that one of those two would be the Punjab University seat, a safe bet for Mr. Shadi Lal. Thus, the minority Hindus would get four seats instead of three. Instead, the *Observer* suggested that Muslims get four seats on account of their majority in the Punjab. Their scheme had the greater merit of securing “Hindu representation to tracts where the majority of inhabitants are Hindus, and Muslim representation to Groups where the majority of inhabitants are Muslims.” The *Paisa Akhbar* argued for the extension of separate electorates in the municipal and district boards in the Punjab.¹⁰⁶ Sections of the Sikh press countered Hindu proposals that subsumed their Sikh identity into a larger Hindu whole. The canvassing of opinions around meagre gains continued until larger struggles forced the Punjab to reconnoitre its energies. The sharpest critiques of the British Empire were the Ghadr revolutionaries, who demanded freedom from the barrel of a gun.

Anti-Colonialism in a Global Space

Between the council reforms of 1909 and the Montagu Chelmsford reforms of 1919, Punjab was beset by revolutionary movements from across the world. The murder of Sir Curzon Wylie in London by the young Madanlal Dhingra, the son of Wylie's old friend from Amritsar, created a serious flutter in loyalist circles. Although Madanlal's father and brothers disowned his action and claimed he was mentally imbalanced, the *Panjabee* proudly proclaimed that a Punjabi had surpassed even the Bengali anarchists by this brave act.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, banned literature continued to wend its way through the Punjab. Envelopes postmarked in Geneva, London, Bangkok, Vancouver, San Francisco, and Cape Town pointed to a vast network of anti-colonial sentiment and organisation.¹⁰⁸ Although it is beyond the purview of this chapter to discuss the details of the rebellions that were planned and the reasons for their failure, the heightened fervour that imbued these rebellions—often led and manned by Punjabis overseas—ricocheted back to affect the politics of the province. These revolutionaries insisted on a politics that could transcend the earthy and more immediate concerns of Punjabis.

The most important of these movements was undoubtedly the Ghadr movement of 1914–15—including veterans from the 1907 movement, Punjabis, Bengalis, and Marathas in Europe, North America, and East Asia, in ever-widening circuits of plots—which drew inspiration from the Great Rebellion of 1857. In its most basic form, returning emigrants hoped to raid arsenals and organize mutinies while the British were pre-occupied with the First World War. They hoped that the local civilian population would join them. Ill-conceived and ill-planned, the movement gave way primarily because British intelligence agencies were able to act upon prior information of their plans.

As early as 1906, Punjabi Sikhs had sought employment in Vancouver, British Columbia. A racist campaign against their presence in Canada occurred at the same time that Indians were resisting the imposition of a tax on indentured labourers in South Africa. News of the strikes in South Africa and the demand for equal citizenship rights for Sikhs in Canada reached the Punjab at about the same time, and raised difficult questions about the rights of citizens under colonial rule.¹⁰⁹ While the British tried to avoid making too obvious a choice in favour of their white colonies, Punjabis grappled against the increasingly difficult barriers to their migration in Canada. The *Komagata Maru* expedition of September 1914,

designed to resist the latest restrictions on Sikh immigration, failed to eventually land on Canadian soil. It coincided with the first wave of Ghadr migrants returning to India to start a series of rebellions.¹¹⁰ A hub of revolutionary literature, Ghadr publications often carried the following advertisement:

Wanted—Enthusiastic and heroic soldiers for organizing *Ghadar* in Hindustan
Remuneration—Death
Reward—Martyrdom
Pension—Freedom
Field of work—Hindustan*¹¹¹

Although the intentions of the returning migrants were not fully known at the time, meetings were held in Lyallpur and Lahore in support of the *Komagata Maru* enterprise.¹¹²

Ideologically, Ghadr constituted a break from the moderate stance of the Congress. Preaching a policy of assassination and complete independence from India, it resonated with the politics of Ajit Singh during and after the 1907 movement. When Ghadr pamphlets and books of songs finally reached the sacred precincts of the army in the middle of the war, the British took action.¹¹³ Apart from breaking up the conspiracy through a series of counter-intrigues, they forced the United States to institute proceedings against the chief conspirators in California. A network of spies in the United Kingdom and the United States helped the British arrest Ram Chandra Peshawari, then editor of the *Ghadr*.¹¹⁴ Aware of the net around him tightening, Ram Chandra proclaimed in the *New York Times* that the “revolt” in India was “indigenous,” not “hatched and plotted” abroad.¹¹⁵

The connections with Punjabis within the Punjab are most intriguing, for they shaped the subsequent political orientation of some of the protagonists keenly. Bhai Parmanand, noted Arya Samaji and professor at the DAV College in Lahore, had been bound for the sum of nine thousand rupees in 1910, when a copy of the Manicktolla Bomb Manual of the Bengal revolutionaries had been found in his premises.¹¹⁶ The Arya Samaj had released him somewhat brusquely from his teaching duties. Parmanand spent the next couple of years travelling in Europe and America. He interacted with the revolutionary Har Dayal in Berkeley before returning to India in late 1913, about the time that the first edition of the *Ghadr* paper was published. Throughout the Ghadr trial in 1915,

Parmanand insisted he was not guilty. Yet the main approver, Dina Nath, and one of the most courageous young leaders of the movement, Kartar Singh Saraba, claimed Parmanand as one of the movement's key leaders.

Although Parmanand's 1934 autobiography is ambiguous about his involvement, his admiration for the courage of the young martyr Kartar Singh Saraba comes through keenly. Parmanand had defended himself by saying that he had left America by the time the Ghadr movement began. Had it not been for the failure of the *Komagata Maru*, none of this would have happened. After all, he had no prior knowledge of the outbreak of the First World War.¹¹⁷ The prosecution averred that his home was a "place of call for dangerous members of the party" and that the young Kartar Singh attributed his ideas to raid arsenals to Parmanand. Jitendra Nath Lahiri, a Bengali student of chemistry at Berkeley and a Ghadr Party worker, was given four thousand rupees when he left for India and was asked to get in touch with Parmanand.¹¹⁸ Others arrested were found in possession of currency notes that were traced back to Parmanand. Given the use of torture to extract confessions, it is difficult to get a clear picture of Parmanand's involvement. But Parmanand's early anti-colonial antecedents would be difficult to dismiss. Initially sentenced to death under the new Defence of India rules, he was finally convicted of transportation for life in 1915. This anti-colonial strand in the case of Parmanand is important to emphasis since it shifted focus in the 1920s.¹¹⁹

If there was both a moderate and an extremist strand to anti-colonial politics in the period between 1907 and 1918, there was equal variety in the approach to the Hindu-Muslim question. Here too, the Ghadr movement made its mark. Ghadr publications frequently urged Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity. Some publications had three names—Ram, Allah, and Nanak—on their masthead.¹²⁰ And the following is a song that the martyr Kartar Singh Saraba sang to the gallows:

*Jo koi puche ki kaun ho tum, To kah do baghi ye naam apna
Zulm mitana hamaara pesha, Ghadr ka karna ye kaam apna
Namaz sandhya yahi hamaari, Aur path puja bhi sab yahi hai
Dharma karam sab yahi hai pyaro, Yahi khuda aur ram apna.
If anyone asks who we are, Tell him our name is rebel,
Our duty is to end tyranny; Our work to launch revolution
That is our form of worship as well as our prayer
This is our religion, our work; this is our Khuda and Ram.¹²¹*

The flag of the Ghadr Party reflected this unity of purpose. Of three stripes, the red stood for Hindus, the yellow for Sikhs, and the blue for Muhammadans. The publications opined on current controversies: Indians who hankered after government jobs were called traitors, and separate educational institutions for different communities, sects, and castes were deemed to be unnecessary.

The case for crushing the Ghadr was made not only on grounds of their ability to cause mutinies among the British Indian army. The disenchantment among Muslims because of the possible breakup of the Ottoman Empire also figured large in British calculations. Leaders of the Ghadr Party in India were seriously debating the inclusion of Muslims in greater numbers.¹²² The larger context was framed by both local and global conflicts that were no longer in British control. The Kanpur riots of 1913 and the affray over the Rikabganj Gurdwara in Delhi in 1914—when parts of religious structures were demolished to chime with the schemes of city planners—resurrected fears of British interference in religious custom. News reports from the Turko-Italian War and later the First World War added to some Muslims' fears that the British connection would not serve their interests. Although smaller Hindu-owned newspapers in the Punjab were quick to raise the charge of Muslim "disloyalty" by referring to Muslim meetings and editorials protesting British policy, Punjab's leading English-language daily, the *Tribune*, held that "fleeting causes of difference . . . should not be permitted to create a permanent estrangement between the two great communities of India."¹²³ The shift in Muslim opinion also was evident in their reaction to the reversal of the Partition of Bengal in 1911. Now even in the small matter of naming a university, the once loyal *Observer* dared the British to impose their will:

It will give us the greater pleasure to make the Secretary of State modify his orders. The decision is final. So much the better. It will be a great triumph for us to make him rescind his decision. They now know how to rescind decisions. Nothing is "settled"—and they have taught us the way to achieve success . . . Let us show them that it is not easy to dictate ideals. The decision to call it merely the University of Aligarh is an egregious blunder. So much the greater cause for rejoicing. We will have it called the Muslim University . . . We committed the initial mistake of begging for the University as a matter of favour. We should have demanded it as a matter of right . . . It is now a trial of moral strength and whoever yields is not of us.¹²⁴

Punjab's civilian administrators wrung their hands at the "ill-timed speeches of prominent English Ministers, whose field of vision appears to have been restricted to European politics" and lamented that mosques had been converted into "political platforms." However, evidence of animosity between religious communities won over that of sustained anti-government feeling. Besides, the British were confident of their own prowess over their most treasured weapon, that of divide and rule: "The fact is that the breach between the two communities is far wider than the breach between the Hindus and Government which, at the present moment is sensibly contracting. It is a comparatively simple task for the leaders of either community to inflame their ignorant co-religionists against the powers that be by an appeal to religious fanaticism; but this powerful instrument cannot be employed in an attempt to weld together two communities whose difference is essentially a religious one . . . a combination between the communities against Government is hardly within the range of practical politics so long as—and this is an important condition—the scales are held even between them."¹²⁵

There was, for the British, the omnipresent possibility of a clash over a thousand conflicting religious symbols and practices, but also there was, among anti-colonial nationalists, a strand of political thought that could see beyond the present impasse, perhaps because of its own location abroad. Lajpat Rai exemplified such a politics. To the prime minister of Britain, David Lloyd George, he posed the non sequitur: "Why is India loyal?"

"All Discontent Is Not Disloyalty": The Discursive Space of Anti-Colonial Nationalism

This chapter has explored the interstices at which numerous sorts of agency were possible, even as it was "forbidden or denied."¹²⁶ This might explain the parameters within which Punjabi Hindus raised new dreams of worldly success and improvement or defended their faith against the charge of disloyalty. This would account for the legal battle waged by Lajpat Rai when he sued *The Englishman* for insinuating that he had been responsible for tampering with the loyalty of soldiers during the 1907 movement. Rai distanced his politics from those of the more extremist Ajit Singh and disavowed any responsibility for the vetoing of the Canal Colonisation Bill. He was awarded fifteen thousand rupees in damages by a court

that asserted that the very use of Regulation III of 1818 in deporting him suggested there were insufficient grounds to institute regular judicial proceedings against him; he might have been deported for committing a criminal offence or for not committing any offence, merely for reasons of law and order.¹²⁷ It is this ambiguity in British law and logic that Rai used with finesse in furthering his political career in the aftermath of the Morley-Minto reforms.

This ambiguity also became the ground on which the moderate Bombay leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale opposed the extension of the repressive Regulation of Meetings Ordinance of 1907. During the debate on this legislation, Gokhale argued that instances of public disturbance were few in the Punjab because of the vetoing of the Canal Colonisation Bill and not the imposition of this ordinance. Extending this piece of repressive legislation would taint three hundred million loyal Indians with the brush of disloyalty. By loyalty, Gokhale meant “a feeling of attachment to British rule, and of a desire for its stability based on enlightened self-interest.”¹²⁸ Dr. Rashbehary Ghose reminded his colleagues in the legislature that the rights of personal freedom and meeting in public were regarded as an “inalienable privilege of every subject of the British Crown.” This right had been demonstrably fragile with the recent deportation of Lajpat Rai. “Timely concessions” were needed because “you cannot effectually gag one-sixth of the world.” In the wake of the Rawalpindi riots and the trial there and at Patiala, both Gokhale and Ghosh emphasised the mischief that could be wrought by police officers and district magistrates with their own axes to grind. The proposed legislation would strengthen the hands of local officials who might not possess the requisite skills to report a speech.

The British response threw the ball back into the moderate court. If most of India were indeed loyal, why was it so hard to produce witnesses and prosecute “rabble-rousers”? Gokhale pronounced a definitional problem: “different officials have different ideas of sedition.” If sedition referred to attempts to subvert the government, it was a recent growth and the responsibility for it lay entirely on British officials and their policy to partition Bengal in 1905. Easing the ruffled feathers of his council, Viceroy Minto concluded that “proper guidance” would enable “Indian capacity and Indian patriotism” to earn a greater share in the government of India. He also denied that his government favoured one community over the other.

However, the passage of the Land Alienation Act and the Morley-Minto reforms compelled certain Punjabi Hindus led by Lajpat Rai, Lal Chand, and Munshi Ram to formulate a discourse of Hindus in danger. The dominant strand in politics appeared to caution against extremism and disavowed its radical incarnations—whether in the shape of Dhingra’s murderous act or in the cold distancing of Lajpat Rai and Bhai Parmanand when the Manicktolla Bomb Manual and correspondence from Shyam Krishnavarma were found in their homes. Rai’s deportation lay at the heart of the debate within the Arya Samaj on whether or not they should eschew anti-colonial politics. Munshi Ram and Lal Chand pleaded for a dignified engagement with the British while simultaneously defending the Arya Samaj—and, more broadly, Hindus—of being disloyal. Indeed, their loyalism circumvented the problem of appeals to religion in the political arena.

A discourse around loyalty also buttressed demands for greater representation. Meeting the challenge of those who opposed holding the Congress in Lahore in 1909, the chairman of the Reception Committee, Harkishen Lal, spoke for the long term: “Against the doctrine of self-abnegation one may well urge the necessity, which all majorities feel, for conciliating minorities . . . patriotism would cease to connote anything useful, if people were not prepared to sacrifice some present interest to secure the lasting good of the country in future. As to political agitation generating discontent, I may be permitted to say that *all discontent is not disloyalty*, and that political agitation conducted on constitutional lines is permitted by Government.”¹²⁹

Although powerful British officials were accustomed to branding everything seditious or loyal, Punjabi Hindus strove to re-define the terms of the debate. At private meetings, essays and poems on patriotism were in circulation.¹³⁰ But there was a perceptible change in that loyalty also was being questioned from unlikely quarters. Speaking for a young doctor’s politics in London, the principal of Forman Christian College in Lahore, S. K. Datta, recalled the 1907 movement:

I was in England at that time working as one of the Secretaries of the student Christian movement. My connection and sympathies were very British; to them I was bound by the ties of a common religion, and yet even I found the situation most intolerable. From the *Times* newspaper to the *Daily Mail* nothing good was said about

India. The most virulent abuse was poured upon us who belong to the educated community and *we were charged with dishonesty, ingratitude . . . and disloyalty*. Such extravagances are bound to influence our minds, though as we get older we tolerate them better and even come to disregard them, but I know the minds of many young Indians were embittered permanently.¹³¹

In another instance, Dr. Girdhari Lal Batra, a young doctor travelling back from London, was found carrying copies of banned literature deemed seditious. The British asked his father, Rai Bahadur Bhowani Dass, who was in the employ of the maharaja of Kashmir, to disown his son; this demand was later reduced. It is not difficult to hear the despair of a colonial subject in the son's letter of apology to his father:

It seems really sad that Government should take such a narrow view, for suppose if one reads every kind of seditious literature and most violent remarks, it does not necessarily follow that he is disloyal, for I don't believe in "Ignorance is bliss." A person is more loyal and a true one if he knows both sides of the question; why should not a liberal study the conservative papers for Gladstone used to read "Times" regularly and he gained knowledge by it, so these seditious papers have not done me the slightest harm as far as loyalty is concerned in fact papers had the opposite effect for *they poor things don't know they are just like a child trying to catch the moon*, but in future I will take good care not to read or keep any such literature.¹³²

Batra's subdued protest and Datta's informed lament were signs that articulate and politically conscious Punjabis were struggling to find a space and language that might adequately reflect their concerns. They also were fighting an earlier generation in their turn towards anti-colonial politics. Numerous other instances stand out from the Punjab. The elder son of Munshi Ram, Harish Chandra, became embroiled in the violent Ghadr movement, and Balraj, the son of Mahatma Hansraj, principal of the DAV College in Lahore, was sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment for a conspiracy to commit murder against the Crown.¹³³ The anarchism of Madanlal Dhingra was repudiated by his family. In Lyallpur, protests around the Rikabganj Gurdwara were carried out by Harchand Singh, the grandson of a loyal jemadar in the army. Sri Ram, the son of an executive engineer in the

Irrigation Department of Punjab was reportedly attending seditious meetings while studying for the bar in London. And in faraway Vancouver, the seeds of rebellion were sown when retired soldiers of the British Indian army threw away their medals, buttons, and uniforms—insignia of slavery and symbols of a different past.¹³⁴

Lajpat Rai's politics reflected the range of options afforded by anti-colonial action. During the 1907 movement, his private letters revealed a sharper anti-colonialism than he was willing to publicly uphold with leaders like Ajit Singh. Chastened by the deportation, alienated by the Hansraj wing of the Arya Samaj, and appalled by the council reforms of 1909, Lajpat Rai espoused the cause of Hindu Sabhas over those of the Congress. He recovered his standing among a Punjabi Hindu electorate by winning the Municipal Council elections in 1911. During the war, he spoke up for the cause of Sikhs in Canada and raised funds for Indians in the Transvaal, but steered clear of the more violent strands of the Ghadr in the United States.¹³⁵ In 1916, Rai published *Young India*, a book that was initially supposed to be published anonymously, which perhaps accounts for its strident anti-colonialism. The book was promptly banned, though copies were smuggled into the hands of British Parliamentarians by a friend of Rai.¹³⁶ Writing of Muslim rule, Rai pointed out that it was not foreign. There was no India office in Kabul that determined policy nor Lancashire manufactures to protect. He recognized that "they evolved a language which is as much Indian as any other vernacular spoken in India today. The groundwork of this language, which is now called Urdu or Hindustani, is purely Indian."¹³⁷

Rai delighted in meetings of the Congress and the Muslim League in Bombay in 1915 from his location in the United States. He was hopeful of a solution and added perceptively that the British had tried to create "an *Ulster* among the Mohammedans of India." A reinterpretation of history accompanied this new politics:

The Hindus have come to realize that after all the Mohammedan rule . . . was not so bad or tyrannical or oppressive as they were told it was by interested historians. The Mohammedans feel that they can be as proud of the Hindu heroes, Rama and Krishna, of the Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, of Hindu science and Hindu philosophy, as the Hindus themselves are, without being false to their religion or to their community. Similarly

the Hindus feel that they can be as proud of a Sher Shah and an Akbar and a Shah Jahan, of Alberuni, of Ibn Batuta, of Abul Fazal, Faizi and Ghalib, as the Mohammedans can be. Nay, they can go a step further and say that even Aurangzeb, was not, after all, so bad as they had supposed him to be. Hindus and Mohammedans have discovered that they can take part in each other's festivals and take pride in each other's past, without in any way being traitors to their respective religions and communities.¹³⁸

Rai held that the "foreign conquerors" who settled down in India became as "Indian as the Normans and Danes became English." Here we return full circle to the spirit that pervaded the agitation of 1907.¹³⁹ At the same time, Rai addressed an open letter to David Lloyd George, invoking the prime minister's "boyhood" to remind him of the "pinch of want" in famine-stricken and colonised India. He asked an irreducibly poignant question—why India remained loyal: "Why do the people put up with all this? Why don't they rebel? Because they have been emasculated, and emasculated so completely, that they are absolutely helpless against your organised brigandage. They are weak, ignorant and incompetent. Sixty four years ago they were not so helpless. But now they are completely demoralized and penniless. Your system has ground them into dust. They cannot even protect themselves from wild beasts. You have completely disarmed them. . . . You have completely hypnotized them by your professions of disinterested liberalism and altruism."¹⁴⁰ Here the field of politics converges—both elite and subaltern resistances; the hypocrisies of British liberalism are faced in the eye.

Between 1907 and 1918, Punjabi Hindus expressed a range of attitudes, both on the place of religion in public life and on the fact of colonial subjecthood. The nation was seen in a starkly Hindu idiom, as well as explicitly including members of other religious communities. At the interstices of anti-colonial protest and cooperation, Punjabi Hindus manoeuvred a discourse of loyalty to assert their demands, both including and excluding members of other religious communities. *Swaraj* came to mean several different things: "one's own dominions and not colonial self-government"; the right to express an opinion about the administration; and, for those drawn to the Ghadr movement, the complete overthrow of the British in India.¹⁴¹ The Congress and the Punjabi Hindu Sabha battled each other, but they also deployed a similar vocabulary and passed similar

resolutions protesting the favours granted to “Indian Muslims”: a new category created by the Morley-Minto reforms. The next chapter considers Punjabi Hindu politics in a startlingly different era, an era that drew increasingly large numbers into the vortex of anti-colonial and communal activity.

The 1920s have long been viewed as a decade that introduced conflict between religiously defined communities all the way up until Partition. I consider anew the multiple kinds of politics this decade encompassed in the following two chapters. The backdrop was provided by the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement (1919–1922) led by Gandhi, the Ali brothers, and a mixed cast of leaders and followers. This mass movement had been launched to protest the Rowlatt Act, the wrongs committed by the martial law regime in Punjab in the summer of 1919, and the imminent collapse of the institution of the Khilafat following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Promising “swaraj in one year,” Gandhi succeeded in moving thousands of students and lawyers to quit cooperating with British institutions. The British predictably responded by sending those thousands to jail. I discuss the movement as it unfolded in Delhi in greater detail in Chapter 3. Here, it is sufficient to say that a series of riots across India, beginning with the Moplah rebellion of 1920–21, came to be viewed as a direct consequence of the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement.

The Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement grew out of a context marked by debates around loyalty, sedition, and representation for religiously defined minorities, as discussed in Chapter 1. Here, I study debates around two other defining movements—*shuddhi* and *sangathan*—especially as they unfolded in the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). I ask to what extent these movements to preserve and strengthen the Hindu community contributed to an increase in tensions between religious communities in these key provinces.

I begin my investigations by examining a riot at Kohat District in the NWFP in September 1924.¹ Like the Moplah rebellion in Malabar, this riot entered the lexicon of politicians as one more instance of the collapse of Hindu-Muslim unity following the sudden conclusion of the

Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement. But its silent and unanalysed entry into a laundry list of communal violence was ultimately expensive. Kohat, more than any other riot in late colonial Punjab, encapsulated the failures inherent in a politics that coalesced around sangathan, or the strengthening of the interests of the Hindu community, at the cost of inter-community interactions. Rather than serve as a warning to a religiously defined minority against drawing exclusionary boundaries too tightly, Kohat became a metaphor for the predicament of a minority Hindu community surrounded by a “fanatical” and majoritarian Muslim population.

Shuddhi and Sangathan

“My own experience confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward. I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling. Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies.”²

Such “common sense” greeted the nation from the pages of Gandhi’s newsletter *Young India* after his extended incarceration in British jails at the end of the first Non-cooperation movement. Upon his release, Gandhi studied the reasons for the numerous riots that had erupted between Hindus and Muslims in the preceding three years. In his first statement, Gandhi absolved several of his colleagues—Lajpat Rai, Pt. Malaviya, and Swami Shraddhanand (once Munshi Ram)—of any religious prejudice. Gandhi allowed that Shraddhanand made speeches that were “often irritating,” but he had only inherited the traditions of the Arya Samaj and like its founder, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, whom Gandhi respected profoundly, he had made his Hinduism “narrow.” Gandhi continued: “I have read *Satyartha Prakash*, the Arya Samaj Bible . . . I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great.” Gandhi’s criticisms of Saraswati unleashed protests from Arya Samajis across the country. I highlight this debate conducted only a few months before the Kohat riot to situate the practice of religious debates—a part of sangathan—in the political public sphere of northern India.

Shastrarths, or religious debates, dated to the nineteenth century when Christian missionaries had met with native opposition while belittling “Hindu” customs, rituals, and superstitions to gain converts. New reformist movements also had to prove their mettle against organized

orthodox opposition: The Arya Samajis had weathered generations of such debates. They were particularly proud of their founder's public debates with pandits in Benares in 1869.³ Yet by the early years of the twentieth century, informed debates had given way to puerile and deliberately provocative polemics leading, with increasing frequency, to assassinations of particular preachers.⁴

Another component of public life in the 1920s was shuddhi, or the re-conversion of lower-caste Hindus, untouchables, and later Muslims and Christians into the Arya Samaj. First undertaken by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1878, conversion was believed to be an innovation in Hinduism, and in the early years of the Arya Samaj, shuddhi was rather an exception.⁵ The new rituals that were created to permit the re-converted individual into the order of the Arya Samaj were greatly contested. So the Aryas tried to balance their reformist zeal with a healthy dose of orthodoxy. The movement to protect cows, for instance, was deliberately used to obtain the support of the orthodox Sanatani Hindus. But shuddhi gained in significance during the catastrophic famines of 1897–98 and 1899–1900, when Arya Samaji leaders such as Lajpat Rai sought to counter the activities of Christian missionaries with their own brand of proselytisation, fund-raising, and the founding of orphanages.⁶ In this manner, tens of thousands of untouchables and lower-caste Hindus were converted through shuddhi and entered the Arya Samaj.

Sangathan, a movement for a consolidated Hindu community, had been advocated at various moments in the late nineteenth century. In 1901, Lajpat Rai recommended that controversial issues relating to the different “religious nationalities in India” be reduced to a minimum in the general agenda of the Congress and a separate Hindu political or semi-political Congress deal with matters such as: “the language question . . . the protection of Hindu orphans from the proselytising agencies of other denominations and, if necessary, to record a protest against those confidential circulars of the Government, which aim at the favouring of other communities to the loss of the Hindus.”⁷

In the immediate aftermath of the Morley-Minto reforms that provided Muslims with separate electorates, Punjabi Aryas renewed efforts to convince other Hindus of the need for both shuddhi and sangathan.⁸ Petitions to protect cows were circulated; tentative steps were taken towards the formation of separate associations for the Hindu and Muslim press; and various organizations issued calls for the boycott of the other

community. In the following section, I will examine the implications of sangathan in an area where the Hindus were truly a tiny minority.

The Politics of a Partial Text: The Kohat Riot of 1924

Kohat was one of the five districts transferred from Punjab to create the new NWFP in 1901. The new province came under the jurisdiction of a chief commissioner who reported directly to the viceroy, thereby enabling better control over India's long north-western land frontier. Integral to the strategic interests of the British Empire, and possessed with a distinct system of law and policing known as the Frontier Crimes Regulations, British governance of this province routinely required massive financial outlays and the presence of a large and permanent garrison throughout the period of British rule. Financial exigencies and a rise in crime were the most important reasons provided by the minority Hindu and Sikh population to revoke the partition of these five districts from Punjab. After the Partition of Bengal was rescinded in 1911, the Hindu and Sikh minority population of the NWFP and the Punjab redoubled their efforts for a re-amalgamation of both the provinces.

That the connections between Hindus in the Punjab and the Frontier Province were close was indisputable. It was at the insistence of Punjabi Hindus that the Indian National Congress passed resolutions demanding the reduction of troops in the NWFP in 1897 and 1898.⁹ The early forays of the sangathan movement in the Punjab had their echoes in the Frontier Province. The Peshawar riots of 1910 allegedly caused by the clash of Holi revellers with a Muslim fast wounded forty people and made headlines in the press in Punjab and London. The riots were evoked by Muslims and Hindus to make two different points: Zahur Ahmad, the secretary of the Muslim League in London, pointed to the new boycott of Muslims by Hindu traders and declared that the Muslim community was being victimised for its loyalty to Britain.¹⁰ However the *Panjabee*, an English-language weekly associated with Lajpat Rai, argued that the failure of Punjabi Hindu leaders to meet the chief commissioner of the NWFP reflected the disregard with which the British treated Hindus concerned about the security of their brethren across the border. For the British officials, this was one more instance of the "Lahore agitators . . . using the Peshawar riots as a handle to discredit the administration."¹¹ But their graphic description of Peshawar puppets dancing to Punjab wire pulling did no

justice to the real fears and prejudices that haunted Punjabi and Frontier Hindus.

Efforts by the Frontier Hindus to seek a re-amalgamation with the Punjab found, in some cases, a measure of support from Muslims.¹² Yet a formal committee appointed to deal with the question of re-amalgamation noted that in a recent debate in the Punjab Legislative Council, Hindus and Muslims had voted on diametrically opposite sides.¹³ During their consultations with officials and non-officials in Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, and Abbottabad Districts, this Frontier Enquiry Committee was confronted with two main currents of opinion: Hindus and towns generally favoured amalgamation with Punjab, whereas Muslims and villages favoured a separate Frontier Province. In these five settled districts, the Hindus, including Sikhs, represented 7.9 percent of the population against 91.6 percent Muslims. For the minority, a movement toward sangathan was, effectively, a movement to re-amalgamate the settled districts of the Frontier Province with the Punjab, and was made with an eye to effect an increase in the numbers of non-Muslims.¹⁴ It was this movement that formed the backdrop to the Kohat riots.

In examining these riots as a partial text, I emphasise three concerns. First, at the most immediate level, the pamphlet that triggered the riot was partial and bigoted. Second, at the level of the locality, the intelligence and later force used to dissuade or prevent violence was incommensurate with the dangers perceived by British administrators in regions as volatile as the Frontier Province. Finally, at the level of the evolving nation, the treatment accorded by Congress leaders like Gandhi, Lajpat Rai, and Pt. Malaviya to Kohat was partial, erasing their own contribution to sangathan and the fears that plagued minority Hindus surrounded by “fanatical” Muslims.

The poem that sparked the riot was commissioned to be printed in a pamphlet of *bhajans* titled *Krishna Sandesh* by Jiwan Das, the secretary of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha in Kohat. The Sanatani Hindus initially claimed that they had not been aware of the contents of the pamphlet that had been distributed on the day of *Janamashtami*, August 22, 1924. However, later investigations showed that these bhajans were read aloud to the congregation of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha in late June and were approved for publication.¹⁵ Jiwan Das had read the proofs himself and was in constant touch with the printers in Rawalpindi. The offending bhajan declared:



Map of North West Frontier Province.

... In Kaaba we will build a temple for Vishnu, the very existence of the believer will be wiped out

If the *azaan* were extinct tomorrow, the blasts of conch would certainly substitute it

The cry of “Allah-o-Akbar” will be replaced with “Om”

Oh, thou Muslim priest begone with thy prayer mat; to Arabia this consignment will be booked.

We are not going to spare those who dare us; *Krishen* has to resort to plain talking.¹⁶

The explicit call to spread the faith of Vishnu all the way to Mecca, and the promise of absolute annihilation held out to “believers”—that is, Muslims—in a region where they constituted the overwhelming majority of inhabitants was foolhardy. In early correspondence relating to the riot, there is greater detail on both the nature of the victims and the perpetrators. For instance, a telegram noted that “old Kohat Hindus were not involved at outset . . . Sanatan Sabha was in hands of new Hindus.”¹⁷ Only “new” Hindus fed on ideas about sangathan could have conceived of celebrating the birth of Krishna with a distribution of pamphlets that included a vicious poem designed to offend religious sensibilities—both Muslim and Hindu. That it was called a bhajan shows the extent to which politics had encroached on the religious, the social, and even the spiritual.

When the poem came to the notice of Kohati Muslims, possibly during a funeral on September 1, 1924, they raised the matter at a meeting with the assistant commissioner, Sardar Ahmad Khan, the next day. The main point of dispute during this meeting between the assembled Hindus and Muslims was the construction of a bathing tank, and the assistant commissioner decided in favour of the Hindu community; the Hindus later alleged that the Muslims brought up the poem in retaliation of their defeat. In the petition submitted, the acting secretary of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha stated that their apology had been conveyed to various Muslims, along with the decision to tear out the page bearing the poem, but that “the said poem must have been wrongly construed and translated by the Muslims otherwise it was an ordinary type of a poem intended for the spread of religion!”¹⁸

The petition detailed the events of September 3. A “big mob” of Muslims asked the assistant commissioner to arrest Jiwan Das, the secretary of the Sabha, who handed over the torn pages with the poem to the magistrate. The remaining 960 copies of the book were ordered to be produced in court, and then burnt amidst shouts of “*Allah-o-Akbar*.” The title page of the pamphlet with an image of Lord Krishna and the word *Om* also were burnt. This act hurt the religious sentiments of the Sanatanis, and they observed a *hartal* or closing of shops in protest of the burning and Das’s arrest.

The religious sentiments of these “new” Hindus certainly were not predicated on any consideration of the religious sentiments of Muslims.

The public burning of the pamphlet shocked them so profoundly that they decided to launch a prosecution against the assistant commissioner. The petition proceeded to complain that the Hindus felt insecure, were afraid to venture out of the city walls, and inside those walls they were “abused, insulted and threatened.” They declared that if this continued, they “might be compelled to leave their houses and migrate to Punjab.” The meeting with the Muslims had resulted in the arrest of Jiwan Das. The case was scheduled to come up for hearing on September 11. The hartal to protest the incarceration of Jiwan Das shows us that the Hindus also expressed their defiance and resentment publicly. It became clear that the Hindus expected protection from the British as a matter of course.

However, contrary to Muslim expectations, the deputy commissioner, N. E. Reilly, secretly orchestrated an agreement whereby Jiwan Das was permitted to leave the district on September 8. Reilly feared an outburst when the case would come up for hearing because he knew that leading Kohati Muslims had been mobilizing Muslims in the neighbouring villages to attend the court’s proceedings on September 11.¹⁹ It was believed that copies of the offending pamphlet had reached the Frontier Province tribes, the Orakzais and Afridis.²⁰ Reilly was aware the Hindu community would be able to pay the ten thousand rupees that would be demanded as security for Das’s release. The Hindus later stated that “the fate of Kohat was sealed as soon as the news of his release spread into the town.”²¹ However, some Hindus—whose objections were obviously overruled—had argued against Das’s early and injudicious release because they realized it would anger the Muslims.²²

The Muslims of Kohat felt the breach of promise keenly. By beat of drum, a big meeting at the Haji Bahadur mosque was called on the night of September 8. The police report revealed the anger among the assembled Muslims, numbering more than a thousand. When the locally well-respected Khilafat leader Maulvi Ahmed Gul tried to counsel patience until they had spoken to the deputy chief commissioner, the crowd decided on the dreaded *talaq* (divorce) oath: “They would either die the next morning or arrive at some decision. They all said that their wives would be divorced to them and that they should not be afraid of death or imprisonment.”²³

Later reports emphasised that the prosecuting inspector, Diwan Chand, had failed to grasp the significance of the divorce oath when it was reported to him and had not transmitted this to his superior officer; had he done so, steps might have been taken to avert the outbreak.²⁴ However, it

is worth noting that the superintendent of police, H. Lillie, also heard of the mosque meeting from Sub-inspector Mohammad Usman Khan via telephone. He did transmit the telephone report to Reilly to the effect that the Muslims were extremely angry. The Hindus of Kohat also claimed that two Hindus reported to the deputy superintendent of police, the highest officer they could approach at that hour, and informed him of the real danger of a "breach of the public peace."²⁵ At any rate, Reilly was informed of the oath by a Muslim during his Town Hall *jirga* the next morning; it appears to have made no impression on him or on his subsequent plans.

Meanwhile, the Hindus had not been idle. On the night of September 8, they had heard of the meeting at the Haji Bahadur mosque and the shouts of "*Allah-o-Akbar*" that emanated at its conclusion. Early on the morning of September 9, the Executive Committee of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha wrote to the chief commissioner and deputy chief commissioner: "Mobs being sent for from outside to show strength to attract your sympathy and menace Hindus strong action humbly solicited against Muhammadans unlawful assembly." This was followed by a meeting of 250 Hindus and the Hindu Muhalla Panchayat at the [S]than of Jogian, where they collectively decided to protect their homes.²⁶

The telegram from the Sabha reached Reilly during his Town Hall meeting with the Muslims. He ordered the police to protect the Hindu Muhalla. When the meeting ended, groups of young boys wandered towards the Hindu Muhalla, while the larger portion of the crowd accompanied the assistant commissioner to launch judicial proceedings against Jiwan Das. The groups of boys reached the Muhalla shouting that they had won victory in the case; with their sticks they rattled closed shop fronts. This was apparently misconstrued by the Hindus locked in their homes that they were about to be attacked. They began "panic firing"; the first full telegram recounting events stated that a Muslim boy had been hit in the chest by a revolver bullet allegedly fired by the pleader Sawan Singh.²⁷ Fires started soon after; at 12:30 p.m., the military was called in to help. One squadron, 5th Probyn's Horse, and one company, 4-13th Rifles, were sent while the fires in different areas were raging. Extra troops were soon called to "fight the fire and prevent looting which had then started."²⁸ The details are important because in responding to criticism, Reilly later asserted that the Hindu Muhalla was not touched during September 9; this was supposed to vindicate his decision not to call in more troops on that night. When fires spread the next day, the Hindus were *evacuated*.

Before embarking on an extended analysis of the events constituting the riot and the unprecedented evacuation of Hindus from Kohat, it is useful to bear in mind that certain compulsions guided British officers in charge of documenting and reporting the violence. Reports in the press and stray official telegrams had painted a picture of administrative bungling. The viceroy urged the chief commissioner to remember this while writing his report: "You will realise that I and my Government have to face much criticism on subject which has been directed against administration. We not only have to meet this, but we have to dispose of question in way i) that will prevent undesirable reactions on the Hindu-Muslim tension prevailing generally in India at present time and causing much anxiety, and ii) that will avoid revival of controversies which we hoped we had explored and settled by the North-West Frontier Province Enquiry Committee."²⁹

The viceroy failed to mention what path the chief commissioner should take if the two compulsions clashed with each other. The reconstructions that followed gave precedence to absolving the British administration over quelling Hindu-Muslim tensions in the country.

There were many anomalies in the events that shook Kohat that star-crossed September in 1924. Amongst the most important criticisms that the administration had to account for was its own state of preparedness. Was the riot planned or spontaneous? The first full-length telegram sequencing events was sent by the chief commissioner, H. N. Bolton. After interviewing many Kohatis, Bolton believed that the situation was grave from September 3, and both sides had been preparing for conflict. On September 5, members of a Peshawar Khilafat Committee tried to mediate but failed and left the next day. "Facts must have been known to city police officers, but they did not report them to Deputy Commissioner or Superintendent who were in consequence expecting peaceful solution of trouble and did not realize imminence of danger."³⁰

The government of India (GOI) responded with a sharp rebuke: "Your serial no 21 is ugly reading. How do you reconcile theory that situation was grave from September 3rd onwards and both sides were making preparations and keeping it dark with fact that . . . nobody, Hindu or Muslim, was timorous enough to give secret away?" Bolton changed his tune and declared that the theory of previous preparation was a conclusion provisionally reached by the inspector-general of police and himself, not by local officers. But the next line seems ill-fitted: "Mus-

lims seem to have been preparing only for loot and Hindus for armed resistance. Fight was clearly started before Muslims were ready." He hoped the "true facts" would be discovered by judicial enquiry.³¹ Under circumstances where the GOI wanted to deflect criticism of its administration in the Frontier Province, the one-man official enquiry conducted by O. K. Caroe was hardly the best bet for calming an irate public opinion.

There were other grounds to doubt the British government's repeated claim that all proper precautions had been taken by the authorities. The rough draft report sent by Bolton noted in some detail the disposition of troops on September 9 and 10. We learn that the officer in charge of the 4–13th Rifles divided his men into two equal portions, one to march through the Hindu Muhalla with the assistant commissioner and the other to go to the main bazaar with the deputy commissioner. All accounts emphasised that the casualties on September 9 were Muslim: A couple of Hindus caught outside city limits were targeted, but the crowd of Muslims inside the city had been armed with sticks, not guns. Fires were now blazing at both ends of the bazaar and looting had begun. When extra troops arrived, they were engaged in stopping the fires and the looters. By 7:00 p.m. on September 9, it was decided that the military would guard the city gates and prevent "the entry and egress of looters," while the police dealt with the inside of the city.

The first shot, according to unofficial observers, had been fired from the Hindu houses overlooking the main bazaar and inside the city. According to Bolton's rough draft:

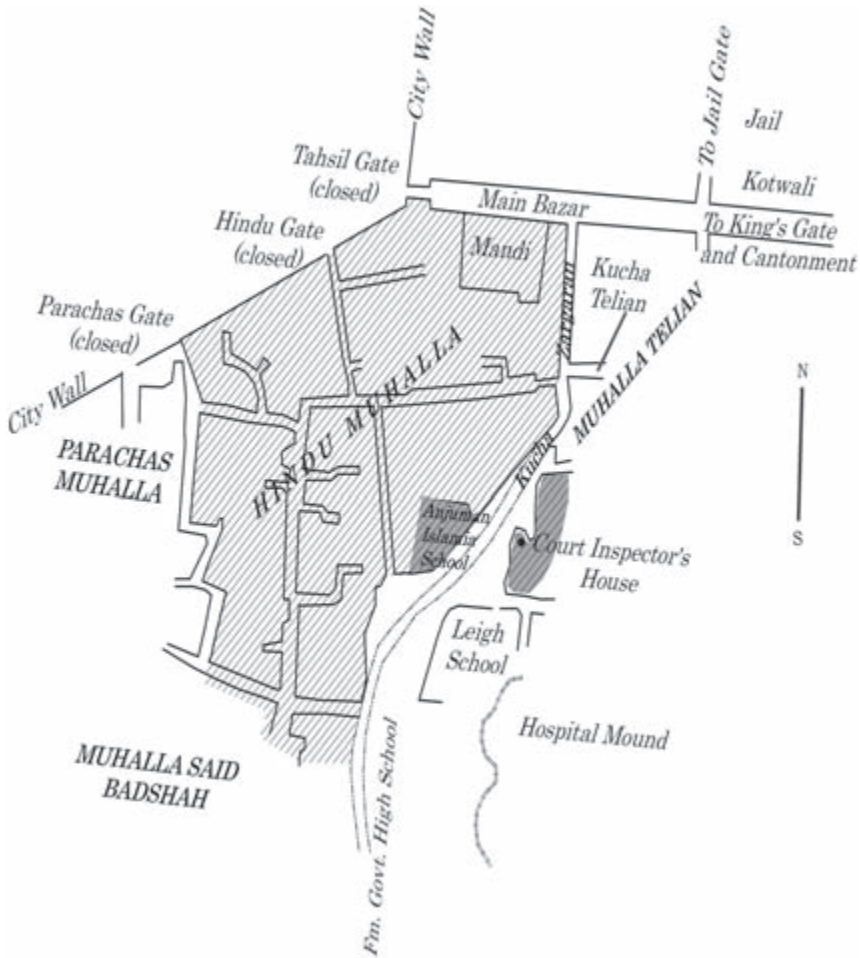
A large crowd with possibly a sprinkling of adults went along the road leading to the tehsil gate of the city. When they got near the gate fire was opened on them from *two houses at the edge of the Hindu Muhalla*, and one small boy was killed and three wounded . . . These boys were about 12 years of age. . . . It can hardly be supposed that the Hindus deliberately intended to provoke a conflict. The truth appears to be that when they saw a noisy crowd returning from the town-hall to the city they thought that the Deputy Commissioner had failed to pacify the Muhammadans, and that they were returning to carry out their threat of the night before. The Hindus therefore fired in panic, thinking that they were protecting themselves against an attack.³²

A glance at the sketch map of the Hindu Muhalla shows the proximity of the tahsil gate to the main bazaar and the Hindu Muhalla. Regardless of the intention of Hindus, how could Reilly, the deputy commissioner, have failed to consider the possibility of retribution the next day? After all, the Hindus' panic firing had caused the eventual death of ten Muslims, including at least one or two young boys. None of the Muslims had arms on that day. Reilly decided, however, that the calm that descended on Kohat on the night of September 9 was permanent. Col. Kirkpatrick had the responsibility of guarding the 2.75 mile perimeter of the city and keeping out the trans-frontier tribes. At 8:00 a.m. on September 10, he was faced with thirteen holes that had been cut into the city wall during the course of the night and a steadily increasing mass of intruders. *Now*, reinforcements were sought.

In defending his decision to post his troops outside the city gates, Col. Kirkpatrick pointed to his many responsibilities: safeguarding the main cantonments that housed women and children, the new cantonments a mile away, and the supply and station areas. In addition, the troops would have been restricted inside the city because of the fires, the narrow streets, and the temptation to assist in the looting.³³ His superior officer supported him and declared that "the trouble restarted on the 10th by the action of the *Badmashes* from the neighbouring country (whether they came from Independent Territory or from our neighbouring villages appears immaterial)."³⁴

In fact, it mattered enormously. In blatant disregard of the chief commissioner, Bolton's conclusions in his draft report that the deputy commissioner "committed errors of judgment" by not informing him of "i) the tension in Kohat by the 3rd September; ii) in releasing Jiwan Das on the 8th and iii) in not taking greater precautions on the night of the 9th and 10th to prevent a recrudescence of rioting the next day," the foreign secretary, Denys Bray, asked Bolton to rewrite his report and emphasise the success afforded by the Kohat authorities in keeping away the Frontier Province tribes during the riot. He also asked that Bolton include "a general review of the measures taken by the Deputy Commissioner on the 9th, with commendation, if any, as seems to be the case, he acted calmly and well."³⁵ In due course Bolton would obey his high command and change his tune to praise the deputy commissioner and officer commanding the troops for handling the situation well.

In his revised report, Bolton explained troop deployments on September 10 from the perspective of officers truly dealing with a spontaneous



Sketch Map of Kohat city, NWFP (Not to scale). Home Poll Kws to 249/VIII of 1924, NAI.

crowd. Gone were the details of the size of the crowd and the relative paucity of troops on the ground.³⁶ There is no suggestion that this crowd was angry because of the firing that occurred the previous day. As the fires spread and it became harder to hold back the large crowd of Muslims, Hindus who had not yet taken refuge in the houses and mosques of friendly Muslims elsewhere in the city were escorted by members of the Khilafat Committee and troops to the police station and the cantonment.³⁷

Col. Kirkpatrick remembered feeling that the situation was getting “beyond control. Fresh fires were starting everywhere.” The few troops they had were tired, there were no reservists at hand, and “stragglers were looting. As long as the Hindus remained locked up in their houses, ready to fire off their revolvers in panic at any time, considerable danger existed, for the Muhammadans were angry and excited at the bloodshed that had occurred.”³⁸

Hindu Muhalla—the words embodied the security that is associated with home. It was imperative that the British show they had done their utmost to preserve the safety of the Hindu neighbourhood, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. To pointed questions on the “precise precautions” taken to protect Hindus from “organized attacks which after their aggression with heavy casualties day before were inevitable,” Reilly replied that the “disturbance round the Hindu Mohalla . . . [only] began at about 9 am on the 10th”; “looting on the 9th confined to main bazaar and lasted about one hour”; and find support in Bolton: “The Hindu Muhalla had not yet come into the picture. There had been no fires or looting there during the day and all had been reported quiet.”³⁹ By his own admission, Reilly considered “some further disturbance during the night [of September 9] highly probable.” However, he used this as an alibi for not meeting with the leaders of the Hindu Muhalla that night. Reilly held that “it would have been as unsound for me to have got out of touch with my Headquarters and telephone as for a General expecting a night attack to leave his Headquarters to expostulate with a picquet for unnecessary firing that day.”⁴⁰

As the rulers, the GOI could dictate the terms of a report, silence criticism, and mete out blame and punishment in uneven measure. Yet their whole-scale transfer of responsibility to Hindus was made easier by the blatant gerrymandering of evidence resorted to by Kohati Hindus, now refugees in Rawalpindi. When Special Magistrate Caroe began documenting cases for looting and murder between Kohati Hindus and Muslims, he noted cases that could possibly be admitted in court and cases that would be laughed out of court. His elaboration of one such case suggests the mood among refugees in Rawalpindi:

In this case 11 distinct persons accuse the six leaders of a crowd some 200 strong of burning and looting their several houses in the Kucha Zargaran. Of the 11, 10 are eye-witnesses, and . . . the story

told by all 10 witnesses is consistent down to the most absurd detail—e.g., one of the six had a pistol in his right hand, another had a pistol over his shoulder, another had a tin of kerosene oil on his head, a fourth a bottle of oil in his hand—and all were shouting “This is the Hindu Muhalla; burn it and loot it.” It is as if the event which the 10 witnesses set out to describe had been photographed, and the photograph then printed in each of their brains. The parrot-like manner in which this evidence was produced in Court was the final touch, and I have no hesitation whatever in pronouncing the case to be a fabricated one, and the evidence learned by rote.⁴¹

The general complaint about looting, however, found its mark. Officers in charge of the Frontier Constabulary and the police witnessed some looting and offered their sepoy's license to deposit their collections before conducting general searches. The loot recovered consisted of silk cloth, some gold, and silver jewellery. Mr. Handyside, the commandant of the Frontier Constabulary, was especially surprised to find a Hindu dogra duffadar had selected a pint bottle of champagne as worth looting. The police had requisitioned grain to feed the extra forces and considered that the removal of these bags also might have lent colour to rumours of looting by the police. In all, only five constables were sent to trial for looted property. But police searches of the neighbouring villages recovered ten large bullock cartloads and thirteen donkey loads of loot from an assortment of fifteen villages.⁴²

Since the Resolution of the Government of India accompanied by Caroe's and Bolton's amended reports singled out the Hindus for blame and silenced internal criticisms of their own responsibility in preserving law and order, the Hindus adopted the plaint of a victimized community that was condemned for fuelling the riots yet suffered the most from them:

The Government . . . have acted . . . as if there had been a war between two independent Nations and the British Government was as a third party just called upon to make a pronouncement as to the origin of the war without any other responsibility in the matter. We . . . humbly ask . . . *whether it is possible under any civilized Government that practically a whole town should be destroyed, a whole community subject to atrocities of an unprecedented character and driven away from their homes and hearths at the hands of another section of the subjects of the same Government and the*

*Government should take no action in punishing the perpetrators of the horrible deeds of arson, pillage and murder but should try to screen them simply because that community might by its situation or otherwise be in a position of advantage, and might if evilly minded [sic] create some trouble for the Government and that on the contrary the Government should expose the sufferers to still greater trouble and persecution in order to compel them to submit to the dictates of the stronger community.*⁴³

Although the petition proceeded to delineate the sufferings of Kohati Hindus to the exclusion of the substantial losses incurred by Kohati Muslims, their main concern was whether the government was willing and able to protect them against the “depredations of their fanatical neighbours.” The Kohati Hindus felt as if the government had ceased to exist and Muslim rule had again been established.⁴⁴

The Problem of Evacuation

The charge of evacuation had to be met. Three whole months after the riots, the government declared that the evacuation from the cantonments to Rawalpindi had been arranged “at the earnest entreaty of the Hindus themselves.” However, the Hindus were too “panic-stricken” and “incapable of forming a right judgment on what was for their own good,” so perhaps the provincial authorities would have “acted with truer kindness had they hardened their hearts against the entreaty.”⁴⁵ Lajpat Rai, who had now landed in Bombay from an extended tour of Europe, interpreted the evacuation as evidence that the Kohat Hindus did not feel safe. Even if the Hindus were the accused, it was the duty of the government to dissuade them and provide military security so they could remain in their homes.

Evacuation posed the problem of negotiating a dignified return. This, for Gandhi, was the crux of the problem. In articles written in *Young India* between October 1924 and February 1925, Gandhi advocated that the Hindu refugees at Rawalpindi not return until the “Kohat Mussalmans were willing and eager to receive them with open arms.” For Gandhi, Kohat was an all-India question and “on a proper and honourable solution” of this problem lay the possibility of bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity. Yet after damning the government for its “utter worthless-

ness and incompetence . . . criminal indifference and callousness,” he declared that “*whosoever the initial blunder and provocation*, the fact stands that the Hindus were practically forced out of Kohat. It is up to the Musalmans therefore to go to Rawalpindi and take the refugees back to Kohat with friendliness and with full guarantee for the safety of their lives and property.”⁴⁶ Gandhi’s evasion of the initial blunder and provocation and the attitude of the “new” sangathanist Hindus did not augur well for his project of forging a “real heart unity” between Hindus and Muslims. What began as an indictment of British inefficiency and culpability got refracted into a Hindu-Muslim question to be solved by Muslims taking the Hindus back home.

Pt. Malaviya was president of the Punjab Sanatan Dharm Sabha that was deliberating in Rawalpindi that year. With direct access to the Kohati refugees and the viceroy, he might have played a key role in negotiating a just settlement. The resolutions at the Sanatan Dharm Conference referred in detail to the outrages perpetrated upon Kohati Hindus and Sikhs and complained that sixteen “respectable” Hindus and three Muslims “of inferior position” had been arrested. Like several others, the conference called for an independent and public inquiry by a committee composed of members of all communities: It also demanded strengthening the number of Hindus in the local police, as well as the judicial and executive services. It invoked the assistance of all leaders working for Hindu-Muslim unity to visit Kohat to bring about reconciliation. The resolutions failed to mention the small fact of Jiwan Das’s pamphlet, published, after all, under the auspices of a local Sanatan Dharm Sabha. They also omitted to mention that Muslims both suffered in the riots and helped Hindus evacuate from the burning Muhalla.⁴⁷ So much for reconciliation.

In response, the Muslim Working Committee at Kohat protested against the “sheer misrepresentation of facts and gross perversion of affairs” in the resolutions of the Sanatan Dharm Conference. The committee urged that the principle of communal representation in the various services under the government and local bodies should, “in the interests of public peace and tranquility” be immediately enforced in the province. It wished to warn the government against “Hindu propaganda to defeat the legitimate aspirations” of the Muslims.⁴⁸

Months of intermittent yet protracted negotiations between leaders of Kohati Hindus and Muslims resulted in an agreement to drop all charges of looting and murder between both the communities. This too was

exceptional: Frontier Province officials emphasised that only this would bring the Hindus back to Kohat and return the frontier to a semblance of normalcy. What made Kohat special was the evacuation of the Hindus. "So long as Kohat is empty of one of its communities, Kohat remains an open sore, threatening to make the whole frontier septic."⁴⁹

In early February 1925, Gandhi arrived in Rawalpindi with the Khilafat leader Maulana Shaukat Ali, and interacted with Hindu and Muslim leaders of Kohat, Peshawar, and Rawalpindi. By this time, a few hundred Hindus had returned to Kohat, building reconstruction was in progress, and an amnesty was being negotiated. Gandhi asked, again, if the Muslims of Kohat would invite the remaining Kohati Hindu refugees in Rawalpindi to return to Kohat. He was informed that the Kohati Muslims were not in a mood to forgive and forget. So he exhorted the refugees: "if you are men and wish to live like men, then make a solemn declaration that as long as conditions do not change, you will not return to Kohat."⁵⁰

Like Gandhi, the British government believed that Kohat was an all-India question. Both wanted reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims of Kohat. They differed from each other in their methods to achieve this object. Gandhi insisted that real peace was practically impossible with government intervention or "without private and spontaneous effort intervention [*sic*]."⁵¹ The viceroy retorted that the final agreement had been made possible because of the spontaneous help of private persons of both communities.⁵² Punjabi Hindus also affirmed that the government had to be party to any agreement between Muslims and Hindus because only the government could promise that a greater proportion of the services would be reserved Hindu and Sikh for as long as the communal tension lasted.⁵³ Gandhi felt that "History would have been . . . more honourably written if the Hindus had not sought the protection of officials . . . had stuck to their homes and without offering any defence, or even in the act of forcibly defending themselves and their property and their dependents had been reduced to cinders."⁵⁴ Such a course of action was hardly appealing to the Hindus; it also served to reinforce stereotypes about "bullying Muslims" and "cowardly Hindus." Gandhi's repeated appeal that Hindus not return until complete reconciliation was effected and belief that it was Muslims "who owe them such reparation as is possible in the circumstances" seemed increasingly out of sync, with refugees who themselves wanted nothing more than to bury the past, move on, and return to Kohat.⁵⁵

When leaders in the Congress turned towards movements that engaged in conversion or movements that, in their turn, exacerbated conflict, how did they remain wedded to ideals of Hindu-Muslim unity? Gandhi held that he was against shuddhi but equally believed that if Arya Samajis thought they had a “call from their conscience,” they had the right to proceed with the movement. If Hindu-Muslim unity was jeopardized because an Arya or Muslim preacher was preaching his “faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep.”⁵⁶ Yet in the wake of Kohat, Gandhi lectured sternly on rules governing conversion to Islam and claimed that conversions in the frontier occurred because the Hindus there were “a hopeless minority untrained in the use of arms . . . the temptation for a weak man in such circumstances to embrace Islam for worldly gain is irresistible.”⁵⁷ Here, then, was an instance when the increasing visibility and volubility of political leaders rendered their equivocal stance on shuddhi and sangathan conspicuous.

Shuddhi and sangathan necessitated the assertion of beliefs not only in the supremacy of one’s own faith but also in a commitment to including others into this highly prized belief system. These movements gained urgency because of the importance given to enumerated religious communities, especially minorities, in the assignment of government services and seats in the legislative councils. This was highlighted in the aftermath of the Kohat riots, when Frontier and Punjabi Hindus demanded an increase in Hindus to the police, administrative, and judicial services of the Frontier Province, along with assurances that they would not be boycotted as a community and could rebuild their religious places. The Muslim Working Committee at Kohat, conversely, also demanded communal representation in services. The same bigotry that produced the offending poem in Kohat reappeared in the Punjab months later with the publication of the bigoted text *Rangila Rasul*. When the high court judge Dalip Singh acquitted the “morally guilty” Hindu publisher of this book on technical grounds, anger at his judgment was expressed against his innocent co-religionists in the NWFP. Hindus were forced to evacuate, this time from the Khyber Agency, although without British assistance. But the movement was repudiated when the government amended the Criminal Procedure Code and passed new legislation that restricted Indians from offending founders of religions; the leader of the Shinwari tribes himself came to Peshawar to take his Hindu neighbours back to their homes in the Frontier Province.⁵⁸

Kohat embodied, in a distilled fashion, the clash between the rigour of sangathan and the theoretical charm of Hindu-Muslim unity. With its extremely small Hindu population and overwhelming Muslim majority, Kohat represented, for Punjabi Hindus, their own predicament as a minority community in a Muslim-majority state. None of the important provincial or all-India leaders were able to face this problem squarely in the eye and suggest a satisfactory resolution to the predicament of a religious minority with majoritarian aspirations. Within the Punjab, Bhai Parmanand warned against the indifference of all India leaders: "This expulsion of the Hindus from Kohat is not a local question. It means that tomorrow in an another place in the Frontier Province the Muhammadans may get displeased with the Hindus and do what they have done with the Kohat Hindus and thus gradually the Hindus may have to vacate the whole of the Frontier Province. . . . If the Hindus are thus pushed inwards it would be an ever-recurring question for the Punjab Hindus to prepare for their defence."⁵⁹

Notice how the responsibility for evacuating Hindus shifts, almost seamlessly, from the British to the Muslims. Lajpat Rai felt the evacuation had raised Kohat to the "dignity of a national disaster" and pleaded that the issues involved were a matter of "life and death to the whole Hindu community of the NWFP." In fact, he argued they were vital to the resolution of Hindu-Muslim unity itself: "Does anybody imagine that there is any possibility of this unity being achieved so long as the Kohat wounds are not healed? There may be unity in the south and the west. There may be unity in resolutions and conferences, but there will be no unity in hearts. What are the riots of Delhi, Gulbarga, Amethi and Lucknow as compared to Kohat?"⁶⁰ The Congressman Lala Duni Chand of Ambala called upon Muslim leaders to take responsibility for these "fanatical outbursts . . . if you raise the spirits, you should also control them." He declared that poverty drove Muslims to commit more crimes than it did Hindus. "The excesses on the part of Muslim hooligans are bound to drive the Hindus to desperation."⁶¹ For all these Punjabi Hindu leaders, then, the responsibility fell on Muslims and on an all-India leadership to resolve relations between the two communities.

But even in this polarized atmosphere, there emerged alternate voices, both Hindu and Muslim. Writing to the *Tribune*, Raj Indro Lal Sahnî argued that culprits on both sides, Hindu and Muslim, ought not to be given harsh sentences. Only this would vitiate the atmosphere in the Frontier Province. Besides, in his succinct words, "love invoke[d] love."

He hoped appealing to the “better element” among Muslims would result in a happier future for the Hindus.⁶² In a similar vein, the general secretary of the Punjab Congress, Dr. Satyapal, pointed to the obvious consequences of such communal fighting: They were allowing “foreigners to chuckle . . . and have a peal of laughter” at their expense. In contrast to the mutual recriminations that threatened to overshadow the press, Satyapal publicly praised Maulana Mohammad Ali for his donation to the Kohat Hindu Relief Fund. And from Muzaffarnagar, the Honourable Saiyid Raza Ali donated money specifically for Hindus whom he hoped would soon return to Kohat.⁶³

These voices mattered, but the evacuation of the Hindu minority left a long scar. The memory of Kohat worked upon the fears of some Hindus in the Punjab when the question of extending reforms to the NWFP was reopened in 1926. For urban Punjabi Hindus, increasingly marginalized by a Unionist Ministry that relied on a rural base, the prospect of losing further power in the NWFP was real. The next section situates their anxieties by drawing out the changing meanings of representation in this period.

The Meanings of Representation

The Montagu Chelmsford reforms granted after the First World War introduced the principle of dyarchy into Indian politics. This meant that subjects such as law and order remained with the central government, but those such as education and local self-government were transferred to ministers nominated by the provincial government.⁶⁴ The reforms also redistributed seats between various interest groups in the provincial councils, but this was calculated to retain British control, made possible with the assistance of a small elected minority. In the Punjab, the weight given to the rural electorate (including pensioned soldiers) made the opposition afforded by the predominantly urban and minority Congress entirely irrelevant. Moreover, the categories created by the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900—“agricultural tribes” and “non-agricultural tribes”—had resulted in the formation of a National Unionist Party to safeguard the interests of the agriculturists. It was with the support of this majority party in the legislature, then, that the Punjab was governed.

The leader of the Unionist Party, Mian Fazl-i-Husain, was appointed minister for education and local self-government in 1921. A lawyer from Sialkot and an active Congressman, Fazl-i-Husain seemed an unlikely choice for a government that prided itself on supporting the interests of a

predominantly rural and loyal peasantry. But Fazl-i-Husain had broken with the Congress on the issue of non-cooperation and seemed, to British purposes, not so radical anymore.

Fazl-i-Husain soon defined his mandate to include the extension of the rights claimed by agriculturists to other fields such as education and the services.⁶⁵ This, coupled with the *extension* of communal representation to local bodies and educational institutions, left the Punjabi Hindus pretty high and dry. One of his first acts as minister was to announce that places at the esteemed Lahore Medical College and Government College Lahore would be distributed among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in the ratio 40:40:20.⁶⁶ This measure, which aimed to redistribute the gains made by higher education more equally among Punjabi's three communities, raised the suspicions of Punjabi Hindus, accustomed to seats being open to merit and thus favourable to a community that had made the switch to Western education generations earlier.

Furthermore, the next two measures launched by Fazl-i-Husain affected Punjabi Hindu interests adversely across a larger terrain. The Municipal Amendment Act of 1923 aimed at redistributing seats in municipalities across Punjab so that the difference between voting strength and population strength was narrowed. This meant that the majority Muslim population would get more seats (in accordance with their numbers in the population of the province) than the educationally and economically better-off Hindus.⁶⁷ Similarly, Fazl-i-Husain called for the redistribution of grants given to schools so that the meagre funds contributed by the government would now go to advance the interests of the educationally backward community—the Muslims—at the expense of schools already operating under Hindu auspices. It was thus with a sense of considerable foreboding that Hindus gathered under the leadership of the former civil servant Raja (once Diwan) Narendra Nath and Pt. Malaviya at the next scheduled Punjab Hindu Conference.

In his welcome address, Narendra Nath emphasised the need for friendly relations between communities and hoped men of the “proper type” would remain at the helm of a perfectly reasonable sangathan movement. Nath praised the “conciliatory” policies of the Mughal emperor Akbar and the process of cultural exchange he inaugurated. As an instance, Nath pointed out that it was hard for him to “discriminate between the beauties of the [Sanskrit] original and of the translation” in Persian by Faizi of the Bhagwad Gita and Nala and Damayanti from the Mahabharata epic. But Nath had himself translated John Stuart Mill's essay on freedom into Urdu and

was terribly conscious of how frequently majority rule could “degenerate into tyranny.”⁶⁸

In detailing their objections to the Municipal Amendment Act, the most frequent claim Hindus put forward was on grounds of taxation. Hindus demanded a determining voice in the shaping of municipal policies, said Professor Gulshan Rai of the Sanatan Dharm College in Lahore, “not on the sentimental or political ground of communal pride and power,” but on the practical ground of contributing more to municipal funds.⁶⁹ But there were more valid criticisms of the minister’s initiative on grounds of consistency. Others pointed out that property tax ought to have counted in substantiating the claims of the Hindus in urban areas because being in possession of agricultural property was a *sine qua non* of the electorate for the district boards. Nath ended the address with what would become his signature tune: “the Hindu problem in the Punjab is the Muhammedan problem in many other provinces.”⁷⁰

More poignant were criticisms against the *extension* of separate electorates. Numerous Punjabi Hindus claimed that separate electorates, although conceded by the 1916 Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League, were meant to be temporary since both the parties had grasped their negative fallout. Under no circumstances was the communal representation to be extended to local bodies where it had been absent in several cases, or become the basis of allocating funds or appointments. To a minority like the Punjabi Hindus, communal representation, separate electorates, and safeguards for a Muslim majority spelt an unacceptable shift in the status quo—in short, a disaster.

For both Nath and Malaviya in early 1924, there was no conflict of interest between mobilizing to strengthen their “communal” interest and the “public” interest. But the Punjab Hindu Conference concluded its deliberations with a resounding resolution to boycott elections to the municipal committees until the innovations shepherded by Fazl-i-Husain were repudiated and the constitutions amended. This boycott was rigidly enforced: Even at the height of plague in April, Hindu members of the Lahore municipality scrupulously refrained from helping Muslims in undertaking sanitary measures jointly. But when Delhi erupted in riots in July, Brij Narain, professor of economics at the Sanatan Dharm College in Lahore, reiterated his appeal for common sense:

I am far from saying that the Hindus alone are to blame for this sad state of affairs. But Hindu leaders who have preached Shuddhi

and Sangathan, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, cannot escape their share of the responsibility for what happened. They have appealed to the worst passions of the mob, and by doing so they prepared the ground for such outbreaks . . . Swaraj is something higher than more posts for Hindus under the present Government or more representation on Municipal or more bodies . . . if we want communal peace in the Punjab, the Hindu agitation against Mian Fazl-i-Husain should cease. It has done enough mischief already . . . can any one deny that the persistence of the Hindus in the boycott intensifies communal bitterness?⁷¹

Kohat, then, entered this terrain of sinking aspirations as a harbinger of worse to come. The terrifying scenario of a beleaguered Hindu minority being forced to flee the NWFP had serious implications. Lajpat Rai unburdened his thoughts onto paper en route from a Unity Conference in Delhi (a Conference cobbled together to convince a fasting Gandhi, who was undergoing penance for Kohat, that leaders were serious about reaching for a Hindu-Muslim settlement).⁷² In a series of thirteen articles written over a period of three weeks to the *Tribune*, he expounded his views on the Hindu-Muslim problem, its causes, and possible resolution. Crucially, Rai, who always claimed to be very clear about his political creed, contradicted himself in important ways during the course of these articles.⁷³

To begin with, Rai wondered at the insistence on absolute rights that distinguished the behaviour of the younger generation. He felt that India's varied communities had to be driven by the ideal of duties rather than the doctrine of rights. The assertion of absolute rights, individual or communal, had been encouraged by the British and was unfeasible.⁷⁴ Since the Khilafat movement, Rai held that "sectarianism and narrow-minded bigotry" had strengthened among Muslims and was "not without influence and reaction on the Hindus and Sikhs." By seeking religious sanction for various items in the Non-cooperation movement, it had "re-enthroned" influences that were antagonistic to the idea of a united India. The solution lay elsewhere: "To be frank, we will have to follow Europe in this matter if we really desire political freedom. Religion must be divorced from politics . . . I don't mean to say that religion should be divorced from our lives or that our political structure should be divorced of religious influences in the higher sense of the term . . . but I do mean that ceremonial

aspect of religion should only be the concern of individuals or of communities and should not be permitted to create barriers or political distinctions between the followers of different religions.”⁷⁵

Rai asked if Hinduism and Islam were “so antagonistic as to make their followers naturally and instinctively hostile to each other.” His views on what was and was not essential to Hinduism were sharply criticized by other Arya Samajis.⁷⁶ But he correctly recognized the influence of the British-imposed “communal system” in realigning certain Hindus—who would have dissociated themselves from Hinduism in an earlier time—toward Hindu interests. They had realized that “except as Hindus they had no status and their children would have none unless they chose to accept Islam.”⁷⁷ Rai’s solution was to emphasise those points on which Hindus and Muslims agreed and to remove all barriers in social interaction that would not lead to loss of faith. He elaborated on his reading of Islam and the consequences of recent riots to assert, emphatically, that it was the “duty of the Muslim nationalist leader . . . to impress on the minds of their co-religionists the truth that Hindus are not *Kafirs* and that even on the occasion of fights and quarrels, their temples, their women and their property are inviolable and unassailable.”⁷⁸ Even in the aftermath of Kohat, Rai clung to stereotypes about riots that Muslims were always the aggressors and Hindus always its victims.

Rai traced the history of communal representation: Watershed events included the founding of the Aligarh College for Muslim elites and its response among Arya Samajis—the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, a symbol of “Hindu consolidation”; the demand for separate electorates made by Muslims in 1906; and its “sanctification” in the Congress-League Lucknow Pact a decade later. Rai did not think that Sir Syed Ahmed, the founder of the Aligarh College, was a Pan-Islamist, but amongst Muslims who joined the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement, “in very many cases their nationalism seemed to be only secondary to their Pan-Islamism.”⁷⁹ Sir Syed’s emphasis on English education and his fears for the Muslim community’s alleged backwardness were not considered to be “absolutely baseless, but the cry which he raised was practically the death-knell of Indian nationalism at the time.”⁸⁰ Rai dwelt on his travels in Turkey to conclude that Indian Muslims were “more Pan-Islamic and exclusive than the Muslims of any other country on the face of the globe, and *that fact alone makes the creation of a united India more difficult than would otherwise*

be the case."⁸¹ In his article the next day, Rai noted the other side of the equation:

One thing, *of course, is patent.* Hindus cannot be anything but Indians. They have no other country and no other nation to look to. They cannot, therefore, be accused of any kind of Pan-Hinduism, in the sense in which the term is used in relation to Islam. Hinduism and Indianism are, in their case, synonymous terms.⁸²

But only five days later, Rai articulated a very different conception of India:

India is neither Hindu nor Muslim. It is not even both. It is one. It is India.⁸³

Lajpat Rai was publicly, and quite unself-consciously, admitting the maze of conflicting opinions that assailed him in the wake of the failure of the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement and the Kohat riots. Here was a leader with almost three decades in public life, swept by rising fears of Pan-Islamism and unable to choose between a conception of India that equated it with Hindus and a conception that seemed to give pride of place to the "national" over the "communal." Having criticized Dr. Muhammad Iqbal for, as Rai heard it, moving from a fervently national to a Pan-Islamic pitch in his poetry, he could not fall prey to similar exclusionary sentiments. Or could he? In analysing sangathan, Rai acknowledged that "there is nothing in its aims and objects or its constitution that need make it anti-Muslim, but to be frank, *the fact that it is anti-Muslim is the only thing that keeps it alive . . . the only purpose which the two movements* [here he includes *tanzim*] *are likely to serve is to increase the already existing estrangement between the two communities.*"⁸⁴ Having admitted this loud and clear, it is a wonder that in the next phase of his career, Lajpat Rai chose to immerse himself in sangathan.

In conclusion, Rai offered suggestions to resolve the communal tangle. He listed the demands of certain Muslims that communal representation with separate electorates should be provided in all the legislatures, local bodies, universities, and other official and semi-official bodies.⁸⁵ He emphasised that "*the euphemism that this is only tentative . . . should deceive no one. Once you accept communal representation with separate electorates, there is no chance of its being ever abolished, without a civil war.*"⁸⁶ The insistence on communal representation with separate electorates was the surest way to ensure that the British would never leave

India because it was “antagonistic to the idea of a common nationhood” or a “united India.”⁸⁷

Hence, Rai proposed that the Punjab should be partitioned into two provinces: the West, with a large Muslim majority, and the East, with a large Hindu-Sikh majority. Given the larger context of the Partition of Bengal along religious lines in 1905, the efforts to re-amalgamate the Frontier Province with the Punjab to create a larger majority for Frontier Hindus, and the ongoing debate on the separation of Sind from Bombay presidency, Rai’s proposal might not have seemed radical. It is only in his discussion of Maulana Hasrat Mohani’s scheme of “separate Muslim states in India, united with Hindu States under a National Federal Government” that Rai unveils a different option: “If communal representation with separate electorates is to be the rule, then Maulana Hasrat’s scheme as to smaller provinces seems to be the only workable proposition. Under my scheme the Muslims will have four Muslim States: i) The Pathan Province or the North-West Frontier; ii) Western Punjab, iii) Sindh, and iv) Eastern Bengal. If there are compact Muslim communities in any other part of India, sufficiently large to form a Province, they should be similarly constituted. *But it should be distinctly understood that this is not a united India. It means a clear partition of India into a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India.*”⁸⁸ This would not be the last word by Rai on communal representation and separate electorates, but it was among the first public declarations of the possibility of a Muslim *India* and non-Muslim *India*.⁸⁹

Closer home, Rai acknowledged that “Muslim dissatisfaction” was “well-founded and genuine.” In Muslim-majority Punjab, Rai asked Hindus to “make up their mind to concede to the Muslims their fair share of the loaves and fishes obtainable from Government.” He disapproved of the opposition of Hindu members of the Punjab Legislative Council to the opening of Intermediate Colleges at Campbellpur, Lyallpur, and Gujrat and concluded that their conduct would not convince anyone that the “whole blame for the present communal tension in the Punjab can be laid at the door of Mian Fazl-i-Husain.”⁹⁰

Two points more on these thirteen articles. In summarizing his suggestions, Rai repeated his proposal to divide the Punjab into two provinces “to make majority rule effective.” The division would leave eastern Punjab with an overwhelming Hindu majority and thereby resolve the problems Hindus faced as a minority in undivided Punjab. Finally, Rai reiterated that Gandhi had made a mistake in assuming that seven crores of Muslims had accepted Non-cooperation. “It was too much to expect

educated Muslims to give up opportunities of preferment and promotion which they were just beginning to get, the Hindus being already much in advance.”⁹¹ The question of appointments in government services is taken up in far greater detail by Raja Narendra Nath. But before discussing his politics, I would like to trace Lajpat Rai’s politics after Kohat and these articles. To do so, I will have to maintain the spotlight on British initiatives as much as on Rai’s.

On March 2, 1925, the Home Member Muddiman announced one-third reservation of seats for Muslims in public services. On April 11, 1925, only a few months after he had declared that anti-Muslim sentiments were the *raison d’être* of the Hindu Sabha movement, Rai became the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, and an even stronger advocate of sangathan.⁹² At the end of the year, he won elections to the Legislative Assembly unopposed: Raizada Hans Raj resigned his seat so that Lajpat Rai could represent Jullundur. His election was hailed for its value in “countering the policy of obstructionism” to which the Swarajist Congress was then partial. Rai’s conditional acceptance of the Swarajist programme included being allowed to vote independently on “communal” questions.⁹³ Throughout 1926, this issue was severely debated within the Congress: In May, Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Swarajist Party, held that the decision regarding whether communal questions were “party questions” lay with the Swarajists in the council and assembly; in September, the Working Committee clarified that no “communal” matter could be made a “party question” if three-fourths majority of either community in the legislature were opposed to such a course.⁹⁴ The importance of this question was highlighted by the divisive debate on extending reforms to the NWFP.

In the buildup to the debate, Hindus from Dera Ismail Khan District and Nowshera cantonment of the NWFP passed resolutions against the reforms. The *Tribune* and the *Milap* held that the question had to be decided by all of India since expenses on the NWFP were borne by the rest of India.⁹⁵ More problematic, however, was the peculiar mentality of the Frontier Province, “a mentality of which the Kohat tragedy was at once the outcome and a glaring illustration and which led one honourable member of the Assembly . . . to declare that the best way of putting matters right in the province was to ask the Hindus and Sikhs to go out of the Province.”⁹⁶ Hindus protesting the introduction of reforms also made frequent references to the intimate social relations that subsisted between

Pathans in the settled districts and the tribes on the other side of the frontier, casting aspersions on Pathan allegiance to Indian nationalism. As Raja Narendra Nath, the new president of the Hindu Mahasabha, put it: "We in the Punjab know more about them, than those more remotely situated . . . robbery and kidnapping is their usual pastime." Nath also wondered how the future legislative council of the NWFP would countenance the punitive measures the British typically adopted against neighbouring tribes.⁹⁷

The issue that was soon to tear apart the already feeble Congress in the Punjab hinged on who would best safeguard Hindu interests in the Punjab and the NWFP. Since the Hindus of the NWFP had no provincial legislature to which they could send representatives, they relied on Punjabi Hindu advocacy of their interests. Their concerns were given ample airing during the debate in the assembly in March and April 1926. Even Lajpat Rai, whose views on the introduction of reforms in that formidable province were fairly nuanced, felt that the positing of that resolution in the Legislative Assembly was in the "nature of a loaded pistol" designed to divide the Swaraj Party.⁹⁸ Conceding that the Hindu minority had its legitimate fears, Rai drew the line on pandering too much to these fears. His views are worth quoting at some length:

It is a pity that the real issue[s] involved in the question have been confused by the unfortunate communal issue. In my judgment there is no communal issue at all. *No minority, however influential, rich or powerful, has the right to block the way of the majority to progress.* Do the Hindus of the NWFP believe and maintain that because they are a small minority entirely at the mercy of the majority, they are entitled to insist that political advancement on democratic lines must for that reason be denied to the majority? That is an argument which is absolutely invalid. The acceptance of that argument involves the permanent domination of a country by foreigners because the latter alone can protect the minority against the possible or probable high-handedness of the majority . . . Kohat has provided the absolute futility of placing any reliance on the British Government whenever there is a conflict between Hindus and Muhammadans in the NWFP.⁹⁹

Rai felt the NWFP would have to eventually get its own council. But it would be "absurdly foolish" to give the province a legislative council

without first equipping it with a modern judicial and educational system.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, the Swarajist Party boycotted the assembly vote. Motilal Nehru's efforts at having a compromise resolution on re-amalgamation with the Punjab or an insistence on treating the settled districts of the NWFP on par with the rest of India by the introduction of a council system failed to be adopted by all the non-official members in the assembly. Moreover, Nehru's lengthy and well-meaning explanations of the negotiations that preceded the Swarajist boycott did not cut ice with many Punjabis.¹⁰¹

Between May and August 1926, Rai travelled in Europe and upon his return, declared that "August 1926 is not August 1920." He turned to Parnell, an Irish nationalist leader, whose biography, *Parnell of Real Life*, had inspired him: "Parnell's policy was neither constitutional nor unconstitutional but a judicious combination of the two. 'Policy', 'Party' or 'methods'—'old' or 'new' were not ends in themselves, but varying and shifting conditions towards the one paramount end—which was the happiness of a Free Ireland . . . although right or wrong did not change, methods did."¹⁰²

What should the Punjabi Hindus do? What would be the point of following the Swarajist policy of obstruction in the Punjab Provincial Council where they formed a dispensable minority? The recent passage of the Money-Lenders Bill (subsequently renamed the Borrower's Protection Bill) in the teeth of the Congress, and Hindu Party's opposition in the Punjab Council, and the debate on reforms in the Frontier Province, followed by the walkout of Swarajists exposed the limitations of Swarajist influence, not only in the Punjab Council, but also in the corridors of the Central Legislative Assembly.¹⁰³ For a Rai attuned to debates in Europe and the impending Royal Commission in 1929, the larger picture had to be addressed. The legislatures would have to be worked, despite their inadequacies and the weight of official control. Nationalists would have to fight their battles, one by one. It is here that Lajpat Rai appreciated Jinnah's contribution. A highly accomplished barrister, Jinnah could have minted money if he chose to work in the courts; instead, he sat in the legislative chambers, through dull debate after dull debate, working the reforms. That was the measure of his sacrifice and his contribution to India's slowly awakening representative democracy.¹⁰⁴ That was the route the Swarajists had to take, in Rai's opinion, and if they chose to obstruct or boycott the councils, they would have to be taught a lesson.¹⁰⁵

“Unity Cannot Be Purchased at the Cost of Hindu Rights”

There are some good men amongst the Hindus who think that the reconversion of the whole Muslim community and the establishment of an all-prevailing all-absorbing Hindu policy is not only desirable but feasible . . . To my mind that policy is impossible. Then there is the Swaraj Party, consisting mostly of Hindus, whose leader maintains that he is constitutionally unfit to think communally, which means that he can only think non-communally. There is a third party to which I have the honour to belong, and who think that . . . nationalism is not inconsistent with justice to the Hindu community and . . . *unity cannot be purchased at the cost of Hindu rights* . . . I want freedom for my country, but I must be sure that I get that freedom without losing my status as a Hindu. I do not want to change masters.¹⁰⁶

With this justification, Rai resigned from the Motilal Nehru-led Swaraj Party and, along with Pt. Malaviya, formed the Independent Congress Party. As one who had always desired the separation of the Hindu Mahasabha from the electoral arena, his participation in a Hindu Election Board with Raja Narendra Nath to nominate candidates was major news. There was no easy explanation, except that Rai declared politics to be like “chess, a game of moves” and felt those who did not know how to change their moves constantly should not remain in politics.¹⁰⁷ Whether or not to follow an unremittingly obstructionist policy; to accept ministerships; to vote individually or according to party whip on issues deemed “communal”—this was the stuff of election debates. Close on the heels of the Swarajist split, the Punjab Congress also split: supporters of the party led by Lajpat Rai formed a Punjab Congress Sudhar Committee and got busy criticizing the office bearers of the Punjab Congress.¹⁰⁸

The election campaign of 1926 sounds curious to my ears, tuned as they are to contemporary concerns, and equally alive to the need for protecting my retelling of the past from teleological strains. And yet, it is impossible to read reports of election speeches without wincing. How else does one react to a Motilal Nehru who insisted that he was as good a Hindu as those in the new Independent Congress Party? The fact that he had not read the Vedas in the original ought not to matter.¹⁰⁹ The battle in the press and platform was bitter. Satyapal, president of the Punjab Congress, complained of Rai’s propaganda that Congress candidates were

“anti-Hindu” and that “Afghans are about to invade India.”¹¹⁰ Duni Chand of Ambala, election publicity secretary, reported that voters were being warned not to vote for a Swarajist who would allegedly take dictation from those outside the province.¹¹¹ In the ensuing contest, Motilal Nehru pit Raizada Hans Raj and Diwan Chaman Lall against Lajpat Rai: both were badly defeated. The Independent Party led by Lajpat Rai won thirteen seats in the Punjab and the Motilal-led Swaraj Party won two; to the Central Legislative Assembly, they won two and zero seats, respectively, from the Punjab.¹¹²

The rapprochement between the parties was effected by the end of 1927, when the British announced the appointment of the all-white Simon Commission to enquire into India’s aptitude for further reforms. In response, the Congress resolved to put forward its own proposals while boycotting the Commission. At the same time, Jinnah sought to coordinate Muslim demands under the auspices of a Muslim conference that was held in Delhi in March 1927. That conference led to another in Calcutta in December, which in turn produced a contingent compromise: the repudiation of separate for joint electorates was firmly anchored to the separation of Sind from the Bombay presidency and the introduction of reforms to the NWFP and Baluchistan; one-third reservation for Muslims in the central legislature was also demanded.¹¹³

Although the boycott of the official Simon Commission was observed by a wide range of parties—including the recently opposed Swarajist Congress and the Independent Congress Party—this did not signal a unity of purpose among Punjabi Hindus. Contrary to the resolution of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha that called for a complete boycott of the Simon Commission to “vindicate national honour,” the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha endorsed the elections of Narendra Nath and Gokul Chand Narang by most of the Hindu members in the council to a Punjab Reforms Committee that would cooperate with the Commission.¹¹⁴ The searing debate surrounding Narendra Nath’s submission to the Simon Commission in the face of an all-India boycott reflected on whether or not some Hindus could press their demands as insecure provincial minorities rather than confident majorities in a wider arena. Faced with the prospect of the All Parties Conference agreeing to the separation of Sind and the introduction of reforms in the NWFP, the vice president of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, Bhai Parmanand, lashed out at what he considered to be the “surrender of Hindu rights.” Parmanand argued:

The reason generally advanced that the interest of one section of the Hindu community should be sacrificed for the sake of the larger issue of Hindu-Muslim unity is superficial and fallacious. The Hindus of Sindh and NWFP appear to be a separate section to us on account of the present administrative arrangement, otherwise they are an integral part of the whole and by thus making them a scapegoat, we are betraying the interest of the Hindu community, because there is every fear of their straying away and the loss would be a dreadful one.¹¹⁵

Narendra Nath argued for cooperation with the Simon Commission from a somewhat different perspective. He felt that the Punjabi Hindus had a case to make as minorities in northwest India. A career bureaucrat whose views on the Morley-Minto reforms are discussed in Chapter 1. Nath soon reached the peak that non-white bureaucrats could hope to scale in the Punjab. By 1916, Nath resigned from the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and accepted the honorary title of “Raja” that was conferred upon him.¹¹⁶ As president of the Hindu Sabha, Narendra Nath gave evidence before the Franchise Committee in 1918 in favour of mixed electorates. In 1921, he entered the Punjab Council unopposed from the Landholders Constituency. He was president of the All India Hindu Mahasabha in 1926 and the sole Punjabi Hindu representative at the Round Table Conferences in London in 1930 and 1931. His lengthy *Memorandum on the Rights Claimed by Hindu Minority in North-West India* served as my primary source for the demands put forward by a section of Punjabi Hindus who refused to fall in line with the all-India boycott of the Simon Commission.¹¹⁷

Narendra Nath wished to demonstrate that “Hindus in North-Western India also form a minority, and an important minority in a country which derives its name from them.” Like Lajpat Rai’s writings to the *Tribune* four years earlier, Nath traced the history of communal representation through separate electorates, marking in particular the terms of the reply to Muslim demands in 1906. What had appealed to the then-viceroy Lord Minto was the argument that a minority community that held an important position in the country needed separate representation in the councils in excess of its numerical proportion.¹¹⁸ Nath pointed out that the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 had not granted Muslims in the Punjab separate electorates because they were a majority in the province. It was the Congress

League Pact of 1916 that fixed proportions for Muslim representation through separate electorates in every province, including the Punjab. This pact paid no attention to the Sikhs, a matter remedied by the Southborough Committee of 1919, which granted Sikhs communal representation through separate electorates. Thus, a full two-thirds of the elected members of the Punjab Council (thirty-two Muslims and twelve Sikhs out of sixty-four members elected from territorial constituencies) were now returned via separate electorates.

Nath objected to separate electorates because they deprived those outside the religious community, which formed the electorate, from exercising a vote in selecting representatives to whom the fate of all would be entrusted. After declaring that “a minority must submit to a majority” in a democracy, he asserted that “if a minority does not want exclusion [in the matter of the councillors that are elected] it is unfair to force exclusion on it. Such exclusions may be forced on a majority community for it loses nothing thereby; on the contrary it derives strength and is better consolidated on communal lines.” Nath’s shifting stance is inexplicable unless we realize that “minority” refers to Punjabi Muslims, where he recommends they submit to the majority. However, “majority” also refers to Punjabi Muslims when he calls on the community to be generous. Hence, Nath insisted that separate electorates could not be countenanced solely to benefit a “majority community whilst a minority community insisted upon joint electorates.” The question of separate or joint electorates had to be decided by the community that was in a minority in a province.¹¹⁹

Within the Punjab, Nath demanded joint electorates with reservation of seats according to the existing proportions of 50 percent Muslim and 50 percent Hindu and Sikh. Safeguarding the comparative advantage that had accrued to the Hindu community was crucial. Nath spoke out bitterly against the Unionist Party policy in the Punjab that ordered the future recruitment of services in certain departments to be in the proportion of 40 percent Muslims, 40 percent Hindus and others, and 20 percent Sikhs. He warned that there were no provisions in the constitution to further reduce the proportions assigned to Hindus from 40 to 20 percent. Further, he held that the claim of the majority community to reservations in government service was incompatible with its claim for provincial autonomy, “for what is now a concession to a backward community would become an irrevocable privilege after Provincial autonomy has been given.”¹²⁰ Here, Nath equated the fate of the anti-colonial movement with appointments in government service.

Nath also analysed the construction of “caste” through the working of the Punjab Land Alienation Act. He noted the assumptions beneath the act and the extent to which they had not been met: A class of money-lenders more exacting than at any previous time had arisen amongst the “agricultural tribes,” and peasants had not been able to procure a good price for their land in a restricted market. Nath’s staff collated figures of agricultural tribes belonging to every religious community to prove that Muslims formed a large majority among them.¹²¹ The Land Alienation Act was supposed to protect the interests of tillers of the soil; while Nath held that it had done so inadequately, he was focused on showing that since the Hindus in the Punjab were predominantly situated in urban areas, this measure worked against them.

Nath elaborated on the weight accorded to the agricultural tribes in the Unionist Ministry, the Punjab Council, and the recent Regulation of 1919 that sought to reserve seats for them in various departments and offices of the provincial service.¹²² He provided extracts from council debates: Strings of questions followed by his statistics suggested that the reservation of services for “zamindars” had become the measure of good governance in the Punjab Council. He complained of the census taken in the Punjab on January 1, 1926, which listed government servants according to religion and as “agriculturist” or “non-agriculturalist.” The definition of an “agriculturist” adhered to that provided by the Land Alienation Act of 1900, but it was now deployed for entirely different purposes. To an urban Punjabi Hindu, the contradiction in British policy was obvious:

I find it difficult to reconcile the policy underlying the resolution of 1919 of the Punjab Government, with that of the Alienation of Land Act. The object of the Act was to prevent the “detrribalization” of land, to prevent the transfer of land from castes which by heredity and tradition are good farmers and live on the land, to castes who live in towns and are merely receivers of rent. I do not see how the object of the Act is achieved by giving every possible facility to agricultural castes to take such an urban pursuit as Government service, dissociating them from farming and agriculture. . . . In no other Province is any preference given to landowners for Government appointments.¹²³

Narendra Nath showed that the Land Alienation Act had led to the creation of a party in the council that “*by removal of the official block will form the ruling majority.*” His memorandum was an exhaustive

argument that based itself as much on a comparative study of minorities in the rest of India as on the merits and demerits of communal representation in the Punjab services and council. Deprived of political influence due to the electoral system engineered by the British, the Unionist Party's assault on their economic privileges seemed to these urban Hindus to mark the beginning of their decline in economic influence in the Punjab. Nath's memo repeatedly invoked what *would* happen if the official bloc in the legislature were to leave. It would appear from his litany of complaints that the Unionist Party would never look favourably upon the interests of urban Hindus such as himself. Yet Nath did choose to support the Unionist Party for a while in 1937.

In his 1928 memo, Nath declared that he had chosen to cooperate with the Simon Commission because he did not foresee any official body collating the detailed statistics that compared the position of Hindus in Muslim-majority Punjab with Muslims in Hindu-majority provinces. He was quite sure that the figures collected by the Punjab government would "show that considering the numerical strength of Muslims in the Punjab they are underrepresented in services and in spite of it Hindus are grumbling. Is it any duty of the Punjab Government to try to unravel the minds of the Hindus whilst the Hindus themselves maintain not only a reticent, a defiant attitude which boycott implies?" Like Bhai Parmanand, Nath asked if it gave "any satisfaction to the Hindus of the Punjab and NWFP to find that whilst they themselves are to be treated as helots in their own Province Hindus in other Provinces are free."¹²⁴

Hence, Nath recommended a clause in the new constitution forbidding discrimination of civic rights on the basis of caste and creed. On larger questions, he blithely declared that communities that could not agree on issues like cow-killing and music before mosques could obviously not agree on more serious questions like the defence of a land frontier. Nath therefore concluded that the "British element" in the services needed to be retained. For him, the presence of a third party was a uniting rather than a disintegrating force. As for dominion status, he doubted the Commission could recommend a "long step" towards that goal.¹²⁵

This was too much for Lajpat Rai. He highlighted this flagrantly loyalist aspect of Nath's memo and sent it to prominent Hindus all over the Punjab to seek their opinion. Who supported Nath's blatant call that the British remain in India and that dominion status was still a long way off? How could Nath have gone against the grain of Punjabi Hindu opinion by inviting the Simon Commission to so many meals that they

felt “killed” by receptions and honours?¹²⁶ While the rest of India boycotted the Commission, would Punjab turn loyal? Thirty thousand demonstrators had met the Simon Commission with black flags and cries of “Simon, go back” in early March 1928. In what now seems like a dress rehearsal, the police had charged at the crowd with *lathis*; later that year, at the same railway station in Lahore and for the same cause, the lathi would hit Rai himself. But for now, the question had to be raised: Who did these loyalists “who waited on the Commission with their *poojahs* [prayers] . . . represent?”¹²⁷

“The Punjabi Hindus Must . . . Refuse to Be Weaned from
the Rest of Hindu India”¹²⁸

Ever since the announcement of the election of Narendra Nath and Gokul Chand Narang to the Punjab Reforms Committee, Rai had argued vehemently against their participation. What body of evidence could these Hindus give to the Commission that they would not already have recourse to? How would pitting the demands of a Narendra Nath against a Muhammad Shafi lead to any kind of objective resolution by the British? Did these Hindus really believe that the British would desert their Muslim supporters in the Punjab and turn to Hindus instead? *Een kbial ast-o-mahal ast-o-junun* (This is a vain idea and madness).¹²⁹ The Commission was a routine bureaucratic affair: The crucial decisions to devolve power already had been taken in London. Rai had known for many months that the Commission would be composed of a wholly unrepresentative body of English officers passing judgment on Indian affairs. He pleaded that Punjabi Hindus tow the all-India line and look at the question of reforms from the all-India and not the provincial point of view:

I love the Punjabi Hindus. I will do anything for them, which is in my power but I cannot be a party to a policy of isolation from the rest of India . . . I cannot agree to sacrificing the interests of 200 millions of Hindus in the rest of India for the hypothetical good of about 24 millions of them in the Punjab, specially when I believe that do what we may the bureaucracy will not and cannot change its imperial policy—not even if all of us go down on our knees and lick the boots of the bureaucrats.¹³⁰

In response to Rai’s call for opinions, Hindu Sabhas across the Punjab confessed they were divided, but the majority favoured the boycott of the

Commission, and chose to follow in the footsteps of the All India Hindu Mahasabha. As for Nath's suggestion for retaining the services of the British, "retrograde," "reactionary," and "detrimental" were the words most frequently used in letters from Diwan Kartar Nath Puri, municipal commissioner, Sialkot; Sardar Ganda Singh Soni, vice president, Hindu Mahasabha Gurdaspur; Pt. Ram Richhpal Singh, president, Hindu Mahasabha Rohtak; Pt. Mehar Chand, principal, DAV College Jullundur; Rai Bahadur Mohan Lal, MLC Simla; L. Duni Chand, president, Dalit Udhar Mandal Hoshiarpur; and Tara Chand, president, Hindu Sabha Ambala City, among others.¹³¹ In a few instances, like that of the Hindu Sabha in Lahore, the office bearers took opposite sides. Thus, while Nath had the support of President Rai Bahadur Sewak Ram and Vice President Bhai Parmanand, General Secretary Gobind Ram Khanna begged to differ. Khanna insisted that the Sabha had not authorized Nath to submit his *Memorandum* on their behalf.¹³²

In the middle of this controversy, an All Parties Conference submitted its Nehru Report, titled after the chair of the committee, Motilal Nehru. With regard to communal questions, the report recommended that electoral figures showed no special need to secure Muslim majorities via reservations in Punjab and Bengal. The report also recommended the partition of Sind from Bombay after a final assessment of its financial viability as a separate state, and the introduction of reforms in the NWFP. Muslim demands for one-third representation in the central legislature were dismissed as unwarranted. Grateful for the support of Sardar Mangal Singh and by extension, all Sikhs, for relinquishing their safeguards as an important religious minority, the report took back weighted representation and separate electorates that were promised to Sikh and Muslim minorities in the 1916 Lucknow Pact and the 1919 Montford reforms. The only reservations permitted were for minorities in "strict proportion" to their numbers in the population. Permitting minorities the right to contest any number of seats was believed to be a better option than reserving weighted seats for them. Furthermore, Muslim fears of the advanced economic position of Hindus in the Punjab were dismissed as "largely imaginary."¹³³ It was noted that an unequal franchise existed in the Punjab, but that it did not merit further attention since the report recommended adult franchise.¹³⁴ The Hindus of Punjab and Bengal were deemed too big to be dealt with as "minorities" (they were 32 percent and 45 percent of the population, respectively); no reserved seats were provided for the depressed classes either. Measures to promote their interests in the realms

of education and other facilities were listed in a Declaration of Rights. A commission would be appointed to deal with the distribution of revenues between the provinces and the center.¹³⁵ The crown prize, arduously fought for by Punjabi Hindus like Rai, was the recommendation for joint electorates. Communal representation for ten years was considered to be a halfway compromise between separate electorates and joint electorates.¹³⁶

The report had a mixed reception. Among Punjabi Hindus, the two extremes were occupied by Lajpat Rai and Bhai Parmanand. In the 1924 *Tribune* articles written soon after the Kohat riot, Rai had insisted that it was impossible to conceive of communal representation as a temporary measure: "Once you accept communal representation with separate electorates, there is no chance of its being ever abolished, without a civil war."¹³⁷ But in late 1928, he actively canvassed for the acceptance of the Nehru Report that included communal representation albeit with joint electorates, thereby guaranteeing that Muslims returned to the legislature under a common electoral roll would not be "lunatics."¹³⁸ Lajpat Rai sought to clarify that although the principle of communal reservation for minorities outside the Punjab and Bengal had been permitted, this was only for ten years, and as a compromise. The Hindus had to accept the retention of communal representation to the extent that it was found in the Nehru Report "*out of a profound sense of necessity*, the necessity of reconciling Muhammadan sentiment and feeling."¹³⁹

The Nehru Report's recommendation to introduce reforms in the NWFP and Rai's strong speech in support of reforms in the ongoing assembly debate unleashed a volley of hectic letter writing. Rai argued that Muslim rule in the Frontier Province would be preferable to the state of anxiety in which Hindus currently lived. He also accused the British of using minority Hindu concerns as a wedge to divide the population of the Frontier Province. The truth was, it was the British who were averse to progressive change, but because they did not have the courage to admit it, they blamed the Hindus.¹⁴⁰ Others in favour of reforms called for a referendum, confident that the "intellectual opinion" among Frontier Hindus would carry the day. Beli Ram Malhotra from Peshawar pointed out that they presently had no legislative council; the Foreign and Political Department furnished district officers who were constantly transferred; and as a result, their concerns were totally neglected. Whatever the case elsewhere, in the NWFP, it would be the "minority which stands to gain by the Reforms."¹⁴¹ He also reminded his readers that the Hindus

contributed 86 percent of the total revenue in the province. Citing the example of other frontier areas like Alsace-Lorraine, he argued cogently for the impartial distribution of rights and privileges. In fact, as inhabitants of a frontier, they would be asked to sacrifice themselves more often; it was only fitting that greater efforts be made to promote their advancement.¹⁴² Or, as “a Kohati” put it: “Indians are a nation in formation and mutual contact has contributed not a little in making them one people . . . Some change must come . . . Then why not adopt that policy which would make North Western Province an autonomous, but grateful and strong member of the Federated States of India?”¹⁴³

Frontier Hindus who were opposed to reforms cited the permeability of the border between the settled districts and the independent areas, as well as the impossibility of placing the two distinct areas under separate authorities. They reeled off statistics on the unusually high prevalence of crime in the province, linking this to the “fanaticism” of the Pathans.¹⁴⁴

But the most explicit objections to the Nehru Report came from Bhai Parmanand. Once fervently opposed to communal representation and separate electorates, he now decided that joint electorates would be no panacea because the Hindus “being naturally possessed of mild and tolerant temperament” would only elect weak Hindus, while any Muslim was as “good” as the other.¹⁴⁵ His views are elaborated in *The Hindu National Movement*. The text is striking in its emphasis that the Hindu Sabha movement was not “communal,” but “national.” Notice the dramatic ease with which Muslims are automatically tarred with the brush of being foreign to India and Hindu communal interests are equated with the national: “Even now the Hindus alone devotedly love this country, and desire and hope for a higher and nobler future for it. Is this sentiment communal? If so, for God’s sake tell me what is understood by the word ‘national’ . . . Who does not know that the Mohammedans with their peculiar mentality have always stood for strengthening their community at the cost of the Hindus’ and the country’s good.”¹⁴⁶

Parmanand claimed that the Hindu Sabha did not want to “advance the communal interests of the Hindus,” but wanted to “protect the Hindus and their nationalism from the unjust aggressiveness of the Muslim community.” The Muslim League, conversely, wanted to “advance Muslim interests at the cost of nationalism.” Like his friend, Savarkar—who coined the term *Hindutva* and redefined “Hindu” to mean one who thought of this land as both his holy land and fatherland—Parmanand declared that the Muslims and Christians had “alienated their sympa-

thies from their country by adopting a religion of foreign origin, [it] all depends on the fact whether they want to be Indians or strangers.”¹⁴⁷ He insisted that it was the Hindus alone who had suffered for the “freedom and honour of this land” for thousands of years: “The Hindu movement is a real national movement that resembles the full moon, which is being subjected to a kind of eclipse by the Muhammadan communalism that wants to overshadow and swallow it up. The Hindu movement is there to save nationalism from being swallowed up in that eclipse.”¹⁴⁸

Parmanand wrote of the rise of “a nation within a nation” with reference to the Muslims and claimed: “We know that the Hindus and the Muslims differ from each other in every respect”. According to Parmanand, Muslims and Hindus read different histories, had different heroes; “the idea of a common nationality is for the present impracticable in India.”¹⁴⁹ He declared his opposition to joint electorates as well as separate electorates, and the introduction of reforms in Sind and the Frontier Province. He referred to the Nehru Report as a “still greater curse than the Lucknow pact” and berated the report for making Punjab and Bengal “practically . . . Muslim by abolishing communal representation and by giving all power into the hands of the Muslim majority.”¹⁵⁰ He was categorically opposed to all negotiations with Muslims. In this extreme stance, he was quite alone.

Minority Rights, the Problem of Unity, and Anti-colonial Nationalism

The fact is that a large number of Hindus and Muslims who profess a desire for Hindu-Muslim unity and who talk of a united India, do not realize that *unity has a price which they will have to pay before it can be achieved.*¹⁵¹

Having weighed everything in the balance, as best I can, I am of opinion that the *price we are paying for the introduction of joint electorates is worth paying.* The plea that the Hindu minorities in the NWFP and Sindh will suffer, has never appealed to me. Minorities must run the risk of being opposed by majorities, if the country is to be free. The protection of a foreign yoke for the minorities is no protection at all, because it involves the permanent loss of freedom.¹⁵²

The Kohat riot and its aftermath provide us with several key insights into the fears and anxieties that beset minority Punjabi Hindus. The allied

problems of rights for religiously defined minorities, regional and national unity, and anti-colonial nationalism joined to produce difficult and oftentimes brave resolutions. Soon after Kohat, and at a time of heightened sangathan, Lajpat Rai juggled upholding the rights of Hindus as a religiously defined minority in the Punjab and aligning himself with the Hindu majority in India, while Narendra Nath and Bhai Parmanand drew upon the rhetoric of minoritarianism to craft increasingly elaborate demands for Punjabi Hindus. But Rai was too grounded in the realities of Britain's grip over India and too devoted to India's freedom to follow Nath and Parmanand's lead and adopt a position of inordinate intransigence.¹⁵³ Let me summarize Rai's shifting positions one more time.

Even in the wake of Kohat and the unprecedented evacuation of Hindu minorities from that district, when Rai wondered aloud at whether or not India was Hindu and advocated her partition into Hindu and Muslim India, he appealed to Hindus and Muslims not to hanker after absolute rights. During an important debate on the extension of reforms and rights for minorities in the NWFP in 1926, Rai argued for a humane legal system to be introduced into the Frontier Province. But he soon withdrew from the Swarajist Congress and co-founded the Independent Congress Party with Pt. Malaviya in order to contest the 1926 elections because he believed the Swarajist policy of obstruction and non-cooperation in the councils was harming Hindu interests. Could it be that the same individual who had then urged Hindus not to fuss about government appointments was troubled by the fact of communal representation seeping into local bodies and government services? Yet, when matters roiled to a boil, the bourgeois question of jobs was the first to dissipate into vapour. Although Rai agreed with Nath's critique of the pernicious consequences of the Land Alienation Act, he was loath to guide Punjabi Hindus into an isolationist corner.¹⁵⁴ As an Indian nationalist, he insisted on a purposeful boycott of the Simon Commission. He considered Nath's appeal to the British to remain in India as evidence of his bureaucratic bent of mind. When Nath claimed that his views represented those of the leading Hindus in the province, Rai rejected this as nothing short of a libel on Punjabi Hindus.¹⁵⁵

Even while holding the banner of Punjabi Hindu interests high, Lajpat Rai recognized, in substantial measure, that an all-India settlement had to *accommodate* the frequently conflicting demands of religious minorities and majorities in other provinces, and actively engage with myriad regional pressures. It was this deeply considered conviction that he presented to his Punjabi and Frontier Province followers in the months be-

fore his death. Or, as a byline in the *Tribune* said, in this season of possibilities, “a little mutual respect, a little mutual trust, a little give and take, and all will be well.”¹⁵⁶ Somehow, Rai had the vision, the pragmatism, and the confidence to think and act politically as a Hindu to be sure, but also in the wider interests of a nation in the making. Would the next generation of Punjabi Hindus retain his vantage?

The 1920s held out a plethora of possibilities both in Punjab and across India. A focus on riots and the rise of *shuddhi* and *sangathan* might suggest that the interests of the community triumphed over those of the nation all the way until Partition. But I have examined the politics of minority Hindus in the Punjab and the NWFP, and shown, with careful attention to shifts in position, how Punjabi Hindus debated amongst themselves and with Hindus in the rest of India about how best to craft their demands and to align themselves vis-à-vis minorities and majorities elsewhere.

I focus here on two moments of anti-colonial mobilisation that also belong to the long 1920s. The first instance dwells on the role of the Arya Samaji leader Swami Shraddhanand (earlier Munshi Ram) during the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement as he was invited to address a Friday congregation at Delhi's largest mosque, the Jama Masjid, in 1919.¹ This was Shraddhanand's picture-perfect effort towards Hindu-Muslim unity coupled with vehement opposition to the British. His later emphasis on this particular event, in an otherwise very busy career, forces us to grapple with the transformative potential of religion in politics as well as to reassess Shraddhanand's own contribution to both anti-colonial nationalism and communalism.

The second moment revolves on the meanings assigned to the activities of the revolutionary Bhagat Singh. I argue that Bhagat Singh and his fellow prisoners' practice of hunger strikes and non-cooperation between 1929 and 1931 helped reunite an embattled and scattered Punjabi political community. Although they failed in their final goal of causing a shift in the Congress's "national" program, I find their manner of protest of value because it acknowledged and accommodated real differences of opinion and method. Both the language of religion and that of non-violence

in the public sphere were used creatively by these Punjabis in knitting together an often-divided North Indian society.

“Om Shantih, Ameen”:

Religiously Informed Anti-Colonial Protests

Under pressure from the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, during the First World War, Britain had agreed to declare the “progressive realization” of Indian aspirations with a view towards self-government, as the declared aim of her government in India. But the Montagu Chelmsford reforms that were announced at the end of the war fell woefully short of the hopes of most politically articulate Indians. In addition, the report of a committee that advocated the continuation of wartime Defence of India Ordinances in peacetime was deemed particularly offensive: a “Prussian document” that had to be “buried in no time.”²

In early 1919, the Indian Association of Lahore met to formulate a strategy with regard to the imminent passage of this Rowlatt Bill. Through unchecked rumour, the bill had already acquired imaginative flourishes. It was believed to give the police unrestrained powers to prevent more than four people from having a conversation; search any house without warrant; and prevent more than three men from standing in one place, going to a mosque, participating in a marriage procession, or performing funeral ceremonies.³ The earthy quality of some of these rumours attests to the manner in which the bill was perceived to affect the everyday life of people.

It was at this juncture that the recently returned expatriate politician Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi sought to experiment with his relatively new weapon—*satyagraha*—on a pan-Indian scale. Believing that the bill had sprung from violence, Gandhi felt the only alternative was *satyagraha*, or the civil disobedience of laws and a patient enduring of all the sufferings this might entail. But Gandhi initially advocated a limited form of civil disobedience to only a specific set of laws.⁴ Punjabis, led by Mian Fazl-i-Husain, agreed with this moderate national consensus, waiting to match their next move in accordance with the fate of the bill.⁵ However, despite unanimous opposition from all non-official members, the Imperial Legislative Council passed the Rowlatt Bill. Accordingly, the *satyagrahis*’ Passive Resistance pledge condemned the bills as “subversive of the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals.”⁶ The Non-cooperation movement had found its *bête noire*.

Swami Shraddhanand, who as Munshi Ram had ably defended the Arya Samaj in the aftermath of the 1907 movement (discussed in Chapter 1), had gone on to publicly renounce all association with the political world in 1917. Two years later, however, he chose to join this very worldly Non-cooperation movement because he felt the movement was more “*dharmic* than political.”⁷ Remembering his participation seven years later in 1926, Shraddhanand recalled how the Arya Samajis were initially astounded by his involvement. He too seemed surprised that religious leaders were at the helm of this anti-colonial movement. “It was a sight for the gods to see Pandit Ramchandra Mahopadeshak of the Arya Samaj and Maulvi Ahmad Sayeed *waiz* (preacher) of the Muhammadan Church—both redoubtable champions of their several faiths—sitting side by side and supporting each other in their tirades against the British bureaucracy.”⁸

To protest against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi put forward a limited program that included a *hartal*, fasting, and meetings scheduled for March 30, 1919. Shraddhanand emphasised prayer: “Every person should . . . meditate for half an hour and pray to *Parmatma* that He may turn the hearts of our opponents. With the exercise of will-power we could impress the hearts even of King-Emperor George, the [P]remier and Mr. Montagu sitting in England.”⁹ Shraddhanand was as eager as Gandhi that the protests stay within bounds and not become violent.

The sources to reconstruct the events of March 30 tell two very different stories. British reports characterised the crowds of people as “mobs” and the violence as led by *badmashes*, while Indian newspapers described the victims of police firing as “martyrs.” Donald Ferrell has endeavoured to distinguish between “audiences,” “crowds,” and “mobs” and between primary and secondary leaders of influence in Delhi at that time.¹⁰ Focussing on the writing and activities of the uniquely positioned Shraddhanand—“King of Delhi,” as he came to be known during the course of this movement—permits an analysis of the circumstances under which an important leader in the world of Punjabi Hindus, hitherto connected with controversial reformist ventures within the Arya Samaj and with defending Aryas against the stigma of sedition in a previous decade, now gained unprecedented influence among both Hindus and Muslims in an anti-colonial movement.

Sunday, March 30, 1919, opened with a *hartal* characterized by the general closure of shops. At about two in the afternoon, Shraddhanand was told about a conflict at the railway station, where a crowd of protesters had tried to insist on closing the station shops. The shopkeepers had

refused and the crowd was warned by a European railway official, who called in the police and arrested two of the protestors. Shraddhanand left immediately for the railway station. The British officers, who thought the hartal “was likely to be a fiasco,” had readied the reserves in the lines and police stations in anticipation of a need for action. These were now called, along with two troops of cavalry from the new cantonments. A hundred men of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry were ordered to stand by at Kingsway, a nearby avenue.¹¹ By the time Shraddhanand arrived, there had been firing and he heard that a dozen had been killed or wounded, “the bodies being dragged into the station yard.”¹² The first official report from Delhi referred to soldiers being “compelled to fire on the mob to clear the Queen’s Road and the Gardens in front of the Station.” An armoured car and a party of 250 Manipuris returning from Mesopotamia who happened to be at the station at the time were used to assist in the “clearing” and to “relieve the pressure” of the mob.¹³ Such compulsions—and, one might add, lack of compunctions—typified the actions of the British in Delhi and the Punjab during the course of this movement.

The crowd was demanding the return of the two arrested members, but the railway officers refused. The official report referred to “rioters” throwing stones and bricks at the police and soldiers; when the crowd refused to leave, the military “charged the crowd and drove them into the Queen’s Gardens and down the road to the left and right.” More firing occurred as the crowd reassembled at the Queen’s Gardens. They dispersed briefly only to regroup under the supervision of Shraddhanand for a pre-arranged meeting to protest the Rowlatt Act. The British report concluded with casualty figures—eight had been killed—and an assurance from the chief commissioner that the police and British infantry had behaved with “great restraint.” This report did not mention the near disaster that had occurred when the Manipuri soldiers almost shot the swami.

In Shraddhanand’s account, which was carried by the native press and later submitted to the Hunter Committee investigating the disturbances that emanated from the anti-Rowlatt Act movement, the police had acted with great depravity. According to this narrative, the crowd of Hindus and Muslims became angry when their compatriots were arrested by the railway officials, and overcome with grief at the later firing that resulted in the death of both Hindus and Muslims. Shraddhanand, who led thousands to the meeting ground, advised the crowd to act like true satyagrahis and not give in to violence despite provocations. He

denied that brickbats had been targeted at British officers. The city magistrate and chief commissioner asked him for an assurance that the meeting, which had by then swelled to forty thousand, would not end in violence. Shraddhanand gave them his word and asked the British officers to remove the troops from the meeting. Later, accompanied by thousands on his way home, Shraddhanand faced a nervous shot from the contingent of Manipuris lining the road near the clock tower. In his account:

I asked all to halt and they obeyed. In my *Sanyasi*-dress I went up to the footpath alone and asked the *Goorkhas* why they were firing on innocent peaceful people. Two rifles were immediately pointed at me and they began saying in a very insolent tone “*tum ko ched [sic] denge*” (We will pierce you). I stood quietly before them and said “*Main khara hun, goli maro*” (I am standing, fire). At once eight or ten more rifles were aimed at my breast and insolent threats were on. The crowd could contain itself no longer and was about to rush, when a wave of my hand and a short appeal to their Vow stopped them. But they were saying “let us die and not you, let us die.” The rifles had remained pointed at my breast for some three minutes when a European on horseback approached and asked the only policeman present whether he had ordered the firing. I stepped forward and asked the European officer whether he had heard the rifle fire. He impatiently answered that he was enquiring about it. I found afterwards that the officer was Mr. P. L. Orde of the CID Police.¹⁴

The first official report did not mention this encounter with the Manipuris. The Hunter Committee Report simply noted that this “exemplifies the unsuitability of this particular force . . . for the purpose of dealing with highly excited crowds.”¹⁵ Orde said that the picket did not understand what was being said to them. In a later report on the activities of Shraddhanand with a view to ordering his removal from Delhi, Orde described the attitude of the crowd as “extremely threatening” and claimed that “it was with difficulty that Munshi Ram [Swami Shraddhanand] could be persuaded to go away. In another few minutes further bloodshed would undoubtedly have occurred, and for this Munshi Ram alone would have been responsible.”¹⁶

Written in the wake of more police firings, Orde was imputing to Shraddhanand the responsibility for loss of life and arguing for his deportation from Delhi. Orde, an officer responsible for maintaining

law and order, neither appreciated the raw courage with which Shraddhanand faced the Manipuris nor his success in preventing violence in those crucial minutes. But Shraddhanand's bravery deeply impressed the thousands of assembled satyagrahis. In an article with multiple headings—"What Happened on the 31st March?" "A Unique Spectacle of Hindu-Muhammadan Unity," and "Hindu Dead Bodies on the Shoulders of Muhammadans and Muslim Corpses on Hindu Shoulders"—the *Pratap* of Lahore wrote: "The pen cannot describe the feeling of regard which the incident created for the Swami in the minds of the people. The Hindus said that he was a god; the Muhammadans said that he was a saint. The spirit of eager devotion in which the Muhammadans kissed the Swami's hand presented a sight which brought tears of joy into the eyes of an Indian nationalist."¹⁷

Recalling the first funeral procession, Shraddhanand wrote that it numbered thirty-five thousand Hindus and Muslims: "Hakeem [*sic*] Ajmal Khan and myself met for the first time at the martyr's feet and from that day we became like brothers to each other."¹⁸ The *Pratap* asked: "Was there any Hindu or Muhammadan of Delhi who did not accompany the bier and was there any garden from which flowers were not brought to be thrown over it?" And quoted the words of the swami:

This day is a blessed one, on which *an unbreakable tie of union has been established between the Hindus and Muhammadans. God grant that this union may be cemented still further and no power may be able to undo it. Do not think that the blood which has been spilt today has been shed in vain. What advantage can be greater than a union between the Hindus and Muhammadans? If you had been told a few days before that this spirit of brotherhood would spring up between the Hindus and Muhammadans could your eyes have pictured this spectacle or could you have been willing to believe this? This is not the fruit of any man's efforts. It is the command of God. Therefore hold fast to it. Become satyagrahis in the true sense of the term. Abide by the vow which you have taken and God will grant you strength.*¹⁹

Later on that afternoon of March 31, five more bodies were received from the civil hospital. Of these, two biers proceeded to graveyards followed by fifteen thousand men (among whom the Hindus dominated) and three went to the Hindu cremation ground followed by some thirty thousand (among whom Muslims formed the majority). Shraddhanand

remembered: “The sight was wonderful. The Muslim biers were mainly carried on Hindu shoulders and the Hindu biers were supported by Muslim shoulders. And the beauty of it was that none of the bier carriers afterwards repented or apologized for having given shoulder (*kandha diya*) to a kafir’s *janaza* or to a *mlec[c]ha*’s *arthis*.”²⁰

Shraddhanand held that one of the results of the fraternization of Hindus and Muslims was that “thefts and affrays were at an end . . . for full twenty days it appeared that *Ram Raj* had set in.”²¹ But now he was sucked into Delhi’s politics, urging shopkeepers to reopen their shops and the police and military to stay off the roads. The first Friday after the shootings at the railway station and town hall, April 4, 1919, was a “red letter day in Delhi.” An open notice was issued for Hindus to attend the *namaz* at the Jama Masjid. Shraddhanand sought to consult Hakim Ajmal Khan regarding the legality of Hindus attending *namaz*. When the Hakim sahib could not be found, Shraddhanand returned home. Then at 1:00 p.m., about fifty Muslims “lovingly” led him into a tonga and then into a faster motorcar until they hurriedly reached the southern steps of the Jama Masjid. Shouts of “Mahatma Gandhi ki jai” and “Hindu Musalman ki jai” greeted him as he ascended the steps. Thirty thousand faces looked up as he entered. Shraddhanand was ushered to the front and asked to address the congregation from the pulpit:

It was a sudden call. I had to stand up. I recited the Vedic verse which inculcated the Fatherhood and the Motherhood of God.²²

*tva« hi nah pitaa vaso tvam maataa shatakrato babhuuvitha |
adhaa te sumnam iimahe ||*

You [= Indra] have indeed become our father, you (have become) our mother, o you full of advice [‘having hundred mental powers’]; now we ask for your grace.²³

I called upon the huge audience to bear testimony to the innocence of the martyrs and ended with calling upon them to fall at the feet of Him who was the Father and the Mother of all. I recited the following from the Urdu poet—

*Hindu ne sanam mein jalwa paya tera;
Atish pai fighan ne ras gaya tera
Dehri ne kiya dehr se tabir tujhe;
inkar kisi se ban na aaya tera
[Hindus have found you in the idol*

The strong sang praises of you
The worldly interpret you through the world
No one could refute you.]
Those who were present can well describe the scene. And then
when I thrice repeated, "*om shantih, ameen!*" and the whole
audience followed me with one reverberating voice.²⁴

This was followed by Hindus and Muslims addressing mixed audiences in mosques and temples all over India.

The contradictions between the British and Indian accounts, apart from the emotional fervour in the accounts of the latter, revolved around the responsibility for violence. Reports were received that the neighbouring districts of Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hissar, and Kangra were being influenced by Delhi through economic pressure, by Arya Samaj emissaries, and by the press.²⁵ Although Shraddhanand urged shopkeepers to reopen their shops and bring Delhi back to a state of normalcy, he also organised a mass meeting that passed a resolution urging the viceroy to institute a non-official commission of enquiry into the violence of March 30. When he began collecting complaints against the CID and the police, Deputy Commissioner Beadon argued for his removal from Delhi. Without a trace of irony, the British officer wrote: "He has no business here and is not a native of this place."²⁶ The problem of responsibility for the violence would eventually compel Shraddhanand to resign from the Satyagraha Sabha.

Soon after the firing on March 30, Gandhi congratulated Shraddhanand and the "people of Delhi for exemplary patience in opposing Rowlatt legislation." He reiterated that they were resisting the terrorist spirit that had resulted in the passing of the Rowlatt Bills. "We may have to give much more such innocent blood as Delhi gave Sunday last. For Satyagrahis it is a further call to sacrifice themselves to the uttermost." He was critical of the local authorities in Delhi for using a "Nasmyth hammer to crush the fly."²⁷ He then made preparations to visit Delhi, but was turned back at Palwal on April 9. This led to another hartal the next day: this time, even Shraddhanand could not induce the shopkeepers to reopen their shops. There is some evidence that shopkeepers were protesting their own economic grievances in maintaining the hartal, but after hearing of the deportation of Satyapal and Kitchlew—immensely popular Congress leaders from the Punjab—and Gandhi's arrest, they grew afraid their Delhi leaders also would be deported. There were rumours that

Shraddhanand had been arrested, and he had to show himself to crowds repeatedly to prove them false.²⁸

Upon his release, Gandhi was faced with the fact of violence in Bombay and Ahmedabad that had followed news of his arrest. He publicly broke down when he heard of the deaths and said this was “not *satyagraha*. It is worse than *duragraha*.” A time may come, he believed, for him to “offer satyagraha against ourselves.”²⁹ Three days later, Gandhi suggested that the violence had been “organized,” espoused the official view of events, and embarked on a fast to atone for the violence in Ahmedabad. To Shraddhanand, he explained that satyagrahis also were responsible for the behavior of non-satyagrahis who joined the former in their activities.³⁰

Shraddhanand disagreed and chose to resign from the Satyagraha Sabha. In his resignation letter to Gandhi, he observed that he had been preaching *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), and *brahmacharya* [celibacy] long before he took the satyagraha vow.³¹ He had stayed away from politics because he believed that Indian politicians could never hold their own in diplomacy against the experienced British. But the agitation against the Rowlatt Act appealed to him strongly and he had responded to Gandhi’s call with his “whole heart and soul.” He condemned the violence by “misguided perverted people” and was horrified by the burning of public buildings, especially of Christian churches at Amritsar and Gujranwala, but he could not accept Gandhi’s silence on the provocations given by the government and the horrors perpetrated in the name of law and order in the Punjab.³²

Shraddhanand disapproved that Gandhi had laid the responsibility for the Delhi shootings on the satyagrahis; that Gandhi advised the Delhi leader Lala Shankar Lal not to defend himself in court for assaulting a CID inspector without being aware of the facts of the case (the Lala had not been present at the time of the assault); and that he sent “objectionable” posters ordering satyagrahis to offer themselves for arrest. Shraddhanand no longer believed in the civil breaking of laws in the manner that Gandhi wished. He held that “real tranquillity” was impossible as long as the Rowlatt Act stayed in the statute books. Peace would only be restored when the offensive act was removed, after which the occasion for the civil disobedience of laws would not arise. Therefore, his reasons for signing the satyagraha vow had disappeared. Nevertheless, he intended to continue working for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act; the unity of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians through the formation of united

panchayats; the popularization of *swadeshi*; the introduction of Hindustani as a national language; and the development of an independent and national system of education.³³

Shraddhanand burnt the records of the Satyagraha Sabha so that the police could not arrest the members. He might have been the first to formally resign from the Satyagraha Sabha, but he certainly was not alone in his criticism of Gandhi's continuing faith in non-violent satyagraha. When pressed to send a message in support of Gandhi, the poet Rabin-drath Tagore agreed that Gandhi's teaching was to "fight against evil by the help of the good." However, "evil on one side naturally begets evil on the other, injustice leading to violence and insult to vengeance." He pleaded against "diplomatic dishonesty" and hoped that "martyrdom for the cause of truth may never degenerate into fanaticism for mere verbal forms, descending into the self-deception that hides itself behind sacred names."³⁴ Gandhi's proposal to renew civil disobedience in the end of May 1919 led to Annie Besant and Narayan Chandavarkar—both veteran Congressites—advising him against taking this hasty step. He finally agreed with his critics and temporarily withdrew the disobedience of laws from his armoury of political action.³⁵

Shraddhanand's involvement with Hindu sangathan in the post-Rowlatt period has been the centrepiece of historical enquiry for a recent generation of secular-liberal historians. A closer study of Shraddhanand's engagements in public life suggests the impossibility of sifting strands of anti-colonialism from the Hindu sangathan imperative. Despite his resignation from the Satyagraha movement, Shraddhanand agreed to be chairman of the Reception Committee of the 1919 all-India Congress session in Amritsar. In his address Shraddhanand returned, albeit briefly, to the underlying logic of shuddhi and sangathan by focusing on the problem of untouchability. He quoted from a speech by General Booth-Tucker, a member of the Salvation Army, to the recently constituted Reforms Committee, wherein he had demanded special rights for India's six crore untouchables because "they are anchor-sheets of the British Empire."³⁶ Shraddhanand implored his audience to deeply consider these words and ask themselves how their six crore "brothers," their *jigar ke tukde* [pieces of their heart] that they had cast aside, had become the anchor of a foreign government. Shortly after this landmark Congress session, the cause of Gurdwara reform drew the attention of the entire Indian political class. I will now briefly discuss Shraddhanand's role in this movement.

The Case for Gurdwara Reform

The location of Sikhs within the larger Hindu community of the Punjab was a matter of intense debate in the late nineteenth century. With its emphasis on doctrinal rigidity and the vehement purging of non-Vedic influences, the Arya Samaj movement in the Punjab had helped harden boundaries between some Hindus and Sikhs.³⁷ Although some Sikhs initially joined the Arya Samaj, the growing contradictions in the reformist aims of the Arya Samaj and the reformist Khalsa wing of the Sikhs led to a split. Control over sacred space was one of the indices with which the Sikhs defined their separateness from the amorphous Hindu community.³⁸

Histories and press communiqués published during the Gurdwara reform movement (1920–1925) routinely began by outlining the place of gurdwaras in the growth of Sikhism. Former principal of the Khalsa College in Amritsar, Professor Teja Singh believed the freedom of their temples had always been “the measure of the Sikhs’ freedom or prosperity.” The control over their temples was as important as the Khilafat was to Muslims; even *swaraj* lost its meaning without this.³⁹ The mid-nineteenth-century shift in the sovereignty of the Punjab from the Sikh maharaja Ranjit Singh to the British was soon reflected in the sorry state of their temples. Where the congregation that reflected the corporate spirit of the community had once controlled temples and established *langarkhanas* [kitchens] out of the incomes accruing to the shrines, now *mahants* [priests] who introduced unorthodox practices lived corruptly and lavishly out of shrine revenues. Recourse to litigation had proven to be expensive and British laws governing the possession of property supported the interests of the mahants.⁴⁰

Coincident with the political activity associated with the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement, the leaders of the movement—including Gandhi and the Ali brothers—encouraged students and professors of the loyalist Khalsa College to stop receiving government grants, and lawyers and soldiers to boycott courts and service in the British army.⁴¹ The British were quick to perceive the consequences of non-cooperationist rhetoric in the “sword arm of the empire”; they promptly relinquished control over the Khalsa College and clamped the districts of Lahore, Amritsar, and Sheikhupura under the Seditious Meetings Act.⁴² Quite soon afterwards by early 1922, the question of the management of the magnificent Golden Temple in Amritsar also passed from the hands of British-controlled priests to the reformist Khalsas.

In the months and years leading up to the eventual passage of the Gurdwara Reform Act in 1925, bands of Sikh *jathas* [volunteers] routinely marched across the Punjab, from one shrine to the next, non-violently conducting prayers or cutting wood to fuel shrine kitchens from mahant-controlled lands, in order to slowly but surely take back control over their sacred shrines. The priestly class that found its British-instituted privileges being revoked by these Sikhs was, in fact, closely affiliated to Hindus. Indeed, one of the major points of contention in the Gurdwara reform movement was the placement of Hindu idols in the precincts of gurdwaras. In seeking to remove these idols, the Khalsas were also making a substantial point about what marked Sikhs from Hindus.

The impeccably non-violent credentials of this movement, led by one of the martial races no less, impressed the Gandhi-led Congress even as it infuriated the British. It was during the “Guru-ka-Bagh” agitation in late 1922 that Shraddhanand, along with Pt. Malaviya, Saifuddin Kitchlew, and Hakim Ajmal Khan, had the opportunity to witness the non-violent discipline of the Sikhs as they were mercilessly beaten by British and Indian soldiers. This eyewitness account by C. F. Andrews, a missionary who grew very close to Gandhi in particular, was widely reproduced in contemporary publications:

I can only describe the silence and the worship and the pain upon the faces of these people, who were seated in prayer, as reminding me of the shadow of the Cross. What was happening to them was truly, in some dim way, a crucifixion. The Akalis were undergoing their baptism of fire, and they cried to God for help out of the depth of their agony of spirit. . . . The blow which I saw was sufficient to fell the Akali Sikh and send him to the ground. He rolled over, and slowly got up once more, and faced the same punishment over again. . . . The brutality and inhumanity of the whole scene was indescribably increased by the fact that the men who were hit were praying to God and had already taken a vow that they would remain silent and peaceful in word and deed. The Akali Sikhs who had taken this vow, both at the Golden Temple before starting and also at the shrine of Guru-ka-bagh were . . . largely from the army. They had served in many campaigns in Flanders, in France, in Mesopotamia and in East Africa. Some of them at the risk of their own safety may have saved the lives of Englishmen who had been wounded. Now they were felled to the ground at the hands of

English officials serving in the same Government which they themselves had served. They were obliged to bear the brunt of blows, each one of which was an insult and humiliation, but each blow was turned into a triumph by the spirit with which it was endured.⁴³

Andrews held that this was more than a dispute about land and property: “A new heroism, learnt through suffering has arisen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world.” Thus, the right to cut wood from the garden of the guru was “righteousness, whatever a defective and obsolete law may determine. . . . concerning legality.”

In this charged atmosphere, Shraddhanand offered the assistance of Hindus and Muslims from the neighbouring United Provinces to support the Akalis: he was arrested for the “abetment of offences.” Addressing about twelve thousand people in Jallianwala Bagh Amritsar, Pt. Malaviya took off his turban and bowed in homage to the non-violent sacrifices of the Akalis.⁴⁴ Although it took another three years of marches, protest processions, and non-violent resistance before legislation amenable to the Akalis was passed in the form of the Gurdwara Reform Act, Shraddhanand’s role in the movement did not go unnoticed.

Shraddhanand and the Problem of Hindu-Muslim Unity

Closely related to shuddhi and sangathan was the equally controversial domain of untouchability reform. The significance of numbers in India’s nascent representative democracy had been highlighted by granting separate electorates to Muslims, defined as an all-India minority, in 1909. In the following decades, untouchables became most sought after—by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—as each community sought to augment its numbers in the new order. Shraddhanand was one of the first Punjabi Hindus to recognize the value of untouchables to the problem of Hindu minorities in the Punjab. In this section I will narrate Shraddhanand’s activities as they sought to strengthen the Hindu community and consider to what extent these might have clashed with his earlier commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity and anti-colonial nationalism.

Although Shraddhanand offered to work full-time to improve the status of untouchables soon after the conclusion of the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement, his attempts to foreground untouchability reform onto the agendas of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha were repeatedly rebuffed. Both organizations seemed to find Shraddhanand’s propos-

als too radical to contemplate. In a long statement in September 1924 that outlined his views and future programme, Shraddhanand concluded that the removal of untouchability ought to be left to the Hindus to resolve: "If it is allowed to remain a part of the constructive programme of the Congress it would complicate matters and might act as one of the causes of accentuating Hindu Muslim tension."⁴⁵ Furthermore, reflecting the deep tensions within the Hindu community, Shraddhanand advised that the "reclamation" of "semi-Hindu non-Muslims and reconversion of Christianized and Mahomedanized Hindus" could only happen with the active assistance of the more orthodox Sanatan Dharmi Hindus. He asked the more reformist Arya Samaj to stay out of this task.

A few months later, in November 1924, Shraddhanand wrote the introduction to what came to be regarded as one of his foremost texts, *Hindu Sangathan: Saviour of a Dying Race*. In this account, Shraddhanand attributed his interest in sangathan to a meeting with the Bengali Hindu propagandist Col. U. N. Mukerji in February 1912.⁴⁶ Mukerji's research on the census report of 1911 showed that within the next 420 years, the "Indo-Aryan race would be wiped off the face of the earth unless steps were taken to save it." Shraddhanand spent the next thirteen years "a mere student of statistics," but in 1923, he decided to work entirely for the "protection and progress of my people."⁴⁷ In *Hindu Sangathan*, Shraddhanand does not elaborate on the changing constituency of his "people" or reveal that he spoke from the pulpit of the Jama Masjid at the height of the agitation protesting the Rowlatt Act in 1919; indeed, it would be incongruous in a narrative focussed on sangathan.

In this history of Hindu sangathan, Shraddhanand concludes that there were four reasons for the numerical decline of Hindus: conversion to other religions, perversion of the Aryan social polity, child marriage and degradation of women, and the dislocation of *ashrama-dharma*. Yet the crux of his argument is that initial efforts at sangathan failed because they were based on the premise of Hindu-Muslim unity. For Shraddhanand, salvation lay in the new sangathan movement founded by Malaviya at a special conference of the Hindu (now) *Mahasabha* in Gaya. To combat conversions to other religions, a first step had finally been taken: the All India Kshatriya Mahasabha had met and passed a resolution approving the return of four and a half lakh Muslim Rajputs "within their brotherhood."⁴⁸

The prolonged attempts to convert the Malkana Rajputs also form the core of an earlier work, *Vartaman mukhya samasya* [*Today's Foremost*

Problem], also published in 1924. In both books, Shraddhanand traces the shuddhi movement to 1896—a moment when Rahdasia Sikhs allegedly petitioned to enter the Arya religion. Despite encountering opposition from the orthodoxy for more than two decades, shuddhi had now become an all-India movement. But it had met opponents armed with unending reserves of strength. Shraddhanand referred to two publications by Khwaja Hasan Nizami—*Dai Islam* [*The Missionary of Islam*] and *Fatimi Davat Islam* [*The Invitation to Islam from the Children of Bibi Fatim*—to argue for the existence of a large conspiracy to convert all Hindus to Islam. Now, shuddhi had become a question of politics and religion. From the political point of view, this was a life-and-death issue for the Hindus. [*Yeh rajnaitik aur dharmik prashna hai . . . rajnaitik drishti se yeh prashna hinduon ke jivan aur mrityu ka prashna hai*].⁴⁹

In another major publication on the challenges facing those involved in the twin pursuits of shuddhi and sangathan, *Khatre ka ghanta* [*The Hour of Danger*], Shraddhanand provided his Hindi readers with a word-for-word translation of Nizami's *Dai Islam*, along with extracts from the much longer *Fatimi Davat Islam* and a fatwa by Maulana Abdul Bari on the duty of Muslims towards apostates—books that were already being dissected by the Urdu and Hindi press of the day.⁵⁰ In his introduction to *Khatre ka Ghanta*, Shraddhanand pointed out that Nizami had been collecting material for *Dai Islam* and *Fatimi Davat Islam* for years; thus, these books could not be regarded as the fruit of shuddhi.⁵¹ Shraddhanand also reflected on his attempts to discuss these books at the Congress session; he was prevented by Congress Muslims who argued that this was the product of only one man's imagination, to which no one paid any attention. Yet in *Dai Islam*, Nizami claimed to have discussed his proposals with influential ulema, pirs, sajjada nashins (shrine custodians), and the Aga Khan himself. What irked Shraddhanand the most seems to be Nizami's belief that even prostitutes and owners of gambling and alcohol dens could become agents for the spread of Islam. This particular strategy moved even Gandhi, who asked for Nizami to search within rather than voluntarily submit a new edition of his book for Gandhi's perusal. Shraddhanand now concluded that the cause of tension between Hindus and Muslims was not shuddhi or sangathan, but practices in Nizami's books that were being faithfully employed by Muslims across India.⁵²

To counter Nizami's proposals for the spread of Islam, Shraddhanand called on Hindus to close their ranks, make untouchables their "brothers," and remove the battery of restrictions and the fear of pollution that

prevented Hindus from mixing with each other and made becoming a social outcaste such an everyday reality. He also asked, rhetorically, what Muslims would do if Hindus stopped employing Muslim compounders, chauffeurs, and servants, and did not permit *fakirs* and blind beggars from entering their neighbourhoods—all agents to spread Islam in Nizami's text. Shraddhanand called for the purification of religious practices and implored Hindu rulers of princely states not to participate in Muharram festivities that allegedly drew their Hindu subjects closer towards Islam. He also asked Muslim leaders, especially those in the Congress, to publicly distance themselves from Nizami's texts and the practices they espoused.⁵³

In the final part of *Khatre ka ghanta*, Shraddhanand reflects on *Maulana Abdul Bari ka murtidon ke badh ke vishay ka fatwa* [Maulana Abdul Bari's fatwa on the killing of apostates], a fatwa by the maulana that allegedly gave apostates three days' notice to reconvert to Islam before finally putting them to death. Shraddhanand referred this interpretation to Gandhi, who responded that the Koran preached non-violence so he was unable to understand the fatwa. Abdul Bari also claimed that no other religion apart from Islam had the right to proselytise. To this, Shraddhanand countered with the opinion of the Khilafat leader Mohammad Ali, who in the Congress Cooch Behar session of 1923 had encouraged Hindus to proselytise. Finally, Shraddhanand argued against Abdul Bari's attempt to distance the proselytising "trouble-making" Aryas from the rest of Hindu society. He also pleaded with his readers, with examples that were less than ideal, not to respond to threats of violence in a similar fashion.⁵⁴

Written in the aftermath of a series of riots, where Shraddhanand claimed Hindus had been at the receiving end, *Khatre ka ghanta* is full of ominous predictions and sarcastic references to the Congress for not taking action. It also repeatedly warns Congress Muslims to take charge and contain these threats before they become too unwieldy. There is little here to suggest that Muslims might also have been responding to, rather than initiating, an ethos of violence.

And yet not even the hour of danger could cover up the large cracks that continued to emerge between the more orthodox Sanatanis and the reformist Aryas. In other writings in the press, Shraddhanand frankly tracked his journeys within and out of sections of the Arya Samaj, various Shuddhi Sabhas, and Hindu Sabhas that included members of the Sanatan Dharm. By late 1926, the press had also published Shraddhanand's

repeated letters of resignation to the then president of the Hindu Mahasabha, Lajpat Rai.⁵⁵ In similar fashion, Shraddhanand narrates his experiences in and out of the Congress in his last and final piece of journalistic writing: *The Liberator*.

The Liberator was written in English to transmit Shraddhanand's ideas to South India, where his other journals—the Hindi *Saddharam Pracharak* and *Shraddha*—were barely in circulation. From April 1, 1926, until October 28, 1926, Shraddhanand wrote twenty-seven editorials, each of which was titled “In and Out of the Congress.” In these editorials, Shraddhanand traced his attitudes towards the Congress since its founding four decades earlier, its star performers, the major debates over the years, and the Congress's uneven trajectory in the Punjab. His recollections included his first impressions of early Congress leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, G. K. Gokhale, Gobind Ranade, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak; the Congress session of 1910 when he advocated full social and religious rights for untouchables; and the backstage negotiations during the 1916 Lucknow Pact. Shraddhanand detailed his disagreements with key leaders and practices at the same time that he warmly reflected on the effusive enthusiasm he witnessed in numerous Congress sessions.

Eight full editorials published over eight weeks between the middle of May and July 1926 dealt with Shraddhanand's memory of the 1919 Satyagraha movement. While earlier editorials covered an entire Congress session, Shraddhanand now lingered over the details. He remembered how he spent every day of March 1919 after signing the satyagraha vow. In the run up to the Delhi satyagraha, time slows down: the swami knows this was his finest political hour.⁵⁶

In starting *The Liberator*, Shraddhanand claimed the cause of untouchables to be his main concern. That he was waylaid en route and embarked instead on this extended journey through memory suggests that at least in the columns of this venture, Shraddhanand could pursue all his objectives—Hindu-Muslim unity, the strengthening of the Hindu community, and the reform of untouchability—with no contradiction.

When Shraddhanand was assassinated on December 23, 1926, mourners both Hindu and Muslim lined the roads and balconies of Delhi.⁵⁷ There were messages of sympathy and recollections of his contribution, not only to shuddhi and sangathan but equally—and perhaps surprisingly, given the drift of history and historiography since—of his contribution to the ongoing movement for India's independence. The most poignant of these read:

Like some of our important leaders he did not confuse religion with politics. Even when he entered active politics once or twice in his life, it was to protest against manifest injustice and not seek glory in political lime-light. As I am writing these lines, I see him standing as an accused in the Court at Amritsar where he took his trial for helping the Sikhs in their heroic struggle at Guru ka Bagh. In his written statement he informed the Court that it was his duty as a Sanyasi to help the oppressed, that he was prepared to face the consequences if he thereby infringed some man-made law. The loss of such a hero is not the loss of one community. If Islam stands for the emancipation of mankind, as I believe it does, then the death of the Swami, who spent his whole life in reclaiming fallen people and in lifting the dead-weight of untouchability from the depressed classes, is a loss to Islam; however paradoxical it may appear superficially.⁵⁸

Shraddhanand's leadership of the movement against the Rowlatt Act in Delhi in 1919, and the significance of his participation have been neglected in a historical literature consumed with tracing either the growth of anti-colonialism or communalism. There is good reason, however, to correct this historiographical bias. Shraddhanand's own emphasis on this anti-colonial moment in his recollections just before his assassination in December 1926 itself suggests that any linear analysis of his moving away from Hindu-Muslim unity to communalism needs reappraisal.⁵⁹ Furthermore, harnessing Shraddhanand to another set of "Hindu Nationalists" like Savarkar, Lajpat Rai, and Pt. Malaviya, and the Arya Samaj organization to a further array of "Hindu Nationalist" organizations, as has been the wont in recent historiography, needs to be reconsidered.⁶⁰ I suggest that Shraddhanand's *memory* of his address to the congregation at the Jama Masjid cannot be disentangled from the anti-colonial context of which it was a piece. Writing of this event long after his shift to shuddhi and sangathan, Shraddhanand was "still impressed with its memory" and hoped "that clouds of doubt will disappear and the bright light of the sun of Faith and Truth will shine forth again with all its splendour."⁶¹ That he fondly remembered this moment and hoped, in a sense, for its repetition, calls into question a periodization of the mid-1920s as a time of "aggressive" Hindu communalism, and attests instead to complex, multiple, and inter-weaving strands of "communalism" and anti-colonial nationalism.⁶²

Today, an imposing statue of Shraddhanand stands outside the Delhi Town Hall, presiding over the busy streets of Chandni Chowk's Nai

Sarak, not far from the spot where Manipuri soldiers once threatened to blow this satyagrahi to pieces. The owners of *Lahorian di hatti*, a shop “from Lahore” located a few feet from the statue, told me that the swami was a great nationalist leader who lost his life at the hands of the British. One of the owners, Mr. Deepak Mahandru, is vice president of the Youth Wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Chandni Chowk. He participates in the annual Shraddhanand Day procession that marches past his store. Mr. Mahandru is not aware that Shraddhanand died at the hands of a Muslim at the height of his involvement in shuddhi and sangathan. In a manner that is evocative of Shraddhanand’s trajectory between the sangathan and anti-colonial movements, Shraddhanand continues to be revered as a leading anti-colonial figure in the popular memory of some Punjabi Hindus.⁶³

My analysis of Shraddhanand suggests that his anti-colonial antecedents and firm commitment to Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity, anchored as they were in his leadership of the 1919 movement in Delhi, remained personally relevant through his involvement in shuddhi and sangathan in the 1920s. In this regard, Shraddhanand was similar to Lajpat Rai, although Rai more explicitly altered his politics towards the end of his life. In the next section I study the shifting politics of another major Punjabi leader—Bhagat Singh. Widely revered today as India’s best known revolutionary terrorist, I emphasise Singh’s wholehearted embrace of non-violent hunger strikes while in Lahore’s prison in 1929–1931 to suggest that his incredible popularity stemmed from his tactics as a satyagrahi, not terrorist.

Bhagat Singh and the Politics of Violence, 1925–1928

Let me begin with a straightforward chronological narrative of Bhagat Singh so that his later turn to non-violence can be placed in historical context. Bhagat Singh began his career as a political worker almost from his birth. His uncle was the famous Ajit Singh who, along with Lajpat Rai, had been deported to Mandalay as a consequence of his role in the 1907 agrarian movement. Bhagat Singh was born as his uncle fled to Persia to avoid another round of British persecution. While still in his early teens, Singh participated in the Gurdwara reform movement of the early 1920s. In 1925, he was associated with two of the foremost anti-colonial institutions founded that year: the Lajpat Rai-founded National College at Lahore, where he studied politics, economics, Indian and

European history, and the new Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha (NJBS) that aimed to re-energise the Punjab in the lull following the collapse of the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement.⁶⁴ The workers of the NJBS organized lectures on moral, literary, and social subjects; they were explicitly concerned with uniting Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, and organized inter-communal dinners to that end. Although some of their radical views on religious faith and agrarian reform ensured they had a limited reach, they also organized public meetings on topics of common interest such as denouncing a bizarre exhibition of Indians in the Berlin Zoo.⁶⁵

Bhagat Singh also was engaged in rebuilding the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) along with the revolutionary Chandrasekhar Azad in the neighbouring United Provinces. The HRA believed in establishing a federated republic of the United States of India by an organized, armed revolution. Its public aims included the establishment of labour and peasant associations; privately, it sought to raise funds and send men abroad for military and scientific training.⁶⁶ However, the association suffered enormous losses in men during the Kakori train dacoity of 1925, when most of its leaders were caught, arrested, and hanged.

To the relief of members of the NJBS and HRA, the late 1920s were a period of intense and continual political change. Even as the British began to engage in the process of constituting a commission to look into the next stage of constitutional reform, a younger generation of Congressmen pushed Gandhi into demanding *purna swaraj* (complete independence) as the Congress's final goal. As discussed in Chapter 2, sections of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were divided on submitting evidence to the all-white Simon Commission appointed in 1927. But the all-India Congress's decision to boycott the commission at least served to bring together all the reigning factions within the Punjab Congress: Drs. Satyapal, Muhammad Alam, and Gopi Chand Bhargava, and Lala Duni Chand of Ambala all supported the boycott. Crucially, Lajpat Rai, who had broken with his former colleagues in the Congress in the mid-1920s over the policy of non-cooperation and obstructionism within the legislative councils, now led this concerted boycott of the Simon Commission.⁶⁷ The young men of the NJBS poured their political energies into this exciting debate on the short- and long-term goals of the anti-colonial movement. They invited the young Jawaharlal Nehru to preside over the Punjab Provincial Political Conference in April 1928.

The most controversial resolution passed by this political conference was a recommendation to amend the constitution of the Congress in

order to make the attainment of complete independence legitimate “by all possible means,” including violence. Opposed by several senior politicians, the resolution was passed by a majority of seventy-five to fifty-six votes.⁶⁸ The *Tribune* led the attack on those who had supported the resolution: It was not “violence, far less mere talk of violence” that would make the government afraid. Indeed, the proposed change in the creed of the Congress would weaken its moral authority and discredit the national movement in India without leading to a more effective means of resistance. The resolution led to important resignations from the Provincial Congress and had to be repudiated later by another meeting.⁶⁹

Apart from, and yet a part of the wave of anti-colonialism spreading across northern India, members of the HRA from the United Provinces, Bihar, Rajputana, and Punjab met in Delhi to frame a separate program of action and form a coordinating central committee. Bhagat Singh’s proposal to bomb the members of the Simon Commission was accepted, as was his decision to stop the practice of looting the homes of rich individuals. It was this category of prosecution witness that had harmed the Kakori accused the most. The party also changed its name to the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (or Army; HSRA) under the persuasive influence of Bhagat Singh.⁷⁰

The demonstrations organized by the HSRA, the NJBS, and the newly united Punjab Congress against the all-white Simon Commission mark an important instance of the ability of a range of parties in the Punjab to cooperate in the political domain. The crowd that greeted the Simon Commission with black flags and loud slogans on October 30, 1928, was *lathi*-charged outside the railway station in Lahore. Lajpat Rai, who was hit by the police, died only two weeks later. His death was widely attributed to the mental if not physical shock he had suffered during the lathi charge.

The HSRA decided to avenge his death; a month later, three revolutionaries—Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Chandrasekhar Azad—killed the assistant superintendent of police, J. P. Saunders, and a head inspector, Chanan Singh. They had intended to kill the superintendent of police, J. A. Scott, believed to be the police officer whose blows hit Lajpat Rai, but they discovered their error too late and decided to kill Saunders instead. The death of Chanan Singh was unplanned; he had rushed to the spot upon hearing the shots. Although the three revolutionaries fled from inside a college campus and there were many witnesses, the Saunders murder case remained unsolved until much later.⁷¹

Contemporary sources suggest that this act of terror did *not* get much support. Although several papers printed an appeal by the widow of the statesman C. R. Das to avenge Lajpat Rai's death, an editorial comment in the *Tribune* averred that the use of violence would make the struggle for national freedom, which was "essentially moral, degenerate into a physical struggle"; non-violence was India's strongest weapon.⁷² Even as members of the Punjab and all-India Congress demanded that the indiscriminate arrest of college students in the aftermath of the murders end immediately, they quickly distanced themselves from the violent act.⁷³ Deploring the murders at the Punjab Political Conference held in March 1929, the president of the conference, Satyapal, reaffirmed that the creed of the Congress was non-violence and mocked the idea that Lajpat Rai's death could be avenged by the killing of a police official. He repudiated terrorism as a political method.⁷⁴

The People, a Lahore weekly founded by Lajpat Rai in 1925, referred to "Balraj"—the pseudonym used by Bhagat Singh in the poster proclaiming revenge for Lajpat Rai's death—as "nothing but desperate action."⁷⁵ Moreover, meetings of the NJBS drew increasingly small crowds. With the exception of a meeting to commemorate a massacre in Jallianwala Bagh Amritsar on April 13, 1929, all the meetings announced by the NJBS from the murders in December 1928 until June 1929 were badly attended, small affairs.⁷⁶ This is worth bearing in mind when we reckon with the mammoth-sized meetings that proclaimed Bhagat Singh as martyr and popular hero. The first president of the Students Union at Lahore remembered the Saunders murder thus: "By and large, the reaction was that the British were made of a very hard fibre, they were the most determined nation, so it would be impossible for the Indians to resort to violent methods and murderous attacks because they would never be able to terrorise them like that. This was the thinking of Mahatmaji as well as of those who supported him through thick and thin." Yet Abdul Majid Khan, the author of these views, was also impressed by a small pamphlet published on Terrence MacSwiney, the Irish leader who died after a hunger strike of more than seventy days.⁷⁷

A Shift in Strategy: The Assembly Bomb Case and Its Aftermath

As police investigations following the Saunders and Chanan Singh murders floundered, the HSRA busied itself by establishing bomb factories in

Agra, Saharanpur, Calcutta, and Lahore. However, the repressive side to British colonialism was making itself felt in a series of illiberal bills due to be passed in the central legislature. Just as the president of the assembly rose to give his ruling on the unpopular Public Safety Bill on April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt threw two bombs from the visitor's gallery towards the officer's gallery in the assembly in New Delhi.

"It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear," were the opening words of the leaflets that were thrown alongside these bombs that were carefully designed *not* to kill. Signed by "Balraj," commander-in-chief of the HSRA, the leaflet protested against repressive legislation and the "crumbs of reforms" expected from the Simon Commission and declared, unusually for those castigated as violent: "It is easy to kill individuals but you cannot kill ideas." The young men then handed over their revolvers and allowed themselves to be arrested.⁷⁸

Public criticism of this terrorist action was unequivocal. Gandhi equated the bombs with the knife that killed Rajpal, the publisher of the notorious pamphlet *Rangila Rasul*, as subject to the "same philosophy of mad revenge and impotent rage."⁷⁹ Motilal Nehru pronounced that the choice lay between Gandhi and "Balraj." The *Tribune* published the "general opinion" that such outrages were the work of men who did not want India to make any progress towards responsible government.⁸⁰ During their trial, Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt prepared a joint statement that responded to these criticisms: "We hold human life sacred beyond words. We are neither perpetrators of dastardly outrages, and, therefore, a disgrace to the country . . . nor are we "lunatics" as the *Tribune* of Lahore and some others would have it believed. . . . Force when aggressively applied is 'violence' and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable, but when it is used in the furtherance of a legitimate cause, it has its moral justification. The elimination of force at all costs is Utopian."⁸¹

The Assembly Bomb Defence Statement clearly indicates that the revolutionaries were concerned with the problem of violence in the course of their revolutionary struggle. The accused explained the composition of the bombs and their deliberate intention *not* to cause harm. They could have wiped out a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly and shot police officers who were scattered and milling around the assembly in confusion soon after the blast; they did not do so. They had been asked to define what they meant by "revolution"; the statement clarified it did not mean the cult of the bomb and the pistol, but that the injustice inherent in the present order of things had to end. Labourers, peasants, weavers,

masons, smiths, and carpenters could not remain the exploited class. Radical change along socialistic lines was of the essence. They ended their statement with the slogan *Inqilab Zindabad* (Long Live Revolution).⁸² They were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Evidence during the Assembly Bomb case led the police to link Bhagat Singh and the HSRA with the Saunders murder case. This had not been anticipated by them. The revolutionaries had hoped the leaflets would gain the HSRA a measure of support and steer the Congress in a more radical direction. However, for a second time in less than four years, the HSRA found its membership in tatters.⁸³ But the tide of public opinion was shifting in their favour. This was reflected in the respect and admiration that their Assembly Bomb Defence Statement elicited in letters to newspapers. *The People* editorialized: "Transportation for life to two young men—their crime had broken a couple of benches in the Assembly Chamber and given slight bruises to two or three members who happened to be near those benches! Seldom has 'justice' made a better bargain! . . . the young bomb throwers . . . received [the news] with joy . . . their usual shouts of 'Long live the revolution.' It is this spirit the posterity would admire . . . Bhagat Singh . . . has dared all earthly power to curb his spirit."⁸⁴ The editor continued to point out the many ways in which Bhagat Singh and his companions differed from the average bomb thrower.

Even before their co-conspirators were arrested as under-trial prisoners in what came to be known as the second Lahore Conspiracy Case, Bhagat Singh and Dutt went on a hunger strike. In keeping with Gandhian rules on giving the opponent sufficient warning before embarking on satyagraha, Singh wrote to the superintendent explaining that he had been sentenced to life imprisonment and was obviously a "political prisoner." He had been given a special diet in the Delhi jail but was being treated as an ordinary criminal in the Mianwali jail. He requested basic provisions—a better diet, no forced labour, books, one standard daily paper, better clothing, and some toilet necessities like soap and oil. Upon receiving no response, he embarked on a hunger strike.⁸⁵ Dutt, who followed soon after, reiterated that he was a political prisoner, not a dacoit or thief, and felt political prisoners ought not to do hard labour.⁸⁶ Both contended that all political prisoners be treated as European "special class" prisoners.

Outside the prison, meetings held to congratulate the prisoners on their convictions were now well attended. Soon after news of the hunger strike spread, June 30, 1929 was observed as Bhagat Singh-Dutt Day in a

majority of districts in the Punjab.⁸⁷ In Lahore, ten thousand people attended a meeting organized by the City Congress Committee; the chair, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, recounted the hardships he personally had endured as a political prisoner. Another speaker, Parbati Devi, exhorted the citizens of Lahore to contribute towards the newly created Defence Committee Fund for the prisoners. Pictures of Singh and Dutt were distributed along with the following lines from their Defence Statement: "From under the seeming stillness of the seat of Indian humanity a veritable storm is about to break out. We have given a fair and loud enough warning. By crushing two insignificant units the nation cannot be crushed." Reporting on the mass meeting, the *Tribune* stated that thousands of Lahoris had expressed their solidarity with the hunger-striking prisoners by fasting on that day.⁸⁸ At a similar meeting in Amritsar attended by five thousand people, political workers recited poems comparing the revolutionaries' ardour for their country to the love stories of Ranjha, Hir, Sohni, and Farhad. Bhagat Singh and Dutt were hailed as the honour of Punjab and Bengal.⁸⁹

The Defence Statement by Bhagat Singh and Dutt in the Assembly Bomb Case was published in the *Congress Bulletin* of July 1. Gandhi wrote in sharp disapproval to the general secretary, Jawaharlal Nehru, that it was "out of place" in a publication devoted to Congress activities and referred to the fast as "an irrelevant performance."⁹⁰ Yet, locally in Lahore, news filtered of the under-trial prisoners who were also refusing to eat. More than a thousand rupees were collected over four evenings when volunteers from the Congress and the youth leagues marched in procession with red banners carrying photographs of the hunger-striking prisoners bearing the inscription: "Dutt is at the point of death, all for country's honour sixteen young men are starving to death in your Lahore." When the success of these processions unnerved the administration and Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure was suddenly imposed, Congress, Ahrar, and Akali leaders including Sardar Mangal Singh and Zafar Ali Khan courted arrest by shouting the newly banned slogan *Inqilab Zindabad* along with members of the newly banned NJBS. The *Tribune* headlined "Satyagrahis Parade Bazars Shouting 'Long Live Revolution'" and the self-professed "Satyagraha Committee" won its first victory when the district magistrate was forced to modify his order and release the defiant demonstrators.⁹¹ The NJBS declared that July 21 would be celebrated as All-India Bhagat Singh-Dutt Day. The proposed program included fasting, processions, the collection of funds for the Conspiracy

Case Defence Committee, and meetings to explain the purpose of the hunger strike and protest the treatment of political prisoners. A month later, when it became apparent that these hunger strikers were unusually committed, several women sent the prisoners *rakhis* consecrated in blood.⁹² To another correspondent, it was not the issue as much as “the manner and spirit” with which the hunger strikers were undertaking their resolve that was inspiring.

Heart-and-soul devotion to a cause, heart-and-soul loyalty to associates, fidelity to the death, are virtues which command our involuntary reverence. Nowhere are they so common as not to be held in high honour. If Sardar Bhagat Singh and Mr. Bhutakeshwar Dutt [*sic*] persist in their fast to fatal extremities, India will be immensely the poorer for her loss. For them the struggle will be over. But what for us . . . is the moral? That is a question for each one to answer . . . *Most of our lives are built on compromises. Is it possible to be more single-minded?*⁹³

Jatinder Nath Sanyal and Ajoy Ghosh, fellow prisoners, remembered that the most difficult part of the strike was not the fight against hunger but “the fight against the instinct of self-preservation.” Sanyal watched the dying Jatindra Nath Das in his last days; first his toes became paralysed, then his legs, his hands, and finally his eyes.⁹⁴ The archives have preserved daily medical reports that attest both to the determination of the hunger strikers to maintain their protest, and of the prison officers to forcibly feed them so that they could attend the trial. Their steady deterioration is evident from the earliest reports in June to later reports in September. In the middle of July, Major P. D. Chopra, superintendent of the central jail in Lahore, noted that the pulse rate of convict Bhagat Singh was 82, “soft of weak tension and volume,” but after artificial feeding it rose to 105 beats per minute. B. K. Dutt’s pulse rate was 64 and rose to 108 beats per minute after artificial feeding.⁹⁵ A week later, both convicts offered so much resistance that the doctors did not recommend artificial feeding.

The home secretary’s philosophy of containment—to avoid action and conciliate moderates—was undermined by the rapidly deteriorating health of some prisoners. In early August, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, a member of the Legislative Assembly and the Defense Committee, visited the prisoners. He advised the prisoners to take medicines and not hurt themselves while resisting artificial feeding. But to the Punjab government,

he confessed his failure to convince the prisoners. He had used all manner of arguments—national, religious, and general—and quoted that even Gandhi, who also resorted to hunger strikes, “always brought it to an end before getting to the extreme stage of committing the sin of taking his own life by his own deeds.”⁹⁶ When Jawaharlal Nehru visited the prisoners, they reiterated that they were fasting for a “principle,” namely, that they were “political prisoners” and that all political prisoners should be treated as special-class prisoners. The recent communiqué of the Punjab government that permitted them a special diet did not deal with the larger question of motive in the classification of all political prisoners.⁹⁷

Meanwhile, the Punjab government revised the probable effect of the hunger strike on the situation in the Punjab. It also acknowledged the “principle” that lay at the heart of the fast: “The spectacle of thirteen young men deliberately starving themselves to death for a principle would excite sympathy in a more phlegmatic and less sentimental country than India. It has excited sympathy in almost every quarter, and should one or two of the hunger-strikers die, this sympathy will beget anger against Government. . . . I think some action . . . *if taken at once*, would pull up the agitation and give us time to consider whether Paris is worth a mess [*sic*], or the peace of Lahore worth half a *chatak* of *ghi* for Dr. Satyapal.”⁹⁸

A whole month after the fourteen under-trial prisoners had joined the strike and after repeated warnings that the condition of various prisoners was critical, the government of India issued a communiqué requesting local governments to re-examine the rules relating to the classification of prisoners.⁹⁹ On September 2, members of the newly appointed Jails Committee, including Lala Duni Chand of Ambala, interviewed the hunger-striking prisoners. Their demands included status as special class prisoners for those convicted of violent offences; that all the under-trial prisoners in the Conspiracy Case should be placed together in a general association barracks; and the immediate and unconditional release of Jatindra Nath Das.¹⁰⁰ The Jails Committee promised that all their demands would be met in full and the prisoners agreed, accordingly, to suspend their hunger strike. But the government played for time at a juncture when there really was no time; they insisted on making recommendations regarding special class prisoners for all of India only after receiving the recommendations of all the local Jails Committees.

As the Punjab Jails Enquiry Committee’s proposals became stuck in bureaucratic mire, Das died on September 13, 1929, after a continuous

fast of sixty-three days.¹⁰¹ On the same day that fifty thousand funeral processionists marched through Lahore, the Central Legislative Assembly passed a motion of adjournment to censure the government. Speaking on the motion, Motilal Nehru elaborated on the basic duty of a government: "It is not a question, Sir, of sections or of procedure or of substantive or adjective law. It is, Sir, a *question of humanity*, of the elementary duty of a Government to save life, to save the lives not only of those who seek its protection, but also of those who want to destroy their own lives."¹⁰² Home Secretary Emerson defended the British government's decision to play for more time; referring "the very great issues" raised by Bhagat Singh to the local governments was necessary because prisons were a provincial subject.

The "very great issues" raised by Bhagat Singh and his comrades were directed at the very basis of British rule. To concede that they were "political prisoners" would mean acknowledging that their motives were political, not personal, and that they were not common criminals.¹⁰³ It would necessitate treating Indian political prisoners, even those accused of violent crimes, on equal footing with political prisoners guilty of violence in Ireland and England. The secretary's contention that the government was defending the law was proving to ring hollow. When the hunger strikers could not come to court because they were too weak to do so, Emerson pushed for an amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure. If passed, the bill would make it possible to hold trials and convict accused persons *ex parte*.¹⁰⁴

Several members protested against this bill in the Central Legislature: Muhammed Ali Jinnah was particularly well prepared. He viewed the bill from three points of view: criminal jurisprudence, the political point of view, and the treatment of the accused under trial. As for the definition of a "political prisoner," Jinnah asked the government to use its "common sense" and "intelligence": "Well, you know perfectly well that these men are determined to die. It is not a joke. I ask the Hon'ble the Law Member to realise that it is not everybody who can go on starving himself to death. . . . The man who goes on hunger-strike has a soul. He is moved by the soul and he believes in the justice of his cause; he is not an ordinary criminal who is guilty of cold-blooded, sordid, wicked crime."

Jinnah pointed out that the proposed bill ran against a fundamental doctrine, "which goes to the very root of the criminal jurisprudence . . . that no man is to be condemned until he is given a hearing." He argued that this amendment was unprecedented; he also suggested more humane

ways to break the strike. After all, the prisoners were not asking for “dressing-tables” or “spring mattresses.” They wanted “nothing but bare necessities and a little better treatment. I ask you in all decency, why cannot you concede this small thing? Did the Government want to prosecute these young men or persecute them?” Jinnah reminded them that he was a “patient cool-headed man,” but there were thousands of young men outside, victims of “this damnable system of Government, which is resented by the people.” He pointed towards the incessant prosecutions in Bengal, Madras, and Punjab, and asked the government why these men would want to make seditious speeches and spend their time in jail: “Do you not realise yourself, if you open your eyes, that there is resentment, universal resentment, against your policy, against your programme?”¹⁰⁵

It was during the debate concerning this bill that under-trial prisoner Jatindra Nath Das died. His martyrdom brought every leading political thinker on the same platform, except Gandhi. In the Punjab, Drs. Muhammad Alam and Gopi Chand Bhargava resigned from the Punjab Legislative Assembly. In Calcutta, Subhas Bose led the miles-long funeral procession; flower wreaths from Das’s coffin were carried away as so many sacred remembrances.¹⁰⁶ It was only fitting that Rabindranath Tagore was inspired to compose a song. His own poem, “Ekla chalo,” had been sung to Das in his final moments. In honour of the martyr, Tagore now wrote:

*Sarba kharbatare dahe taba krodha dahan—
 he Bhairav, shakti dao, bhakta-pane chaha.
 Door karo Maharudra jaha mugdha jaha khudra—
 mrityure karibe tuchha pranera uthsaha.
 Dukhero manthanabege uthibe amrita,
 shanka hote raksha pabe jara mrityubheeta.
 Taba deepa roudrateje nirjharita galibe je
 prastarashrinkhalonmukta tyagera prabaha.
 [All meanness is devoured by the fire of your anger—
 O God, give us strength, have mercy on your devotees.
 Sweep away, Almighty, what is false and petty—
 May death be dwarfed by the ecstasy of life.
 By churning the depths of suffering will be found immortality,
 Those who fear death will be freed of their terror.
 Your resplendent scorching power will melt and let flow
 Freed of the chain of stones, a stream of sacrifice.]¹⁰⁷*

And from faraway Ireland, Mary MacSwiney, sister of the late Lord Mayor of Cork Terrence MacSwiney, mailed a telegram carrying the hope and the promise: "Freedom will come."¹⁰⁸

Defining Motive: Anti-Colonial, Political, Reactionary

Several consequences flowed out of Das's tragic end. In the first instance, the Hunger-Strikers Bill failed and the government decided to treat both Singh and Dutt on par with the other under-trial prisoners. Furthermore, the general conduct of the case worsened. The ongoing tug-of-war between the magistrate, the police and jail officials, press representatives, relatives of the accused, and legal advisors to the accused in the jail-turned-courtroom has been discussed by the historian A. G. Noorani.¹⁰⁹ He has detailed the degrading manner in which the prisoners were handcuffed and beaten, and the occasions they were unable to appeal to the High Court. The proceedings of the court, when the prisoners were able to attend, were widely published. Bhagat Singh and almost all the others accused defended themselves. They were more interested in the "moral effect" of their trial, that is, more concerned with revealing the egregious nature of colonial courts and the dissemination of revolutionary propaganda than with expecting justice.

But their demand for rights as political prisoners continued to have an uneven trajectory. The first phase of hunger strikes ended with the death of Das and the promise that a new system of classifying prisoners was in the offing. When it became clear that the government of India was in no mood to "redeem its promise" to the prisoners and the public, the prisoners provided the government with one week's notice before embarking on another hunger strike. The Punjab Congress responded with public meetings and a hunger strike week, characterized by fund-raising for the defence of the accused and measures to induct new members into the Congress.¹¹⁰ In a long letter that traced the history of the hunger strikes and the unfulfilled promise of prison reforms, the prisoners again raised the question of motive and pointedly referred to the difference between non-violent and violent offences:

It is through motive alone that the real value of any action can be decided. Are we to understand that the government is unable to distinguish between a robber who robs and kills his victims and a Kharag Bahadur who kills a villain and saves the honour of a young

lady and redeems society of a most licentious parasite? Are both to be treated as two men belonging to the same category? Is there no difference between two men who commit the same offence one guided by selfish motive and other by a selfless one? Similarly is there no difference between a common murderer and a political worker even if the latter resorts to violence? Does not his selflessness elevate his place from amongst those of ordinary criminals?¹¹¹

This indisputably logical demand was only halfheartedly conceded by the government. Although the racial classification of prisoners was ended, local magistrates continued to have the last word on whether or not political prisoners were worthy of “special class” treatment, thereby spurring lengthy appeals for particular political prisoners during the next phase of civil disobedience.¹¹² The third and final hunger strike undertaken by the prisoners was a response to the arbitrary classification of prominent Congressmen during the Gandhi-led civil disobedience movement of 1930–31. Riding on privileges fought for by the revolutionaries, Gandhi’s trusted lieutenant, Mahadev Desai, described the misclassification of prisoners as a “grave scandal.”¹¹³ At this particularly dramatic conjuncture, the Special Tribunal cobbled together to pass judgment on the frequently absent accused prisoners.

When Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were sentenced to death, Bhagat Singh Appeal Committees were established in every district of the Punjab.¹¹⁴ At a Bhagat Singh Day on February 17, 1931, colleges emptied out onto streets, and 15,000 people met in Lahore. More than 138,000 signatures seeking the commutation of the death sentence were sent by the All Punjab Bhagat Singh Appeal Committee to the viceroy.¹¹⁵ In Amritsar, a public meeting organized by the Workers and Peasants Party demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners. The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee insisted that commuting the death sentence was an essential condition for peace.¹¹⁶

In his final letters, Bhagat Singh showed an emotional and political maturity far beyond his twenty-three years. To his followers, he emphasised that compromise was a part of politics, but it was important to remain absolutely steadfast in the final goal. If they were fighting for sixteen *annas*, they were to accept the one anna they received and continue fighting for the remaining fifteen. The problem with the moderates was that they fought for one anna and received nothing in return.¹¹⁷ Crucially, Bhagat Singh dealt with the appellation “terrorist.” He used the

word “*aatankari*” and was emphatic: “*main aatankari nahin hun, main ek krantikari hun*” (“I am not a terrorist, I am a revolutionary”). He had always known that the bomb would not be the solution; it was evident in the history of the HSRA. The bomb would only be of use in certain cases; the main goal was to work with workers and peasants.¹¹⁸

In his criticisms of Congress strategy and in his endeavour to chalk out a long-term strategy for the revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh returned to the relationship between means and ends. In their last letters, both Sukhdev and Singh distanced themselves from the bomb attacks that engulfed the Punjab and Bengal in late 1930.¹¹⁹ Although calling for a military department in the future Communist Party, Bhagat Singh was emphatic that it would have to be subordinate to the political wing. He told his followers not to try to read between the lines. He wanted to inform them with his full strength that except for the first few days of his career as a revolutionary, he was never a terrorist. He was absolutely confident that they would not achieve anything by those means: *bam fainkna na sirf bekar, balki nuksandayak hai* (throwing a bomb is not only useless, but could have negative consequences [for the revolutionary movement]).¹²⁰ Bhagat Singh reminded his followers that it was important not only to die for your goals but also to live by them. Singh and Dutt advised the All Punjab Students Conference not to use bombs and pistols, but to follow the Congress program.¹²¹ Yet the transformation in his politics and the sophistication of his reasoning has not been studied. The British damning of these prisoners as “terrorists” has had a long afterlife in the writing of history.¹²²

The debate on whether or not Gandhi did enough to secure the commutation of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru during his talks with Viceroy Irwin has long been decided against him.¹²³ The greater question is that of Gandhi’s attitude throughout the hunger strike and tribulations in the prison-turned-court from 1929 to 1931. Even as Jinnah and Motilal Nehru damned the British government for its inhumane and irresponsible attitude, Gandhi simply informed his inquiring and protesting readers that his silence on Das’s “self-immolation” was in the “national interest.” The profuse author of a hundred letters in this period now held that there were “very many important questions affecting the nation” on which he maintained absolute silence.¹²⁴ To Sukhdev’s letter that he speak directly to the revolutionaries in prison rather than talk to them through the press—in a manner reminiscent of British bureaucrats—Gandhi simply replied that the revolutionaries’ methods

were secret.¹²⁵ Even his sermon on the “Cult of the Bomb,” written soon after a prolonged period of hunger striking, focused on the attempt of another set of revolutionaries’ to bomb the viceregal train.¹²⁶ Gandhi did not engage with the revolutionaries’ criticism of the way he seemed to compromise with the British or with Indian capitalists; he focused on violence. When some revolutionaries employed non-violence, Gandhi continued to refer to their violent past. The distinction between the rights of political prisoners and the question of violence was blurred by Gandhi alone; numerous editorials in the *Tribune*, written as a way of presenting the “general opinion” of the country to the British, admitted this difference.¹²⁷ Indeed, the revolutionaries’ hunger strikes also had served to unite an unusually weak Congress Party within the province. Why did Gandhi refuse to acknowledge the pain and legitimacy of the hunger strikers’ non-violent protest?

The historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya has alluded to the “eternal debates about what-Gandhi-said, versus what-Gandhi-really-meant, and what-Gandhi-said-elsewhere.”¹²⁸ Yet it is so vexing that an enormous range of scholars have been able to study Gandhian non-violence without engaging with the greatest critic and successful emulator of his methods: Bhagat Singh.¹²⁹ A digression into Gandhi’s views on satyagraha, jail reforms, and the rights of political prisoners is required before I can proceed further with this argument.

In *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Gandhi defined satyagraha as a “force which is born of truth and love or non-violence.”¹³⁰ Yet even as he recalled the moment of its birth in 1906, he was acutely aware of the inconsistencies with which he appeared to his readers. After all, in subsequent years, he had offered his service to the British in the First World War. In a chapter in his autobiography, appropriately entitled “A Spiritual Dilemma,” Gandhi admitted that his participation in the war effort could “never be consistent with *ahimsa* [non-violence]. But it is not always given to one to be equally clear about one’s duty. A votary of truth is often obliged to grope in the dark.”¹³¹ Gandhi’s understanding of satyagraha developed over the years through particular struggles conducted by himself and those who claimed to perform satyagraha in his name. Early on, he distinguished between passive resistance and satyagraha. While the former appeared to Gandhi to be accompanied alongside the use of force against an adversary, satyagraha eschewed the use of physical force and could be offered to one’s “nearest and dearest.”¹³² Thus, Gandhi characterised the hunger strikes deployed by British women suffragettes in prison

in 1909, which elicited forcible feeding, as resorting to physical force.¹³³ In 1920 he was alone in his criticism of the Irish leader Terrence Mac-Swiney's final hunger fast.¹³⁴

With regard to jail reform, Gandhi's attitudes took many often frustratingly conflicting forms. In a series of articles written for *Young India* in 1924, he recalled his experiences in various jails and was critical of the prevailing system of forcing political prisoners and habitual offenders together in the same cell.¹³⁵ He regarded newspapers as "a necessity in no way inferior to breakfast" and their deprivation a particularly harsh penalty for political prisoners. However, he concluded with the hope that "civil resisters will not misunderstand this"; they were to "put up with the roughest treatment" accorded to them.¹³⁶ Yet in the same series, Gandhi recounted episodes when he intervened on behalf of hunger-striking political prisoners. He allowed that prisoners were entitled to protest under certain circumstances. In the instance he elaborates, Gandhi's mediation consisted in explaining to the prisoners that their fast could not convince the jail superintendent of the wrongness of his flogging punishment, which could only be brought about by reasoning. In a following article, Gandhi distinguished between embarrassing the government (patently not the goal of satyagrahis) and disillusioning the government (which was possible if they behaved in an exemplary fashion).¹³⁷ Some years later, in December 1927, when admonished for not speaking on the cause of political prisoners often enough, Gandhi responded that he had lost faith in the British system and in the "power of making an effective appeal to the administrators of that system."¹³⁸ But within a few months, we find Gandhi listing the terrible food and conditions of hard labour that were inflicted upon satyagrahi prisoners lodged in the Surat and Sabarmati Central Jails, and appealing for "humaneness" in the jails.¹³⁹

A brief glance at two other strictures given to satyagrahis will make my argument explicit. During the Vaikom temple satyagraha of 1924, Gandhi clarified that satyagrahis should not take the assistance of Sikhs or Christians in their struggle. Untouchability was a Hindu sin that could only be expiated by other Hindus.¹⁴⁰ And in the satyagraha to remove the O'Neill statue in Madras in 1927, Gandhi supported the agitation despite the fact that it would increase feelings of hatred towards the British. The swarajist, according to Gandhi, was bound to expose "the blemishes of foreign rule."¹⁴¹ This reading of Gandhi's rules reveals his awareness of jail maladministration, his concern for the treatment meted out to some political prisoners, and his order that satyagraha be undertaken by those

most closely affected by the act they wanted to modify. Why then did he not support the satyagraha of Bhagat Singh and his fellow prisoners?

As an issue, the proper classification of political prisoners and the improvement of conditions in jails had been the subject of intense debate in the Punjab throughout the decade. The prolonged incarceration of a whole range of prisoners who were arrested during martial law in 1919 and the Gurdwara reform movement in the early 1920s brought various oppositional parties to vote together in the Punjab Legislative Council on the side of releasing these hapless prisoners. Indeed, in late 1925, Lajpat Rai led the Congress sub-committee for the Jails Committee appointed by the British. He interviewed prominent Congressmen such as Gopi Chand Bhargava, Satyapal, Lala Duni Chand, and Sardar Mangal Singh, all of whom testified to the chaining of prisoners and other instances of maladministration that they had witnessed while in various jails since the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement. To the Punjab Jails Committee, Lajpat Rai submitted that prisoners should be classified according to their position in life and the nature of the crime they had committed.¹⁴²

If the cause was not alien to the anti-colonial movement in the Punjab, the means chosen by Bhagat Singh and his comrades could not have been more homegrown. Perhaps, as argued by Kevin Grant, a historian who has compared fasting and hunger striking in England, Ireland, and India, Gandhi distinguished between supporting fasts and hunger strikes.¹⁴³ It is true that the fasts often undertaken by Gandhi were in the nature of a penance rather than a protest. Even during the Rowlatt agitation of 1919, when Gandhi's call for satyagraha first got India-wide publicity, he had insisted that the fast was not in the nature of a hunger strike, but public meetings and a general hartal were registers of protest. Yet Gandhi's extremely severe fasts (he only allowed himself water with a little lemon juice) were often used to pointedly mould public opinion. In March 1918, he focused on the mill owners of Ahmedabad; in September 1932, he wished that his desire to embark on a hunger fast to protest the Communal Award be broadcast.¹⁴⁴ In other words, the line between hunger fast as penance, self-purification, and a form of political protest was blurred by Gandhi himself.

Located in the dreary prison cells of Lahore, Bhagat Singh and his co-conspirators could neither call for a hartal nor announce their aims at public meetings. They could only express their grievances through a general hunger strike. That these young men, otherwise so fond of life and food,¹⁴⁵ did not eat for months on end, is a testimony to their pursuit of

truth and their capacity for self-suffering—cardinal principles of satyagraha as Gandhi himself defined them. In the autumn of 1929, Bhagat Singh and his fellow prisoners plucked at the contradictions in Gandhian satyagraha by claiming the right to suffer, the most fundamental right of all, for the rights of all political prisoners in all of India.¹⁴⁶ It was Singh who wrote in his prison diary, sometime during his extended incarceration, these thoughtful, open-ended words from Trotsky's *Lessons of October 1917*: "But a moment comes when the habit of thinking that the enemy is stronger becomes the main obstacle to victory . . . What does it mean to lose the moment? All the art of tactics consists in this, to snatch the moment when the combination of circumstances is most favourable."¹⁴⁷ With regard to the strategic use of non-violence and the relationship between means and ends, Bhagat Singh was ideologically closer to the Mahatma than the latter cared to acknowledge.

Although neglecting to analyse Bhagat Singh's protest, the historian Claude Markovits does refer fleetingly to the "risk, of which Gandhi was aware, of bringing about the birth of a new elite, characterised not by aggressive physical courage but by its capacity to endure sufferings of the flesh for the cause of the nation. Such an 'elite of suffering' did not crystallize in the same way as an 'elite of violence' might have."¹⁴⁸ Might that have been intentional? In an article that provides a larger context for the 1930 civil disobedience movement, the historian Sumit Sarkar has suggested that late 1930 saw a push towards compromise with the British fuelled by an increasingly assertive bourgeoisie and "the absence of a coherent left alternative." This is exemplified in the convergence of the concrete issues raised by the bourgeoisie with the eleven points presented by Gandhi to Viceroy Irwin. Sarkar points out that salt provided Gandhi with a "universal rural grievance" with "no socially divisive possibilities."¹⁴⁹ However, once launched, the civil disobedience movement grew in directions not entirely foreseen. In villages and forests in Gujarat, Bengal, Bombay Presidency, and the Central Provinces, pressures from below were pushing the movement to include no-rent and no-revenue campaigns, the picketing of liquor shops, anti-grazing fees, *chowkidari* taxes, and forest satyagrahas. It was in this context that influential industrialists decided on compromising with the British. Neither the eleven points nor the separate demands spelt out during the Gandhi-Irwin talks of 1931 included the commutation of the death sentence of the political prisoners.

In the case of Bhagat Singh and his fellow prisoners, Gandhi's silence was particularly unfortunate; their prolonged hunger strikes had brought

together habitual political adversaries. Even more than the Congress-led boycott of the Simon Commission of 1928, these protests for the rights of political prisoners united public opinion across India. Both the official historian of the Indian National Congress and the official compiler of revolutionary terrorism for the British government admitted that the popularity of Bhagat Singh equalled that of Gandhi at this time.¹⁵⁰

Contrary to the arguments of Christopher Pinney, who dwells on the representation of Singh's mimicry of an Englishman in a Lahore railway station in 1928 as a sign of his immense and mobile modernity and emphasises his "structural negation of Gandhi's corporeal practices," the incredible popularity of Bhagat Singh and his fellow accused prisoners stemmed from their choice of a cause that had always bridged other ideological divides, that is, the cause of political prisoners.¹⁵¹ The means used to fight this battle of principles was the hunger fast—a means at once vivid, emotional, intense, and exacting, a toll on the human spirit as well as the body.¹⁵² The images that assailed Punjabis in the late 1920s and early 1930s were not of the trilby hat but of the painful ordeal that the young men had undergone for the sake of all political prisoners.¹⁵³ The deteriorating health of the hunger-striking prisoners graced the columns of newspapers. The myth of the violent (and therefore popular) Bhagat Singh does not face up to a meticulous scrutiny of the contemporary historical record.

In the beginning, it seemed transparent, clear, and unequivocally anti-colonial. Before launching the first India-wide satyagraha campaign, Gandhi had declared: "*Satyagraha* is self-dependent. It does not require the assent of the opponent before it can be brought into play. Indeed it shines out when the opponent resists. . . . Death in the fight is a deliverance, and prison, a way to liberty . . . victory lies in the ability to die in the attempt to make the opponent see the truth, which the *Satyagrahi* for the time being expresses."¹⁵⁴

Gandhi did not see the truth of his opponents' satyagraha, even after their death. By labelling them "murderers" and "terrorists," and invoking their history of violence, the British had sought to dismiss the revolutionaries' non-violent demands for rights as "political prisoners." This colonial narrative of "terrorism" was accepted and promoted by the Gandhi-led Congress. In his insistence on controlling every satyagraha and failing to acknowledge the satyagraha of these prisoners, Gandhi sought to retain power in the hands of an overly centralising Congress.¹⁵⁵ Bhagat Singh's hunger strike is a window into a different and inclusionary anti-colonial

nationalism—radical yet willing to compromise; aware of the quality of anti colonialism that would be needed to weld together truly disparate segments of Indian political society. For a Punjab that may have been, his hunger strike brought together a divided Punjab Congress: Satyapal, Duni Chand, Gopi Chand Bhargava, Sardar Mangal Singh, Zafar Ali Khan, and others participated in processions, the Conspiracy Case Defence Committee, and the Jail Enquiry Committee. These men had chosen opposite sides when Malaviya and Lajpat Rai floated their own party to contest the 1926 elections. They were divided on the compromises forged by the Nehru Report of 1928. They would be rivals again in the coming decades. Bhagat Singh's uncommonly unifying protest was a powerful opportunity to re-think the fundamentals of anti-colonial nationalism. Thanks to the compromises forged by Gandhi, this opportunity was lost.

Conclusion: Languages of Protest and the Dilemmas of Inclusionary Nationalism

A collective will, a struggle for truth, a measure of compromise for a greater end; the courage to court arrest, to face a posse of soldiers ready to fire, to summon the energy to bear a long hunger fast, to speak out in the Central Legislative Assembly about all that was wrong with being a colonial subject; to expand the limits of community to include anti-colonial activism and the limits of nationalism to include the rights of a religious community: these were the languages of protest in the Punjab in the early twentieth century. Through a close discussion of the politics of Swami Shraddhanand and Bhagat Singh and his fellow hunger-striking revolutionaries, this chapter reveals how Punjabis belonging to different religious communities combined in the political arena to spectacular effect.

What makes these instances of protest all the more worth examining is that they were all along lined with, and reaching towards, alternative possibilities. The aftermath of the Kohat riot shows how conflicted a leader like Lajpat Rai was on the paths available to Punjabi Hindus. Shraddhanand also shifted between shuddhi sabhas and the Congress in his quest for a suitable platform to undertake the reform of untouchability. He valued equally the freedom to lead a non-violent anti-colonial movement, to support a reform movement among the Sikhs, and to proselytise for Aryas and the larger Hindu community.

Bhagat Singh, too, pondered over various strategies, choosing to court arrest by throwing weak bombs in the Legislative Assembly because he

did not want the actions of the revolutionaries to be misunderstood or, what was worse, ignored. Once under arrest, he thoughtfully chose the hunger strike—a means also chosen by earlier prisoners—to put up the most arduous of all hunger strikes to demand rights for all political prisoners and to score a series of moral victories over the British. Significantly, he helped reopen the question of violence as strategy in a burgeoning anti-colonial movement, even as his non-violent actions brought him the support of an impressively wide range of Indians.

These instances of protest point to the accommodations that could be forged by an anti-colonial nationalism that sought to include multiple constituencies—minority Hindus as well as minority Muslims and Sikhs, Arya Samajis and Sanatani Hindus, revolutionaries and Gandhians alike. The next chapter brings this narrative forward to further proliferating constituencies that would eventually congeal on one, slowly evolving question: how to share power in a free India.

Chapters 1–3 reveal how Punjabis forged a consensus on questions as critical as the rights of political prisoners, laws that would govern them at a time of peace, and the right to proselytise. On what questions, then, did they disagree? The later-day fact of Partition has made religious differences appear wholly intransigent. But was this how contemporaries understood politics? On the various safeguards for religiously defined minorities in formal political arenas—including joint/separate electorates; appropriate weightages in legislatures and other local bodies; reservation in the services; and reservation for Muslims in a federal, all-India center—Punjabis belonging to different religious communities could find common ground and accommodate their differences. However, their pacts and agreements were repudiated as often as they were close to being signed. Could it be that the final word in these negotiations lay elsewhere, beyond the five rivers that bound the Punjab? Was the massive presence of the colonial state—as an allegedly impartial arbitrator, but also assailed by competing pressures—a giant obstacle in the way of a settlement? Or were the contrary demands made by rival political interests finally irreconcilable?

I address these questions by discussing the all-India settlements that were pursued in the 1930s and 1940s, namely, the Round Table Conferences of 1931–32 and the subsequent Communal Award and Poona Pact, the Jinnah-Prasad negotiations of 1935, the Sikander-Jinnah Pact of 1937, the Lahore Resolution of 1940, the Cripps mission of 1942, the Gandhi-Jinnah talks of 1944, and finally, the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946. At each juncture, I foreground the concerns of Punjabi Hindus, religious minorities in undivided Punjab, and confident majorities in a Hindu-dominated India, so palpably in the making. Understanding how Punjabi Hindus framed their choices and grasped, to a limited extent, the

implications of the heady debates that encircled them might help uncover why they were caught unawares in 1947, and why Partition provoked a disbelief so intense it would not fade with time.

Punjabi Hindu Claims and Qualms

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Congress-League Lucknow Pact of 1916 afforded Muslims separate electorates in all provinces, including Punjab and Bengal, where they were numerically a majority. However, the pact had not regarded the Sikhs in the Punjab as distinct from the Hindus, and it denied Muslims a majority in Punjab and Bengal. Instead, Hindu and Sikh minorities in the Punjab were offered 50 percent weightage, although they comprised about 44 percent of the population.¹ But in the aftermath of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, which offered Sikhs (who comprised 12 percent of the province) a special weightage of 19 percent, the Punjabi Hindu leader Lajpat Rai, who was absent at Lucknow, pronounced the pact a “political blunder” designed only to include Muslims in the demand for full self-government. Rai was keenly aware that the new weightage for the Sikhs would have to be at the expense of weightage for Hindus because of the imperative to keep the Punjab, one of only two large Muslim-majority provinces in India, still nominally Muslim-majority.

A series of Unity Conferences held in the mid-1920s also sought to grapple with the contrary claims of different religious communities. During a particularly well-attended conference in 1925, major leaders displayed their lack of trust in each other. Gandhi pointed out that the Ali brothers—once his staunch allies in the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement—had been accused of wanting to invite the Afghans to raid India. They denied the rumour, but when Sardar Mangal Singh said that the Hindus were strong enough to defend “their country” even if the Muslims did not stand by the Hindus in the event of a foreign invasion, the Congress leader, Dr. Ansari, simply said he wanted to retire from public life. Lajpat Rai declared that Muslim protestations about their love for India and their “readiness to resist foreign invasions” were so hemmed in by “ifs” and “buts” that they left an “atmosphere of distrust in many Hindu minds.” The proceedings tell us that “Mr. Jinnah bitterly complained against this illogical and unwarranted feeling of Lalaji.” It was a feeling he did not know how to alleviate, but if there was anything he could do, he was “perfectly willing and ready to do it.” This somewhat

healthy washing of dirty linen permits us a window into some of the inchoate fears associated with Pan-Islamism, at least some of which got further washing during the fraught elections of 1926, discussed in Chapter 2.²

Also in 1926, the Punjab Swarajists spearheaded a series of negotiations with Muslims and Sikhs. The details of the agreement included joint electorates after six years, representation on the basis of population, and safeguards for minorities in elected bodies within the Punjab if these safeguards were allotted to minorities in any other part of India. As for the services, preference would be accorded to Muslims, who were deemed to be “backward classes” for a certain period, after which they would enter open competition. The participants in these negotiations included Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Abdul Qadir, Dr. Muhammad Alam, Dr. Satyapal, Duni Chand, Kishen Singh, Pt. Santanam, and Sardar Sardul Singh.³ The disastrous result of the elections for the Swarajists meant the end of this round of negotiations. It is worth noting, however, that these talks were held among Punjabis to resolve a communal problem concerning representation that had a peculiarly Punjabi manifestation, but this did not mean they were disinterested in the all-India picture.

Raja Narendra Nath’s *Memorandum* of 1928, also discussed in Chapter 2, offered another resolution to the minorityism that worried Punjabi Hindus. Nath’s scheme to unite the Punjab with the four separated districts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and claim rights for the Hindus as a *minority* in North West India was in the same league as Lajpat Rai’s 1924 proposal to partition the Punjab and create a “Muslim India and a non-Muslim India” insofar as both schemes linked the reservation of minority interests with the reorganization of provincial boundaries. But there was an added concern—power at the center. Even as Muslims belonging to the Muslim Conference and Muslim League moved to reject the Nehru Report of 1928 and present “Fourteen points” as their set of demands, Hindus belonging to the Hindu Mahasabha distanced themselves from the compromises agreed to in the Nehru Report, including joint rather than separate electorates and the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency.

In this atmosphere, the poet-politician Dr. Muhammad Iqbal framed his scheme for a Muslim India *within* India. Addressing a session of the All India Muslim League in Allahabad in December 1930, Iqbal suggested: “If the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own

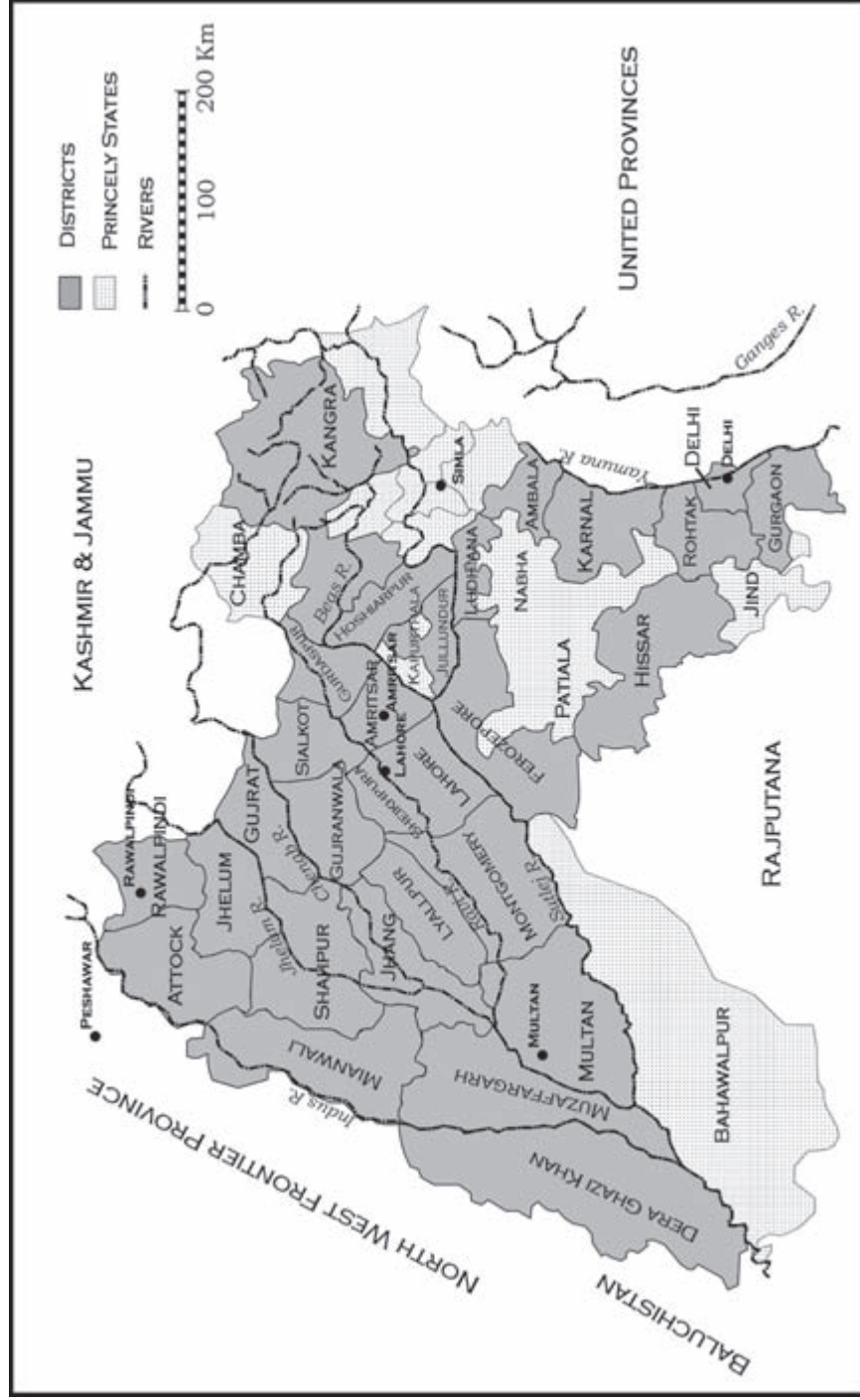
Indian homelands, is recognized as the basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India.”⁴ Although Iqbal went on to proclaim his “highest respect” for the customs and religious institutions of other communities, his proposal for a “consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state” that would include the Punjab, the NWFP, Sind, and Baluchistan was unappreciated by the minorities in the Punjab. While quoting copiously from his speech, the *Tribune* headlined: “Homogeneous India Will Lead to Civil War/Bugbear of Hindu Oligarchic Rule Haunts Sir Muhammad Iqbal.”⁵ The editorial picked on the obvious disinterest in Iqbal’s scheme for Muslims residing outside this “North-west India,” and wondered why this new Muslim state would be necessary for the defence of India against foreign invaders. What of the immense seaboard? And were the martial races among Hindus and the Sikhs to be ignored or converted to Islam? The editorial predicted: “For Muslim leaders like Mr. Jinnah this speech is bound to be a fierce eye-opener. They have here the *reductio ad absurdum* of the famous fourteen points and must see to what a sorry pass their pandering to communalism has brought their community and country. . . . We refuse to believe that any appreciable section of his co-religionists, many of whom believe as firmly in freedom as any Hindu, will follow his sinister lead.”⁶

The *Tribune*’s hopes notwithstanding, others surveyed the alternatives. Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar felt that all the other demands included in the “Fourteen points”—for instance, the creation of Sind as a separate province, the allocation of residuary powers, and the distribution of seats in the central legislatures—could be settled quite fairly. The really intractable problem was that of balancing the interests of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs within the Punjab. The Sikhs, for instance, were only 12 percent of the Punjab, but they owned a third of the land and formed a quarter of the British Indian army. If the Muslims claimed political importance on grounds of ruling India before the British, the Sikhs lay similar claim upon the Punjab. Hence, they claimed weightage in the Punjab in the same proportion as did Muslims in states like the United Provinces (UP), where they were a similarly situated minority. But this would cut into the marginal majority of the Muslims (almost 55 percent of the Punjab) and certainly into that of the Hindus (32 percent of the Punjab). So what was the solution? Caveeshar was quite clear that the British were “not going to put their hands in the fire”; not only because they could not “afford to displease one community for the sake of the other but also because they have no desire to lose one strong argument for their pres-

ence in India, the argument that Indians are incapable of solving their own differences amicably and in a reasonable manner.”⁷ The solution, then, had to emerge from within the Punjab.

Caveeshar proposed a partition whereby Western Punjab would comprise the divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan, while the Eastern Punjab Province would include Ambala, Jullundur, and Lahore divisions. In this newly created and still substantially sized Western Punjab, there would be a little more than 6 million Muslims, nine hundred thousand Hindus, and almost five hundred thousand Sikhs. Muslims could easily afford to give the non-Muslims weightage. In the newly created Eastern Punjab, there would be slightly more than 5.5 million Hindus, somewhat over 5 million Muslims, and almost two hundred thousand Sikhs. Here, the Sikhs would need no weightage since neither Hindus nor Muslims would be in an absolute majority. Such a division would contain communitarian ambitions that seemed, at the moment, irreconcilable, and an impediment towards national unity. Caveeshar felt both provinces could have a common governor responsible to their respective legislatures, as well as a common High Court and a common university: “Both the provinces could be united again into one, when the communal feelings have died down in India and the national life is cleared of communal rubbish.”⁸

Bhai Parmanand was less sanguine. President of the Punjab and Frontier Hindu Conference that met at DAV College in Lahore, Parmanand reminded his audience of the beginnings of the Hindu Sabha movement in the Punjab in the early decades of the twentieth century. While admitting that Hindus were a fractured lot, he held that their internal differences were not enough to make them “appear as communities different from each other.” What made Islam peculiar was its foreign origin; this, according to Parmanand, led Muslims to believe they were a separate community in India. Now, Sir Iqbal admitted that Muslims wanted to create a Muslim India. What were the Hindus to do? They found attempts to create a strong “Muhammadan belt on the north west frontier” via proposals to separate Sind, establish an autonomous government in Baluchistan and the NWFP, and create absolute statutory Muslim rule in the Punjab. Furthermore, the Muslims suggested that residuary powers not be given to the central government, but that they should lie in the federating units. Parmanand turned to John Stuart Mill’s strictures in [*Considerations on*] *Representative Government* for guidance on what might bind together a federation. He considered Mill’s examples from history—those of the German Bund and the United States of America—and agreed with him on



Map of Punjab, c. 1931.

the necessity for a strong federal army, an army that would be ready to “carry the decrees of the federation against any recalcitrant state.” Parmanand concluded his address by emphasising the stock demands of Hindus belonging to the Punjabi Hindu Sabha: no separation for Sind; concessions for minorities in the Punjab if there were any concessions for minority Muslims in provinces in the rest of India; no statutory majority for Muslims in the Punjab; no reforms for the NWFP; and no creation of “hostages” of minorities in a Muslim India. Interestingly, he suggested equalization of salaries for all public servants—this would do away with rivalries amongst the communities and detract from the social cache that accrued to these jobs.⁹

At the same conference, Dr. B. S. Moonje addressed a session of Punjab Hindu youth. Condemning the idea that Hindu-Muslim unity was essential for swaraj, Moonje lauded the youth movements he had seen in Italy and Germany. He thought that if Hindus of the Punjab received military training, they alone would be able to defend the “Indian empire.” Inspired, no doubt, by such lofty sentiments, Devindar Kumar of Amritsar moved a resolution urging that Hindu young men of the Punjab start “Order[s] of Hindu Youths” across the country.¹⁰ The conference also urged that Parmanand represent their interests at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. If this was not enough, Master Tara Singh, president of the Central Sikh League and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), carried on a campaign for one-third representation for Sikhs in the Punjab. In response to these fairly threatening demands, the Punjabi Muslim Afzal Huq resigned from the working committee of the Nationalist Muslim Conference, while Malik Barkat Ali, still a “nationalist” Muslim, sought to publicly argue with the Master.¹¹

It was at this moment that the Congress working committee announced its resolution, a compromise that Gandhi admitted fell halfway between “undiluted nationalism” and “undiluted communalism.” This included joint electorates; adult franchise or, failing that, a uniform and extensive franchise that would reflect the proportion of every religious community in the electoral roll; reservations for minorities who were less than 25 percent of the population in provincial and federal legislatures with the option to contest additional seats; the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency; reforms for the Frontier Province and Baluchistan; an assured majority to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal; the protection of culture, script, religious belief and practice, and personal law; and the vesting of residuary powers in the federating units unless, on further

examination, they proved to be against India's best interests. As Malik Barkat Ali exclaimed, these proposals conceded almost all of Jinnah's fourteen points with the exception of one-third representation in the central legislature: "It is now for Muslims to redeem the pledge given in his fourteenth point, viz., that separate electorates may then be replaced by joint electorates."¹²

But the Punjabi Hindus belonging to the Hindu Sabha were livid. Narendra Nath wrote to Gandhi complaining that Hindus, who were a minority in Punjab, ought to receive preferential treatment as well. Was he aware that Hindus were a minority in twenty-one districts of Punjab? "Does everyone concerned . . . realise that for the present weightage enjoyed by minorities the right to contest for additional seats is not a proper substitute? . . . My friend Sardar Ujjal Singh one of the Sikh delegates to the Round Table Conference has clearly expressed the opinion that the right to contest for additional seats will prove illusory. The case of Muslims in Central Provinces, Behar and Madras may present a similar difficulty. Let it, therefore, be understood by the communities to whom the right to contest for additional seats is given, that unless it is possible to form constituencies in which there is a majority of the voters of that community, this right is of no avail."¹³ Here was communal logic operating at its invidious best. Nath was assuming that with joint electorates at play, Sikh, Hindu, or Muslim candidates would never stand a chance from constituencies in which they were a minority. Communal considerations would always triumph over other party manifestoes.

Bhai Parmanand made his objections even clearer. He felt that not even 1 percent of Sindhi Hindus would agree to the separation of Muslim-majority Sind from Hindu-majority Bombay Presidency. And he alleged that Muslims had been satisfied with 46 percent representation in Bengal and had wanted 51 percent in Punjab in the last conference. Mahatma Gandhi had now agreed to give 51 percent, "i.e., their communal statutory majority in both the provinces." Did he not know that "statutory communal majority is the very antithesis of democratic self-government"? Parmanand preferred "alien rule by a third party" to this. He also declared:

I would wish both Bengal and the Punjab to be partitioned into two parts, each part consisting of the Hindu majority and the Muslim majority so as to save the Hindu majority from communal domination. Secondly *Mahatma Gandhi agreed to vest residuary*

powers in the provinces. This means the dismemberment of the country into Hindu India and Muslim India. It is a pity that Mahatma Gandhi cannot foresee the endless troubles which would result from it . . . On the other hand, what are the conditions he wants to impose? One of them is adult suffrage which not only, according to the Nehru Report, is one of the Muslim communal demands but is one of the well-known fourteen points. But has this adult suffrage any practical importance at all in a country in which three-fourths of the male population, not to talk of the womankind, lives on the verge of starvation? And for them the price of a vote is a little drink or a day's meal. . . . *Does Mahatma Gandhi represent the Hindus of the provinces where they are in a minority?* I say without hesitation he does not. . . . He should not presume that the Hindus of these provinces are like animals of sacrifice and have no wishes or ideas, which could be entirely ignored. He should take note that any surrender of their legitimate rights would be met with a stubborn resistance.¹⁴

Although Parmanand was not a delegate to the Round Table Conference, it is more than likely his views reached the Mahatma's ears. Parmanand clearly believed that provincial rights could only be had at the expense of minority communities in the Punjab. The rights of Hindu minorities could not be safeguarded by Congressmen like Gandhi. Meanwhile, proposals to partition the Punjab were very much part of the solutions that sought to deal with this whole bundle of concerns safeguarding the rights of minority and majority groups.

So, for instance, Sir Geoffrey Corbett, secretary of an Indian delegation to the conference, proposed a scheme for a partitioned Punjab that was designed to address Punjabi Hindu objections to granting Muslims a statutory majority in the provincial legislature; and to weightage that, they believed, must not be given to other communities (such as the Sikhs) at the expense of a minority community (such as Punjabi Hindus). Corbett's proposed partitioned Punjab, without Ambala Division but including Simla, afforded Muslims a clear majority of 62 percent, Hindus about 24 percent, and Sikhs 13 percent.¹⁵ Such a clear Muslim majority rendered unnecessary any reservations on their behalf. This scheme gained support among Ambala Hindus who also gathered under the leadership of Rai Bahadur Chhotu Ram, their leader in the legislature and representative to the Round Table Conference, to commend the proposed constitution

of Delhi into a separate governor's province. But the Corbett scheme was strongly resisted by the sole official representative of Punjab's Hindus, who had also reached London: Narendra Nath.

Besides, the Sikhs also resented being placed in the "position of an ineffective opposition."¹⁶ Sikh representatives reiterated their demand for 30 percent reservation in the Punjab legislature, deemed not to be unreasonable because the Muslim minority in the UP, with a corresponding population, had 31 percent reservation. Alternatively, they proposed a "territorial re-arrangement" that would lop off Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions, excluding Lyallpur and Montgomery Districts. The removed divisions could either join the NWFP or form a separate Muslim-majority province. This would leave no community in the reorganized Punjab with an absolute majority and "each community would be obliged to conciliate the others." The Sikhs' proposed partition would make Hindus 42.3 percent of the Punjab, Muslims 43.3 percent, and leave the Sikhs themselves a key 14.4 percent of the province. However, if this was unacceptable to the others, they preferred no change from the present constitution in the Punjab. Sardar Ujjal Singh emphasized: "Sikhs do not want any gain or domination. What they want is that their representation should be such as to enable them to make an effective appeal to the other community if any one of these groups tries to tyrannise over them . . . Either weightage to an extent of 30 percent with no single community in majority or the redistribution of the Punjab. If neither of the two solutions is acceptable the Sikhs will not accept any constitutional advance in the Punjab. Let the rest of India go ahead and let the Punjab be administered by the Central Government. This is the considered opinion of the entire Sikh community whether Nationalists, Moderates or Loyalists."¹⁷

Narendra Nath had a crisp rejoinder: "All partition schemes should . . . be shelved." He opposed Corbett's scheme for the separation of Ambala Division for the same reasons that "the Sikh scheme of partition is unacceptable to the Muslims." If the Sikh scheme were accepted, reservation of seats for the Hindu minority would be "absolutely essential."¹⁸ In his claim, Nath pointed out that if Sind were separated from Bombay Presidency, nearly 29 million Hindus would find themselves minorities in Muslim-majority provinces across India. That was 9 million more than minority Muslims in Hindu-majority provinces. Although this fact alone required a "greater consideration" for "Hindu interests," Nath construed this rather narrowly. If minority Muslims had separate electorates, he wanted the constitution to insert a clause permitting the voters of a mi-

nority community to join the voters of another minority community in the electoral registers, by a majority of two-thirds of each community's elected members. In the case of the Punjab, the minority status of the Hindus would be reduced if they were aligned with the Sikhs.

If separate electorates were retained, Nath also demanded reservation of seats for Punjabi Hindus in the provincial and federal legislatures in proportion to their population. Lending full play to his elitist credentials, Nath, like B. S. Moonje of the Hindu Mahasabha, stated that "due regard to efficiency" and a "minimum standard of education" were incompatible. He asked for the abolition of governing castes, and demanded that the services employ candidates without distinction of race or religion.¹⁹ This would obviously allow those who had access to greater resources and opportunities to continue exercising them. But Nath did make a small allowance towards redressing ancient imbalances; he later recommended the reservation of one-third of all jobs for those belonging to the backward classes.²⁰ Also, with regard to the "depressed classes", Nath pointed to the reforms of the Arya Samaj and claimed that those who were now entitled to wear the Brahminical thread and recite the Gayatri mantra would not want to leave the Hindu fold. However, if the depressed classes were granted separate representation—a key demand made by their representative, Dr. Ambedkar—Hindus in Punjab and Bengal would be reduced to 14 percent and 18 percent of the population respectively. In this case, the Hindus of both provinces would claim "weightage at the highest rate allowed to Muslims in Provinces in which they are in a minority."²¹ Nath was obviously pitching his demands at the highest possible level to benefit his own community—that of upper-caste and urban Punjabi Hindus.

The concluding speeches at the Round Table Conference again proved that communal leaders could be fiercely anti-colonial. Pt. Malaviya voiced the anger of at least some amongst India's elite when he said: "There is a feeling that a favour is being conferred upon us Indians in giving us the opportunity to express our views before this Conference . . . It oppresses me to think that it is so."²² He reminded the British of the seventy thousand Indians who had courted imprisonment in the recent Civil Disobedience movement; of the peasants labouring under an unfair currency ratio; of the educated middle-class men who could not find employment; and of the limits of repression. It was the duty of Parliament to let Indians govern their own country and become a Dominion.

Back home in the Punjab, an editorial in the *Tribune* mused over the multiple partition proposals that had been discussed. It contended that

the Punjabis were “as much a nation within a nation as the Bengalis” and “the solidarity of the Punjab” was as strong and important an element in the “composition of the Indian nation as the solidarity of Bengal”:

There are parts of the world where the Punjab is better known than any other province and where the name of the Punjabi is a synonym for industry, enterprise, initiative, resourcefulness, courage and manliness. Is the Punjab going to sacrifice this eminent position both in India and in the world merely for a temporary communal adjustment? With all the strength of conviction in us we say No. By all means *let the Muslims have their absolute majority in the Punjab, just as the Hindus have elsewhere*. Only let them, like the Hindus in their own majority provinces, agree to do without communal representation in any form or shape. Let them enjoy their political power and authority only as Indians and let them share it fully with other communities in the only way in which political power and authority can be shared—*under a scheme of joint electorates without a statutory communal majority*. If only they consent to do this, the Punjab will not only retain its proud and honoured place in India and the world but materially enhance it in the new era that is about to begin.²³

The editorial neatly captured the contradictions that afflicted most Punjabi Hindus who paused to consider the Muslim conundrum. “Absolute” majorities for the otherwise backward community were hardly possible without, at minimum, adult franchise. And even the most progressive in the Hindu community now appeared unwilling to countenance a statutory majority for Muslims until the introduction of adult franchise.

Since the many communities and political interests represented in London could not come to an agreement, the Ramsay MacDonald government announced the Communal Award of 1932, whereby it confirmed separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, and Europeans, and extended the privilege to the depressed classes. Depressed classes were permitted to vote in both general and special constituencies reserved for them. Special seats were also provided for women, labour, commerce and industry, landholders, and universities. Muslims were also granted a statutory majority in Punjab and Bengal and weighted representation in provinces where they were a minority. The franchise was enlarged to permit between one-tenth and a quarter of the population of the country to vote, with an attempt

to reflect the percentages of various communities in every province.²⁴ Finally, the award could only be modified if the proposed changes had the support of all the parties concerned.²⁵

The Communal Award's provisions for Punjabi Hindus were sharply criticized by major commentators—Bhai Parmanand, Chhotu Ram and Gulshan Rai—each of whom proposed different alternatives. Professor Gulshan Rai of Sanatan Dharm College in Lahore pointed out that Hindus who were 28.7 percent of the population, according to the data released by the census of 1931, had been granted 25 percent of seats in the future council. The Sikhs too were angry and had begun marching their jathas all over the countryside. If the Muslims and Hindus responded with Ahrar Jamaats and Mahabir and Arya Dals, then a civil war-like situation would be impossible to avert. The only solution was to accept the offer made by Sir Iqbal. Rai suggested that all of Rawalpindi Division and most of Multan be reconstituted to form a heavily Muslim-majority province. He also recommended the creation of a central Punjab province that would include the thirteen districts of Montgomery, Lyallpur, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Lahore, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, and Kangra, pointing out that these districts were also home to the Sikh confederacies of the eighteenth century and contained the major religious places of the Sikhs. He recommended the rest of Ambala Division revert to the UP, of which it had been a part before 1857. Gulshan Rai's plans followed the canal irrigation projects that had been constructed by the Raj and pointed out how each newly created province would be self-sustaining and substantial. He also thought the Jats would be happy to have their own province in the east and that the Ambala Hindus had little in common with Hindus in the rest of the Punjab.²⁶

Rai Bahadur Chhotu Ram was at this time a member of the Legislative Council, prominent leader of the Unionists, and lobbyist for the interests of "agricultural tribes," especially Jats. He traced earlier Muslim demands to prove that MacDonald had "assumed the role of a more zealous Muslim" in giving to Muslims more seats in the Communal Award than their own representatives had demanded. It was quite obvious that the Hindus of the Punjab had been deprived of their share by the award, but for this Chhotu Ram blamed the Hindus themselves: "They would insist on the application of one uniform formula to all the provinces of India, irrespective of the obviously different conditions prevailing in each province, before they agreed to any solution of the Punjab problem." What sense did that make? Referring to himself as "half a Muslim," a label

maliciously deployed by his detractors, Chhotu Ram suggested he was impartial enough to propose a way out. He pointed out that Muslims who were almost 56 percent of the population of the Punjab had a voting strength of only 44 percent. This is why they had been averse to agreeing on joint electorates pending the granting of adult suffrage. Even with the majority afforded to them by the award, they would require the support of minorities to form a stable government. Chhotu Ram turned to the numerous partition proposals under consideration and expressed himself in favour of the separation of the bulk of Ambala Division and the creation of a new province with Meerut, Agra, and Rohilkhand Divisions, with Delhi as its capital. If this was not acceptable, he suggested joint electorates with a slightly differential franchise.²⁷

Shortly thereafter, however, Gandhi decided to contest the separate electorates that had been granted to depressed classes by the MacDonald Award by going on a severe hunger fast. As a result of the Poona Pact that was quickly formulated, the number of seats for upper-caste Hindus in the Punjab was further reduced.²⁸ The possibility of changing the boundaries of the Punjab was again considered. From Delhi, B. S. Moonje of the Hindu Mahasabha complained of the silence of the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha. Were Punjabi Hindus willing to acquiesce in the 55 percent statutory majority for Muslims and the 20 percent weighted representation for Sikhs that would reduce them to a further minority in their province? Moonje had just met Hindus of the Ambala Division, who were repeating their demand for a partition of the province along the lines of Corbett's scheme. Moonje reminded the Lahori Hindu Narendra Nath that when the Ambala Hindus were raising support for Corbett's plan in London, it was: "I and you who threw cold water on it and the agitation was nipped in the bud." Now the Ambala Hindus demanded the support of the Mahasabha for the same scheme:

I am at a loss to know as to what to say to them. Now that the entire ground has been cut from beneath our feet of your opposition to the establishment of the Muslim Raj in Punjab, the question naturally arises—*why not extricate the poor Hindus of the Ambala division from the yoke of the Muslim Raj and help and try to have a bulwark of the Hindu province on the Frontiers of real Hindu India against the attack of the Muslims of Punjab and NWF Province?* It will be predominantly a Jat Province and it is believed that the Hindus will not be able to wean away the Jats from their alli-

ance with the Muslims until a Jat province is created. An amount of pressure is being brought upon me and I should like to know what you and the Sikhs have to say in the matter.²⁹

The idea that Hindus alone could defend India from the inevitable incursions of Muslims from the north-west was a recurring preoccupation. I have already referred to Narendra Nath's cynical comment during the discussions on extending reforms to the NWFP: "We in the Punjab know more about them, than those more remotely situated . . . robbery and kidnapping is their usual pastime."³⁰ In 1934, Gulshan Rai wrote copious articles to the *Tribune* wherein he linked the loss of freedom throughout India's long history to inadequate attention on the frontier. His articles, later published in book form, only served to heighten the tempo of a debate that returned time and again to Iqbal's 1930 address to the Muslim League, wherein he had envisioned a "Muslim India within India." Read and remembered in the context of incursions, Iqbal's vision was construed as nothing less than a Pan-Islamic state threateningly situated on India's frontier.³¹ Gulshan Rai and Parmanand co-opted the idea of partition to create "bulwarks" against this Muslim "belt."³² In fact, Parmanand declared: "I and many of us who are of my way of thinking would not object to even statutory majority of Muslims if they insist upon it in the Punjab" if the Ambala Division could be separated from the rest of Punjab and allied with Delhi or with other districts of the UP.³³ The elaboration of these numerous partitionist proposals and their reasoned refutations in the press underline the fact that partitionist proposals *were* being discussed widely in the Punjab public sphere. That the variously configured portions of the Punjab would lie within a united India was so obvious it did not need to be spelt out.

Through 1932 and most of 1933, thousands participated in the Gandhian Civil Disobedience movement and were promptly jailed. Simultaneously, a series of provincial leaders became Congress presidents, replacing those who were arrested. At a moment when the Congress seemed to be running out of new ideas, Pt. Malaviya, who was elected president of the Calcutta session in April 1933, left the Congress to form the Congress "Nationalist" Party, along with M. S. Aney. Evoking Lajpat Rai's negotiations with Motilal Nehru almost a decade earlier, these "Nationalists" wanted Hindu members in the assembly to vote independently on the Communal Award. This was unacceptable to the Congress High Command; their dodgy

ambivalence was reflected in their decision not to contest the seats where Malaviya and Aney stood as candidates.³⁴ Claiming to be the voice of all India, the Congress held that it could neither accept nor reject the Communal Award. In a long statement on the award, the president-elect, Rajendra Prasad, enunciated this unstable and ambivalent view:

It is utterly wrong to say that the Working Committee has accepted the award. It has not done so and could not have done so when it knows that the bulk of Hindu and Sikh opinion is against it. It will thus appear that the [Congress] Working Committee and Pandit Malaviya and Sjt. Aney are agreed in their condemnation of the Communal Award . . . an organization like the Congress, which seeks and claims to represent all the elements in the country, may not reject it when it knows that one community at least as a whole, in spite of exceptions, accepts it.³⁵

In sharp contrast to Congress irresolution, the Hindu Mahasabha unequivocally condemned the Communal Award, while the Muslim League declared that although the award was unsatisfactory, it was to be accepted until a better solution arose.

Despite the many differences on the communal question, the Congress voted with the Muhammad Ali Jinnah-led Muslim League to reject the White Paper turned Joint Parliamentary Committee Paper in early 1935.³⁶ Jinnah's resolution had three clauses: The first clause called for an acceptance of the Communal Award "so far as it goes, until a substitute is agreed upon by the various communities concerned." This was carried by the votes of the Muslims and the government; the Congress was neutral. Both the second and the third clauses dismissed the scheme of provincial governments as "most unsatisfactory and disappointing" and the All-India Federation as "fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable"—these were passed with the votes of the Congress.³⁷ At the same time as the presidents of the Congress and the League, Prasad and Jinnah, were voting together in the Central Legislative Assembly, they also were engaged in new negotiations over the ongoing communal question.

"The Cup of Victory Has Been Snatched . . . from Our Lips"

The Jinnah-Prasad negotiations of 1935 embodied another opportunity for the successful resolution of the communal tangle and modification of the Communal Award. Rajendra Prasad's opening gambit was the "sor-

est point”: separate electorates. Jinnah suggested they assume that joint electorates were acceptable and proceed on that basis. He was willing to give the Hindus of the Frontier Province, who along with Sikhs were less than 8 percent of the population, a weightage of 100 percent. He believed that the majority community should concede a weightage, if it did not suffer from doing so. Prasad elaborated on the minority Hindu complaint that in both Punjab and Bengal they had to bear the burden of the weightage given to a third community: the Sikhs and the Europeans, respectively. The Hindus wanted the weightage to come out of the majority community. Jinnah felt that this proposition was perfectly correct in theory, but the Muslims had no “margin” in Bengal and Punjab out of which they could give weightage to the minority communities. Any weightage given to minority Hindus would disturb their marginal majority in Punjab and Bengal.³⁸

The terms of the formula hammered out by both presidents required that the franchise reflect the proportion of population of the various communities in the electoral rolls for the provinces and the center, necessitating the adoption of a differential franchise, and also that there be no overlapping of constituencies.³⁹ Jinnah suggested that in the Punjab, the Sikhs, as the smallest minority, would be given the first choice of constituencies to be followed by the Hindus. In Bengal, both Hindus and Muslims would attempt to persuade Europeans to give up some of their seats; these would be divided between them in proportion to their population in that province. In other provinces and at the center, the Muslims would retain the seats afforded to them by the award.⁴⁰ They now decided to consult “friends” on the terms of the agreement.

Jinnah was particularly keen that the Hindu Sabha and Sikh leaders find the terms “agreeable and particularly what was Pt. Malaviya’s attitude.” He also wanted their signatures on the formula. Prasad asked if resolutions of provincial legislatures and assembly would suffice. Jinnah pointed out that as “mere expressions of opinion” they might, but the government would insist on resolutions of communal organisations and the signatures of individual leaders before modifying the Communal Award.⁴¹

Prasad’s negotiations with a host of leaders from Bengal, Punjab, and the Congress Nationalist Party reveal their multiple and conflicting demands. To begin with, leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha who were hosting an Anti-Award Conference did not think this was the right time to open negotiations with Muslims. However, other Hindu leaders saw the award as an “accomplished fact” and felt that Jinnah’s giving up of separate

electorates was itself a big concession.⁴² After a detailed discussion of every clause by 5:00 p.m. on February 25, 1935, when a group including Narendra Nath and Pt. Nanak Chand of Lahore were asked to sign their acceptance of the formula, Nath declared that he was personally opposed to the clause regarding no overlapping of constituencies. Pt. Nanak Chand averred that he had worked for fifteen days to demarcate constituencies and Nath's suggestions were impracticable. So Nath agreed to waive his personal objection and said the "sin of depriving so many Hindus" of the freedom to vote for Hindus from any constituency would be "on their head and not his own." Pt. Nanak Chand and Nath then signed the draft.⁴³

But the real difficulty lay among a few Bengali Hindu and Sikhs leaders and Pt. Malaviya who wanted Jinnah to concede much more. Bengali Hindus wanted no differential franchise, a redistribution of seats between Hindus and Muslims, and a publicly stated time limit of ten years for the reservations. The Sikhs objected to a statutory majority for Muslims, and their attitude towards differential franchise in the Punjab was succinctly summarized by their representative, Sardar Mangal Singh: "The feeling was that a follower of Prophet could get a vote by paying less [tax] than a follower of the Guru."⁴⁴ Pt. Malaviya did not agree to the weightage given to Muslims in provinces where they were a minority; he also wanted the Muslims to have no more than one-third reservations in the central legislature.⁴⁵ They had, with special interests, about 36 percent of the seats.

Prasad prepared a fresh note of demands for Jinnah, both at the center and in Bengal, Punjab, and Assam. The demands were: no differential franchise, a redistribution of seats in Bengal, release of seats by Muslims in the center to bring their representation down to 33.3 percent, and a publicly stated time limit for reservation. Jinnah refused, saying that if he tried, "he would be hounded out and no one would listen to him." He had experienced difficulties persuading Muslims to give up separate electorates. He realized there was "injustice to Bengal Hindus which had been aggravated by the Poona Pact but we must realise that we were not writing [on] a clean slate."⁴⁶ Since the object was to seek a modification of the award, and the government would not accept an agreement that excluded the Hindu Mahasabha, a Congress-League settlement alone was "useless." In Prasad's words: "I also told him that friends had asked me if Musalmans would join in the struggle for a better constitution. He asked in reply—*What else are we doing all this for?*"⁴⁷

In his autobiography, Prasad remembered that he and Jinnah had “liked each other” and that he “felt particularly sad” because the ground on which the talks failed were insignificant. He felt that Jinnah’s demands were “essentially fair.”⁴⁸ However, Prasad claimed that he “made it plain to Jinnah at the outset” that he was only speaking on behalf of the Congress. He added, and mark the change of tense: “While he was willing to guarantee acceptance of the agreement *by all Muslims* he wanted a similar guarantee *not only from me but also from Pandit Malaviya*, representing the Hindus. The talks, therefore, broke down, primarily because, although Jinnah had been negotiating with me as the President of the Congress, he insisted that the Hindu Mahasabha should also be a party to the agreement. *His attitude had undergone a change. He wants the Muslim League to be accepted as the only representative of the Indian Muslims while he classifies the Congress as a representative of the Hindus.*”⁴⁹

But if Jinnah thought the Congress represented Hindus, why was he seeking the approval of the Hindu Mahasabha? The question of whether or not the League represented all Indian Muslims would arise, but that was still in the future. In 1935, however, Jinnah did not claim that he could bring in all or represent all Muslims.⁵⁰ In fact, he repeatedly referred to his difficulties in persuading other Muslims to accept joint electorates. Punjabis watched from the sidelines. As the unbelievable seemed within reach, and Narendra Nath and Pt. Nanak Chand—Punjabi Hindu representatives to the second and third Round Table Conferences—were summoned to Delhi for consultations, the *Tribune* warned against overly high expectations: “Past experience is a warning to all concerned of the danger of hallooing before we are out of the wood. What Mr. Parnell once said pathetically about Irish Home Rule is equally true of this problem in India. *The cup of victory has again and again been snatched away from us at the very moment when we were about to raise it to our lips.*”⁵¹

This is a riveting, aching image; victory had always seemed within toasting distance. The Jinnah-Prasad negotiations reveal the enormous influence of the Malaviya-led “Nationalists” from outside the Congress. At the same time, they represent a moment saturated with knowledge of how close all-India leaders had been to forging an agreement on amending the MacDonald Communal Award.

But the moment passed. It was business as usual once the Congress decided to contest the elections of 1937. A study of the election campaign sheds light on the kinds of compromises that were necessary to win an election and form a new government.

Forging a Majority: The Politics of Electoral Alliances

In 1934, Jawaharlal Nehru was among the critics of the Congress dance between the “communal” and the “national.” From prison, he wrote bitterly of his lack of faith in “interpretations,” in Gandhi, and in certain members of the Congress:

There is hardly any common ground between me and Bapu and the others who lead the Congress today. Our objectives are different, our spiritual outlook is different and our methods are likely to be different. It appears that we even understand or interpret the English language differently in so far as it embodies the resolutions of the Congress. “Independence” is almost a forgotten thing so far as our leaders are concerned—a brave plain word submerged under various “points,” interpretations, speeches, safeguards and assurances . . . *Interpretation is our strong point after we have made equivocal statements . . . the Congress . . . tries to compromise with the communalists though some of these openly side with the government.* . . . This is what we have come to after all our high ideals and brave talk. When I read Bapu’s statement recommending withdrawal of civil disobedience I had a great shock . . . that statement seemed to me to be an insult to the nation, to the Congress and to any person with a grain of intelligence. I felt with a stab of pain that the chords of allegiance that had bound me to him for many years had snapped.⁵²

Nehru’s emotional response was partly directed to the working committee resolution that had repudiated socialism as an objective of the Congress. He also resented Gandhi’s emphasis on issues like the abolition of untouchability, which he believed detracted attention from the “political” problem of anti-colonial resistance. He found the negotiations between the Congress “Nationalists” led by Malaviya and Aney and the Gandhi-led Congress extremely distasteful. But only two years later, Nehru himself participated in negotiations with the “Nationalists”. He now held that “in its essence,” the outlook of the Congress and the “Nationalists” was the same and the gap between them was “more imaginary than real.”⁵³ These by-lanes in the path of politics are always ignored in meta-narratives of inexorably formed “communalism” and “nationalism.”

Initially, the all-India Congress was undecided on whether or not to contest the elections mandated under the Government of India Act of 1935. When it finally voted to contest the elections, its ambivalent stance

on the Communal Award became the crucial issue on which the elections were fought among Punjabi Hindus. A brief digression into the campaign in the Punjab offers us a window into the way electoral alliances mapped onto political differences. To begin with, Punjabi Hindus were divided into the Congress, Unionist, and Hindu Sabha parties; the latter was divided into groups led by Raja Narendra Nath, Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, Pt. Nanak Chand, and Mr. Manohar Lal.⁵⁴ The Punjab Congress itself was splintered between Drs. Satyapal and Gopi Chand Bhargava, the president of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and the would-be leader of the Punjab Congress Assembly Party. Throughout the election campaign and its aftermath, both groups fought each other, thereby weakening an already feeble Punjab Congress.

Early on in the campaign, feelers were sent out by the Hindu Sabha Party led by Bhai Parmanand to Dr. Ansari, one of the presidents of the Congress's newly constituted Election Board. If the Congress would fight the Communal Award and the White Paper, it would be assured of the Hindu Mahasabha's support.⁵⁵ But the "Swaraj" Party invoked by Parmanand failed to materialize, and Ansari was bound by the resolution of the Congress working committee to neither accept nor reject the award. Parmanand retorted that the Congress had fallen "victim to an old fallacy enunciated by the author of the Communal Award [MacDonald]" that the award could only be changed by "means of an agreed solution of different parties . . . *an agreed solution is an impossibility.*"⁵⁶

Jinnah also was seeking an agreed solution, but among Muslims since the elections were being fought on separate electorates. No less a Hindu Sabhaite than Dr. Gokul Chand Narang hosted a tea party in Jinnah's honour as he planned to woo Punjab's Muslims.⁵⁷ Narang was also busy sounding out the Punjab Congress, wondering if any seat-sharing arrangement were possible. The correspondence between various members of the Hindu Sabha and Satyapal, the president of the Punjab Congress, when eventually published, revealed that Narang had wanted Satyapal to have his list of candidates approved by the Hindu Election Board. Satyapal thought the suggestion "preposterous."⁵⁸ He reiterated the politics that distinguished the Congress from the Hindu Sabha Party in the Punjab. Briefly, Congress workers had sought imprisonment during the Non-cooperation-Khilafat and the Civil Disobedience movements, while Hindu Sabhaites like Narang had enjoyed the benefits of being in the Punjab Council without ameliorating the conditions of Hindus who were at the receiving end of legislation such as the unfair Land Alienation Act.

The Land Alienation Act and the entrenched interests of the landlord-dominated Unionist Party comprised the subject of Nehru's campaign speeches in the Punjab. Claiming to support the partial if not total repudiation of rural debts,⁵⁹ Nehru often was followed by the star campaigner of the "Nationalist" Party—Malaviya. Satyapal complained that Malaviya was resurrecting the "old cry of 1926 that the Congress is the bitterest foe of Hindus," but this was only to be expected in elections conducted around the Congress's neutrality on the Communal Award.⁶⁰

Newspaper reports attested to the confusion in the minds of voters who assembled to hear Nehru one day and Malaviya the next, both campaigning for different candidates. As Congress president, Nehru was bombarded with requests that the new disciplinary rules framed by the Congress for the elections be enforced against Malaviya and his son, Krishna Kant, because they had campaigned for anti-Congress candidates. Nehru sought advice from other members of the working committee, explaining that: "Malaviyaji has been acting in a self-contradictory manner. On the one hand he has supported two anti-Congress candidates in the Punjab—Shrimati Shanno Devi and Syt Kesho Ram . . . on the other hand Malaviyaji has given his unstinted support to Congress candidates in the UP as also in the Punjab and elsewhere. . . . Then there is another matter. What possible action can we take against him? He is not a member of any of our executive committees except the AICC of which he is an ex-officio member as ex-president. To disbar him from ordinary membership seems an extreme step which seems to me undesirable and which would be widely resented."⁶¹

The working committee was divided in its opinion. Nehru turned to Malaviya himself for advice. Was he aware of the reactionary political antecedents of some of the candidates? He referred to the letters of protest on Malaviya's campaign in the Punjab: "What am I to do about this? . . . Your general and particular support of many Congress candidates has been of great value to us. Even apart from this the feeling that we have you on our side has been a great consolation to me. But how am I to distinguish between you, with all my regard for you, and others who have acted similarly? I have no answer to that question and it seems to me that some answer must be given. Hence my distress."⁶²

Finally, the Congress simply decided not to do anything about it. In fact, the Punjab Congress closely emulated the example set by Malaviya. A close examination of the numerous election disputes that were later submitted for official enquiries revealed that the groups led by Satyapal

and Gopi Chand Bhargava were not ideologically differentiated. Whereas Satyapal defended the Amritsar City Congress president, Rup Lal Puri, for supporting the “Nationalist” candidate, Kesho Ram Sikri (for whom Malaviya campaigned), Bhargava defended his inability to find a Congressman willing to oppose the “Nationalist” candidate, Narang, in Lahore. Nehru’s handwritten notes tracing Malaviya’s preference for Kesho Ram over the Congress candidate, Sant Ram Sethi, suggest that a discussion with Rup Lal Puri clinched the issue in favour of the former.⁶³ The relationship between Congressmen in the Punjab and all-India heavyweights like Nehru and Malaviya was not uniformly that of client and patron. It was a member of the Punjab Congress who had convinced Malaviya that Kesho Ram had a better chance of winning.

The results of the election of 1937 brought the Congress into power in seven out of eleven British Indian provinces. But in the Punjab, the agricultural tribe-dominated Unionist Party won with a resounding 90 out of 175 seats. The Congress won 29 seats and the Hindu Election Board won 10.⁶⁴ The Unionist premier, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, succeeded in forming a coalition government; his multi-religious cabinet included one representative from the Hindu National Progressive Party and one member of the Khalsa Nationalist Party.

Conducting a post-mortem of the electoral verdict, Gulshan Rai pointed out that in every straight fight between the Hindu Party and the Congress in the Punjab, the latter had won. The Muslim League had won only two seats; it was clearly time for all religiously based organizations to pack up and leave the political field.⁶⁵ In a similar vein, ordinary Congress workers swamped the head office with suggestions for party reform; their letters also suggest they had bought into Congress party rhetoric on “communalism” and “nationalism.” Deveshwar Varma, who had opposed Narang as an Independent candidate because the Congress refused to give him the official nomination, wrote to Nehru that some of the young workers of the Congress had formed a new party to help the Congress—the Progressive Party in the Punjab.⁶⁶ Mayaram Deveshwar of Amritsar District complained that official Congress candidates had been ignored by leaders in the Punjab Congress who campaigned for “Nationalists”. He asked for an impartial enquiry that would remove such leaders from the Congress.⁶⁷

Lala Duni Chand of Ambala, an old Congress hand, began by suggesting that the Congress adopt a rural agenda. However, he then proceeded to absolve Satyapal of all charges and blame Bhargava for all the

ills that had beset the Punjab Congress—factionalism, corruption, and communalism. In a later note, Duni Chand blamed the vernacular press—*Pratap*, *Milap*, and *Vir Bharat*—for actively fomenting the rivalries within the Congress, and criticized the High Command for interfering in the selection of Congress candidates; he also recommended the drafting of objective rules for the future.⁶⁸ Niranjan Das, an advocate of Gurbanwala, lamented that “pseudo-Congressmen, Non-Congressmen and even anti-Congressmen” were being put forward as Congress candidates. The man on the street was influenced by the names of Gandhi and Jawaharlal, but candidates who were opposed to *swadeshi*, who drank in public, and who had been police informers were adopted as candidates by the local Congress committees. Narain Das Khanna, an ex-martial law prisoner, suggested that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) permit two Congress committees in Amritsar City. This would skirt the problems presented by rival groups.⁶⁹

Instead, the AICC exacerbated the prevailing rifts within the Punjab Congress by sending contrary signals to the rival groups. From June 1937, the Unionist premier, Sir Sikander, hosted a series of Unity Conferences to reach an agreement among various Punjabi leaders on issues as diverse as the time and routes of religious processions; attacks on religions and religious leaders; conversions; and on proposals relating to the nationalization of certain festivals and the sustenance of a common culture.⁷⁰ Nehru permitted Bhargava to attend this conference while responding to his rival, Satyapal: “As regards the Unity Conference, the Working Committee hardly discussed this matter. All that it said was that in view of the peculiar circumstances in the Punjab difficulties might have arisen if we had boycotted it specially at that stage. None of us expected anything out of it. . . . I am quite clear in my own mind that we must withdraw from this Conference. But I want to proceed about it in the right way.”⁷¹

Armed with this statement of intent, and the recent withdrawal of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) from the Unity Conference, Satyapal and the working committee of the Punjab Congress asked Bhargava and other Congressmen to withdraw from the conference. However the working committee of the AICC overruled this resolution of the Punjab Congress. Satyapal issued a statement to the press declaring that this was a “painful surprise” because “Pandit Jawahar Lal had clearly and in unmistakeable language declared the futility of our cooperating with such a Conference.”⁷² Nehru found the statement not

“at all a happy one” and, not for the first time, urged Satyapal not to argue in public.⁷³

Shortly before this Unity Conference began its meetings, the all-India Congress announced its determination to directly contact the “Muslim masses.” Although this programme never fully took root, its inauguration garnered quite a bit of heat.⁷⁴ The Unity Conferences were also being held at a time when the Punjab was afire with rival Sikh and Muslim claims over the historic Shahidganj mosque turned gurdwara. When the High Court pronounced that the disputed structure would stay with the Sikhs and not revert to the Muslims, Malik Barkat Ali, a Muslim Leaguer, tried to put forward a bill in the Punjab Assembly. He was stopped in his efforts by a very statesman-like Sikander, newly powered by an alliance with Jinnah. Sikander revealed that he had advised the governor to disallow the Shahidganj Bill; his statement referred to the likelihood of all manner of disputed temples, gurdwaras, and mosques becoming future sites of conflict. Sikander was applauded for his good sense by the minority communities as well as several Unionist Party members.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the Sikander-Jinnah Pact of October 1937, whereby Muslim Unionists would have to owe primary loyalties to the Muslim League, reaped a rich harvest of commentary. Duni Chand, who only recently had pointed out Congress’s shortcomings in the election campaign in the Punjab now hailed the Congress’s innate ability to deal with the pact: “The Congress has in its onward march to the goal of freedom met and conquered many an Ulster like this.” However, to Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, this Lucknow Pact between Sir Sikander and Jinnah ought to be a source of “delight” to every “nationalist leader”; recent pacts and negotiations had collapsed solely because of division in the ranks. It was imperative for Hindus and Muslims to line up behind one political party so that any pact that was negotiated between the leaders of the respective communities could be brought to a fitting conclusion. Bhargava of the Congress deployed the slur of the times: Parmanand and Jinnah were accused of forming a “fascist bloc,” and Parmanand was implicated because a representative of the Hindu Sabha Party was part of the Unionist-led coalition government in the Punjab.⁷⁶ Arguably the most important question that cropped up in Punjabi Hindu circles was what effect the Unionist alliance with the League would have on their status as religious minorities in the Punjab. Furthermore, who was in the driver’s seat: Sikander or Jinnah? Would provincial interests be sacrificed at the altar of Jinnah’s ambitions in the rest of India?

Meanwhile, suspicions about Congress intentions in the Muslim mass-contact movement and the ongoing stalling of direct negotiations also formed the subject of correspondence between Nehru, Nawab Moham-mad Ismail Khan, a UP leader of the Muslim League, and Jinnah in early 1938. In beautifully crafted, long, and polite letters that were subsequently published in the press, the leaders accused members of each other's party of indulging in slandering, violence, and generally lying during election campaigns. Nehru, who had sought an explanation from Malaviya for campaigning for "Nationalist" candidates and was well aware of the corruption within the Punjab Congress, now claimed higher moral ground by accusing the League of its misuse of religion during the UP elections.⁷⁷ Furthermore, even as Punjabis and other Indians produced detailed schemes for federation and partition, Nehru pleaded ignorance: "I do not yet know what the fundamental points of dispute are."⁷⁸

The attitude of a Satyapal in resisting participation in the Unity Conference was merely a provincial approximation of Nehru's attempts at deflecting direct talks. At the same time that Nehru was confessing to Satyapal that he was unconcerned about the Unity Conference, Raizada Hans Raj, who was participating in the conference, wrote to Gandhi: "I really do not subscribe to the view adumbrated by Dr. Satyapal that the Congress is the only organisation which should tackle such problems . . . if there is no harm in our remaining in the Conference Dr. Satyapal should not carry on any agitation against it. If on the other hand Dr. Satyapal is right, then we should come out of the Conference. Any other position would be very anomalous."⁷⁹ Without the honest support of the all-India Congress, and soon enough, the Muslim League, the Unionist Party-sponsored Punjab-wide Unity Conference was a doomed venture.

Apart from wrecking Unity Conferences that it had not initiated, the all-India Congress demanded that the Punjab Congress work towards dislodging the Unionist government. To that end, Nehru asked Bhargava, the leader of the Punjab Congress Assembly Party, to pursue instances of governmental repression; to demand that the anti-colonialist Ajit Singh, who had fled the country in 1908, be permitted to return; to protest against the actions of unfair deputy commissioners, and to socially boycott the Unionist leader Chhotu Ram: "I remember writing to you about the gross misbehaviour of Sir Chhoturam and his insulting references to Congress. I do not know what, apart from protest, the attitude of Congressmen has been towards him. I think that this attitude should be one of the

completest [*sic*] noncooperation, that is to say, *Congressmen should refuse to associate with him or to meet him or to shake hands with him or to talk to him. Generally they should treat him as if he was not there.* In fact it would be desirable for Congress members not to go to any place at all where he happens to be present.”⁸⁰

Nehru’s advice to Punjabi Congressmen to withhold cooperation from the Unionists was not questioned. But when Jinnah declared a Day of Deliverance to celebrate the resignation of Congress ministries in 1939, Nehru treated this as proof of a “vital political difference” between himself and Jinnah ever since 1920, when Jinnah walked out of the Congress because he disagreed with its “objective and methods.”⁸¹ This was in sharp contrast to Nehru’s affirmation only a few weeks earlier, at a speech in Allahabad on November 5, 1939, when he claimed he had “found no difference as to the final objective” between the Congress and the League.⁸² The tools to build a narrative of fundamental political difference—the stuff of electioneering—were being put in place. It was far easier to engage in a politics of labelling than to deal with the issues at stake.

In the aftermath of the elections of 1937, in which the Muslim League won only 4.4 percent of the Muslim vote, it was very difficult to accept Jinnah’s claim that the League was the “authoritative and representative organization of the Musalmans of India,” although it followed the tactical alliances Jinnah had forged with the Unionist Party in the Punjab and the Krishak Praja Party in Bengal.⁸³ Yet what enervated the Congress’s claim to represent all of India was its inability to take seriously the fears of Muslim *and* Hindu minorities, and draw a clear distinction between itself and the increasingly shrill politics of the Hindu Mahasabha. Their attitude towards the Communal Award was revealing in this respect. From adopting an untenable neutral stance, the Congress ended up aligning itself with Hindu Mahasabhaites on the eve of elections, without paying attention to the concerns of Muslim allies like the Ahrars.⁸⁴

In the official language of the Nehruvian Congress of the late 1930s, separate electorates and reserved seats for Muslims divided India into so many “communal” compartments and were detrimental to the progress of the Indian nation. Yet, it is worth remembering that this Nehruvian claim was a shift from earlier Congress positions. In 1916, the Congress had been a party to the Lucknow Pact; in 1928, the negotiations leading up to the Nehru Report referred to the formation of “communal” councils in approval, and the proposed Nehru Report provided reservations

for Muslim minorities, albeit in strict proportion to their numbers in the population. Even the Prasad-Jinnah negotiations of 1935 moved towards joint electorates while ensuring weighted representation for minorities where enough “margins” existed. So even if the Nehruvian Congress was right in its theoretical stance on communal safeguards, *unilaterally* repudiating these smacked of betrayal and, ironically, chimed with Parmanand’s dire warning of 1934: “An agreed solution is an impossibility.” In a growing climate of fear exacerbated by the absence of coalitions in the provincial governments formed by the Congress, such a stance lent strength to new slogans: “Islam in Danger” and “Hindu Raj.”⁸⁵

Apprehending *Pakistan*

When the word *Pakistan* first emerged in public consciousness in the summer of 1933, the pamphlet that spelt out its contours was called “fantastic” and “absurd.” But non-Muslims who would be most severely affected by the formation of an independent Muslim state were quick to point to its most blatant exclusions, both in the realm of logic and ethics. So, as an editorial in the *Tribune* argued, if Muslims were uncomfortable being in a minority of one to four in the new India, why would Hindus and Sikhs consent to being minorities in the same proportion in the new Pakistan? The scheme of *Pakistan* also seemed to necessitate holding the minority Hindus and Sikhs as hostages in the five provinces of Punjab, Sind, NWFP, Baluchistan, and Kashmir, or conniving in their large-scale gratuitous migration: Was this ethical? And what of minority Muslims who would remain in India? Typically, such opinion pieces would conclude: “We have no doubt in our minds that the Muslim public will treat the present scheme with the contempt it deserves.”⁸⁶ Others also listed the considerable strategic and commercial interests that the British would always have in the region and surmise that such a scheme would never win British approval.

For votaries of Hindu *sangathan* like Bhai Parmanand, however, growing Muslim “organization and consolidation” only proved their worst fears right. In negotiating with Jinnah, the Congress had refused to learn from the past. Muslim demands would always increase and their extra-territorial sympathies were well known. In putting forward these views, Parmanand failed to recognize that the Muslim community was as diverse as the Hindu community and *Pakistan* had come to embody very different meanings and hopes for them. Making an argument for sanga-

than, Parmanand wrote: "I have only one panacea and that is Hindu Sangathan. Let every Hindu feel that he is a part of Hindu India wherever he be. Let Hindu India be one body with one soul. If it is hurt in one part of the body, let us say in the Punjab, let the entire physical system respond to that pain. Then and only then will there be salvation for the Hindus. Then perhaps the Muslims will feel that an honourable pact with the Hindus is worth having. Then there will be serious discussions about establishing unity. Otherwise running after Mr. Jinnah and his tribe is mere wild goose chase."⁸⁷ These horrifyingly chilling words were written in 1938. No one attuned to debates in contemporary India can fail to make the connection between Parmanand and some of the Hindu Right's stars in politics today.

A year later, the declaration of the Second World War and the Congress withdrawal from provincial ministries necessitated new strategies. When the British finally turned to Jinnah, hoping to use his intransigence as leverage against the Congress, Jinnah stated his demands in the Lahore Resolution. The resolution asked that geographically contiguous units be demarcated into regions so that areas in which Muslims composed a majority, as in the north-west and east, would be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units would be "autonomous and sovereign." "Adequate, effective and minority safeguards" were promised to minorities within these units, regions, and other areas where Muslims were in a minority. However, the word "constitution" was used in the singular in its fourth paragraph, one among several reasons why the historian Ayesha Jalal has suggested that the brilliance of the Lahore Resolution lay in its capacity to mean multiple things to multiple constituencies.⁸⁸ But a host of minorities drew rather different conclusions from the Lahore Resolution, refusing to see diversity of interpretations as anything but a ruse to create a *Pakistan* where they would be a beleaguered minority.

Apart from worries over the meanings and implications of the Lahore Resolution, urban Hindus grew tense at a spate of legislation put forward by the Unionist government. In line with a tradition of criticism exemplified by Punjabi Hindus such as Lal Chand in 1909 and Narendra Nath in 1928, Gokul Chand Narang now articulated the fears of urban Punjabi Hindus who felt their economic power being steadily undercut by Unionist [mis]rule. Narang lambasted the Unionists for allegedly destroying money-lending by the Moneylenders Act and the Relief of Indebtedness Act, and accused the government of taking away valuable

property from them by the *Benami* Act. He believed that trade and commerce were hampered by the new Markets Act, the Sale of Goods Act, and the Trade Employees Act, and that Conciliation Boards had “not acted justly . . . towards the moneylenders and . . . had played a great part in reducing the assets . . . and in some cases . . . wiped out the debts entirely.”⁸⁹

Turning to the fraught question of language as a medium of instruction, Narang pointed to the provisions made for minority Muslims in the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Madras Presidency, and Bihar to learn Urdu. He pointed out that an amendment asking the Punjab government to permit the teaching of Hindi and Gurmukhi in certain recognized schools, if a particular number of students wanted it, had been rejected. Like the French, Germans, and Italians in Switzerland, he wanted the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab to be permitted to learn their own languages in a script of their choice. He protested against the government’s stand on preserving the *status quo* with regard to language by comparing this with their attempts to alter the *status quo* in the economic field. In this vein, Narang criticized the Unionist government’s policy on recruitment to the services. Newspaper advertisements seeking Muslims or agriculturists for vacant positions; statistics from the consolidated lists of services pertaining to the Public Works Department, Ministry for Development, Provincial Civil Service, Police Department, Law Department, and Ministry of Education; and allegations of discrimination meted out to Hindu newspapers in the matter of receiving government advertisements or having their securities forfeited were made, unremittingly, to prove that the Hindus of the Punjab were being discriminated.⁹⁰ Similarly, Narendra Nath, once the author of a memorandum on the rights of minorities in India’s north-west, stuck to his ground that he would “conceive of no reasonable grounds on which a majority community can claim reservations. To put a minority under a disadvantage on the ground that it is educationally advanced is to display Hitlerism in a most objectionable manner.”⁹¹

Even as Narang and Nath were arguing for the abolition of separate electorates and communal representation for the majority community in the Punjab, the erstwhile prime minister of Madras Presidency, C. Rajagopalachari, proposed a territorial interpretation of the Lahore Resolution. Rajagopalachari interpreted *Pakistan*—a word that actually was not used by Jinnah in Lahore in March 1940—to mean a division of the

Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal with a few interests safeguarded by a federal center or vaguely articulated provisional government. The areas that would cede from the union would have to undergo a plebiscite to ensure they approved of the division. As the Congress High Command moved to give Rajagopalachari's territorial embodiment of the resolution a serious consideration, the District Congress Committee of Gujranwala asked the all-India Congress and working committees to disown the proposal immediately. In their "considered opinion," Gandhi could no longer "rightly guide the country."⁹² The Rajagopalachari interpretation raised a howl of protest from Punjab's minorities while increasing Jinnah's visibility considerably.

In early 1942, Stafford Cripps arrived from Britain with his proposal that would permit provinces to opt out of the Indian Union. The all-India Congress equivocated. In April, the Delhi Resolution declared that the Congress could not compel people in any territorial unit to remain in an "Indian Union against their declared and established will."⁹³ But in May, the Congress passed another resolution condemning any proposal to "disintegrate India."⁹⁴ This resolution followed in the wake of Rajagopalachari's more controversial resolution in Madras, and led to the resignation of Rajagopalachari from the Congress working committee. I think it is worth reading a defence of Rajaji by one of the leading Punjabi Muslim Congressmen, Mian Iftikharuddin. Iftikharuddin was also a member of the Communist Party; he later switched allegiance to the Muslim League:

I need hardly emphasize that in the unity of India lies the good of all communities including the Muslims. Looking alike at our past common heritage and our future common interests and aspirations, I feel that the unity of India can best be and in fact can only be maintained by the consent of the various elements that constitute this country. Unfortunately the "third party" has for the time being succeeded in creating, maintaining and intensifying our differences with the result that a section of Muslims have become apprehensive about their future. For this and other reasons some of them have raised the slogan *for a separate India*. The question is how best can this apprehension be allayed? You can preserve the unity of India by two methods, either by violence or by consent. Violence, it is obvious, can neither be justified, nor can it lead to

any permanent unity. Unity based on force is a contradiction in terms. If such unity could be justified, there would be no limit to our boundaries. We could even annex Afghanistan, Ceylon and Burma and call it India. Unity of a country has no meaning if it be not voluntary. *The more we talk of holding India together against the wishes of the various elements concerned the more do we stiffen the opposite separatist tendencies. The best way to begin to work for unity is by conceding the right of secession. Mr. Rajagopalachari's move therefore instead of being a Pakistan move, is actually the most effective unity-of-India move.*⁹⁵

The discussions in the press suggest that neither Iftikharuddin nor Rajagopalachari won many adherents among the minority communities in the Punjab. Even if Jinnah, Rajagopalachari, Iftikharuddin, and Gandhi were willing to disentangle the many questions of self-determination for India's minorities with the nature of the federal center, they were simultaneously subjected to a historicizing imperative. Jinnah's demands were being castigated as "only a morsel to be followed by others, in an unending stream, to whet his insatiable appetite."⁹⁶

Two years later, when Gandhi opened negotiations on the basis of Rajagopalachari's formula suggesting the separation of Muslim-majority areas in the north-west and north-east of India, the Congress's own history of irresolution posed something of a problem. He soldiered on, armed with the Congress president Abul Kalam Azad's assurance that despite the May resolution, he could discuss Rajagopalachari's formula with Jinnah because the April resolution still stood.⁹⁷ The Punjab Congress represented by Bhargava was "greatly perturbed," but they would not "violate discipline."⁹⁸

The Gandhi-Jinnah talks failed because they were intended to fail. Jinnah refused to accept a "mutilated" Pakistan—Rajagopalachari's interpretation of the Lahore Resolution—while Gandhi was out to "prove" from Jinnah's "own mouth that the whole of the Pakistan proposition is absurd."⁹⁹ Jinnah was distressed that Gandhi had no representative capacity and wanted to proceed on the basis of "self-determination" without accepting the basis of the Lahore Resolution, that is, the two-nation theory. To Gandhi, he wrote:

You proceed further to say: "Can we not agree to differ on the question of 'two nations' and yet solve the problem on the basis of self-determination?" It seems to me that you are labouring

under some misconception of the real meaning of the word “self-determination.” . . . can you not appreciate our point of view that we claim the right of self-determination *as a nation and not as a territorial unit*, and that we are entitled to exercise our inherent right as a Muslim nation, which is our birth-right? Whereas you are labouring under the wrong idea that “self-determination” means only that of “a territorial unit,” which, by the way, is neither demarcated nor defined yet, and there is no union or federal constitution of India in being, functioning as a sovereign Central government. Ours is a case of division and carving out two independent sovereign States *by way of settlement between two major nations, Hindus and Muslims, and not of severance or secession from any existing union, which is non est in India*. The right of self-determination, which we claim, postulates that *we are a nation, and as such it would be the self-determination of the Muslims, and they alone are entitled to exercise that right*.¹⁰⁰

Jinnah held that the rights of minorities in *Pakistan* would be “a matter for negotiation and settlement with the minorities in the respective States, viz., Pakistan and Hindustan.”¹⁰¹ But the war was on and Churchill, the British prime minister, was hardly invested in the success of these talks. With the Congress working committee still in jail for the Quit India movement of 1942, Gandhi too had no authority to define the composition of the provisional interim government that would, according to Rajagopal-achari’s formula, organize a plebiscite to determine the opinions of those inhabiting the proposed *Pakistan*. However, Gandhi stood by the unilateral decision to demand independence as reflected in the Congress’s Quit India Resolution of 1942, while Jinnah insisted this went against the demands of Muslim India. They were in fact replaying an earlier debate between the Congress and Muslim allies such as the Ahrars. In 1936, the president of the Ahrars, Habibur Rehman, had asked Nehru to replace the Communal Award with a solution agreeable to all parties, and not to repudiate the award unilaterally. Under pressure from the Congress “Nationalist” Party, the Nehru-led Congress had ended up reneging on its neutrality towards the award. Now, would the Congress persist in demanding independence without first making an agreement with the minorities?¹⁰²

For Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs, there was an added dimension to the conundrum. How could Jinnah argue that only Muslims would exercise

the right of self-determination? If the Congress could not compel Muslim minorities to be part of an India that was admittedly “non est,” it was clear they could not compel Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs to be part of *Pakistan*. But this did not mean that Hindus and Sikhs were ready to leave a Pakistan based on the exclusive Muslim right of self-determination. Indeed, Hindus and Sikhs were equally attached to their homeland and had neither a desire to leave the lands of their ancestors nor to acquiesce in the creation of a state where their status was, at best, uncertain.

What were the Punjabi Hindus to do? Some hoped the Unionist premier, Sikander Hyat Khan, and his successor, Khizr Hyat Khan, would stand up to Jinnah’s bullying and assert their own interpretation of the Lahore Resolution and the Sikander-Jinnah Pact of 1937.¹⁰³ Others extended support to the Mahasabha-organised Akhand Hindustan Conference in Lahore, thereby marking their protest against the Gandhi-Jinnah talks and the Congress’s consideration of the demand for *Pakistan*. At the same time, Savarkar, the ideological guru and then president of the Hindu Mahasabha, urged Punjabi Hindu youths to enter land, air, and sea forces en masse, to militarize Hinduism and Hinduize the military.¹⁰⁴ Savarkar’s call did win a few adherents: Shiv Singh, a member of the Punjab Civil Service, offered to “awaken Hindu India against the present Muslim communal mindedness created by Jinnah.” Conversely, Kundanlal Lamba of the Lamba Soap Factory, Lyallpur, urged that the Hindu Mahasabha consider seriously any British proposal that offered Hindus and Muslims equal representation. Lamba also proposed a campaign involving the discarding of titles, the resignation of Hindu ministers from League ministries, and the organisation of all Hindus to demand complete independence from the British, along the same lines as the Congress.¹⁰⁵

Professor Gulshan Rai watched Lahore get overrun by pro- and anti-Pakistan conferences and public meetings to no apparent avail. He urged “Pakistani Muslims” to establish a “mass contact” with Hindus and Sikhs and convince them that they need not fear Pakistan. He also urged Hindu and Sikh leaders to examine the Pakistan idea fully and “show by facts and figures that no Pakistan scheme can be of any benefit to the Muslims.” Further, he recommended that “Hindu and Sikh political thinkers . . . write in the Muslim press against Pakistan” and “Muslim writers . . . write in favour of Pakistan in the Hindu Press.” A serious consideration of each other’s points of view was the need of the hour: “Truth can be hammered out only in this way.”¹⁰⁶

Politics in the Punjab grew more complex when the Akalis, who were aligned with the Congress, began to ask for a *Khalistan* that would act as a buffer between Pakistan and Hindustan or, alternatively, an Azad Punjab, a free Punjab. The historian Indu Banga argues that it was only in March 1945 that the connection between a nation and its territorial embodiment into a state was crafted. She holds that the Sikh demand for a partition of the Punjab was initially made to “whittle down the Pakistan idea” and later to ensure that “the de facto Sikh homeland” would not go to Pakistan.¹⁰⁷

As the war came to a close, Viceroy Wavell released the members of the Congress working committee from prison; crucially, they began to prepare for elections, the outcome of which would help determine the shape of free India. The Punjab also got more than a moment’s respite from debates over multiple demands for homelands with news of the Indian National Army led by Subhas Chandra Bose. From across South-east Asia, Bose had raised funds and gathered together an army that included eighteen thousand civilians apart from professional soldiers of the British Indian army.¹⁰⁸ When the British sought to court-martial three officers on charges of treason, however, it became clear they had misjudged the temper in India. The three officers were Punjabi and belonged to the three main religious communities: Shah Nawaz Khan was Muslim, Prem Kumar Sahgal was Hindu, and Gurbakhsh Singh Dhillon was Sikh. The British were finally forced to bow down to popular opinion and not carry out the sentences.

In the election campaign of late 1945, the Congress forged a closer relationship with individual candidates once nominated by the Hindu Sabha. In the Punjab, for instance, the Mahasabhaite leader Gokul Chand Narang withdrew his nomination papers to the Central Assembly in favour of the Congressman Diwan Chaman Lall on the condition that the Congress would not agree to *Pakistan* or parity at the center.¹⁰⁹ Rather than commit to a full-fledged alliance with the Mahasabha, the Congress leader Sardar Patel declared that Sabha candidates who wished to contest elections had to be nominated by the Provincial Congress Parliamentary Board. This mirrored Jinnah’s move to nominate Leaguers with the best potential to win the elections, their own ideological affiliations being of little import in the selection.¹¹⁰

In Lahore, Delhi, and London, the Punjab elections were regarded as crucial to determining the fate of the *Pakistan* idea. The landslide victory

of the Muslim League (they won 74 of 175 seats) seemed to suggest that Jinnah had indeed been accepted as the sole spokesman of the Muslims of the Punjab. But now commentary in the Hindu press focused on how the verdict could not be read as a referendum for *Pakistan*.¹¹¹ A coalition comprising the Congress, the Unionist and the Panthic Sikhs came to power in the Punjab. Helped by their election propaganda around *Pakistan*, and the parent body's decisions to disallow coalitions in the provinces, the Punjab Congress and the League were unable to form a much-needed coalition in the Punjab. The party with the largest number of votes had not been able to form a government in the Punjab.¹¹²

Cabinet Mission Plan and the Battle of Interpretations

A few weeks after, a three-member team from the British cabinet arrived to help resolve the problem of sharing power in the new government. For Muhammad Nazir of Bahawalpur, it was time for the leadership of the Muslim League to retrace its steps. Let me quote his remarkable letter in its entirety:

When the Muslims of India cast their votes in favour of Pakistan, they did so in the belief that the Muslim League would use it as a bargaining counter to secure necessary safeguards for the Muslim minority in the coming federation, and not as an objective. For Pakistan[,] to be an effective or even practicable reality, needs much more political homogeneity and geographical compactness than that provided by the precarious domain parcelled out in remote and disconnected units. Nobody thought that a seasoned politician like Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah would not be able to readjust his policy when the time for its proper reorientation arrived. But it appears from the temper of the speeches delivered at the recent Convention of the Muslim League that its protagonists have, in the exuberance of their zeal, lost their political bearings, and are riding for a fall down the communal declivity into the abyss of civil war.

Islam is not—it can never be—in danger. It is a poor tribute to its superb rationalism and the irresistible democracy of its principles to regard it as a decadent creed needing a political prop to sustain it. What is really in danger is the integrity and solidarity of Mother India threatened by the vivisectioning zeal of her perverse progeny. This is not, of course, to belittle the solid achievements of

the League and its stalwart leader, Mr. M. A. Jinnah. But the game can be over played.

The forthcoming vacation of the British cabinet delegation provides the last chance of readjusting our political balance. Let us so orientate our policy that the coming generations recall our names, not as fanatics who plunged the country into chaos, but as patriots who built an enduring edifice of peace for posterity to enjoy.¹¹³

Would India's numerous great leaders reorient their politics and revert to an idiom of accommodation over conflict?

To preserve a united India, the Cabinet Mission Plan suggested that "Provinces should be free to form Groups" to decide on certain common subjects: however, the Union Centre would embrace both British India and the Princely States and deal with the subjects of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Communications. The union would also have the "powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects. Residuary powers would vest in the provinces."¹¹⁴

A short week after the publication of the plan, on May 22, 1946, Jinnah detailed the many areas in which the Cabinet Mission statement fell short of the basic demands put forward by the League. Still, the plan was worthy of further examination.¹¹⁵ The Congress working committee resolution, passed two days later, accorded its own interpretation on the nature of the Constituent Assembly, deeming it "sovereign" and "open . . . at any stage to make changes and variations"; the final lines, however, must be drawn between a "Provisional National Government" with more powers and the Constituent Assembly before the Congress could make a decision.¹¹⁶ Although both the all-India Congress and the Muslim League differed on the nature of Grouping, they initially accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16, which preserved a united India.

But minorities in the Punjab reacted with anger. The Punjab Congress expressed its "strongest opposition" to the element of compulsion introduced in the Grouping of provinces as "unjust, undemocratic, antinational and . . . calculated to perpetuate internal discord and disharmony." It deemed the grouping of Punjab with Sind, NWFP, and Baluchistan as inconsistent with the "spirit of provincial autonomy."¹¹⁷ However, the ardent Congressite from the NWFP, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, told Gandhi that he preferred Grouping to a Partition of the country.¹¹⁸

Numerous Punjabi Hindus agreed with the Punjab Congress in their opposition to Grouping, but some differed. Brij Narain, by now honorary

professor of economics at Punjab University, examined Grouping from the perspective of an economist who had taught and thought about economic planning for several years. In a neat little book that traced various options—"charkha economics," laissez-faire economics, Soviet-style planning, and the role of "created money" in a developing economy—Narain concluded that although a united India would have been best, for purposes of planning, grouping was second-best. States as individual units would be too plentiful and pulled by different pressures, but groups were workable.¹¹⁹

At about the same time, Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni, former trustee of the *Tribune*, and chronicler of the Gurdwara reform movement, addressed a series of letters *To the British Cabinet Mission*. His survey of Indian history was wide-ranging; as for Jinnah's *Pakistan*, Sahni declared it was an "ill-defined, inchoate and ill-fitting concept."¹²⁰ He admitted that Jinnah had recently declared that Pakistan would not be a theocratic state. However, he had not repudiated statements by other Leaguers that Pakistan would be a theocratic state. Sahni wished to know how the Cabinet Mission could even negotiate with a "retrograde" body like the Muslim League. That the League had recently won a majority of Muslim seats in the Punjab elections made no difference to Sahni. For him, Jinnah was "like a lawyer with a bad case" who sought "refuge in mystification." Although he was pleased that the Cabinet Mission Plan opposed the vivisection of India, he found Grouping to be "artificial, unnatural and unreasonable" and "Pakistan in practice."¹²¹ Intriguingly, Sahni also claimed that acquiescing in the creation of Pakistan was a British ploy to weaken India and deflect attention from their assistance to Jewish immigrants in Palestine.

A key political leader in this fraught time was the Congress representative for the Punjab University seat, Gopi Chand Bhargava. We have come across Bhargava as a medical doctor advising hunger strikers in 1929, as a member of the Punjab Congress Parliamentary Board during the elections of 1937, and as a brief interlocutor with Sikander Hyat Khan during the Punjab Unity Conference later that year. His letters in 1946 reveal his fears, as a Hindu, of being swamped by the Muslim-majority north-western provinces of Sind, Baluchistan, and the NWFP in the Grouping scheme. Furthermore Bhargava also had to contend with the fears of minority Sikhs. He now suggested that the Congress's Lahore Resolution of 1929, which had promised not to

push through a constitution that did not have the support of the minorities, be applied to them. In this, Bhargava was contradicting his mentor, Sardar Patel, who had written to him that the “Congress resolution of 1929 has no application.”¹²² As for the interim government in the center, Bhargava, like Narang, held that parity between the Congress and the League would make the situation in the Punjab “very awkward.” Crucially, Bhargava acknowledged the fragility of the Congress-Akali-Unionist coalition that had come to govern the Punjab.¹²³ The coalition finally ended when the new premier, Khizr Hyat Khan, resigned on March 2, 1947. The details of the consequent violence are discussed in the following chapter.

At the level of high politics, however, the Congress working committee passed a resolution recommending the partition of the Punjab, not unambiguously within the contours of one India. The resolution hoped the “division” would “work to the advantage of all the communities concerned” and “lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other.”¹²⁴ This resolution was accompanied by a joint statement of Congress and Sikh leaders in the Punjab that they would not be willing to give the “slightest assurance or support” to the Muslim League in forming a ministry, as they are “opposed to Pakistan in any shape or form.”¹²⁵ So much for hopes of accommodation over conflict.

Diwan Chaman Lall, the Congressman who only recently had promised the Mahasabhaite Narang that the Congress would never agree to Pakistan, now declared that the Congress resolution recommending partition had produced a “tremendously reassuring effect” and would help bring a “breath of reality into the present abnormal situation”!¹²⁶ Even so, two weeks later, Nehru was admitting the “unity of the Punjab” and confessing he would “regret Partition.” He suggested a temporary partition into three areas—the first two predominantly Hindu and Muslim and the third a mixed area—with separate ministries supervised by the governor to obviate the imposition of governor’s rule.¹²⁷ A week later, eleven Punjabi Hindu and Sikh members of the central legislature deemed the partition “an urgent and immediate administrative problem,” not a “long term constitutional issue.”¹²⁸

Even as Jinnah warned the British from falling into the trap of equating Pakistan with the fragmentation of India’s provinces, the AICC called for a partition of India. Jinnah reiterated his “fundamental fact” that there were *two nations*—Hindu and Muslim—and that “we want a National

Home and a National State” in the six provinces of north-western and north-eastern India. But the move to partition Bengal and Punjab was “sinister” and “actuated by spite and bitterness [to]:

... unnerve the Muslims by openly and repeatedly emphasising that the Muslims will get a truncated or mutilated, moth-eaten Pakistan. This clamour is not based on any sound principle except that the Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Bengal wish to cut up these provinces and *cut up their own people* into two in these provinces.”¹²⁹

On the same day, Nehru wrote to the new viceroy Mountbatten:

our Committee are prepared [*sic*] to accept the principle of partition based on self-determination as applied to definitely ascertained areas. This involves the partition of Bengal and Punjab. As you know, we are passionately attached to the idea of a United India, but we have accepted the partition of India in order to avoid conflict and compulsion. In order to give effect to this partition every effort should be made to meet the wishes and the interests of the people affected by it.”¹³⁰

If Nehru called for a partition to “avoid conflict,” the Punjab Congress invoked unity only to deny it in the same breath. Multiple, messy loyalties now had to be hierarchically arranged in the name of the nation. Therefore:

in the interest of the unity of this country this committee demands that power be transferred to a strong centre Government. This committee *while believing in the unity of the Punjab is of the opinion that the unity of India is more fundamental and necessary*. But *if* the division of India becomes inevitable and inescapable because of the reactionary, negative and anti-national and undemocratic stand of the Muslim League, then in view of the present happenings, the part of the Punjab which desires to remain in the Indian Union is fully entitled to exercise its inalienable right to do so. With respect to the demarcation of the division line, which matter, [*sic*] this committee leaves to the discretion of the Congress High Command.¹³¹

The burden of the Punjab Congress resolution rested on one word: *more*. The unity of India was *more* necessary than the unity of the Punjab.

Almost two decades prior to this moment, at another decisive juncture in the history of the Punjab and India, Lajpat Rai had pleaded that he loved the Punjabi Hindu, but he could not sacrifice the interests of 200 million people for those 24 million. Lajpat Rai managed, with dexterity and acumen, to balance the interests of his province, religious community, and nation in the making. Now the Punjab Congress had reached another crossroad: this time, it asserted that the interests of the larger nation required sundering the province in two.

Meanwhile, Hardyal Devgun, president of the Punjab Hindu Students Federation, was in the throes of a press campaign against the Congress; he demanded a “strong Hindu front” against the “weak centre and grouping.” He wanted leaders of the all-India Hindu Mahasabha to tour the Punjab and hold a convention of Hindu youth.¹³² In the wake of the March and April violence in the Punjab, V. G. Deshpande, president, All India Hindu Students Federation, believed Lahore to be “very critical”; the migration of a large number of Hindus did not bode well for its inclusion in India. He feared the impending announcement on June 2, where “by the consent of the Hindus, India would be partitioned. Of course, the public is behind the Congress and ours is a cry in the wilderness. The enthusiasm of the Hindus for creating [a] new province in Punjab and Bengal is being exploited by the Congress in order to strengthen the Congress move to partition India and *some of our leaders are unconsciously helping the cause.*”¹³³ Accounting for its anger with the Congress’s acceptance of Pakistan was not easy when the Hindu Mahasabha had itself advocated the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal. The twin issues of nationalism and Hindu supremacy were finally disentangled in an impassioned appeal for “anti-Pakistan” days around the country. The Mahasabha circularised:

The Congress leadership which professes to speak on behalf of Hindus . . . have surrendered Pakistan to Moslem League. . . . Hindusabhaites are supporting partition of these provinces from a fundamentally opposite point of view. *Hindusabhaites want to establish two more provinces where Hindus would be in a majority. At the same time they want the remaining parts of Punjab and Bengal to remain in Akhand Hindustan which will be ruled by a strong Central Government powerful enough to intervene in the Provincial administrations in cases of emergencies in order to protect the Hindu minorities there.* These policies of the Hindu

Mahasabha are being exploited by the Congress to demonstrate to the World that their move of partitioning these provinces as a corollary to Pakistan and a part and parcel of their abject surrender of Pakistan to Moslems has the support of Hindus.¹³⁴

Not only in 1947, but on numerous occasions earlier, Mahasabha leaders like Parmanand and Moonje had proposed partition as one possible solution. In fact, Parmanand claimed that Hindus and Muslims constituted two nations so frequently that the Congressman-turned-Leaguer Dr. Muhammad Alam quoted him during the discussions on the famous Lahore Resolution. Admittedly, those partitions had been conceived of within a united India. But what had the Mahasabha done towards achieving that goal other than urge Hindu sangathan and, within the Punjab, label all Unionist policies and Congress efforts both within and outside the province as a betrayal of Hindu interests?¹³⁵ Apart from holding anti-Award conferences after 1932 and anti-Pakistan conferences after 1940, and urging that Hindu youths militarize, what had the Mahasabha done to make a united India possible? The responsibility of the Mahasabha in fomenting insecurity and raising hopes of Hindu majoritarian rule in Muslim-majority Punjab must be underscored.

On June 2, 1947, Mountbatten delivered HMG's statement to divide the Punjab. Jinnah sought one week's time to ascertain the views of the All India Muslim League Council; Nehru was ready to give the working committee's reaction by the evening; and Gandhi, "not even a four *anna* member of the Congress," was not present at the meeting. Mountbatten felt "God must be on our side, since Gandhi . . . was afflicted by a day of silence."¹³⁶ Gandhi's handwritten note to Mountbatten on his day of silence said: "I am sorry I can not speak; when I took the decision about the Monday silence I did reserve two exceptions, i.e., about speaking to high functionaries on urgent matters or attending upon sick people. But I know you do not want me to break my silence."¹³⁷

Conclusion: On the Accommodation of Political Differences

It would be so easy, in the interests of clarity and simplicity, to argue that as some Muslims belonging to the League increased their campaign for *Pakistan*, Punjabi Hindus turned eastward, strengthening their

ties with Hindus in Hindu-majority India. Although historiography has “conditioned itself precisely to explain the ‘historical inevitability’” of Partition, that would not and has not explained the disbelief of millions of Punjabis as the fact of Partition sank in.¹³⁸ Perhaps a more complex answer lies in the chapters on violence and memory that follow. An idea, albeit spare, of how Punjabi Hindus sought to make sense of these issues, and grapple with their “inevitable” culmination emerges from the Peshawari Hindu Prithviraj Kapoor’s production, *Deewar* (Wall). This play mapped the Hindu-Muslim communal tangle onto the story of two brothers who were forced to create a partition in their joint family because of the machinations of a foreign woman. In the final scene of the play, the wall is broken down to the chants: “We were One. We are One. We will remain One.” *Deewar* opened on August 9, 1945, and was performed 712 times before being replaced by *Pathan*, yet another Partition play that opened on April 13, 1947, and was performed almost 600 times. Plays often were followed by a conversation with the audience; on one memorable occasion, the Home Member in the interim government, Sardar Patel, who had intended to stay for only a short duration, was so moved that he sat through the entire play and later addressed the audience.¹³⁹

Disbelief, anger, and blame poured out of letters addressed to the Congress. In January 1947, Dr. Shanker Das Mehra of Lahore wrote to the Congress president, Acharya Kripalani, that he did not think it productive to work the Constituent Assembly in the difficult conditions that prevailed in the country. Since “communal harmony” was the “essence of Independence,” he asked the Congress to “re-approach” the Muslim masses. In his estimation, the present communal trouble was a direct result of Congress policy since 1935. The one person responsible for this was Jawaharlal Nehru because he had formed Congress governments in the provinces in 1937, “forgetting the fact that only a handful of the Muslim members who could be counted on finger tips were returned on the Congress ticket.” This had resulted in the birth of the Muslim League. This was aggravated by the then Congress president Azad’s decision not to permit the Congress parties in the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab, Bengal, and Sind to form coalitions with the non-communal Muslim groups within their provinces. This had pushed the Muslim leaders of Punjab and Bengal into the arms of the League. Mr. Gandhi had aggravated the situation by “dancing attendance on Mr. Jinnah . . . and lowered the position of the Nationalist

Muslims, who were accused of being the henchmen of the Hindu Congress.” Mehra asked the Congress to work from the provinces and forget the all-India picture; and to permit the Muslim members of the legislature to nominate their quota for the cabinet. If all the parties worked in the interest of the province as a team and in a spirit of accommodation, this would “encourage political cleavages in a communal majority” and there could be an “agreed settlement.”¹⁴⁰

To Kripalani’s standard response that the Congress would always work in the interests of the nation, Mehra wrote back, fuming: “Very many thanks for your laconic and stereotype reply . . . may I ask if all that has been done in the past by the Congress Working Committee been in the interest of the country or the nation? [*sic*]” He listed, again, the many wrong decisions that he believed the Congress took in the aftermath of the 1937 elections.¹⁴¹ He asked for four lakh Congress volunteers to help restore communal harmony in Bengal, Punjab, and Sind. Mehra’s appeal to the Congress to be more accommodating resonated in other letters to Gandhi and members of the working committee.

From Amritsar, Shareef Mateen, president of the District Trade Union Committee, pointed out that the severe violence then engulfing the Punjab was not the result of some local trouble or due to another mosque or temple incident. It was the consequence of the “game of power-politics” and until this was stopped, “peace committees etc. will function only on paper.” Only a coalition ministry and Congress-League agreements were proper safeguards, which would have the “wholehearted support of the working class.”¹⁴²

Om Prakash Chopra of Lahore, in contrast, spoke like a businessman. He proposed that the partition of Punjab and Bengal be conceded after the signing of a document called the “Charter of Freedom.” By the terms of this charter, both Pakistan and Hindustan were to be “absolutely sovereign” in their internal and external affairs; their boundaries were to be definitely fixed; and they could only raise loans from each other, or with the consent of each other, from a third state. If these conditions were not acceptable, the Pakistan state could be granted “as lease for a specified period. Depending on the tenure of the lease, the state would either remain independent or be annexed again to Hindustan.” Chopra also wanted safeguards for minorities of each state and free migration of population for at least ten years, with the right to qualify as a “national” from the moment the minorities showed signs of settling down “permanently” in the terri-

tory. The two states would not be permitted to ally with each other's enemies, and if either wanted to sell raw materials or food grains, preference would be given to the other. Disputes would be referred to a permanent commission of representatives from Burma, Ceylon, Siam, Pakistan, and Hindustan "and any other state which may be agreed to"; other treaties pertaining to trade "should also be contemplated keeping this doctrine in view that Pakistan and Hindustan and even Burma and Ceylon are after all sister states and were part and parcel of Geographical India at one time." In this way, the "aspiration of having one organic India" may one day be fulfilled.¹⁴³

Leaning heavily on archival materials, this chapter revisits the debates around minority rights and safeguards in the 1930s and 1940s, and the different meanings that accrued to the slogan *Pakistan* to gauge how remote or close an agreement between religiously defined communities and political parties was, especially in the Punjab. To account for the disbelief that accompanied Partition, I have highlighted the voices of Punjabi Hindus—Congressmen, Hindu Sabhaites, or otherwise interested and politically aware citizens—who insisted that other possibilities be considered, all the way until the summer of 1947. I have shown how partitionist solutions were on the anvil at least from the early 1920s. Yet these were formulated within the contours of a united India. Only after 1940, when the Lahore Resolution came to have a life of its own among a range of theorists did the possibility of a partitioned Punjab, away from the rest of India, begin to raise new spectres of fear and distrust. Yet it was not until early 1947 that some Punjabi Hindus began to choose a partitioned India over a united India. Even so, from Prof. Brij Narain to Prithvi Raj Kapoor to Dr. Shanker Das Mehra, these later partitionist solutions were set aside for more emotional and practical alternatives. To those writing to the Congress, to the Cabinet Mission, or in the press, the differences between the various political interests were not irreconcilable; that the British might negotiate on the basis of a partitioned Punjab and Bengal was still not within the realm of plausibility. In fact, even senior members of the Congress were unconvinced of the Congress's final decision. So General Secretary Kripalani, a Sindhi, wrote that the decision to partition had been "not only a great national but a personal calamity. My life long political loyalty to the Mahatma has been for the time being shaken."¹⁴⁴ Yet the Congress ultimately called for Partition,

even as it reaffirmed the unity of the province and nation in the same breath. That it was so close, that it could so easily have been otherwise, that the maps of one of the hottest spots of the world might so easily have been less complicated—these, too, are historical facts that need to be reckoned with.

PARTITION VIOLENCE AND THE
QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I found it impossible to decide which of the two countries was now my homeland—India or Pakistan. Who was responsible for the blood which was being mercilessly shed every day? . . . When we were colonial subjects, we could dream of freedom, but now that we were free, what would our dreams be? Were we even free? Thousands of Hindus and Muslims were dying all around us. Why were they dying? All these questions had different answers: the Indian answer, the Pakistani answer, the British answer. Every question had an answer, but when you tried to look for the truth, none of those answers was any help.

—Saadat Hasan Manto

Manto's questions echoed endlessly in the summer of 1947.¹ Later, historians attempted an answer. They used big words—"genocide," "ethnic cleansing," "sectarian violence," and "communal violence"—that sounded bulky and alien to Punjabi ears, words that hardly ventured into the contemporary archive. For contemporaries who were victims, perpetrators, as well as mere witnesses, there was fear to contend with, a strange, polarizing fear to which they were not accustomed. When, on Partition's eve, power flew from the seemingly comprehensible instructions of ministers to the incomprehensible rumours of an uncontrollable press, from railway station to student rally, from mixed neighbourhoods to mixed troops and police stations, great trepidation began to be felt in every home.

The problem of determining responsibility for Partition violence blurs the easy distinction between high politics and subaltern voices that is the staple of Partition historiography today.² A close reading of crime reports, intelligence reports, correspondence between officials, memoirs, newspaper accounts, rumours in circulation, and pleas from refugees reflects on the positions of those who did and did not participate in the violence of 1947. Studying the specific conditions that attended every phase of Partition violence might help us begin to unearth larger patterns across districts,

perhaps even all of Punjab. This chapter examines the largely political violence that grew out of tensions associated with the election campaign of 1945–46 and the breakdown in negotiations that ensued. The violence in Rawalpindi and Lahore is connected with the scramble for power that resulted when the British opted for a hasty withdrawal with no concern for successor state/states. Finally, some of the issues surrounding the question of responsibility are unpacked by examining the way the army and the police were deployed. The question of responsibility for Partition violence continues to haunt those who changed homelands in 1947. It has formed the core of a genre of writing known as “Partition literature.” More recently, it has re-entered the public sphere in the form of poisonous rhetoric, deployed most powerfully by the Hindu Right in India. It is an important question for historians to consider.

Political Negotiations and Spiralling Violence

The correspondence between the British, the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Sikhs between 1945 and 1947 shows an acute awareness amongst all players of the stakes in winning the elections of 1946 and a peaceful transition. The Simla Conference, called to reckon with the situation at the end of the war, suggested that the British were finally willing to walk the road towards Indian independence. The conference floundered because the Muslim League insisted on nominating all the Muslims to the conference. Such a position was unacceptable to the premier from Muslim-majority Punjab, Khizr Hyat Khan, as well as the Congress, whose wartime president was Maulana Azad. That negotiations broke down was opportune for Jinnah, who could not control Leaguers in the provinces, but it also hardened stated claims.³ Noting the effect of propaganda on the ground, the governor of the Punjab, Bertrand Glancy, cautioned that the Unionists would have no “spectacular battle-cry” to match that of “Islam in danger”: “We shall be heading straight for bloodshed on a wide scale; non-Muslims, especially Sikhs, are not bluffing, they will not submit peacefully to a Government that is labelled ‘Muhammadan Raj.’ Hence it appears to me to be *of vital importance to take action, before it is too late, to deflate the theory of Pakistan.*”⁴ Viceroy Wavell also urged that “if *Pakistan* could be publicly shown to be a wholly impracticable proposition that would . . . greatly reduce the vigour with which they would be prepared to go into action in support of it—more

particularly since it could be implemented in certain Provinces, notably in the Punjab, only at the risk of most serious civil disturbance and bloodshed.”⁵

Though this caution reached London, it was decided to postpone an enquiry into *Pakistan* until after the elections. Meanwhile, election propaganda steadily worsened. In the Punjab, Hindus and Sikhs were worried by rumours that the *sharia* would prevail and non-Muslims would be forced to settle their disputes in mosques if the League were to form a government.⁶ Yet the more perceptive relied on pure math; the distribution of seats in the Punjab Legislative Assembly according to the Government of India Act of 1935 ensured that no single community could rule the province. Even if the Muslim League, aided by separate electorates and heightened polarisation, were to win all the Muslim votes, that would only account for 86 of 175 seats. Besides, the two-decades-strong Unionist Party was not expected to beat a quiet retreat. At any rate, while high-ranking British officers chose to be conspicuously silent, rumours translated into violence in an increasingly vitiated election atmosphere.⁷ Khizr Hyat, now at the heart of the battle of interpretations on the meaning of *Pakistan*, announced that Muslim Unionists favoured Pakistan as long as the Punjab was administered by a coalition of the various communities. Jinnah, meanwhile, reiterated that Pakistan would include Muslim-majority provinces with their present boundaries. Electoral overtures guided party statements and Viceroy Wavell toed the British line to keep quiet on controversial matters.⁸

However, the direct relationship between stalled or broken political negotiations and an outbreak of violence was recognized in the breakdown plans that Wavell sent to London. Acting upon their logic would require calling the shots in India for longer than the British were prepared to consider. But “serious communal conflict” would result if either of the two main parties reneged on accepting a stated compromise.⁹ Wavell did not wish to compromise on two basic principles: (1) if Muslims insisted on self-determination in genuinely Muslim areas, these must be conceded; and (2) large non-Muslim populations could not be compelled to remain in Pakistan. The secretary of state believed that it was best to “declare our attitude on the Pakistan issue” only if “our decision will be at least acquiesced in and not resisted by the Congress and Muslim League.”¹⁰ In contrast, Penderel Moon, a key civil servant, urged that a “non-committal attitude leads to certain disaster.” If the Congress

and the League were unwilling to resolve a post-election deadlock, a British initiative was necessary. Calling for a “more thorough testing of the ground,” Moon argued that “India would be divided only that it might be more firmly, because more freely, united. The concession of Pakistan in name would be the means of approximating most nearly to a united India in fact.” He concluded his memoranda with a telling warning:

As so often in Indian affairs, we are in danger of becoming the victims of words. The real crux of the Indian problem is how to obtain Hindu-Muslim collaboration. Compared with this, the relative merits of Pakistan or United India are, in themselves, insignificant; and granted the sturdy spirit of Provincial independence, which exists in any case, the practical differences between them may not amount to very much. Between separate sovereign states, bound together by close and continuous collaboration, and a Federal Union with a weak Federal Government, the difference may prove one of form than of substance. The demand for Pakistan has unduly scared both the Hindus and ourselves. Concede it and you draw the sting. ‘Grasp it like a man of mettle and it soft as silk remains.’ But it will entail much hard work.¹¹

Wavell sought to clarify the implications of Pakistan by drawing out the demarcation of districts by population. He was deeply aware of the connection between formal politics and its reverberations on the ground; that the demarcation of a boundary deemed unfair would lead to bloodshed.¹² But again the secretary of state did not see the need for any urgency.¹³

Election results showed the massive gains made by the Muslim League over the Unionists in the Punjab.¹⁴ *Pakistan*, variously imagined, won in a system that slotted the electorate on the basis of formal religious identity. Despite the League’s win, as noted in Chapter 4, the Unionists formed a shaky coalition with the support of the Panthic Party, the Congress, one Independent and one Indian Christian.¹⁵ On the ground, the immediate effect of the inauguration of the coalition ministry was violence. In response, the district magistrate of Lahore issued orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) prohibiting the carrying of weapons, public meetings, and the gathering in any public place of five or more persons.¹⁶ Intelligence reports testified an increase in recruitment to the militant ideological core of the Hindu Mahasabha—the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).¹⁷

Fortnightly reports until the end of May 1946 were replete with words like “simmering” and “unsettled,” but the ongoing Cabinet Mission negotiations seemed to help halt full-fledged outbreaks of violence. In Delhi, the stray goat of a Muslim boy that wandered into a ground where some Hindu boys were playing triggered off violence that claimed two lives; and in Kartarpur of Jullundur District, a Muslim boy caught touching sweets in a Hindu’s shop set off an episode that claimed one Muslim life and injured six Hindus.¹⁸ Multan and Amritsar witnessed stray stabbings that claimed four lives. The new Punjab governor, Evan Jenkins, described the calm that held the Punjab as deceptive and recorded the obsession with which all parties were collecting *lathis* and knives. He reported that the leader of the new coalition, Khizr Hyat Khan, was unable to take action against the private armies for fear of upsetting his own allies in the Congress.¹⁹

It is at this juncture that the Cabinet Mission proposed its plan to preserve a united India. The statement of May 16, 1946, hoped “mutual accommodation” would greet their plan; the alternative to a peaceful solution would be “a grave danger of violence, chaos and even civil war.”²⁰ The substance of the statement did reflect an earnest effort at reconciling contrary demands. Crucially, the British also planned for a possible outbreak of violence. The two options facing them if the League or the Congress could not agree with each other were repression and scuttle. Repression was discarded after an estimate of the mass violence that could be unleashed in the Congress ruled provinces by their well-trained cadres. Scuttle or a deferred scuttle plan referred to British withdrawal by a specific date, regardless of whether agreement had been reached about a constitution. If this happened, government policy in the interim period would still have to be fashioned. Failing agreement, the Hindu group would be permitted to set up its constitution separately and Muslim groups framing their own provincial and group constitutions would have to allow non-Muslim areas to opt for Hindustan. Calcutta would probably have to be secured as a free city. What if the Congress accepted the scheme and the League rejected it? The cabinet delegation believed that Muslims could not be compelled to attend the Constituent Assemblies, but it would be unjust to Hindus that they would lose any chance of a union. The note concluded: “I suppose the right course in this case would be to tell Jinnah he could have complete sovereignty for the small Pakistan (without Calcutta) and let him face the practical difficulties himself.”²¹ And what might those practical difficulties amount to?

Wavell considered the formation of the interim government to be the crux of the whole problem. To relinquish control to a government in which Muslims refused to participate would be "very dangerous. It would be likely to lead to grave disorders in the Punjab and Bengal, and would be injurious to our whole position in the Muslim world."²² For as long as the British assumed responsibility for any corner of India, they had to maintain law and order; moreover, many people in India wanted peace and would support the government if it were "firm and resolute." Wavell's appreciation was incorporated into a Cabinet Defence Committee paper that dwelt on the military implications of a breakdown in negotiations. Punjabi Hindus are included in a section that considers the possibility of the British withdrawing into areas demarcated to be in *Pakistan*. It would appear that the British did understand the fears of minorities in areas suddenly torn asunder:

In Pakistan and especially, in the Punjab, there would be a large and militant Hindu minority and communal trouble in the form of serious riots could be expected in the area which would be under our control. Congress would have a direct interest in these people. In Hindustan, there would be no guarantee of the fair treatment of the Moslem minorities. Even if there were no ill-treatment there would be bound to be wild and inflammatory rumours which would add to our difficulties in Pakistan . . . these two factors taken in conjunction could not but end in civil war and we should be involved not only in fighting with Hindustan, but also in serious communal strife in parts of Pakistan where there were Hindu minorities, where British troops would be the only effective armed force.²³

Commander-in-Chief Auchinleck's appreciation on the internal situation in India mirrored the uncertainty in politics in its prediction that disturbances could occur "any time before during or after the elections."²⁴ Furthermore, Auchinleck suggested that the Congress would learn from its failures during 1942 and target the rural population. They knew how easily road, rail, and telephone communications could be disrupted. It would be difficult to predict the state of the armed forces by April 1946; Auchinleck was aware of the influence of the Indian National Army propaganda on the loyalty of his men. In conclusion, Auchinleck stressed the need to prepare for civil war in the spring or winter of 1946. He also emphasised the need for British soldiers and suggested that as many as

could be spared be sent to India.²⁵ Nehru's statement that the iron wall separating the Indian army from the Indian people had collapsed and Indian soldiers who came from the peasantry were as politically sensitive as those in fields and factories corroborated Auchinleck's fears.²⁶ Intelligence reports attested to "more communal feeling" in the army than there had been two years earlier, especially amongst Indian officers. If the thirty battalions of British troops were removed, it would worsen the internal situation within India.²⁷

Nehru now declared that he was "profoundly depressed and disappointed" and tired of "long and interminable discussions" because "someone wanted more time." The proposed parity in the interim government was even worse than what was suggested at Simla the previous year.²⁸ Jinnah, in contrast, accepted a Cabinet Mission Plan that preserved a united India. He required some leverage with his committee to explain what some may have regarded a *volte-face*. He demanded an assurance from Wavell that if the Muslim League accepted the proposals and the Congress rejected them, they would still be called to join the interim government and would be given their share of portfolios. This, Wavell could not do, but he gave Jinnah his "personal assurance" that they did not "propose to make any discrimination in the treatment of either party."²⁹

The Congress and the League had tried to secure every conceivable edge over the other on the questions of parity in the interim government, the nomination of a nationalist Muslim among the Congress five, the selection of minority representatives, and the need for majorities of both communities to decide on questions pertaining to one community. Finally, the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16—subject to its own interpretation of the grouping clause (that is, whether or not provinces would be forced to join groups)—but rejected the June 16 statement comprising names for an interim government at the centre.³⁰

By the time the mission was ready to leave, the Congress and the League had both agreed to the formation of a Constituent Assembly, albeit with their own spin on grouping.³¹ The interim government, however, had failed to gain both participants. In this incredibly charged atmosphere, the new president of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, threw caution to the winds. In his maiden press conference and on a matter as delicate as the proposed Constituent Assembly, Nehru spoke provocatively:

What we do there, we are entirely and absolutely free to determine. We have committed ourselves on no single matter to anybody . . . the

big probability is that from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping. Obviously Section A will decide against grouping. Speaking in betting language, there was a four-to-one chance of the North West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then Group B collapses . . . even the Muslim Leaguer in Sind dislikes the idea of grouping with the Punjab, because he fears the Punjab will dominate Sind, the Punjab being the dominant party in that Group, and more aggressive and advanced in some ways. [On the forthcoming meeting of the AIML Council at Bombay] . . . I am glad the Muslim League has realized that we have created a new situation. *We propose to create many further new situations.* What we shall do if the League decides to do this or that, we will see what the conditions then are, and decide accordingly.³²

It is worth remembering that the composition of the interim government, the demand for *Pakistan*, the creation of a Constituent Assembly and rival interpretations of the Cabinet Mission's Grouping Plan were matters that consumed Indians, particularly minority communities, and were discussed threadbare and constantly. At no other time in history did Indians breathe politics so wholly and hopefully. Nehru's press conference raised the political temperature once again. Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, once president of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and only recently a co-signatory to Diwan Chaman Lall's letter to Narang promising that the Congress would oppose both *Pakistan* and Hindu-Muslim parity at the center, now joined the Muslim League.³³

Under these unpropitious circumstances, the Muslim League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals.³⁴ Nehru, revealing a complete disregard for the high tension, hopes, and fears that had pervaded the Cabinet Mission negotiations, chose to proceed with the Constituent Assembly without the Muslims, who could not be permitted to "hold matters up indefinitely by intransigence." Wavell, too, did not seem unduly perturbed by the threat of direct action, for Jinnah "has few lieutenants who are willing or able to run a mass movement and no ready-made organisation . . . on the other hand a *Jihad* would be a very serious matter."³⁵ As it turned out, the Calcutta killings of August 16, 1946, provided evidence of neither jihad nor Muslim League organisation, but the unmistakable imprint of mass participation suggests that negotiators at the highest levels had found their embittered nemesis.

A universal *hartal* and mass meetings in every town and village where the League resolutions would be explained comprised a rather unassuming itinerary, reminiscent in fact, of Gandhi's itinerary during the first Non-cooperation movement. A sense of the confusion that prevailed among officials may be garnered from the Bengal governor, Burrows, who claimed that the Bengal prime minister, Suhrawardy, had no idea what direct action meant and had proclaimed a public holiday to avoid trouble. It was possible that the Muslims of East Bengal would fight, but it was not clear against whom; there were only about two hundred British in East Bengal. Army dispositions were mostly in the West, since the Governor expected trouble with the Congress rather than with the League.³⁶ Auchinleck believed that the situation in India was possibly less dangerous than it had been six weeks earlier.³⁷ The stigma associated with direct action glued to the League, although Jinnah clarified at that time and later that "the meaning of direct action which is attributed to us maliciously, namely that it is based on the principle of force, violence and bloodshed, is without any foundation and is absolutely untrue . . . direct action means social pressure, strike or revolt, constituting moral pressure upon the authority in power to redress our grievances and meet our demands."³⁸

The Calcutta killings of August 1946 form a sub-set in the historiography on Partition violence. Secondary literature abounds in perspective and detail on what happened and holds different actors responsible.³⁹ Mobile patrols needed to engage the guerrilla tactics of murderous gangs and the oft-cited involvement of Ghulam Sarwar—an influential Noakhali *pir* and former member of the Legislative Assembly with links to the underworld who had lost against the Muslim League in the 1946 elections—suggest that the battles for space at the neighbourhood had little to do with the over-arching categories of religion or nation.⁴⁰ Horace Alexander of the Friends Service Unit pointed to the delayed action in calling in the military. In Calcutta, in a Red Cross van on August 17, he neither heard nor witnessed a single instance of effective intervention from the police during the whole of Friday [the 16th] or Saturday. Police shots in the air, in fact, gave armed looters a few moments' warning to disappear; once the police vans left, the looters reappeared. It was also evident that there were protectors from both communities: "I had the experience, for instance, that when we went to rescue a Hindu family from a Muslim suburb where their Muslim protector had had his car burnt by the Muslim roughs (this sort of incident, by the way, has been

quite common—on both sides, much to the credit of both communities) the family said they could not come out into the open road without an armed escort. But as soon as they saw my white face, apparently they decided that I was sufficient protection!”⁴¹

Hidden in this story of a white man *not* being the target of mob violence is a hint of ties that stayed strong despite the targeting of those very bonds. A violent resolution to the problem of power-sharing now necessitated absolute loyalties. If Muslims and Hindus could not come together in politics, they were not to be permitted to come together at all; hence, the difficulty mobs had with members of their own putative community who harboured members of the “other.”

The Calcutta killings obviously did not bring the Congress and League any closer. While the Congress demanded the resignation of the League ministry in Bengal, Jinnah disallowed the chief minister, Suhrawardy, from forming a coalition government with the Bengal Congress. The relationship between political negotiations in Simla and New Delhi and violence on the ground continued to develop dangerously. Leaders of non-violence now spoke calmly of the inevitability of violence.⁴² The presence of a relatively unfettered press and signs of the new liberalism in vogue accompanied the extravagant freedom to kill. As experts in the law and constitution making fiddled with words, enforcers of the law withdrew prematurely from the responsibility to secure life and property. Bengal, then Bihar, the UP, the NWFP, and finally the Punjab became witness to the sorry scramble for power in the practice of everyday life.

Violence Elsewhere and the Creation of Refugees

It is difficult to study the violence that shook the Punjab in 1947. Film, family histories, literature, and popular understandings of the event clothe it with an enormous power that could not be spoken of for so many decades because it was so profoundly hurtful and of such lasting consequences. What happened in 1947 that transformed minorities in the Punjab into refugees, then citizens, of two different nation-states? I have examined the relationship between negotiations at the centre in Delhi and the steady-ing levels of tension in the provinces. Although Wavell, Auchinleck, and Penderel Moon were aware of the significance of a negotiated settlement and the increasing weaknesses in traditional British defences like the army, little was done to insist upon a negotiated peace. To some degree, the “transfer of power” already had occurred; at least, recognition of the

enormous power they wielded had dawned on leaders of the Congress and the League.

Through the summer months of 1946, violence was at a minimum in the Punjab even though levels of tension between the private armies of the RSS and the Muslim League National Guards (MLNG) were high. But news of the Calcutta killings of August soon filled the press with acrimony. The interim government, initially officered solely by the Congress, was greeted with black flags in the government clerks' quarters in Delhi, and more generally in Lahore and Quetta. Muslim papers appeared with black borders and blank editorials to commemorate the occasion.⁴³

The space provided by the unimaginative leaders of the League and the Congress was rapidly filled by local leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the MLNG. Narrowly defined communitarian interests sought to make political gains out of the violence inflicted in Bengal and Bihar through the sponsoring of "days" in their remembrance.⁴⁴ Finding the "irresponsibility of educated people" almost "incredible," the Punjab governor Jenkins complained that: "The students of the Dayanand Anglo Vedic and Sanatan Dharam Colleges in Lahore celebrated 'Noakhali Day' on 29th October, and took out a procession which shouted the most provocative slogans, including one which may be translated 'blood for blood.' The students wanted to march through the city, and were restrained from doing so with some difficulty . . . had they carried out their original intention, we should have had a serious riot. People of good education and standing, such as Sir Gokal Chand Narang, a former Punjab Minister, are responsible for whipping up anti-Muslim feeling."⁴⁵ Intelligence reports described more "danger and tension" in the Hindu-majority towns of the Punjab. Soon, news of the massacre during the Garhmukhteshwar *mela* in the United Provinces heightened tension in the Punjab.⁴⁶ The government responded with a Punjab-wide Public Safety Ordinance, effectively prohibiting drilling, processions, demonstrations, public meetings, and the carrying of a weapon of offence for six months.

On October 26, 1946, the Muslim League finally joined the interim government; the Congress seized this opportunity to demand their acceptance of the long-term proposals envisioned in the Cabinet Mission Plan and their entry into the Constituent Assembly. Jinnah insisted on prior agreement over the Grouping clause. A hasty meeting of Wavell, Jinnah, Nehru, Liaquat Ali Khan, and Baldev Singh in London was significant only for the breather in tensions it provided in the Punjab, where Muharram passed peacefully. As they had done so often in the past, Hindus

served refreshments to Muslim processions.⁴⁷ But when the Constituent Assembly met without the League in early December, a League conference decided upon measures that would advance their claims to power in the Punjab. They settled on a demand for the restoration of civil liberties through “protest processions”; this would also defy the bans instituted by the Public Safety Ordinance. If nothing else, the League had its pulse on the fragility of the Unionist-led coalition ruling the Punjab.

In early January 1947, the Congress finally accepted the statement by His Majesty’s government (HMG) regarding the Grouping of provinces. But the Congress resolution also emphasised that no province should be compelled to join a group, and the rights of Sikhs should not be jeopardized. The caveat was disregarded. The resolution was roundly condemned as a betrayal by Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs, and important officials in the Bengal Congress such as Sarat Chandra Bose resigned from the Congress working committee in protest.⁴⁸ For those who held Grouping to be no better than *Pakistan*, this resolution was a tipping point.

The Punjab premier, Khizr Hyat, chose this moment to announce a ban on the RSS and the MLNG under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Asked to take action against these openly militaristic bodies in the summer of 1946, it had taken Khizr this long to take the plunge. The timing of the ban and the quest for a cause that would de-stabilise the Punjab government were perfect for a League that was short of time. “Direct Action” in the Punjab began when Mian Iftikharuddin, Congressman turned Leaguer, refused to allow the police to search the head office of the MLNG in Lahore. Khizr returned from a brief trip to Delhi to discover that the directive against the MLNG had been interpreted as a ploy to prevent the League from joining the Constituent Assembly. He ordered the release of eight Leaguers who had been arrested and withdrew the bans on the MLNG and the RSS.⁴⁹ Hartals and processions thousands strong with crowds chanting anti-Khizr slogans were characteristic of the direct-action movement.⁵⁰ Jenkins feared this hitherto non-violent movement had an obviously communal stance to it since the Khizr-led coalition ministry included the Congress and the Sikhs. Finding the Leaguers “very sadly lacking in brains and political sense,” he observed that their “published policy” was to establish “undiluted Muslim rule” in the Punjab. While some members were: “much more liberal in private conversation than they are in public . . . the fact remains that they fought the General Election of 1946 on the extreme demand for Pakistan, and have

not since said a word to reassure the Hindus or the Sikhs. Even among the more liberal of them the line seems to be that having established undiluted Muslim rule they will be generous to the minorities.”⁵¹

This impractical idea that safeguards for minorities in the Punjab could be sorted out after the principle of Pakistan was conceded was identical to the Congress’s demand that safeguards to minorities all across India be worked out after the British withdrew. Further evidence that the League lacked political sense came in a stern note from Sardar Patel, the Home Member in the interim government. Patel complained to Wavell about the Leaguer Raja Ghazanfar Ali’s recent declaration in Lahore: “Mohammed Bin Kassim and Mahommed of Ghazni invaded India with armies composed of only a few thousands and yet were able to overpower lakhs of Hindus; God willing, a few lakhs of Muslims will yet overwhelm crores of Hindus.”⁵²

But selective recourse to a more complex history of communal engagement was not the preserve of the League. Soon after, Master Tara Singh invoked the Akal Fauj, a voluntary Sikh organisation of legendary prowess, to face the impending onslaught of Muslims.⁵³ Into this boiling cauldron of rhetoric and staying power, British prime minister Attlee’s announcement on February 20, 1947, promising a transfer of power by June 1948 to some form of central or provincial government was regarded as “the prelude to a final communal show-down.” Jenkins believed that Attlee’s statement made it “*impossible for the Punjab to take a line of its own, and even encourages the Muslim League and the Congress to set off all-India interests against provincial interests.*” The Muslim League in the Punjab would be encouraged by its High Command to avoid a compromise in order to increase its bargaining power in the Muslim-minority provinces, and the Punjab Congress would be expected to work for a central government dominated by Hindus.”⁵⁴

As Jenkins had intimated it would, the movement in the Punjab turned violent. When Khizr offered to remove the ban on public meetings but continue banning processions and the carrying of arms, the League decided to celebrate its “victory” on March 2. The same day, Khizr resigned. And that evening in Lahore, Master Tara Singh held a sword unsheathed in his hand and declared: “O Hindus and Sikhs! Be ready for self-destruction like the Japanese and the Nazis. Our motherland is calling for blood and we shall satiate the thirst of our mother with blood. By crushing Moghulistan we shall trample Pakistan . . . Disperse from here on the solemn affirmation that we shall not allow the League to exist . . . Finish the Muslim

League.” Dismissing these as “pompous” and “empty threats” did not detract from the power the Master had over certain members of his own community.⁵⁵ Screaming *Pakistan murdabad* (death to Pakistan) was tantamount to “hurling a matchstick into a room full of explosive gas.”⁵⁶ The Congressman Lala Bhimsen Sachar, who was standing by his side, proclaimed “I, as a member of the Government, hereby declare that you have every right to take out processions.”⁵⁷ The next day, demonstrating students from the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College (DAV) and other colleges clashed with police: two died and sixty officers were injured. The students then tried to break into the district police office and were only stopped by repeated firing. Police reserves were assaulted and officers injured. A lorry used by the police was gutted and its seat covers burnt. In the afternoon, Lahore erupted: six died and fifty-nine were injured. Non-Muslim crowds were seen tearing down Muslim League flags and ripping badges off Muslim Leaguers.⁵⁸ As the police responded to student demonstrations, ministers in the coalition government resigned in disapproval. With the League unable to forge a meaningful and viable coalition, the Punjab went under Section 93 of the Government of India Act of 1935, which meant Governor’s rule. The cast for Punjab’s own midsummer nightmare were now firmly on the stage.

First Cut: Rawalpindi

One of the largest disturbances to erupt in the Punjab occurred in Rawalpindi District. In terms of sheer numbers and brutality, Rawalpindi set the tone for what followed in the Punjab. A reading of several First Information Reports (FIRs) suggests that the violence was planned. The perpetrators were not faceless to their victims, nor did all Muslims participate in the killings. The tension brewed slowly over a period of days and the face of the law was either conspicuously absent or on the side of the looters.

At noon on March 8, 1947, for instance, a “Muslim mob” surrounded the village Mogul from all sides, shouting *Pakistan Zindabad* (long live Pakistan). The Sikhs of this village collected in the main *gurdwara* to defend themselves. Gunshots were exchanged, petrol and kerosene were freely used, looting continued all night, and then houses were set on fire. The village was surrounded so that no one could leave. Valuable goods were carried away on donkeys, bullock carts, and camels. One hundred and eighty persons in the *gurdwara* were then attacked. One *subedar* of Durna Village tried to appease the furious mob, but he was ignored and

sent back. More Muslims gathered; the “mob” had grown to more than a thousand persons. Casualties among the Sikhs rose: “My father-in-law, Mehal Singh who tried to appease the mob was shot dead by Mohammad Khan *havaladar* whom the inmates [of the gurdwara] recognized well.” Forced to flee the burning gurdwara, the Sikhs who began to emerge were disarmed and faced with the choice of conversion or death. They agreed to convert. However, others gathering from the surrounding villages insisted that every Sikh woman and child must be killed and that “the body giving shelter will be similarly dealt with.” Satnam Kaur, who was abducted and then found by a military rescue party three days later, recalled how she and her family hid in the grain field and then in the house of Shafi in Mughal Pari Dhok. But they were spotted and Shafi was threatened, so he turned them out of his house the next morning. All the men and most of the women in her family were stoned or burnt to death.⁵⁹

Again on March 8, another FIR detailed how fifteen people from the villages of Harakha, Dhok Raja Hashmat, Bhumali, Waryama, and Bahia approached the village of Bassali and after reciting *Allah-o-Akbar* attacked two Sikhs who were watering their cattle. The other Sikhs at the pond fled. After this initial assault, the mob moved to another village. An hour later, a mob came from about thirty-five villages, each of which is listed in the FIR, and attacked Bassali, shouting *Pakistan Zindabad* and *Allah-o-Akbar*. The mob was armed with axes, *kirpans*, spears, and guns. Gunfire was exchanged; the mob responded by looting and setting fire to specific houses. The FIR lists names of perpetrators, along with those of witnesses: “The house of Natha Singh was looted and burnt by Mohammad Ashraf, cobbler, Imamdin compounder, Ajab Khan of Chak Jogian. This was witnessed by Natha Singh, Sakhshi Khazan Chand and Sarbans Lal. Gurdwara Singh Sabha was attacked and set fire by Allahadad of Dhudian, Master Mohammad Din, Master Abdul Majid, Hassan Khan of Kalri. This was witnessed by Sujan Singh, Pt. Tara Chand and Sadhu Singh. Simultaneously other houses were looted and burnt,” and so the details tumble forward.⁶⁰ This continued throughout the night. At 10:00 a.m. the next day, Allahditta the *lambardar* sent a message proposing a settlement. Arms and a thousand rupees in cash changed hands. The besieged villagers were asked to send their representatives to settle further terms at a spot outside the village. There, a group of Muslims faced a group of Sikhs and Hindus and asked them to convert to Islam. Some agreed; those who did not were murdered. The others ran back to the village. The mob then proceeded to loot and commit

arson. A list of their atrocities is enumerated. The names of fifty-two people who were murdered by the mob are given, along with the names of forty missing. Those who had agreed to convert were shielded in the house of "Captain Sardar Khan . . . for two nights who protected them at the risk of his own life." They were ultimately picked up by military trucks and transported to Rawat. The FIR pleaded for an investigation: "If the houses of these persons are searched, majority of looted property can be recovered."

Another FIR details the case of the Muslim members of the Peace Committee in Lal Kurit. They invited about ten Hindus and Sikhs to the house of a Muslim Leaguer and after discussing terms, the "hosts" began to depart one by one, leaving the Hindus and Sikhs to a mob that had gathered outside. The FIR was sardonic: "Ultimately the 'guests' came out and they got the peace they wanted—with a vengeance. Only one came back—wounded to hospital. The others obtained Nirvana and so they may rest in peace free from any further danger from Muslim League. The corpses of two have been recovered, one of them being that of the father of the Stenographer to the DIG [Deputy Inspector General]"⁶¹ The report held that trouble had been brewing even before the resignation of the Khizr Ministry. Sensing this, the district magistrate had "gagged" M. A. Minto, a local lawyer and other "notorious Muslim Leaguers." On March 6, a meeting was held at the bungalow of the district magistrate to ensure that trouble would not break out. Accusations had been openly levelled against the assistant district magistrate, Mohammed Shafi, for supporting the Muslim League agitation and defying the ban on processions and meetings. But the charges were not carried through and Mr. Shafi was allowed to stay in charge of the situation:

No steps were taken to stop the heavy influx of outside hooligans or to round them up, although the meeting was held at about 11 am and there was ample time to take preventive measures. Large number[s] of *badmashes* were allowed to collect close to Chouki Shah Nazar where murders and acts of incendiarism were committed the very next morning. Large number[s] of *badmashes* both local and imported were being harboured at the Islamia school at the house of the President of the Muslim League and other places, although they could have been dispersed without even firing a single shot. But it did not suit the police to do so as they were parties to the arrangements.

Further evidence that this was part of a well-laid conspiracy was: all the arms used were illicit and had been imported by the Muslim Leaguers with police assistance, a large number of *goondas* had been imported from outside Rawalpindi, and motor lorries had been used necessitating large amounts of petrol, which was a rationed commodity.⁶²

Refugees poured in as the massacres continued. A brief description of the mob that attacked the village of Thoa Khalsa suggests that it consisted of discharged soldiers armed with rifles, tommy guns, and steel helmets. The raiders met with a three-day-long resistance, but finally succeeded. This FIR also drew lines connecting the district authorities to the local Muslim League to explain why the military was not called in on time. In conclusion, the FIR recommended the imposition of martial law to protect minorities and the transfer of key officials who they held responsible for the violence. It also suggested that the Muslim composition in the police be reduced to 50 percent, that licenses for firearms be issued to the minority community, and that the central government form an enquiry committee that would include members of all religious communities.

The causes of these disturbances, however, were believed to lie deeper. To remedy this, it was suggested that until the Communal Award remained, the representation in services should adhere to the ratio of the population of the communities, and the number of officers representing a minority community should exceed the number of officers of the majority community in a particular station. This would make it impossible for the majority community to ill treat the minority community. It is clear that Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs at the receiving end of violence continued to think in terms of the demands raised in previous years. The victims of the Kohat riot also had asked for reservation in services in the Frontier Province. Crucially, the FIR recorded *no desire to migrate*; there was no suggestion that the violence had made it inconceivable for the refugees to return to their villages. The breakdown of law and order was considered to be the prime cause of the violence; the minorities were still willing to live with the majority community provided they were granted certain legal and political safeguards.

Looting figured as the dominant cause of disturbances in Rawalpindi City between March 6 and 13, 1947. Chaudhri Bholanath, a *sarraf*, reported that meetings had been held by members of the Muslim League in the field opposite the Bazar Dhok Ratta, which were presided by the *maulvi* of the Jama Masjid in Rawalpindi. Rustam Ali, of sugar and

wheat depots; Sufi Allah Din, allegedly a pir; *mistri* Haji Sher Mohammad; Abdullah the tea seller; Babu Sultan Ahmed, head clerk in the railways; Nizam Din, the tailor who ran a drapery shop at Purana Killa; Fazal Karim, a carpenter, and his father, a *mistri* whose flour *chakki* was located at Ratta Amral; others named and “fifteen men, employees Railway Shed, living in Railway Quarters whose names I do not know, but whom I can identify personally” were blamed for the riots at Dhok Ratta Amral. Bholanath listed the names of those who began the assault at 6:30 p.m. on March 6, and those who were assaulted. These included a European, municipal officials, and the president of the Municipal Committee who was a Hindu, Dev Raj: “They neither took away the dead bodies into custody, nor did they post any guard round them. . . . They took no timely action, and this resulted into the encouragement of the Muslim Leaguers and their abettors [*sic*].”⁶³

Bholanath described the night of March 6: Hindus and Sikhs spent the night on their roofs and heard reports of firing from the houses of many Muslims. The police took no action. At 11:00 the next morning, a mob of fifty Muslim Leaguers, some of whom were named in the FIR, surrounded the house of Bholanath and asked him for three thousand rupees if he wanted his life and property. Bholanath and his family managed to escape through a corner door to the house of Kundan Lal Kakar, a railway employee. However, he returned to his house later to keep watch. He saw the men looting and carrying his property to their houses. He noticed that no passage leading to the police station was safe. At about 2:00 p.m., he saw a Muskina riding his cycle: “The detailed list of the loss of my property is enclosed herewith. I am an income tax payer. At this time there is no serious apprehension of the bricks of my burnt *kothi* being removed by the accused, as these are very costly.” Since it was still very cold, he requested bedding and clothes for his family. Far from vendetta, he was concerned with the safety of his bricks, his property, and the lives of his family members. He reiterated that the police and the army did nothing, even when it became obvious that things were going to get out of hand or had turned violent.

Emmet Alter, who taught in Gordon College, Rawalpindi, detailed that the trouble had begun in Lahore when the Khizr Ministry resigned. On March 5, insistent and loud processions in the streets of Rawalpindi had forced the college to close “indefinitely.” Alter’s report is worth quoting at length:

Here at the college our campus, which is quite large and reaches through from one road to another, is an oasis of quiet—quieter than normal when college activities are in session. Throughout the trouble in Pindi there has been no anti-foreign or anti-Christian feeling. We are deeply thankful for this. There has been no effort to invade our college grounds, and our college boys, of whom there are about 150 resident in our hostels of mixed communities, have been wonderful. The effect of our Christian teaching and influences is evident at this time. *They have stuck together, loyal to those of opposite communities, though the larger groups outside are fighting each other. Groups of students, of equal numbers of Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs, have taken turns in guarding our gates at night.* Two cases have occurred where our students have defended members of the opposite party when attacked. Two of our Moslem students had ventured out from a dormitory and were attacked by Hindus and Sikhs. One was able to get away but one was caught. Then one of our Hindu boys stepped up and said, “This is my class fellow, let him go.” He then escorted the Moslem boy to the dormitory where he was staying. Yesterday morning a lone Moslem was riding horseback along the road just outside our college gate. Sikhs attacked him, struck down his horse with swords (it later died) and badly beat the man, who managed to get away and ran for our gate. Our own Sikh students let him through but stopped the Sikh outsiders from following.⁶⁴

Some days later, Emmet’s wife, Martha, wrote to her mother in Massachusetts that their laundry had been brought to them on time, unexpectedly so. They learnt from their *dhobi* that he had been protected by Muslims amongst whom he had lived for fifty years. They had permitted him to do his laundry in their courtyard.⁶⁵ These letters provide vital insights into the way some people managed to stay sane, not unmoved by events that threatened to destroy the closely knit communities amongst which they lived, but safe, alert, still caring for members of the “other” religious community, perhaps with a new touch of self-consciousness.

A close reading of these reports also makes clear the details that upset master narratives of “communal violence.” While the term is occasionally bandied about even in these reports, the naming of particular perpetrators and victims, and their positions in society abound. References to a

Shafi of Mughal Pari Dhok, one *subedar* of Durna Village, Captain Sardar Khan, and resident students of Gordon College stand out as protectors, as do the names of members of the Muslim League, ex-military, potters, cobblers, tailors, sellers of tea and grain, and other functionaries of the colonial state such as assistant district magistrates, who figure as perpetrators of violence. Evidently well-organised, the massacres were preceded by an initial takeover of arms of the minority community, an exchange of cash, and the option to convert followed by loot, arson, and then murder. Young women often were singled out and abducted by people from neighbouring villages. Several of the names of the perpetrators of violence were also known to the victims.

In March 1947, however, the decision to migrate had *not* been taken. Bholanath of Rawalpindi City requested the reinstatement of some of his property and warm clothes for his family; the presidents of the Hindu Sabha, Singh Sabha, Central Relief Committee and one hundred other Hindu and Sikh residents of Rawalpindi demanded martial law.⁶⁶ The residents of a burnt and looted street in Amritsar submitted details with names of perpetrators and also claimed that the authorities had prior knowledge but took no preventive action. As in the Rawalpindi massacres, they demanded deterrent punishments and heavy fines on the culprits so that confidence could be restored.⁶⁷ In Gujarkhan, victims asked for martial law, the arrest of culprits, the return of abducted women, the recovery of stolen property, and arrangements for the rehabilitation of refugees. They did not recommend partition or express a desire to migrate to a Hindu-Sikh-majority area.⁶⁸

Touring the Punjab two weeks later, Bhopatkar and Ashutosh Lahiry, leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, noted that a tenth of Amritsar was devastated: "The houses mostly belonged to the Hindus but the shops mostly belonged to the Muslims. About ten crores of rupees property [*sic*] have been lost of which eight crores belong to the Moslem and seven crores belong to the Hindus and Sikhs. Loss of lives are almost equal."⁶⁹ The Punjab Provincial Congress recommended a thorough enquiry by an impartial tribunal and measures to protect minorities and evacuee property. It also congratulated citizens for the "many heartening instances of neighbourly love and mutual amity" that had been revealed as "Hindus and Sikhs gave shelter to the Muslim neighbours while Muslims protected their Hindu neighbours."⁷⁰

But this violence brought forth a Sikh plan for an independent Sikh state that would have the option to join Hindustan or Pakistan, or stay

independent and make a separate treaty with the British. Giani Kartar Singh imagined that the river Ravi would be the boundary with the Muslim state and the Hindu Jats could have Rohtak, Gurgaon, and half of Karnal and Hissar Districts. The Sikh state would comprise much of Ambala, the rest of Karnal and Hissar, Montgomery, the Phulkian states, and hopefully Nankana Sahib in Sheikhpura District would be a "free city." The Giani personally would not push for Lahore. He thought that "once the partition had been effected, there would be voluntary movements of population and that the Sikhs now living in the Lyallpur district would exchange [land] with Muslims living in Montgomery." Demanding an immediate partition, the Giani believed that the two new provinces could remain in their assigned group, but with the right to contract out of the new constitution. He was absolutely firm that the Sikhs would not consent to being part of any formation that placed them under the domination of another community.⁷¹ A week later, Tara Singh, Kartar Singh, and Baldev Singh declared they would accept the Cabinet Mission Plan if they had 30 percent seats, the Hindus another 30 percent, and the Muslims 40 percent. Otherwise, they insisted on the partition of the Punjab.⁷² The boundary dividing the Punjab was to be based on landholdings and not population figures: "Mr. Jinnah has already accepted the principle of the transfer of population and there should therefore be no objection to the mutual exchange"; non-Muslims could move into the landholdings of Muslims in the east and vice versa.⁷³

The Sikh decision had its ramifications on the ground. Gurmukhi pamphlets in circulation demanded "every Sikh should do his duty to the Guru's Panth" and help collect fifty lakh rupees "for fighting the Pakistan in which lies our death." Intelligence reported that Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were in touch with the rulers of princely states and were planning to attack Muslims.⁷⁴ On *Baisakhi*, 280 Sikhs including Master Tara Singh pledged to disperse across the Punjab and not return home until they had protected their community. These select volunteers formed the new Shahidi Jatha.⁷⁵

A social and economic boycott of Muslims, and increasing conversions to the militant Nihang sect followed the resolution of the Punjab Congress advocating the partition of the Punjab.⁷⁶ On May 25, Ahirs, a Hindu caste, attacked a Muslim village in Gurgaon causing serious casualties. Troops from the states of Alwar and Bharatpur were helping Hindu jats in clearing the states of Muslims.⁷⁷ At this moment, the new viceroy Mountbatten announced the partition of Punjab and Bengal.

From the large ideological terrain of *Pakistan*, the battle for the Punjab now zoomed in on the territory between Lahore and Amritsar. Thirty-three cases were registered under the Explosives Substances Act in the first week of May alone, while the provincial death toll from the start of the disturbances stood at thirty-three hundred, with fourteen hundred injured.⁷⁸ The political rhetoric and vendetta unleashed by the next outbreak of violence far outnumbered the original dead. The cycle of retribution had begun.

Lahore: Where Cloak and Dagger Aim for the Heart

Lahore—today almost a synonym for nostalgia and shared living—burst into flames in the summer of 1947. The battles for space this ancient city unleashed reflected rival claims, rival loves, rival loyalties, and rival belongings. Shared living and conflict in a tight embrace, a study of Lahore can throw some light on the fractures in the body politic of all of Punjab. But some questions will remain unanswerable, entangled as they are with conflicting memories.

In “Shyam: Krishna’s Flute,” an autobiographical story, Manto captures the complete breakdown in social equations that the moment of Partition embed. Close friends Shyam and Manto were listening to a family of Sikh refugees from Rawalpindi narrate stories of how people were being killed in the Punjab. Shyam confesses: “Not now . . . but when I was listening to the atrocities the Muslims had committed . . . I could have murdered you.” Manto writes: “Perhaps I could have also murdered him at the time. But later when I thought about it—and between then and now there is a world of difference—I suddenly understood the basis of those riots in which thousands of innocent Hindus and Muslims were killed everyday. Not now . . . but at that time, yes. If you ponder over these words, you will find an answer to the painful reality of Partition, an answer that lies in human nature itself.”⁷⁹ Shyam knew that Manto was not personally responsible for the killings happening elsewhere; such though was the madness of that time. There is a quality of pain that cannot be articulated, only endured in silence. Partition violence plumbed that realm of the unspeakable; it left even the most articulate speechless. *Panjab nu nazar lay gai* (“Punjab got the evil eye”) was all that the painter Krishen Khanna could say, several decades later, borrowing words from a painter across the border.⁸⁰

Once the decision to partition had been taken, the three communities began claiming large swathes of their homeland for their own people—now religiously defined. The League was content to rest its case to the British-appointed Boundary Commission on the basis of population majorities: Hindus and Sikhs could see their beautiful Lahore slipping from their fingers by such an assessment. They relied on the vague declaration of “other factors” to influence the decision of the Boundary Commission. To that end, certain Punjabi Hindu and Sikh members of the Constituent Assembly now appealed that the River Chenab form the boundary of the two provinces: this would leave East Punjab with half the province. This was deemed to be just because non-Muslims paid more than 50 percent of the total land revenue of the Punjab. Either of the colony districts of Lyallpur or Montgomery and an exchange of property and population also were demanded.⁸¹ At the level of high politics, leaders of East Punjab wanted to function out of the existing capital, Lahore, believing that any flexibility on this score would render the notional boundary absolute.⁸² This desire to cling to old markers of identity found its mirrored reflection in Jinnah’s desire to hold the first meeting of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in Delhi.

On the ground, Lahorias asserted their rights of residency by burning the homes of “others.” The crime report for May showed the arms assiduously recovered from various districts. Lahore produced the largest haul.⁸³ Fires were another means of clearing spaces of their occupants; some were started “almost under noses of police and it has been impossible to see or trace offenders.” Lahore, with its narrow lanes and inadequate water supply, burnt freely. During the worst period, there were twenty to thirty fires a day.⁸⁴ Under fire himself for not instituting martial law, the Governor Jenkins requested more troops. Lahore alone needed a complete brigade: it had three companies of troops and an overworked police force instead. His request was not acceded to: a brigade lay waiting in Delhi just in case disorders broke out after HMG’s Partition announcement.⁸⁵ For all the stories emanating from Lahore, Mountbatten was surprised “to see so much of Lahore standing” when he visited on July 20. The actual damages amounted to 5 percent of the walled city and 1 percent of the whole of Lahore.⁸⁶

Random bombs found mixed targets: Muslim passengers on June 10; a crowd examining a bomb [possibly a booby trap] that exploded in a bathroom drain at a private hospital outside Shahalmi Gate on June 15;

Muslim labourers walking along Brandreth Road on June 19; Hindu labourers on a truck on June 20; nine of unknown religion in Sabzi Mandi on June 21; Muslims buying fruit near Baghbanpura on July 20; an audience at a cinema the next day; and a crowd at Lahore and Moghalpura Railway Stations on July 22.⁸⁷

Jenkins insisted that these “cloak and dagger activities” could not be curbed by imposing martial law. He complained against politicians who demanded that the Security Committee be consulted before neighbourhoods were searched: this would obviate the purpose of searching these localities. He believed the violence was funded by political interests:

I do not mean that Jinnah, Nehru and Patel or even Mamdot and Sachar personally abet murder and/or arson. But somewhere connected with the Party organisations here there are people who control the campaign and are given the money to do so. Fire raisers actually caught include an Indian Christian (at Rs 15/-) and three Purbia Hindus (salary not stated) who had been engaged to burn Hindu property. Evidence is accumulating that on the Hindu side the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh are the organisers. This body has highly respectable gentlemen at its head; but it makes and uses bombs, and acquires and distributes arms and ammunition. It has close contacts with the Congress. At my instance, and after a lot of hawing [*sic*], Mamdot, Sachar and Swaran Singh have promised to cooperate in stopping the trouble. So far they have not gone beyond pious statements. What is needed is direct and private pressure on the party underworld and a stoppage of funds . . . moreover, in spite of their clamour for Martial Law and “stern measures,” the communities—particularly the Hindus—are resentful of any arrests and detentions under section 3 of the Punjab Public Safety Act, 1947, and the High Court have virtually demolished the section. Many *goondas* whom we had picked up have been released, and the destruction of the Mozang bazaar coincided with one of these jail deliveries.⁸⁸

Not only Jenkins, but even G. D. Khosla, one of the judges of the Lahore High Court and, subsequently, author of a fact-finding report commissioned by the Congress, argued against giving bail to those caught looting or committing arson. Khosla also emphasised the general climate of irresponsibility that was reinforced when perpetrators were only too aware that their crimes would go unchecked. He suggested:

It is not unlikely also that the present unfortunate communal situation has helped to engender a feeling that *the present is a favourable opportunity to settle old scores*. For this reason murders are probably committed now-a-days that would normally not have been committed. It is not difficult for a man, who has a grievance to settle, to so carry out the crime as to create the impression that the motive was communal and that the accused was probably a man of another community. I have little doubt that this actually has happened on occasions in this Range and possibly elsewhere in the Province also. In such cases the Police from the start are set on a false trail. For the Police the difficulties of detection have increased considerably in recent months and it well may happen that the percentage of murder convictions, which never was high, will drop still lower. Should this happen the murder situation is likely to worsen still further. It seems most important that the trial of murder cases should be speeded up, because, as things are going, it is not impossible that the murder situation may get completely out of control.⁸⁹

There was mounting evidence of the Sikh leaders' involvement in the violence. Although Baldev Singh had committed to accept the award of the Boundary Commission in June, his compatriots prepared for a violent showdown if the boundary dividing the Punjab did not suit them. Their desired Punjab ranged from a province that struck off the Hindu Jat portions in the east to one that struck off Muslim majority provinces in the west. In tears on multiple visits, Giani Kartar Singh appealed to the Governor to help the Sikhs. Mountbatten wrote identical letters to both Nehru and Jinnah, asking them to give Sikhs weightage in the legislatures at the new provincial legislatures and at the center, and asked both leaders to consider the transfer of population since the boundary would split the Sikhs in two.⁹⁰ The consequences of the break in the Sikh tight-rope were disastrous. Unsure of the ground beneath their feet, armed *jathas* took to plundering villages in Hoshiarpur and Amritsar.⁹¹ Master Tara Singh was implicated in a plan to blow up Pakistan special trains leaving East Punjab with government servants, and an attempt to assassinate Jinnah in Karachi on Pakistan's Independence Day. Jenkins's decision not to arrest him reveals the extent to which a smooth transfer of power overrode other considerations of security. The lack of will to take action against powerful political elites suggests that a shift in real power had occurred well before August 15.⁹²

The acclaimed stolidity of the police was now in doubt. Both the disarming of Muslim policemen in Amritsar and the sabotage of trains in early August 1947 mark a watershed in the magnitude of violence that quickly began to engulf the Punjab. An analysis of these two events reveals the importance of the interface between high politics and mass violence. Between 4 and 12 August, Jenkins revised his estimate of the reliability of the police. He now admitted that “every civil official is now acutely conscious of his community.”⁹³ He reported that the police in East Punjab were unsteady and Muslim policemen in Amritsar intended to leave for West Punjab on August 15. At this point, a superintendent of police designate, Mr. Kaul, decided to disarm the Muslim police in Amritsar. This left the police in Amritsar at only 30 percent strength and entirely Hindu and Sikh in composition.⁹⁴ In nearby Lahore, the MLNG began appearing in uniform. There was “serious indiscipline at the recruit training centre” and between three hundred and five hundred men could no longer be trusted with emergency duties. Jenkins asked for more troops and declared the railways unsafe “unless army can take over [on] ‘war department’ lines with full railway security.”⁹⁵ Was this not tantamount to asking for martial law without its attendant implications on the effectiveness of civil authority?

Lt. Col. Altaf Qadir of 3 Temple Road, Lahore, corroborated reports of the ineffectiveness of the police. He was helping his sister-in-law’s family escape from their home across the Badshahi mosque area because the largely Hindu-Sikh area was rumoured to be a target for arsonists. While he waited for them to load their possessions onto his vehicle, he saw parties of Muslims rushing into houses that had caught fire and mobs of men that were not dispersed by policemen who were also present. Qadir had to draw his pistol to ensure that a mob retreated into various allies. He reported:

On the ramparts of the Lahore Fort . . . were at least 20 policemen who seemed to be firing—*NOT* at the mob—but either into the air or at men inside houses. I advanced towards the crowd again, drew my pistol and ordered them to disperse . . . The mob having dispersed into side lanes I approached the foot of the Lahore Fort rampart where the police post was located and shouted to them to enquire as to why they were not taking any action about the hooligans. I do not know whether they fully understood what I was

trying to say but one of them shouted "Of course we are taking action and are firing in the effort to disperse the mob." . . .

I am quite convinced that the police were deliberately ignoring the whole affair from start to finish and had no intention whatsoever of taking any action towards stopping it. Their firing was, I am sure, intended only to keep up a semblance of normal action. Having been an eye witness of this incident between 1530 and 1615 I am also quite convinced that the police can NOT be relied upon to control any hooliganism on the part of the Muslims and if the intention is to ensure that such incidents do not occur there is no alternative but that they should be closely supervised by the army and NEVER trusted on their own.⁹⁶

This report also suggests that prior information about incidents of arson was generally known and the army, though scarce, had the potential to be useful on the ground. The staged quality of police firing shows that large numbers of locals in the neighbourhood were involved.

The sabotage of trains as a plan of action was known to British intelligence from the evidence implicating Master Tara Singh in a conspiracy to kill Jinnah. Train schedules were found with a saboteur. After four foiled attempts, the saboteur's efforts bore fruit on August 9. The first train to be partially blown up fifteen miles west of Bhatinda in East Punjab was a Pakistan special train carrying Pakistani government employees from Delhi to Karachi. A mine blew up eleven feet of track; the derailment was believed to be the work of former army men and possibly men still serving in the army.⁹⁷

On August 12 and 13 alone, 10 percent more of the walled city of Lahore had burnt down.⁹⁸ Gandhi, who sometimes had a penchant for the ludicrous, asked Hindus not to flee burning Lahore: "I am grieved to learn that people are running away from the west Punjab, and I am told that Lahore is being evacuated by the non-Muslims. I must say that this is what it should not be. If you think Lahore is dead or is dying, do not run away from it but die with what you think is the dying Lahore." Unwilling to die for a cause they could not comprehend, Hindus and Sikhs fled to refugee camps. By August 20, the population of non-Muslims had dropped from three hundred thousand to a mere ten thousand.⁹⁹

Farseeing suggestions of friendly relations between India and Pakistan arrived from Karachi. Tarachand, president of the Om Arya Pratinidhi

Sabha, suggested that “our conduct towards the minorities in Hindustan should be fair and generous, but not cringing and weak. We should be strong, but not provocative. Every action of Hindusthan [*sic*] friends will have a reaction on Pakistan Hindus.” He recommended special attention for the protection of Pakistani Hindus and their places of worship, including a charter of their rights and a strong border between Pakistan and Hindustan. To show off their numbers, Tarachand suggested a huge gathering of Hindus “on Raksha Bandhan day at Sukkur or Lahore where vows would be made to preserve Hindu culture and religion at all costs.” Far from reflecting the fears of a minority, Tarachand seemed to be speaking from a position of strength and an awareness that the people of Pakistan and Hindustan would still have to deal with each other after a political partition.¹⁰⁰

The Punjab Boundary Force and the Collapse of All Authority

The Punjab Boundary Force (PBF), comprising five brigades and an armoured regiment, emerged out of concerns about the fourteen (out of twenty-nine) districts that were under dispute between Punjabis across the proposed border.¹⁰¹ But the basic command structure facilitated the whittling away of real responsibility. The British commander, Major General Rees, was responsible to the Joint Defence Council, through the supreme commander, who would temporarily have operational control. Rees would be advised by one Muslim and one non-Muslim officer. There would be no changes in the law governing the use of troops in aid of civil power after August 15. Units of mixed class composition were employed because battalions composed of one class of soldiers had been accused of partiality. Ordinances would cover all the disputed districts; martial law was not imposed because of a shortage of officers.¹⁰² Scarcely a week after the PBF started duty, Jenkins complained that the five brigades had an average of fifteen hundred effective rifles. This meant that there were seventy-five hundred effective rifles to control twelve districts with a population of at least 12 million. He recommended more officers, tactical reconnaissance squadrons, the release of two hundred policemen lent to Delhi, and the earliest possible announcement of the boundary award.¹⁰³

The attitude that guided this last vestige of a crumbling order reflects the fool’s paradise that the British, departing in all their glory, chose to inhabit. The commander Rees’s first special order of the day made re-

peated references to the old Indian army, its “honour and reputation . . . of which we are so proud is at stake and in our hands.” The master copy of the PBF operating instructions includes dicta such as “hold the ring,” “use ingenuity and mobility,” “vary the bowling,” “cf. Marlborough’s days—disperse to forage, concentrate to fight battles,” suggesting a curious mix of old-war strategies coupled with a limited awareness of the predicament in the Punjab. Rees’s instructions to “disperse to give an impression of strength and ubiquity, working from company and platoon patrol bases” suggested carelessness.¹⁰⁴ Years of experience should have taught him better than to expect forces at half strength to effectively meet well-armed and trained jathas and gangs. The suggestion to hold tea parties and liaise with civil authorities jarred with instructions to stay aloof—to know the territory and not the inhabitants. How else was crucial intelligence on the movement of gangs to be obtained? Above all, there was a clear absence of instructions on the possibility that one’s own men might no longer be trustworthy or that the blurred division of responsibility between civilians in authority and the military in command might offer conflicting ideas on how to run this civil war.

Quite early in its brief span of four weeks, the chief of the PBF discovered that “we have missed some opportunities . . . gangs moving about with obvious evil intent . . . have not been sufficiently punished.” Junior officers were now encouraged to “handle local assemblies roughly . . . open fire without further ado.”¹⁰⁵ Privately, Rees admitted being “bombarDED for demands to take over control; to show ruthlessness and string some malefactors up on lamp posts, or put some up against the wall and shoot them; to place troops at every street corner, as though I had a million men—from Hindus, Muhammadans and Sikhs—all make such proposals.”¹⁰⁶

From Amritsar, the commander reported that attacks from gangs were continuous and troops generally arrived late. Visibility was poor due to crops, trees, and orchards, and villages had been attacked within two or three miles of troops and “no one knowing anything about it.” Police intelligence was “negligible” and dispersion of troops meant “sacrifice of control and coordination; difficulties as regards communications; the possibility of subversive influences; and waste of men on extra Guards.” The report concluded with a request for more troops and aircraft support.¹⁰⁷ Rees deflected responsibility onto the Sikhs. They had “planned and organised for this war . . . it is a revenge for the Rawalpindi massacre and the Sikhs [are] shouting *Rawalpindi!* as they strike

their blows.” As for the purposefulness of the army, he gave an example that was typical of the violence of this time:

A number of Muslim refugees on foot was moving westwards not very far from Amritsar. The number of troops that could be afforded to escort them was small though well armed. Sikh *jathas* (organised armed bands) lay in wait for them in high crops and at a suitable place attacked, stampeded the terrified refugees and got in among them in the first rush. The escort fought back hard and eventually drove off the Sikhs. But, among a crowd of refugees of many thousands, as you can imagine, the *jathas* played havoc and before they could be driven off had inflicted about 400 killed and a 150 wounded, men, women and children of the wretched Muslims. The troops fought well and are known to have killed at least 62 of the Sikh *jatha* on this occasion and observed 15 killed or seriously wounded with Sikhs being carried away out of range. The whole affair lasted only about 10 minutes.¹⁰⁸

While internal evidence suggests that responsibility for the continued violence lay in both official and non-official quarters, the situation reports culled from official reports and Rees’s own log are an invaluable record of how the violence was intricately entwined with official attitudes towards it. References to heightening tension, stabbings, and bombs grew exponentially as August unfolded, but the first detailed account was dated August 10, when the Muslim police of Amritsar were disarmed. Four raids a day was considered average, as were casualties of 10–15 of both Muslims and non-Muslims. In the next three days, casualties averaged 100 per day. Three days later, a total of 513 were reported dead: 178 non-Muslims and 335 Muslims. Railway and canal personnel stopped reporting to work. At the Lahore airfield the next day, Auchinleck, Rees, and Jenkins discussed the possibility of imposing martial law. Rees asked for two hundred officers to work martial law in twelve districts. Large-scale evacuation of Muslims had begun from Amritsar District.

August 15 heralded a new kind of freedom in the Punjab. In Lahore, a gurdwara was burnt with at least 13 Sikhs inside while Muslim police and troops did nothing. In Amritsar city, a Sikh crowd paraded naked Muslim women, some of whom were raped and then burnt. Rees who was *en route* to interview Master Tara Singh, arrived on the scene just after the episode: “At interview, Sikh leaders promise to call off violence—in Amritsar City

immediately by beat of drum: in rural areas, longer time required. Sikh leaders request military escorts to be mixed and maximum Non Muslim troops in Amritsar.”¹⁰⁹

The trickle of refugees had turned into a flood. Almost all the police officers were non-Muslim and new to Amritsar. Fires had increased by 100 percent, but only four fire engines were working. “Police panicky, fire wildly at night.” There were train derailments in East Punjab followed by more train derailments in West Punjab. Master Tara Singh’s call for “reciprocal cooperation” was cautiously welcomed by Daultana.¹¹⁰

At a high-power conference in Ambala the next day, Nehru asked whether fifty or one hundred lorries could not transfer the existing refugees. Rees pointed out that lorries were already in use, but under the circumstances, only one round trip was possible each day. Nehru then asked how long it would take to evacuate refugees, “Two or three days?” to which Rees replied, “no—week to ten days.”¹¹¹ Extra trains were negotiated between the governments of East and West Punjab. Arthur Smith, deputy commander-in-chief, asserted that responsibility for law and order lay with the governments concerned until martial law was proclaimed, which he hoped would not be required. Curiously, the gradual shrinking of areas manned by the PBF was discussed alongside the possibility of further trouble accompanying the announcement of the Boundary Award that night.

Further evidence that the leadership was losing its grip on an enraged people came at a meeting in Amritsar the next day. Master Tara Singh complained of the disproportionate casualties when Sikh jathas came in conflict with the army. Nehru pointed out the folly of Sikhs fighting organised government forces.

Bhargava Tell our people in opposite side to obey that Government.

Nehru How do we get our orders etc. out?

Discussion The difficulties were discussed. Lahore give East Punjab some radio time.

Nehru to broadcast tomorrow evening from Delhi 2010.

Detained Lahore police to be returned.

Nehru to Master Tara Singh Necessity of law and order, and setting up new governments, leaders to help . . .

Tara Singh I am doing all we can . . .

Discussion All in on it etc.

All must put our house in order.¹¹²

How is the historian to read this consensus that “all [were] in on it”? Who were *our people* on the *opposite* side—Hindus? These high-level conferences at Ambala and Amritsar offer us our first indication of how and when leaders approached the refugee problem. There was no preparation for the exodus, despite mounting fears and rumours that minority populations would have to be transferred. There remained a dangerous naïveté that announcement by drumbeat and radio were all it would take to quell the anger at being made to feel alien in one’s own land.

While violence had been anticipated as early as 1945, the uninterrupted flow of refugees had not been imagined. At a cabinet meeting, Mountbatten, who at one time had all the answers, now asked the others: “Can you persuade people to stay—or will you say, we will receive you?” Daultana remarked on the lack of effect that Tara Singh’s message had had on the violence on the ground. It was Sikh policy to force Muslims out, he alleged, in order to embarrass West Pakistan, which could neither refuse refugees nor make good arrangements for them.¹¹³ Brig Stuart complained of the heavy demands being made on the military and concluded simply: “At present situation is Martial law without staff.”¹¹⁴ At the Circuit House in Jullundur, those at the helm of affairs could not agree on how to maintain or transport refugees. As late as August 29, both Jinnah and Nehru reaffirmed that they were against the transfer of populations.¹¹⁵ But the cycle of violence now failed to heed the declarations of leaders who had lost their credibility. Those who could assist their neighbours to flee the violence did so without help from the government. In the village of Setalmari in Multan District, for instance, Muslim villagers escorted their Hindu neighbours to protection in the city. Complaints that Muslim refugees from Amritsar had occupied some vacant houses belonging to Hindus in Mohalla Laheti Sarai led to the local Muslim Leaguers taking action against these refugees.¹¹⁶

Lending further complexity to the social basis of violence, there also were requests for protection from those still believed to be in command. So, for instance, Muslim refugees from the princely state of Kapurthala arrived in Lahore having suffered enormous violence, a fact attested by independent reports from the chief minister of Kapurthala. Yet from the safety of the Muslim-majority city of Lahore, on September 3, 1947, these refugees posted a telegram to the maharaja of Kapurthala, who was holidaying in Kashmir, to restore peace so that they could *return*. What kind of attachment was this? What words can describe the sheer multiplicity of loyalties that simultaneously divided and united the Punjab?

How does the historian comprehend this attachment to a homeland even at the moment of the birth of a homeland for the Muslims of violence-wracked Punjab, if not all India?

Although the fate of the PBF had been discussed in meetings at least since August 17, the suddenness of its dissolution at the end of the month only can be explained by the lack of confidence it enjoyed among most Punjabis. This heartfelt condemnation captures the anguish of those who could not understand the point of its existence:

It is difficult to write analytically and with a rational perspective when half the time one is trying to hold back one's anger and the other half trying to hold back one's tears. We cannot help the conclusion, however, that one of the factors which contributed to this tragedy was the disgraceful and abject failure of the PBF to do its duty. Judging from its performance it was badly commandeered, badly officered and badly advised. During the last three weeks it has been outmanoeuvred, out-intelligenced and outdone, not by a regular field force but by bands of blood-thirsty marauders. The few contacts that the Force ever made with murderous bands appear to have been utterly inconclusive and in no area have they succeeded in pressing an advantage home. The normal operational method of the Force appears to have taken the form of arriving at the scene of engagement long after the enemy had done his work and left and then to fritter away their manpower by settling down to guard the ruins.¹¹⁷

It became the responsibility of the military evacuation organisations of both India and Pakistan to clear the mixed ruins of a once-united Punjab.

Conclusion: Law, Order, and the Problem of Responsibility, 1945–1947

Violence as powerful as that which engulfed Punjab in 1947 left long scars over subsequent generations; it was also the first memory for a generation of children in both India and Pakistan. Yet for all the blood that was spilt, there are no stark and opposing lines that the historian can draw between victim and perpetrator. Much more than the Holocaust, Partition violence split families and communities unevenly and a study of Partition violence raises a very different set of questions for those involved in the incredibly rushed transfer of power.

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the print version of this title.]

Telegram from Muslim refugees in Lahore to the Maharaja of Kapurthala,
3 September 1947, G. D. Khosla Papers, NMML.

From Gulmarg, Lahore, dated 3 Sep 47

To H.H. Maharaja Kapurthala

many phagwara muslim villages burnt looted quaran [*sic*] desecrated phagwara city. muslims being murdered Houses burnt aaa Muslims murdered shops looted houses burnt in Kapurthala aaa state in siege.

lorry full of muslim refugees with muslim constables entirely sacked your highness beloved personality and august presence here solicited by all state muslims to restore peace council and police working.

untiringly but your Highness presence absolutely indispensable [*sic*].

Mohd Tufail and Refugees c/o Muinddin Khan
telegraph master Lahore

Primary sources corresponding to the years 1945–1947 reveal an increasing comfort with extra-constitutional means to attain *swaraj*, preferably absolute and undivided. A powerful thread that runs through the second half of the *Transfer of Power* volumes is a tussle for controlling power between New Delhi and London. Wavell, the viceroy through much of the tortured negotiations that preceded the formal transfer of power, witnessed a steady picking away of his authority. He warned against trying to “administer India from Whitehall or from New Delhi” and asked that provincial governments be entrusted with responsibility for maintaining law and order.¹¹⁸ In Bombay, after a British battalion enforced curfew and put down a riot that claimed 39 dead and 177 injured, the governor suggested that a British battalion was “desirable,” the use of which was also stressed by a number of papers after the riots. He also suggested that curfew be applied at once; that “all the known bad characters” in the area be arrested at the first sign of rioting because “whether interested in communal strife or not, they are certain to make hay while the sun shines”; and that there be adequate powers of detention.¹¹⁹

There were early warnings conveyed through fortnightly intelligence reports about the shortage of experienced police officers and magistrates, the effects of wartime demobilization and unemployment contributing to an increase in crime, the need for the police force to be brought up to a reasonable strength, and for more experienced magistrates.¹²⁰ Failing a rigorous announcement from London, Wavell felt the civil officials tucked in distant towns would assume that their higher officers who were not taking action against violent speech were turning pro-Congress.¹²¹ Regarding

the violence that erupted in the aftermath of the failed Cabinet Mission Plan negotiations, it is important to reiterate that senior British officials in India were keenly aware of the possibilities of violence failing agreement and the decreasing powers they had over their almost-free subjects. That they chose to be silent spectators without insisting on a political settlement speaks volumes for HMG's priorities at this crucial juncture in the history of the subcontinent. A deputy commissioner who served in Amritsar, George Brander, emphasised the responsibility of the British: "The colossal massacres which took place were largely due to the undue haste of our withdrawal. No doubt the British Government was anxious to hustle the Indian politicians and bring them to a sense of reality, but they were given quite insufficient time to make any proper arrangements for law and order. The haste bred panic and led to such huge loss of life as the world had seldom before seen. It is fortunate for the political reputations of the persons concerned that so little publicity was given to these events and they have been largely forgotten in later troubles."¹²²

In the Punjab, Jenkins had noted the effects of Attlee's declaration of February 20. The statement unleashed a race for power because HMG had decided to transfer power by June 30, 1948, to whichever state(s) held office. When Partition became definite in June 1947, the division of the old Indian army became a concrete reality. Auchinleck warned that units spread out all over Northern India on internal security duties would have to be recalled to undergo reconstitution. He also was uncertain if the army would remain a "reliable instrument" to aid the civilian administration should there be "widespread disturbances."¹²³ Frank Messervy of the Northern Command was uncertain of the loyalties of the police: "The Lahore police have been very hard pressed, are very tired and are considered, without their officers, to be not entirely reliable."¹²⁴

The Home Department sought to get its own machinery organised in the event of widespread disturbances. A "middle path" between repression and restraint was to be followed: controversial articles in the press would be prosecuted against, lists of troublemakers had to be made and exchanged between provinces, jail accommodation had to be reviewed, measures needed to be taken for maintaining the police at full strength, internal security plans needed to be revised in alliance with military authorities, and measures had to be drafted to enable speedy trials.¹²⁵ The record of accomplishment in each of these cases is that of absolute failure.

In the case of the press, discordant voices in the provinces and the centre, and between the Congress and the British revealed a complete lack of focus. The Punjab responded badly to the appointment of a committee to examine press laws, stating that it was “hardly the time to review the Press Laws.”¹²⁶ Under the shadow of violence in Calcutta, Noakhali, and Bihar, the All India Newspapers Editors Conference formulated a convention for the publication of riot news. This weak list of “shoulds” was further diluted after the Partition announcement.¹²⁷ During the eight months when the convention was followed and a Press Advisory Committee was instituted to advise the press on objectionable articles, the air was thick with tension between newspaper editors in Bombay and Delhi, between those who worked with English and vernacular papers, between editors of Muslim and non-Muslim papers, and between the Congress and the British.¹²⁸ In the bruising of egos that ensued, it was easy to lose sight of the main point: controlling the animosity generated by the press.

The government took a peculiarly cavalier attitude towards volunteer organisations like the RSS. In mid-June 1946, a report from the Intelligence Bureau detailed its “long term policy of steady preparation for the attainment of its ultimate goal of Hindu supremacy.” Ostensibly an open organisation, the report acknowledged that the RSS kept its affairs secret. Volunteers were trained to wield lathis, spears, swords, and daggers, and had shooting practice with air guns. A Punjab intelligence report detailed that RSS leaders were planning to shift their Punjab headquarters to the nearby princely state of Jammu so they could operate with more freedom. Within the Punjab itself, activities were reportedly carried on “under cover of *kirtans*” and included the participation of government servants. In conclusion, the deputy director of the Intelligence Bureau noted that RSS activities did not justify its banning. The Home Member Patel also did not wish that summaries submitted to the cabinet divulge details on the communal situation or volunteer organisations.¹²⁹

I have discussed the repercussions of disarming Muslim policemen in the Punjab on August 10. In Delhi, the entire police force was divested of its Muslim officer component methodically. That this process was completed by the time the violence of September overcame Delhi lends credence to my argument linking a breakdown in order with the attitudes and composition of the police and armed forces.¹³⁰ The subject of the partiality of the police touched many spheres of British administration;

newspapers that insinuated their partiality could be prosecuted under Section 4 of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931.¹³¹ But police officials are indicted in every historical source: in Altaf Qadir's indictment of the Lahore police and Messervy's private fears; in private letters from the chief minister of Kapurthala to the maharaja holidaying in Srinagar in August 1947; in FIRs on the Rawalpindi massacres; and in Nehru's complaint to Rees about "organised Sikh jathas functioning . . . with the connivance of the police, the petty local authorities and sometimes even some soldiers . . . [and] Muslim [League] National Guards."¹³² Why was it so hard to rein in the police? The alternative to a steadily unreliable police force was martial law. Jenkins was an ardent advocate of managing without martial law:

"Cloak and dagger" activities are extremely difficult to control, and the best method of controlling them is patient investigation combined with improved intelligence. There is no short-cut by Civil or by military procedure; for neither a Civil Governor nor a General administering Martial Law can properly shoot innocent people merely because they happen to be, or to live, near the scene of an outrage . . . *The only immediate benefit from Martial law would be the quicker trial and punishment of offenders.* Our performance in this matter has been most unsatisfactory—owing to the enormous number of cases, the lack of trained staff, and the general feeling that all cases will be dropped on 15th August, investigations and trials have been slow, and there have been practically no death sentences.¹³³

Was that immediate benefit not reason enough to impose martial law? The very real shortage of officers willing to try cases arising from instituting martial law seemed a key issue. By the middle of August, Jenkins was asking for more troops, Stuart in Amritsar was complaining of a martial law situation without adequate staff, and Rees asked for two hundred officers if martial law was to be imposed in all twelve disputed districts. It is pertinent to remember that some British officers were aware of the problems that would arise out of British games at "holding the ring." I. D. Scott wrote against Auchinleck's proposed Joint Defence Council and said pointedly: "There should be no British responsibility in this matter."¹³⁴ General Arthur Smith noted that "in no circumstances" could "British officers on the borders of Pakistan be employed with troops operating against those under British officers in Hindustan."¹³⁵

While habitual lawbreakers were not being kept behind bars, enquiry committees instituted to try cases arising out of disturbances in Calcutta, Bihar, and later Delhi were systematically wound down. In Calcutta, the witnesses were too afraid to give evidence and the Partition resolution determined the final adjournment of the commission.¹³⁶ Mountbatten told Jinnah that an enquiry in Bihar would not be in the interests of the local Muslim minority. In Delhi, the absence of fleeing Muslims and the presence of Hindu and Sikh outsiders provided an excuse not to pursue an enquiry into “the happenings in police stations Karol Bagh, Sabzi-*mandi* and Paharganj during August–September 1947.”¹³⁷ So it is hardly surprising that the bulk of Partition violence occurred after the haphazard decision to evacuate minorities was conclusively taken. Minorities who had chosen to stay were now assisted in their forced migration by the army, *goondas* let out on bail, and a steady and growing stream of displaced refugees from the other side. A distilled narrative of these complex circumstances is proffered in Satish Gujral’s autobiography.¹³⁸

The report of the Military Evacuation Organisation (India) affords us a view of what followed—one of the largest migrations in modern times. The selection of “guides” to enable the army to evacuate pockets of refugees was itself a corrupt process; there was sparse protection to foot columns; the motor transportation afforded to individuals to help evacuate others was misused; civilian drivers refused to drive their trucks, which they complained needed repairs; Master Tara Singh refused to guarantee the safety of columns of Muslim refugees passing through Amritsar City; and rumours of conditions in East Punjab furthered the forcible conversions and murders of refugees in the West.¹³⁹ Although a long convoy of Muslims to Amritsar was attacked at three points, at another point some non-Muslims provided limes, gram, and water to the refugees. The military officers invoked martial law and recommended that in the future, the army acquire complete control over communications. Finally, this most official of sources admitted: “It is not entirely correct [that] all Muslims in the East Punjab and the Punjab States excluding Bahawalpur wish to enter Pakistan and that all Hindus and Sikhs in the NWFP and the West Punjab wish to leave.”¹⁴⁰

This “first catastrophe of the historical consciousness in modern South Asia” has, according to David Gilmartin, “resisted effective integration with the political integration of partition’s causes.”¹⁴¹ Here, I draw out the connections between those causes and the specificity of different

kinds of Partition violence to suggest that the players in this battle were very complex. There were those who tried to create the space for a political settlement even as compromise seemed difficult; members of the army and the police who resisted playing roles they had been assigned by political leaders; political leaders who could not imagine the finality of Partition and the magnitude of violence that broke the Punjab; and leadership of another order that emphasised there should be no “British responsibility” in the matter. Not religion, not the forging of a “moral community to a place that was being reconstituted as a nation-state,”¹⁴² not even the resolution of personal vendettas—it is the unprecedented and unplanned crumbling of an old order on a vast scale and the absolute abdication of responsibility for minorities on both sides of the border that explains the magnitude of Partition violence. It is equally necessary to recognize the numerous instances of succour provided by members of the “other” religious community. These instances hint at the preservation of a very different kind of moral community.

A strand of historical writing that may be termed “trans-national” has included Partition violence in a laundry list of genocidal conflict.¹⁴³ This chapter shows that Partition evades such monolithic frames because the degree of violence was shaped by the particular circumstances, temporal and spatial, of every episode of displacement and slaughter. Some episodes were genocidal, if one understands genocide to mean “the very legitimacy of a presence as alien.”¹⁴⁴ However, references to the police and army turning away from a scene of slaughter were countered by eyewitnesses and survivors commending these services for protecting them. I believe the deep desire to return to what became *Pakistan* or to stay on cannot be squared with the blanket definition that the word “genocide” imposes on all such violence.

MEMORY AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING
 IN POST-PARTITION DELHI

My journey to grapple with Partition began when my grandfather remarked that despite the fact of Partition, he would gladly have continued to work in Lahore. I sat there stunned, not sure if he was serious. Why, he asked, don't people work in Dubai? And wasn't Lahore far closer than Dubai? In post-Partition India, Lahore felt a million miles further than Dubai. His vivid memory of the desire to stay on in Lahore, despite the high politicking that had resulted in Partition and despite the long years since Partition, formed an unanalysed silence. This chapter uses oral history to think through many such silences.

I conducted about fifty semi-structured interviews in Delhi between November 2002 and August 2003. On tape, former refugees described life in pre-Partition Punjab, their childhood, schooling, friendships, experience of colonial rule, and the violence they experienced in 1947, frequently beginning with the last—the most difficult of memories. I used materials from the archives and my own socialisation in Partition stories to field questions, withdrawing when the refugees seemed to prefer silence. In the early interviews, I shared my historians' insights or my family's stories from 1947; I quickly stopped doing so because this seemed to affect the content of what the interviewees wished to say. Very occasionally, I was asked to switch off my tape recorder; the dominant attitude, however, was that their histories be recorded before they were forgotten or lost.¹ I did not search for foundational myths or stories that describe culture or conflict as a "hydra-headed phenomenon."² I listened carefully, for what goes unspoken is sometimes as important as what is said. I used the snowball technique to meet interviewees—one led me to another—while trying to include perspectives from rural and urban West Punjab and from different socio-economic strata. In the extracts that follow, I have preserved the original flavour and flow of the interviews, including my sometimes leading interjections.

In hindsight, it is perhaps natural that most people's recollections of the Partition and their decision to migrate were tailored to fit the narratives of their lives ever since; and yet, so much seemed to overflow—huge gaps that could not be sewn shut, loose ends that had nowhere to go. I focus on some of these gaps, for the light they reflect is crucial to understanding how the memory and experience of Partition has folded into ongoing relationships.³ These gaps or fragments have been studied recently. According to Gyanendra Pandey, “the importance of the fragmentary point of view lies in this: that it resists the drive for a shallow homogenization and struggles for other, potentially richer definitions of the nation and the future political community.” But at the same time, he adds: “The mark of the fragment is that it resists the whole (the narrative). It cannot be assimilated into the narrative and its claims to wholeness.”⁴ For Veena Das, too, “unlike a sketch that may be executed on a different scale from the final picture one draws, or that may lack all the details of the picture but still contain the imagination of the whole, the *fragment* marks the impossibility of such an imagination. Instead fragments allude to a particular way of inhabiting the world, say, in a gesture of mourning.”⁵ However, unlike the use of fragments in Das and Pandey, these fragments from my interviews do reflect upon how these Punjabi Hindus understood and came to terms with their whole, their new world. The narrative, never uncontested to begin with, is flexible enough to accommodate rival imaginings. Its openness is its strength and, equally, a source of weakness.⁶

Not one of my interviewees believed they would have to leave when troubles broke out, or leave *forever*—whether they came from Abbottabad, Lahore, Jhelum, or Rawalpindi. This “moment of reckoning,” the decision to leave their homeland for a new political configuration or nation, lasted a few hours for some, several months for others. But the memory of the contingent quality of that decision to leave stayed. When I arrived in Delhi with my tape recorder, this fact was remarked upon and reiterated. In the case of Mr. I. K. Gujral, however, this memory had to be drawn out slowly, almost painfully.

“Never Did We Think We Would Come”: A Contingent Decision

Mr. I. K. Gujral, former prime minister of India and an active member of the Indo-Pakistan People's Forum for Friendship and Democracy, was present along with his communist friend and poet, Faiz Ahmad

Faiz, at Minto Park in Lahore, March 1940. They listened together to Jinnah's Lahore Resolution, a declaration allegedly for a sovereign *Pakistan*, and a familiar turning point in nationalist master narratives of Partition. However, contemporaries acknowledged that a demand for *Pakistan* did not necessarily imply a demand for Partition.⁷ I reproduce excerpts from the interview for Mr. Gujral's alleged response to the Lahore Resolution:

Gujral At that time, the Communist Party had taken a stand and we had become supportive of . . . not Pakistan, not in that word because they coined another word, that is, the right of self-determination of Muslim minorities . . . very stupid but very . . . therefore . . . for all the time . . . this I didn't agree with but you know the Communist Party has one habit. It conditions your thinking and that is that. Then, like all dogmatic parties, therefore if you are in it, in a dogmatic party, then you are . . . for instance my distancing came in the 1942 movement . . . My mother, my father, all of us went to jail . . . [I was released in] 1943. [In] 1945 I was settled at Karachi. There was a great deal of debate going on. I wasn't a participant in that debate, but one thing was becoming very clear—there was a sharp thinking in Lahore but I wouldn't say I formed an opinion on it. I was not so much involved in this opinion making . . . opportunity.

Nair At what point did you realize personally that it would mean uprooting of you typically from one place to another, from west to east?

Gujral Never. *Never did we think we would come.* That was the reason why my father was in the [Pakistan] Constituent Assembly.⁸

Mr. Gujral cannot draw a neat line between the Lahore Resolution of 1940 and the migration of 1947. He remembered too well the Cabinet Mission negotiations and his father's decision to join the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. As president of his college union and later president of the Lahore Students Union, he probably had a better understanding of the Lahore Resolution than he is now willing to divulge. He told me the resolution was not a call for a separate Pakistan, but related to the right of self-determination for Muslim minorities; he said that Mr. Jinnah was willing to negotiate on the basis of the Cabinet Mission Plan. I then

showed Mr. Gujral this press note that referred to his father's activities in October that year.

Mr. Inder Sain Lamba, secretary, Punjab Hindu Student Federation, stated:

Recently a statement has been issued by L. Avtar Narain Gujral, Advocate of Jhelum that about 20,000 Hindus and Sikhs of Jhelum, Chakwal, Pind [D]adan Khan and adjacent villages have decided to stay in Pakistan. How this statement is baseless may be judged from the deeds of the local Muslims of Jhelum. Nearly 700 Hindus and Sikhs were killed on 25.9.47 with the active help of Military and Police. L. Avtar Narain praises the authorities in the same evening when the helpless refugees were attacked. We wonder how a man like L. Avtar Narain who has removed his all relative and capital to the Indian Union, can give such a baseless statement. We press upon the Government of India not to neglect the refugees of Jhelum district who require immediate evacuation otherwise there may be greater loss of life and property as particularly when there is no refugee camp at Jhelum proper. It is the first duty of Indian Government to remove the refugees from Jhelum district and other Pakistani areas and not to rely on the baseless statements of some renegades [*sic*].⁹

After a long silence, Mr. Gujral declared he had never before heard of Mr. Inder Sain Lamba. He then pointed out to me that it was patently untrue that his family had moved out of Pakistan. He was then in Karachi and his brother, Satish Gujral, was in Jhelum helping with the evacuation process.

Nair What made it difficult for people like your father or Mr. Sachar to stay on in Pakistan? Was it these hordes of tribesmen, *kabailis*, who were coming?¹⁰

Gujral The tribesmen's camp was outside our house and they were crossing the river from there to go to Mirpur and that was the time he had decided to come away at about the same time. That was the last time when my father . . . he had already reached there. . . .

Nair Now for the future of India and Pakistan it would have made sense for minorities to remain on both sides but the violence made it impossible . . . ?

Gujral Yes, also the beginning perception was that the country is divided and people stay where they are, but the horrendous part of the violence and the Nehru-Liaquat Pact was signed because it was not possible.

Nair Now in your opinion, at that time, who was responsible for the violence? Did you think that the police was hand in glove with the Muslim National Guard or did you think that these were people who were your own neighbours who were falling upon each other . . . upon Hindu houses?

Gujral Both . . . on this side and that side . . . you see . . . army was being divided, administration had not been set up, governments were not formed, therefore to expect that law and order should have been enforced . . .

Nair Did Mr. Jinnah personally want Pakistan, did you think? Or did he want more share in power in an undivided India?

Gujral Much has been said, that I don't know personally . . . but he had agreed to the Cabinet Mission, which means he didn't want . . . but at the same time when I look at the papers now, I think he must be . . . but his speech at the Lahore session made it very clear what he wanted.

We are told that Lala Avtar Narain Gujral was willing to stay and work with the Pakistan Constituent Assembly until the movement of tribals that had to cross Jhelum en route to Kashmir forced him to abandon his plans. Did the arrival of the tribesmen only precipitate his decision to leave Pakistan or did it change the course of his plans? We will never know, but his son Satish Gujral's eyewitness account of that decision hints at the unformed nature of their plans. Satish Gujral's account of a meeting at the DAV College refugee camp in Lahore on August 17, 1947, when Jawaharlal Nehru was shouted down by thousands of enraged refugees, resonated with other accounts of meetings in Ambala, Lahore, and Jullundur that led to the Nehru-Liaquat evacuation pact.¹¹ The evacuation of minorities was not an inevitable fact that flowed seamlessly out of the drawing of the Radcliffe boundary line. Leaders in Delhi had not anticipated the heavy toll of refugees and violence that would stem from their decision to divide a homeland. So, it is of some significance that when most Congress functionaries in Punjab were packing their bags to move eastward, Lala Avtar Narain Gujral paused. He seriously considered the possibility of a safe and secure environment

that had been promised by Raja Ghazanfar Ali, a League politician from Jhelum, and a good friend.¹² This is all the more meaningful when we hear from Mr. I. K. Gujral that refugees from the Rawalpindi riots of March 1947 believed these were planned by interests that desired Partition and did not want “small minorities . . . therefore the slogans were *Pakistan leke rahenge* (we will take Pakistan) that time.” Whether in history or memory, the Gujral family’s desire to stay on, even after these orchestrated riots, suggests a loyalty and attachment that coheres to the time of Partition. Although Mr. Gujral did not linger on this moment of reckoning, he could not erase it from his narrative. That was the truth of their migration; perhaps its corroboration in formal archives lends it added meaning.

Mr. Gujral’s account and several others I collected suggest that the violence of Partition did not make it inconceivable for minorities to stay on. People also continued to believe they would return after this sudden spate of violence ended. The story of Mr. Chamanlal Mehra, a shop owner from Lahore, hinged on this belief.

“I Am a Pukka Muslim, You Are a Pukka Hindu”:
An Ordinary Friendship in Extraordinary Times

I was taken to meet Mr. Chamanlal Mehra by Deepak and Rakesh Mahandru, co-proprietors of *Lahorian di hatti*, a shawl shop in Nai Sarak, district Chandni Chowk. I was drawn to their shawl shop by its name, which means “a shop from Lahore,” but discovered that the proprietors were born long after Partition. Mr. Mehra had known their father, Sohanlal Sherbetwala, and drunk his famous sherbet in Lahore’s renowned Anarkali Bazaar. In the Shahalmi Gate of Lahore, a predominantly Hindu area, Mr. Mehra’s father also had owned two shops and a big building that was rented out to fifty-two people. Twenty-eight years old in 1947, Mr. Mehra was now regarded as a knowledgeable elder in the locality by others who listened respectfully to his Partition stories. When I asked him about Partition, Mr. Mehra told me the story of a friendship that saved his life. He spoke feelingly in Urdu, and more than once his voice grew heavy with emotion: “Partition happened on 15th August, no? Before that, the commotion began on 3rd August. He came to me . . . said I am a *pukka* Muslim, you are a *pukka* Hindu, that exchange of turbans [*pagdi*] has created a difficulty for me, because that makes us brothers . . . because of the exchange of turbans, so tomorrow, you take *my*

mothers, sisters and remove them from Lahore. There will soon be *calamities* about which I cannot say more.¹³

In his narration, Mr. Mehra spoke in the voice of his Muslim friend and emphasised “you take *my* mothers, sisters and remove them from Lahore” . . . therefore the exchange of turbans signifying brotherhood had become more than symbolic in these calamitous times. The use of “*my*” with reference to Mr. Mehra’s family made it seem as though his Muslim friend was asking him to protect *his* mothers and sisters from what was to come. Mr. Mehra replied that he is talking like that only; nothing will happen, he will not leave. *Raj palat jayega, ham yahin rahenge* (there will be a change of government, [but] we will stay here)—this sentence was repeated several times during the interview. This conversation was framed in a larger context of people in Lahore who asked them (the Hindus) not to leave: the story of this friend provided the detail.

Eight days after his friend’s warning, on August 11, Shahalmi Gate was set on fire.¹⁴ Mr. Mehra was among the young men of the neighbourhood who were keeping patrol and tried to put out the fire, but the water tank of the fire brigade had been filled with petrol instead of water: three hundred houses were burnt. Mr. Mehra said *this* was the warning his Muslim friend had wished to give him, but he had not told him the whole scheme. The morning after the fire, his Muslim friend returned and begged Mr. Mehra to leave; even now there was time. On August 13, Mr. Mehra’s father suggested they leave Lahore for about ten days until the troubles ended. They stayed with relatives in Dalhousie. Two weeks later, on their way back—*vaapas jaana to hai hi* (we *had to* return)—a friend in Amritsar told them that nothing had remained of Shahalmi Gate. Seven thousand more buildings were set on fire after they had left.

As a shop owner, Mr. Mehra’s focus was not on details of the violence he heard or saw, but on the shops that were burnt. He then traced his family’s journey to Delhi, the shop allotted to them by the government in lieu of property lost in Lahore, and the steady recovery in economic fortunes since. His wholesale trade in cloth had moved from Connaught Place to Janpath to Karol Bagh to its present location in Chandni Chowk. He supplied embroidered suit material to shops all around the country. As we filled out my questionnaire towards the end of the interview, he floundered at the question asking for his mother’s name—he could not remember! It is a funny moment: then he recalled, “Lal Deyi.”

When I asked Mr. Mehra if he was bitter, he replied that he returned to Lahore in 1962. I was surprised. Why? How? He said that he went “*ghumne ke liye, koi khatra nahin tha*” (to wander/visit, there was no danger)! Shahalmi Gate was no more and the shops had been replaced by a big crockery market. He recalled how the rickshaw and tonga drivers refused to take money from him; neither did the owner of a drugstore: “I mean, there was nothing sad between us when I went in 1962, I felt I had returned to my own city. Why did we leave this city? I was saying again—why did we ever leave? They gave us so much love—again in [19]65 there was confusion. In [19]62, there was nothing.”¹⁵

There was, indeed, no bitterness in Mr. Mehra’s voice. In questioning that moment of departure, on his visit to Lahore and forty years later to me, Mr. Mehra recaptured the agony of leaving. He re-inhabited the Lahore of his dreams and his voice grew sad. He recounted his visit to the street from where he picked up his bride—*apne sasuraal ke gali gaya*. As he stood in contemplation, a young man asked him what he was doing. When he told him: “*Yaar kabhi ham sehra baandh ke aye the, is gali mein . . . aaj puchne vala koi nahin*” (“Friend, I once came to this street as a groom, today there is no one to ask after me”), the man replied, “*Usne kahaa hamaari bibi hai, puchne vali, chalo ap hamaare ghar*” (“My wife is here to ask after you, come to my home”). Mr. Mehra refused the offer because he was shy—the women in that home were in *purdah*. But they chatted on the street and the Lahoria told him to go and ask those people for something—a reference to a gift and blessing that is given when you go to the home of your in-laws.

Even as I broached the subject of anti-colonial movements and the responsibility for Partition, Mr. Mehra returned to the migration as a mistaken act—*galti ki Laahor chod diya* (we made a mistake leaving Lahore). He remembered that when he left Shahalmi Gate with his extended family, his Muslim friend had watched him leave, as if in relief. The structure of the interview and his repeated references to that original act of kindness show that he attributes his new life in Delhi to the *daya* and *drishti*, the mercy and foresight of his Muslim friend. In times such as those, what were friends to say and what were they to hide? This pukka Muslim friend tried to protect the interests of his pukka Hindu friend in the only way he could: in the half whisper of half a scheme. Mr. Mehra’s story of resettlement in Delhi is a story of rebirth and renewal that this friendly act made possible. His story reveals the dilemmas posed by friendships between religious communities in this moment of reckoning and massive

upheaval. It is also a record of the triumph and enduring memory of that friendship.

“Not a Friend, He Was a Classmate”:
Punjabi Hindu as Hindu Supremacist

If Mr. Mehra’s story affirmed friendships with Muslims in pre- and post-Partition Punjab, Mr. Sharma’s narrative and career ridicules that very idea. A former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Parliamentarian and recent convert to Sikhism, Mr. Baikuntha Lal Sharma, also known as Prem Singh “Sher,” was recommended to me by several interviewees including Baba Vivek Shah, the head of a temple frequented by refugees from Lahore, who believed I could learn about the struggles of Punjabi Hindus from him.¹⁶

Mr. Sharma lives in a former refugee colony in the heart of New Delhi. Most of the interview was in the form of a pre-set speech delivered loudly, as if during an election campaign. Initially, I tried to steer the conversation to his past rather than his immediate preoccupation: “There can be no peace on earth until Pakistan is wiped out from the world’s surface.” So he tried to begin from the beginning, as it were.

Mr. Sharma began his career as a *pracharak* of the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS) in Shakargarh *tehsil*, district Gurdaspur. He remembered vividly the Hindu Mahasabha training camp in 1945, the details matching with those I found in the Mahasabha papers: He was then sixteen years old. His narration of *jal-samadhi* (the collective death through immersion in a river) of some Hindu women whom he escorted to India during Partition enabled him to restate his goals: that 218 places of pilgrimage remained in Pakistan and he had vowed to reclaim them all. He declared that Pakistan used to have 10 percent Hindus, now it had less than 1 percent. Intriguingly, he claimed that the RSS ordered its workers *not to* migrate from the areas that came within the new state of Pakistan. This order, received after August 14, may have wrought further confusion in the minds of non-Muslim minorities. Were they to stay and defend themselves against the violence or leave in large numbers? However, the contingent nature of his migration is drowned in a narrative that focuses on regurgitating allegedly ancient antagonisms between Hindus and Muslims.

Mr. Sharma revealed little of his childhood. His father was head clerk in the Divisional Superintendent Office of the railways in Ferozepur.

Mr. Sharma studied at the Sanatan Dharm School in Ferozepur and later at the KC Arya High School in Sialkot. He then breezily referred to a Muslim friend who later sent him copies of the pamphlet “Rape of Rawalpindi” that he distributed for propaganda purposes. So, did he have Muslim friends, then? Mr. Sharma replied: *Class mein baithte to hello hello hota hi hai . . . jab tak musalman gaay ka maas khata rahega . . . hamaara sochne ka drishtikon hi nahin hai, pura ult-baith, ek purab hai, dusra paschim* (We sat in class, so we used to exchange hellos; as long as the Muslim eats the flesh of cows . . . our ways of thinking are not the same, its completely different, one is east, the other is west). Almost seamlessly, the contemporary rhetoric of the Hindu Right dominates every association and memory of the past.¹⁷

Mr. Sharma attributed his desire to protect Hindu society to his family. His sister, Shakuntala Sharma, was apparently a member of “Bhagat Singh’s party.” Contrary to our understanding of Singh’s Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, Mr. Sharma seems to have learnt the art of protecting *Hindu* interests from a revolutionary party that aimed its activities against the *British*. He read his sister’s copy of the banned book *Shahidan-e vatan*, along with writings by anti-colonial leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Lokmanya Tilak, attended college cursorily, and then threw his energies into the protection of *Bharat Mata* (Mother India). This rather prosaic introduction to his politics was followed by a projection of himself as a man of simple means; he had never kept more than five hundred rupees in his wallet and he received a pension of only seven thousand rupees a month.

Describing the Congress as a Hindu party and similar in aims to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1947, Mr. Sharma felt that at the present rate of growth of the Indian Muslim population, the rest of India would soon become Pakistan. These “snakes” were intent on converting *dar-ul-harb* into *dar-ul-Islam*.¹⁸ His Hindutva rhetoric includes an interpretation of Partition as a sellout to Muslims and Islam as a fundamentalist religion because they believe their religion to be the only true one. Mr. Sharma magnanimously ascribes to Hinduism a tolerance that the *Sangh Parivar* wished to erase—“*they* are very clear in their thoughts, *we* are not clear.” After being described as tolerant, Hinduism must in fact become “clear”: this Hindu society/nation must be saved.

Mr. Sharma then proceeded to describe his career since Partition, quickly moving from one locus of activity to another, unwilling to be interrupted. Soon after Partition, he relied on a relative to obtain a job as a

warrant officer in the army ordnance corps at Ranchi. He was subsequently fired because he was present at Ayodhya when the idol of Ram Lalla emerged miraculously at the Babri Masjid in 1949.¹⁹ His next job was at the National Defence Academy Khadakvasla, then at the Ministry of Agriculture. He was then recruited to form “patriotic unions” in the government services. He rose to become secretary general of the Government Employees National Confederation. In the meantime, there were troubles in the Hindu world, not least the Meenakshipuram conversion of 1981, when thousands of Dalits converted to Islam. These induced him to quit government service and join the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a core constituent member of the organizations that form the Hindu Right.

In 1991, and again in 1996, Mr. Sharma was elected to Parliament from New Delhi on a BJP ticket. However, he soon grew unhappy with the compromises made by the BJP and felt that the problems of Hindu society were being neglected. His resignation letter to the then home minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, stated that as a *karmkaandi* Brahman, he felt it his duty to take on the job of the martial caste, Kshatriyas, and save Hindu society. His slogan was *shastrameva jayate* (arms will prevail). To my surprise, he then switched registers—to Urdu poetry! Mr. Sharma recited: “*Muhabbat ke liye kuchh khas dil makhsus hote hain, Yeh voh naghma hai jo har saz par gaya nahin jata*” (Only certain hearts are meant for love, this is that song which cannot be sung by each instrument).²⁰ This implies that Mr. Sharma was not cut out for parliamentary work. He then spoke appreciatively of songs from the well-known film *Umrao Jaan*. His brand of Hindutva apparently includes a flavor for the aristocratic culture of nineteenth-century Lucknow. Using Urdu—a language stigmatised as “foreign” and “Muslim” by the Hindu Right—to buttress his reasons for abandoning the parliamentary path points to one more anomaly thrown up by the Hindu Right’s politics of doublespeak.²¹ Mr. Sharma has since converted to Sikhism because he believes that the Sikhs were founded to be the militant and protective arm of Hindu society.

The clarity in Mr. Sharma’s thinking comes from a reading of history suited towards the construction of an exclusivist and supremacist Hindu India. Although Mr. Sharma’s first contacts with the RSS appear to have been made in the mid-1940s, he has erased prior instances of a shared life with Muslims in undivided Punjab to forge a homogenising narrative that fits into his present politics. In this monological discourse, Partition provides no rupture in Mr. Sharma’s relations with Muslims. Now he is determined to kill Pakistanis, even if this means the murder of millions.

When I met him, he was raising funds for a *Smriti Mandir* (a temple of commemoration) outside Delhi, dedicated to victims of Partition violence and Hindu “martyrs” who died at the hands of Muslim conquerors in the last twelve hundred years. The temple is on the lines of a memorial in Israel that one of his close friends visited. He also produces a monthly newsletter, *Abhay Bharat*, which propagates the idea of an Akhand/undivided India. This publication is targeted to reach fourteen thousand police stations and members of the armed forces. He concluded the interview with the contented declaration: *Sab anand mein hun, bas yeh desh bach jaye* (I am very happy; just this country must be saved).²²

“I Think the Muslim Is a Very Warm Person”: Punjabi Hindu as Secular Indian

If the Muslim has no place in Mr. Sharma’s conception of India, the Muslim occupies uneasy ground in the secular Indian imagination as well. My conversations with Mr. Krishen Khanna, who perhaps epitomizes all that is best in the archetypal secular Indian, traced a journey in time saturated with reflections. Unlike Mr. Sharma, Mr. Khanna was willing to be interrupted, often stopping himself and returning to an earlier thought or turning to his wife, Renuka Khanna, to refresh a particular memory. We spoke over two Sundays, the conversation included his wife, and I was given access to the private letters of his father, Mr. Kahan Chand Khanna. The Khannas’ fathers taught philosophy and history at the prestigious Government College, Lahore. They were childhood friends before they married each other. Their remembrances evoke the cosmopolitanism of Lahore, perhaps at its best.²³

One of India’s most renowned painters, Mr. Khanna’s first job was in a printing press on Abbott Road, Lahore. On August 11, 1947, he left Lahore for Simla on a weeklong assignment, never imagining it would be forever. The interview began with Mr. Khanna rethinking the relations of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, and Christians on two hundred yards of MacLagan Road, his first home in Lahore. He used to think of it as “great amity between various groups, religious groups or whatever”; but when he recently subjected his memory to “some sort of critical review,” he realised there were “very few Muslims” on this stretch of road. He recalled the easy accessibility of various homes on that road, then remembered some uneasiness during Muharram—a memory that was only recently uncovered: “We had during Muharram of course processions being taken

down the road; we watched it like everything else, but I seem to think there was always a little kind of a not a fear . . . at the time of Muharram for instance . . . we didn't quite know what to make of it but there it was. There wasn't any animus towards the Muslims as such not in our . . . not amongst the children but that's because maybe we were children."

The cagey quality of this remembrance dissolved when he proceeded to talk of the family tailor, a Muslim, "a very respectable man," who came regularly to ask his mother if she needed anything, even when his father was pursuing a doctorate in London: "There was a wonderful community feeling there." The size of that community allowed for such civilities. He then moved to Multan, where there were "far more Muslim boys, my give and take with these chaps was as it was before." This is all very well, but there is more—he felt that "one got *assimilated* into a very Muslim culture . . . One didn't realize that this was a *Muslim* culture." It was a cook in his family house, on his mother's side, who pointed out that the young Khanna boy's dress, the *salwar kameez*, was *Muslim*!

Mr. Khanna then referred to his study of Persian and his language being Urdu: "My wife and I, we were from a very different, mixed kind of bringing up . . . with lot of interchanges with the Muslim world and accepting this as a part of my own heritage." His daughter, in contrast, is a classical Bharatanatyam dancer and her classical language is Sanskrit. A child of post-Partition Delhi, she does not speak Punjabi. However, there is no unrestrained dip into nostalgia when I enquire into the possible losses and gains for the next generation: "You know a loss of poetry is a loss of poetry. I don't give a damn whether it's Muslim poetry or English poetry. If you decide not to read it, it's your loss. I'm quite sure since I can't read Hindi and I don't read Hindi, a lot of literature in Hindi is my loss, but then I content myself with the fact that I can't have every literature, every bit of poetry into my system."

Mr. Khanna's matter-of-fact response may be a result of so much movement: He studied in schools in Lahore; at the Imperial Service College in Windsor, United Kingdom; at Emerson College in Multan; and then in Government College, Lahore. His professional career in a bank took him to Madras, Bombay, and Kanpur; he has lived in Simla and Delhi, but above all, he exudes the wisdom that comes with a certain kind of openness, a certain kind of success. His reasoning is not bound in regret; the loss is there, but it does not overwhelm him.

Neither Krishen nor Renu Khanna is entirely certain about whether to place social relations between members of different religious communities

as intimate or tense in 1945–1946. They said different things at different points in the interviews. They described the atmosphere in Government College, Lahore as “intellectually lazy”; the young boys spent much of their “surplus energies” in sports and other college activities. Consider this extract, the lack of empathy with the movement for Pakistan, and the gushing admiration for Muslims that follows:

K. Khanna I remember a great friend of mine, Teji, used to say, well you know the big brother has to be generous.

Nair And what did you think?

K. Khanna And I said, well I suppose so and but you know why are *we* bothered with all this? We are living alright. I mean there was no . . . *thought* that we’d ever get separated. Of course the majority community had to be generous . . . why shouldn’t they act in a magnanimous fashion?

Nair By majority community you meant?

K. Khanna The Hindus.

Nair In the country?

K. Khanna In the country, but in Lahore of course it was a fifty-fifty affair. In Lahore it was such an evenly mixed . . . I mean it was 1 percent, even the 1 percent was fluctuating and it quite honestly never bothered me.

Nair Do you remember an atmosphere of sloganeering, mobilisation?

K. Khanna I saw a procession, probably the first one, a Pakistani procession in Anarkali and these women there . . . they were Pakistani women dressed in their green thing whatever . . . these *leke rahenge Pakistan; leke rahenge* (we will take Pakistan; we will take . . .) you know, shouting the odds. I said, what’s wrong with these *chudels* [witches] you know (*laughs*) then we could go on about divisions . . . I was working in a press. There were lots of Muslims in the press working. I was heading it, I was running their lives for them in terms of work and so on. *Very affectionate, very nice, very open, very friendly* and even now let me tell you I mean I went back may be what thirty years later, more than that, the warmth with which I was received . . . I think the Muslim is a *very warm* person. The Punjabi Muslims are *very warm*, we were *very warmly* received, *very warmly* received²⁴ and it happened right now,

Kuldip Nayar went there and he's a part of the Indo-Pak friendship. They call it Pak-Indo; we call it Indo-Pak, same thing. We work independently. They were feted, they were dined . . . *unhone hamaari khaatirdari ki* (they took such good care of us) . . . but we are . . . their delegation that came here was unattended! *sukha!* (dry! stiff!) Nothing happened!

Nair Aisa kyon? (Why so?)

K. Khanna Because we are like that. We are stupidly political, involved in politics, accounts, *ye karenge, ye thik rahega, das chizen* (we'll do this, this will be enough, ten things). I mean can you imagine now they are talking about sending our troops to Iraq but I mean we shouldn't even be contemplating this, fortunately they made a public issue of this.

Although the movement for Pakistan is even today remembered in anecdotal terms that are inexplicable, Mr. Khanna rushed to reaffirm his faith in the humanism of the ordinary Muslim. I asked him about the atmosphere in the printing press; after all, the press was allegedly responsible for much of the venom in circulation in the mid-1940s, but he could remember no tension in his press. The Muslim workers under his supervision were very affectionate, nice, open, and friendly. *The Muslim is a very warm person*. Is this the memory of social interactions in pre-Partition Lahore or a memory distilled through secular India's own traumas ever since? I then asked about Partition-related violence, their memory of the RSS, the Akalis, and the League. The conversation meandered into the present, throwing sharp light on the grey ground that the Sangh Parivar and Indian Muslims inhabit in popular minds.

K. Khanna The strange thing is, much as one would disagree with the RSS, given their kind of cast iron stance on Muslims, they did a lot during Partition. The recovery of women, for instance, the RSS *did* that and they are not . . . that element of the RSS . . . the RSS is not very imaginative, but actually they are led by very clean, clean-living people. My *taya* [uncle] who was very dear to us was a member of the RSS. He used to say well, what's wrong with being a Hindu? *Well this is true, see what was happening in the Punjab was that Hindus were being assimilated in a Muslim culture, also very little of the Muslim absorbing Hindu culture*. Am I right Renu or wrong?

- R. *Khanna* You know, the atmosphere of Hindi [Hindustani/United Provinces] Muslims was not the atmosphere of the Punjabi Muslims.
- K. *Khanna* Yes, absolutely . . .
- R. *Khanna* Punjabi Muslims were really agricultural. Very simple, very warmhearted. Their hearts were very clear of whom they were extremely respectful. Now in Government College, Lahore, my psychology teacher was an Ahmadiyya and he occupied the chair of psychology and philosophy after my father, and I was his student. Qazi Akbar was his name. Now the Ahmadiyyas were declared by the Pakistan government to be non-Muslim! So there was a lot of absorption . . . as a whole culture I mean we are sure . . . just like in Ajmer, Hindus and Muslims go regularly.
- K. *Khanna* When I came back from England, you know, to Multan, my father was still there as inspector of schools—one of his great friends was a Qureishi and his father was a *Pir*, a very well-known, one of the big boys in the region . . . and a very good friend of my father's and the day I arrived he came to see me, the *Pir Sahib* himself. And all our servants, all these chaps, the driver, were staggered that the *Pir* should be coming to see this young chap! A huge, tall thug of a man, beautiful beard, stately presence and immaculately dressed, came and for a good ten minutes he blessed me in the choicest language. And I was down, my head was down, utterly . . . his son, Sajjad, became a good friend of mine in college . . . He came to give his benediction. That's a great honour you know, but now one would say some bloody Muslim came to give you an honour. I mean people don't regard . . . the way the VHP talks, it's as if the Muslims didn't exist as a community or they are a horrible lot . . .
- R. *Khanna* But don't forget the president of the country [Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam] is a Muslim . . . there are so many Muslims in the country who have assimilated.
- K. *Khanna* Of course. [M. F.] Husain, [Sayeed Haider] Raza, all these chaps. Raza says, *Naam ke liye muslim hun, sayyid hun* (I am a Muslim in name, a *Sayyid*), but I mean his knowledge of Hindi . . . this whole business of Hindu-Muslim . . .
- R. *Khanna* He knows Hindi, he knows Sanskrit . . .

K. Khanna Ya . . . and what culture you were brought up in . . . no culture tells you to slit anybody's throat!

Nair So how would you analyse the change in the RSS from 1947 to now?

K. Khanna My *taya* [uncle] was a leader of the [RSS] *shakha* [branch] in Ferozepur, which is a contiguous area to Pakistan and he was a very well-regarded, very honoured . . .

Nair This is in the early '40s?

K. Khanna No, this is after Partition . . . and my father disagreed with him. Well he [uncle] said, why don't they [the Muslims] call themselves Hindus? Well my father said because Hindu has become a very specific nomenclature. My *taya* said Hindu only means this side of the Indus, anybody who is a resident in this part of the world you know, so what's wrong in calling yourself that? Nothing . . . you know it's synonymous with a certain religious community, a certain religion and the Muslims certainly are a different religion . . . it's like the Hindus keep saying the Sikhs are a part of us. Well they are *not* a part of us . . . they are very separate and they should be regarded as such. You should honour their differences rather than saying *ye to hamaare hi jaise hain* [they are like us only].

Mr. Khanna believed that the RSS was led by "clean-living people" like his uncle. But there were important disagreements between his father and uncle on what they meant by a Hindu. For his uncle, "Hindu" referred to anyone living east of the river Indus, while his father found that definition untenable. Mr. Khanna remembered the Punjabi Muslim as *very* warm, syncretic to the point of being considered heretic by some. His interactions with and understandings of Indian Muslims proved they had *assimilated* so much in post-Partition India. I find, in the Khannas, the secular dilemma of dealing with religious difference. The secular stance of affirming syncretism comes dangerously close to that of an exclusivist RSS redefining "Hindu," or to those Pakistanis who, in deeming Ahmadiyyas to be heretic, are defining "Muslim" in an exclusivist, doctrinaire fashion. While speaking of the difference between Hindus and Sikhs or Hindus and Muslims, the secular Indian is caught in the syncretic eddy or mired in the politics of tokenism. Would the former Indian Muslim president have been equally acceptable if he were not well versed in Sanskrit? The Muslim Pir can be stately and the VHP can be ridiculously ignorant, but

can the secular Indian empathise with another's religion as *faith*? Was the blessing of the Pir merely a "great honour"?

I turn to their responses in my questionnaire—under religion/caste, Renu Khanna has written: "caste—nil; mixed religions—accept all." Krishen Khanna has written: "I was born a Hindu but am a lot else besides." The "lot else" does find utterance in responses to occupation, civil society organisations, and places of living in post-Partition India, but the question on religion still elicits this uneasy response. Is this the secular Hindu's way of distancing him or herself from a suffocating Hinduism peddled by a Hindu Right that seeks to exclusively and often violently define what and who can ever count as "Hindu"?

In our second meeting, we focussed on the relationship between the individual and the state. Mr. Khanna detailed instances in post-Partition India when the government of the day hindered with people-to-people contacts between India and Pakistan, even in the realm of art and culture. I close this section with his reading of why his alma mater, the prestigious Government College, Lahore, never managed to have an old boys' network:

K. Khanna You know, there was this Old Boy's dinner and I was there as well. . . . it would be around sometime in [19]52, '51 . . . What happened there was somebody made a remark in their speech that Partition happened and it's bad for the college it broke up, this that and the other sort to which Qutb responded, Nazim Qutb responded, who is a friend of ours, and he said well it needn't have happened if it weren't for blah blah blah it became a political argument and I don't think it had been intended at the outset. I think Qutb was over-sensitive when he came out. He was actually Pakistan's information minister. I suppose he had to make some sort of a remark and he did . . .

Nair And what is your hunch about why the Government College [Lahore] Old Boys' Association hasn't been functioning for years?

K. Khanna I find it hard to answer this question, but I think people are busy and you suggested just now that all these guys have done well, you know, bureaucracy and so on, which is true. They either have no time for this kind of thing or they feel that possibly this *mel-jhol* [meeting together] might not be so good.

Nair So then, don't you think that this is a case in point when people-to-people contact . .

K. Khanna is important . . .

Nair is coming into direct conflict with occupational . . .

K. Khanna Yes, I think this is definitely so. This is definitely so. I am rather naïve in my formulations, but I do think that there are various hierarchies sort of positioned, the artistic hierarchy is one, the political hierarchy is another, and the economic hierarchy is another—these three are the main—and controlling all this is supposedly the political hierarchy . . . also covers trade, the economics of this country and I think these boys to stay in power, that side or this side or whatever, it's a usual back-scratching society. If this was left to the people, they wouldn't bother. People are interested in living, they are not interested in who owns what and where the various flags are flying . . . I mean, I know this is very, very naïve. I will be brushed aside as this idiot, but I really think people are interested in preserving their own territory.

That civil society's remembering can come into conflict with the designs of governments is a carryover from Khanna's earlier references to the "dry" attitude of the Indians involved in the Indo-Pak Friendship Society. As I prepared to leave their beautiful home, Renu Khanna said: "*Everybody* is haunted by their childhood memories." That and their liberal attitude towards "a loss of poetry" left me with a sense that their past is something they carry with them.

To spend an afternoon with the Khannas is to revisit a slice of warm Lahore in the 1940s. There is no anger here, only a host of memories. The figure of the Muslim occupies several niches in their memory, as does that of the "secular" or "communal" Hindu. They shared stories of a Muslim retainer who stayed in touch after Partition, and an old classmate who became governor of Punjab and publicly embraced Mr. Khanna at an awards function in Pakistan in 1989. The secular Hindu canvas has the Indian Muslim in every colour, but he or she is ultimately a caricature, a symbol, an extra piece that will not fit into an unfinished jigsaw puzzle unless it comes "assimilated." Is the Indian Muslim finally only a witness to "shared living" in another time? Must he or she now take on the overt symbols of Hindu society to be considered sufficiently Indian? There is a quality of profusion here—of an active mind re-engaging with the past—

but also a quiet contentment, of a life lived well, fully, successfully. The secular Hindu has moved on.

“Muslims should love India, they should live amicably with Hindu majorities, they should respect their sentiments”:
Punjabi Hindu as RSS worker

I was introduced to Purushottam and Savitri Aneja through their grandson, Rahul Rajkumar, an American citizen and a student at Yale Medical School at the time of this interview. Rahul’s college roommate was a good friend of mine and had suggested I speak with him. Rahul was then in Delhi doing an internship and he was staying with his grandparents. It gradually became clear to me that I was listening in on a much longer conversation that had spanned several years between these Indian grandparents and their American grandson.²⁵

The interview began with the Anejas recounting their harrowing journey from Multan to India. They left in October 1947, soon after a series of mass marriages, because it was not clear who would survive the journey and who would be left behind. The young couple’s marriage, in fact, had been decided before they were born—their mothers were close friends—and they had gotten engaged when they were still children. But these marriages, performed in a hurry, “only two hours long,” were not how Savitri Aneja had imagined it would be. She quickly added:

S. Aneja There was great fear, great danger. The Muslims would come, with sticks. Everyone had collected chillies and ground them. What else to do? There were no weapons in the village. They would all gather around with sticks and make loud noises. Then there were also some Muslims who would give us some help, those who were a bit big.

Nair Big in age?

S. Aneja No, big in status.

P. Aneja Respectable persons.²⁶

S. Aneja They protected us and when we got to Khanewal in a car, one of their men escorted us.

At Khanewal the family was separated. They could not all fit into the overflowing train that pulled into the railway station. Mr. and Mrs. Aneja were thrown in through the windows since the doors were locked. There were no iron bars in the windows in those days. They left all their

belongings with a Muslim neighbour, telling him they would return after a short while.

Mrs. Aneja described social relations in her natal village, Sardarpur. In her recollection, Muslims and Hindus lived harmoniously together. However, they were not welcome to eat in each other's homes. If Muslims even touched Hindus by mistake, the Hindus would have to bathe to purify themselves. Mr. Aneja added: "If they even touched our mud-baked utensils or pots, or if water from their hands fell upon these, we would have to throw them away." Mrs. Aneja recounted the layout of her village and her favorite memory of a giant banyan tree that extended roughly from the fire brigade on the main road to their kitchen (she signalled with her hands) and under which all the buffaloes and cows would be tethered in those hot summers. Two or three furlongs away were a large peepul tree, so large that the entire village bazaar could fit under its shade. But the women wore *ghunghat* and stayed indoors; it was the men who availed themselves of these public spaces. She remembered the village as a place of great simplicity. If a guest arrived unannounced, all the homes would contribute whatever vegetable they had in their kitchens so that the guest would get a selection of vegetables. If anyone were to begin cleaning a sack of wheat all alone, the other women would stop their work immediately and give her a hand. Although there were no Sikhs in the village, they all prayed from the Durbar Sahib at a *dharamshala*. Every evening there were *kathas*—storytelling and singing sessions. Most of the prayers were chosen from the Darbar Sahib. To my surprise, Mrs. Aneja asked, "Why? Don't Hindus also accept Guru Nanak?" Evidently, the acrimony between Sikhs and Hindus in some towns had not yet disturbed religious and cultural practices in this village.

I asked of their relations with Muslims. Mrs. Aneja recounted the years she spent with her uncle's family in Patti, close to Lahore, soon after her mother's death. Her uncle's daughter taught there at an Arya Samaji school. Her students included Muslim girls with names like Firdaus and Razya. They were very fond of their teacher and would ask her every day to visit their homes, so the young Savitri accompanied her older cousin, and ate at a Muslim's home: "So she fed us . . . (*laughs*) they must have got the food from the bazaar . . . where would they have made it at home? But the utensils were certainly from their own home . . . In the city no one bathed if touched by a Muslim, but in the villages this would happen." She then told me of her grandfather's high status back in Sardarpur. He was a *zamindar* and the *chaudhri* of the village. When the Muslim farmers

of the region would enter the bazaar where her grandfather also had a shop, they would dismount their horses in order to show him respect. Yes, it is true they would not eat at each other's homes in the village, she admitted, but dry food was often given so that Muslims could cook it according to their own traditions. The Muslims, too, would give them dry food to cook on their own.²⁷

Mr. Aneja recalled a different childhood. He lived in a much smaller village, where his father taught in an Urdu medium school. Mr. Aneja was sent to the DAV School in Multan City, about thirty miles from the village, where he could learn English and prepare for a job in the government. His mother accompanied him and stayed with him. At the DAV school, Mr. Aneja was introduced to the Arya Samaj. He became aware of the tensions between different reform movements and heard the *shastrarths*—the debates between the Arya Samajis and the Sanatan Dharmis—which had not affected the peace and daily practice of religion in their villages. He visited the Arya Samaj temple once a week and when preachers arrived from the big city of Lahore, the students would listen for nights on end to religious lectures at the temple. As he proceeded to study at Emerson College in Multan, Mr. Aneja continued attending meetings at the Arya Samaj temple. Freedom/*azadi* was often discussed, but *supan mein bhi nahin aya tha ki Pakistan banega ya is tarah Partition hoga* (not even in their dreams did they think that Pakistan would be formed or Partition would occur like this).

It was in Multan that he first heard of the RSS. A charismatic teacher named Sanjiv Kumar headed the RSS branch and also taught at the DAV School. The goal of the RSS was simply Hindu *sangathan*. Mr. Aneja insists there was no clash between the Congress and the RSS, even in 1947. Senior leaders of the Congress were not members of the RSS because, according to Mr. Aneja, the RSS was not a big enough organization. At RSS meetings, there were never any criticisms levelled against the Congress, Muslims, or anyone else: “We were with the Congress . . . everyone was with the Congress, there was no other party at that time.” The conversation veered back to the practices of pollution/purity. Both the Anejas insisted that Muslims did not mind the practice of untouchability. Mrs. Aneja challenged me: “Did they ever talk about this? Did they ever complain?” It was a custom, and so it continued.²⁸

I asked them what newspapers they used to read, and they replied: *Pratap* and *Milap* in Urdu and the *Tribune* in English. And then, Mr. Aneja said wistfully, *ham to urdu ko karte the pyar, bas . . . urdu musalmanon*

ki zubaan hai . . . aise nahin dekhte the, sab padhte the (We loved Urdu . . . that Urdu was the language of Muslims alone . . . we didn't see it that way. Everyone read it). In fact, he remembered not liking Hindi at all. It was only after coming to India after Partition and after his daughter started learning Hindi in school that he began to get accustomed to the language, and grew to love it. Recently he had completed a master's in Hindi literature. In fact, he also loved English. At Emerson College, a teacher named Jai Dayal taught Shakespeare with such feeling that he had the students laughing and crying with the script. Prithviraj Kapoor was a good friend of his.²⁹ The memory of those plays inspired Mr. Aneja to fulfill his other deep desire (*khvaahish*): he had just completed a master's in English literature. So here was a young Hindu deeply attracted to both Shakespeare and the RSS. He noted his membership in the RSS, in Multan and then Delhi, perfunctorily:

P. Aneja They took me away to the RSS in Multan, so when I came to Delhi I spent some time with them, then later, I didn't . . . from [19]48 onwards, I left it. In [19]49 I joined the government service . . . then because of Mahatma Gandhi [the RSS] was banned . . . it was banned . . . it was forbidden to government employees. Now, since retirement, I go occasionally.

S. Aneja He also spent a month in jail.

Nair You went to jail?

P. Aneja When Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, then the RSS was banned. I was studying then in Government College, Rohtak, Partition had happened, so when it was banned, there was a *satyagraha* for the RSS . . . I spent many months there.

Nair When does this refer to?

P. Aneja [19]48 to [19]49.

Nair But why did *you* go to jail?

P. Aneja We did *satyagraha*, no, that our head, whom we called "guruji," Guru Golwalkarji, to release him . . .

Nair How did you feel about what Nathuram Godse did?

P. Aneja Didn't like it . . .

Nair So you didn't feel the ban was valid?

P. Aneja But why blame us? We can't work for Hindu *sangathan*?

Nair But it was in this business of Hindu *sangathan* that Nathuram Godse entered . . .

P. Aneja What Nathuram Godse did, we obviously did not like . . .
*it was not a good thing.*³⁰

S. Aneja He was not following them [the RSS] . . .

P. Aneja He may have attended one of our *shakhas*, but he was not a [RSS] worker . . . he was not an activist so they had to release our Guruji . . . this was not our work. I go to the Arya Samaj and the Arya Samaj does something . . . so that should not mean that I participated in that. *He did come they say, kabhi shakha mein woh aaya hoga, bahut log aate hain* (he may have come to the shakha sometime; many people come). We did not think that . . . or the Sangh did not say to kill someone . . . it was not like that . . .

S. Aneja It is not the policy of the Sangh to kill anyone . . .

P. Aneja Their policy was constructive.³¹

I then learnt of Mr. Aneja's gradual involvement with the RSS after his retirement in 1986. I also learnt of why he had adhered to the ban while in government service; if he had not, he could have lost his job. He had even been arrested for several months during the witch hunt that constituted a part of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Emergency in 1975–1977. All those with any kind of police record linked to the RSS were arrested. In due course, Mr. Aneja pointed out to me: "We never called him like that—Golwalkar! We were taught to say Param Pujya Madhav Rao Sadashiv Golwalkar ji, his full name." And then he said: "There was no one who did not regard Mahatma Gandhi with great esteem . . .

Nair But . . . when you came . . . were there also people with you who were perhaps angry with Mahatma Gandhi?

P. Aneja (*silence*)

S. Aneja Yes, yes, there were some who said that he was responsible for Partition and that he had installed Jawaharlal when Patel was more capable.

P. Aneja No . . . (*weakly*)

S. Aneja Why, people used to say . . . we might not have said it. Why? People used to say that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for Partition, he agreed to it. He used to say, "Do not fight, do not fight."

P. Aneja hmm . . .

S. Aneja "Do not fight, it isn't an issue . . ."

Nair Do you think Patel would have made a better prime minister?

S. Aneja How do we know? People used to say . . . they used to say that Patel had strength. He had annexed the [princely] states [to India] . . .

P. Aneja They also said that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was given one state—Kashmir—and he couldn't handle even that.

P. Aneja, S. Aneja See how bad the situation is there . . . ?

Here, it is Mrs. Aneja who goads her husband into agreeing that Gandhi had his opponents. "People used to say" might be an oblique way of suggesting they agreed with his opponents and with those who claimed that Sardar Patel would have made a better prime minister. The conversation drifted to their changing loyalties—from the Congress to the Jana Sangh, the forerunner of the BJP, and then the BJP itself. They also remembered the Congress-led anti-Sikh riots of 1984, when they had protected Sikhs in their neighbourhood. They acknowledged the assistance of the Nehruvian Congress in helping them get compensation for property lost in what became Pakistan. But it was clear that their loyalties were no longer with the Congress. At this point, I turned to their grandson, Rahul Rajkumar:

Nair So what is your problem with the RSS?

P. Aneja (laughs)

Rajkumar That's such an obvious question that I am sort of struck by my inability to respond. Because I have never had to answer such a simple question. Our conversations have been much more . . . complicated. Once when I was little, maybe five or six years, nine or ten years back, I had come to India and he took me to an RSS function, neighbourhood shakha that they had in the morning and I . . . I told him first I didn't want to go, 'cause even by that time I had totally rejected this ideology, discussed it with my parents and . . . knowing what little I did about the RSS, I really was not interested in the organisation, but he *forced* me to go and I said okay I'll go as an observer and I brought my camera to sort of mark my observer-ship, that would distinguish me from this crowd, holding the camera, I would take some pictures . . . that would be the extent of my involvement. But you remember the head of the organisation . . .

P. Aneja The shakha?

Rajkumar Ya, the head of that . . . neighbourhood organisation. He asked me to salute the flag.

P. Aneja It is our custom . . .

Rajkumar (quickly) But it's not *my* custom.

P. Aneja When we go, we salute the flag.³²

Rajkumar He asked me to salute the flag and I said you know, "I am *just* here as an observer, I really don't want to . . . participate in this ritual." Why did he *force* me to do that?

Nair Did you have to?

P. Aneja Did you do that?

Rajkumar No, I didn't do it. But why did he do it? Why did he have to ask me?

P. Aneja But he was not forcing you. Why should not he [ask]?

Rajkumar But he *was* forcing me to.

P. Aneja He should not have done that.

Rajkumar Why did he have to do that?

P. Aneja He is an individual. *Vaise* [By the way], I think he should not have done that.

Rajkumar But I think that reveals the nature of that organisation.

Nair How did you feel when he made you do this? Were you embarrassed? I mean . . .

Rajkumar At first I was embarrassed. Then I didn't have the strength of conviction that I have now, and so I was very uncertain. I looked to him [his grandfather] for support, and it wasn't there . . . he sort of was watching . . . smiling to see how I would handle the situation.

P. Aneja laughs . . . But it is discipline *na* . . . whenever we go to the gurudwara . . .

Rajkumar I think its brainwashing.

P. Aneja When we go to gurudwara we do as they do

Rajkumar I think its brainwashing. I think the RSS doesn't encourage . . . critical thinking.

P. Aneja Why not? You can . . .

Rajkumar I don't think it is an analytical organisation and if you see, even in my talks with you . . . actually this time I've . . . for the first time in several years we have completely abandoned our political conversations. I don't even indulge in this anymore.

Nair Because it hurts?

Rajkumar You asked me, you asked me this time why have I lost my interest in politics.

P. Aneja Yes, I asked.

Rajkumar You think I have lost my interest in politics?

P. Aneja Ya . . .

Rajkumar Actually, I haven't lost my interest in politics. I have lost my interest in discussing RSS.

P. Aneja Why?

Rajkumar Because I find that the conversation is *the same*. We have *the same* conversation . . .

P. Aneja (laughs)

Rajkumar And no matter how many times I try to corner you in some situation to give a straight answer, you change the meaning of the words of the conversation. And even if you speak to his son-in-law, my uncle, my masi's [aunt's] husband, you'll find the same thing. He's *pukka* RSS in that way; if you find that you've really put them a tough question, suddenly they alter the meaning of the words to escape that situation . . . For example, one thing that he told me when I was very little is that the name of this country is Hindustan. *Is desh ka naam hai Hindustan*, and everyone who lives in this country, because it is Hindustan, should be a Hindu. And because they are Hindu, they should worship . . . Lord Ram . . . They should worship, they should respect Lord Ram . . . and I said . . . what about *Muslims* who live here? And . . . what did you say? . . . They should also call themselves Hindu because . . . the name of this country is Hindustan.

P. Aneja Now this country is called Hindustan . . . Hindustan . . . when somebody asks you . . . because Hindu is a nationality.

Rajkumar But what is India then?

P. Aneja India is the name given by . . .

Rajkumar The English?

P. Aneja Yes . . . if you ask anybody, they say they live in Hindustan . . . you ask any common citizen.

Rajkumar Even this is untrue—and this I have actually tested. We have had this conversation from my childhood also. He said, you ask, ask anybody on the street in India, *aapke desh ka kya naam hai*, what is the name of your country, and they will say Hindustan. And my counter-argument to this was, "Maybe in Delhi some people might say that. But if you go to Tamil Nadu, they will not say Hindustan."

P. Aneja What will they say?

Nair India!

Rajkumar They will say India! If you go to Andhra Pradesh, people will not say Hindustan. If you go to Bombay, maybe some people will say it, but I think the majority of people will say India. You don't think so?

P. Aneja No . . . Hindustan. In books, in literature, in everything, you will find this name, Hindustan . . . nowadays, at least.

Rajkumar Sometimes our arguments get caught up in semantics. I will be insisting that Hindu[ism] is a religion and not a nationality. And that he rejected; he said that Arya Samaj is a religion, but Hindu refers to a nationality . . . ³³

The conversation then turned to the principle of separating religion from politics that Mr. Aneja claimed to support, but this principle ran against the campaign for a temple to the god Ram in Ayodhya that both the Anejas supported. We spoke of the freedom to choose one's religion, permitted by the Indian Constitution, and the spate of anti-conversion bills that were being passed in various states, most recently Tamil Nadu. Finally, we turned to the violence in Gujarat. The Anejas and their younger grandson, who just returned from school, spoke out against the violence they all had seen on television earlier in 2002. At the same time, there was this giant fact to contend with: Mr. Narendra Modi, Gujarat's chief minister, had just been re-elected in the state assembly elections. Mr. Aneja proclaimed: "He is popular among the masses . . . if you believe in democracy then you must think of the people!" We spoke of the Congress's own pale saffron "soft-Hindutva" chief ministerial candidate, Shankar Singh Vaghela, who lost the elections to Modi, and the lack of an ideological alternative. Mr. Aneja returned to the Congress's help towards refugees like him in post-Partition Delhi:

P. Aneja Those who were Hindus were nationalists . . . Maulana Azad was also a nationalist.

Rajkumar Didn't you say that Maulana Azad was a showpiece?

P. Aneja Yes, like now there are one or two Muslims in the BJP. They are showpieces!

Nair So what is the option for Muslims in India . . . ?

P. Aneja This Muslim League, no, it was like that . . .

Nair What do they do now?

P. Aneja When they wanted Pakistan, then votes flew . . . there were assembly polls and general elections. All Muslims, even

in UP [United Provinces], even those who would not be part of Pakistan, they also voted for Mr. Jinnah's party . . . for Muslim League Muslims. No one listened to Mahatma Gandhi, absolutely no one. Just like today the BJP does not listen to Muslims, just like that Congress too would not listen . . . *they all voted—I think 90 to 95 percent people voted for Mr. Jinnah's National Muslim League party . . .*³⁴

Nair So what is the political alternative today?

P. Aneja I am speaking to you of what happened fifty years ago. All Muslims voted for Mr. Jinnah . . . nobody listened to Mahatma Gandhi. No Muslim listened to Mahatma Gandhi . . .

Rajkumar But she is asking, what should Muslims do now? I am sorry I interrupted you, I want to catch him on this . . . what should Muslims do now?

Nair Whom should they vote for? If you call them showpieces when they join the BJP . . .

P. Aneja No, actually I think that they should come . . . we say that because when they were in the Congress, the Muslims would refer to those in the Congress as showpieces. *This is not my word, Muslim League* followers would refer to Muslims in the Congress as showpieces. They called Maulana Azad a showpiece at that time. In that way, I refer to those in the BJP as showpieces . . .

Nair So what should the Muslims do politically?

P. Aneja He should love India—*aur kya* (what else?), there is no other way. They should love India, they should live amicably with Hindu majorities, they should respect their sentiments . . .

Those Muslims who remained, changed party allegiances, subscribed to the great promise of Nehru's secularism, and then watched India turn slowly saffron, have no real place in the Anejas' "Hindustan." They are condemned to be "showpieces" either in the BJP's overtly majoritarian framework or in the Congress's emulative politics of "soft-Hindutva." Despite Mr. Aneja's love for Urdu, and now Hindi, and Mrs. Aneja's memory of interactions with Muslim girls in Patti, their attitude towards Muslims is simple. They have followed the RSS mantra and made it their own. On a day filled with animated and solemn conversation, the saddest remark came from Rahul: "for the first time in several years, we have completely abandoned our political conversations."

“*Keh-te Hain Naasur Hai*”: A Life in Contradiction

Another set of conversations, also across generations, greeted me less than a week later. I was persuaded to meet Mrs. Gill by her granddaughter, whom I met at my cousin's wedding. She insisted I interview her grandmother because she had a very interesting Partition story to share. In an interview that spanned several hours and was informed, at different moments, by the opinions of her husband, daughter, and granddaughter, I heard several powerful stories. Partition, in the words of Mrs. Gill, was a *naasur*, a wound that refused to heal.³⁵

Mrs. Gill's family belonged to Mailsi, a village in Multan. Her father served under the British as a police officer, and her grandfather served the community for decades as a doctor. They owned a large house, a small hospital, and the only car in the village—a Chevrolet. She opened the interview with a glimpse of the story of her grandfather's departure from the village—“People did not want him to leave, they gave him so much love.” This is a theme she returns to: a part of family lore; when her daughter and granddaughter joined the conversation, they made sure that I knew of this first trauma.

Several strands of life in pre-Partition Punjab unravelled. Originally from Jullundur, where she spent some of her vacations, Mrs. Gill grew up in the Muslim-majority districts where her father was posted: Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Sialkot, Lahore, Multan, and Mianwali. She referred to her Muslim friends with affection, and said they ate together: “When I was a young girl, I was most brought up as a Muslim girl in my own house.” She remembers being treated differently from her brothers because of a protective environment that she attributed to Islam—there was even a time when her father tried to make her and her mother wear *burqas* because he feared his enemies would harm his family. These stories are narrated warmly; religious differences do not seem to have been a problem; she also remembered the words of a prayer she sang with her Muslim classmates in Lady Anderson's High School in Sialkot.

Mrs. Gill was married into a family in East Punjab in December 1945. Although she regarded Mailsi her home and was married there, she had only spent summer vacations there. Her father was building his retirement home in Lahore when Partition happened. In the winter of 1946–47, Mrs. Gill visited Mailsi. She vividly remembered the tension of those months:

Before Partition, when I was six months' pregnant with my daughter, I visited Mailsi. Then we used to hear slogans "*Pakistan banke rahega, Pakistan banke rahega*" [Pakistan *will* come into being; Pakistan *will* come into being] . . . we'd talk amongst ourselves about our future because *we* were minorities . . . my grandfather used to say nothing will happen, no one will touch us, but *we were a minority in that city, the majority were Muslims*. And we were considered more well-to-do than them . . . so he used to say that no one will tell *us* anything, and then *we* used to respond, my uncle, that fine, let's stay here for a month, a month and a half longer. When they saw that circumstances were worsening, then he said let's leave, my grandfather said I will not leave, no one will say anything to us, they are all friends. He was a doctor, *I have treated them, why will anyone kill me? They used to say, they are Muslims, we are getting ready to leave*. They say, my uncle and my grandfather, that *those Muslims swore by the Korans on their heads again and again saying please don't leave and my grandfather would respond saying I don't want to go. I really don't want to*, but tell me, my children, and then my uncle said, you know . . . young thinking maturity, see we know you will not say anything to us, we have complete faith in you, but if a mob comes, 500 or 600, from somewhere else, not from your village, but from behind, first they will kill you, then they will kill us. You will not be saved, and we will not be saved, is this intelligence? This is why it is best if . . . my grandfather would cry that this is helplessness. It was neither in their hands nor in our hands . . . ³⁶

The above quotation is based partly on a direct experience of family discussions in the winter of 1946. As news filtered in of the killings in Calcutta, Noakhali, and Garhmukhteshwar, these minorities in West Punjab could not help being affected by the slogans they heard. Did they have a choice? Would their neighbours—poorer neighbours, patients of their father—be able to protect them from the wrath of hundreds from *outside*? Would the situation stabilize in a month or two? The reference to Muslims swearing with Korans on their heads, mentioned to me repeatedly over the course of the interview, and often enacted by Mrs. Gill lifting her hands over her head as if she were holding a book, is powerful. In her study of the Red Shirts in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Mukulika Banerjee

refers to the carrying of Korans on heads as a symbol of reconciliation and persuasion in Pukhtun society. I understand the significance of this gesture in similar terms.³⁷

When Mrs. Gill's natal family finally moved out of Mailsi, they did so with the help of their neighbours. The details of their traumatic journey in September–October 1947 later reached her through other members of the family. I asked her if she ever discussed Partition with her grandfather. No, she answered. This is not to doubt the veracity of her story; it is interesting, though, that this story dominates her memory of Partition and has been passed down the generations as emblematic of the family's experience.

As for herself, Mrs. Gill celebrated Independence outside Parliament in New Delhi with her husband, an officer in the elite Indian Foreign Service. Her only direct knowledge of Partition violence was a stabbing that she witnessed of an old Muslim in Delhi and the fear she felt listening to the slogans *har har mahadev* and *allah-o-akbar*. She recalled the fires near Paharganj in Old Delhi and the announcements on the radio broadcasting refugees' whereabouts: At the time, she did not know whether her own family had managed to escape from Multan. In her neighbourhood in Delhi, young men from the RSS promised them protection and planned for families to move to Birla Mandir if trouble came. It was September 1947, and Delhi was ablaze with anti-Muslim violence. She described the RSS volunteers as full of *josh*—enthusiasm, “young young,” about twenty years of age, they were “very patriotic.” Residents of Delhi, they were excited by stories they heard from refugees, especially Sikhs. There were trainloads of massacred people and once it began, the violence continued for a whole month. She suggested that the violence was spontaneous—an attribute that does not stand when examined against the historical record.

Mrs. Gill also recalled instances where Hindus helped disguise their Muslim friends as Hindus so that they could find their way to an army convoy and cross the border to Pakistan. She told of a friend who came in a procession on foot that stretched for twenty-five miles; by the time they reached India, the procession was half the size it had been. Her own family managed to reach India safely, but she remembered that one of her brothers, a police officer, was forced to leave behind his gun in Pakistan. She returned, several times, to the property they left behind, the jewellery in particular. Their “safe deposit” in those days was hidden in cupboards or buried under the earth. In fact, when her brother was re-

cruited to retrieve abducted women, he made a trip to Mailsi in the hope of retrieving the family's jewels. However, their home had been occupied by a refugee family, who firmly but politely told him that they too had left behind their wealth in India.

There was something I could not put my finger on. She touches her careful coiffure . . . it's stray strands threaten to upset the balance. I learn from Mr. Gill, who has now joined the conversation, that he had been attracted to the RSS in 1947. In fact, it was his daughter who goads him into revealing that, indeed, he was impressed by their discipline, but his older brother, a member of the Congress, prevented him from joining them. More stories flow out; there is so much anger here. Mrs. Gill then tells me about her youngest brother: "We remember all those things, we do, very bitter, when my brother was, because the partition was created, that's why we lost our brother. As I told you now, he got very beaten up in school and got very scared. He would get very agitated. He used to say 'Oh Pakistan!'"³⁸ Her brother was traumatized by this beating at school and then, a few years after Partition, he joined the Indian Air Force. He never returned from the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. She uses the word *naasur*—a wound that can never heal—and holds Pakistan responsible. But when I ask her if the recent violence in Gujarat, when Hindus deployed Partition rhetoric against Indian Muslims, is fair, she is emphatic—*Unka badla inse kyon liya jaye* (Why should these people pay for that wrong)?

Mrs. Gill decides to tell me another story. When her granddaughter, Deepa, was studying at the University of London, she became very close to some boys from Pakistan. (Deepa interrupted: "Nani, I am glad *you* are telling this, I was wondering if you would.") They were acting in a play together, meeting often, and she was invited to their parents' house for *Id*. When Mrs. Gill learnt that Deepa had received *idi* (a gift at *Id*), she grew suspicious: Were these just friends?

Deepa In all fairness, I was also egging her on. She used to say that you know, are they just friends or are they boyfriends and I used to tell her maybe they are . . .

Mrs. Gill I was really scared—very worrying—Neeti, there were two things—one was religion, the other was partition. With Pakistan, that was the last—I couldn't have taken that.

I heard more stories of Mrs Gill's opposition to her daughter's friendship with a Pakistani friend in New York in the late 1960s. I was struck by the vehemence of her stance. This was not only about the prospect of her

beloved granddaughter marrying into a family from Pakistan, but about forging any kind of personal relationship. Why does Mrs Gill's insistence on her grandfather's reluctance to leave Multan in October 1947 not influence her attitude toward her grand/children's personal friendships with Pakistanis? Why should this or the next generation pay for the errors of a previous one?

She changed the subject.

Memory and History

School histories or rather official histories of the "freedom movement" taught in India and Pakistan treat the events that led to these two countries' freedom quite differently. For India, the year 1947 signifies independence and the endnote of a non-violent anti-colonial movement; for Pakistan, it embodies freedom from both British and Hindu domination and the creation of a homeland for Muslims.³⁹ In the last two decades, scholars have begun detailed analyses of the trauma and pain that accompanied Partition. But trauma and pain know few boundaries and have become, in the hands of untrained practitioners, breeding grounds for narratives of bigotry.⁴⁰ More recently, activists for peace have turned to Partition narratives to emphasise rescue and relief operations in an attempt to overtly shape the discourse around Partition. Although well-intentioned, these efforts elide the many layers of tension that compose Punjabi memories and identities.⁴¹

Oral history, as employed in this chapter, offers a window into the silences that continue to engulf some memories of Partition among former refugees. These silences suggest that memory, in and of itself, poses questions that it cannot answer. The fragment seeks support from the whole; the interface between "high politics" and the "fragment" is breached in the realm of the mind.

Following the doyen of collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs, research on memory, myth, and national identity has focussed on recovering the contexts and means by which social groups remember and manipulate the past to reflect presentist concerns.⁴² The alternative to collective memory has been Foucauldian counter-memory: "the discursive practices through which memories are perpetually revised."⁴³ Lost in these formulations is the resilience with which other kinds of memories are grounded, in contexts of their own making. The philosopher Tzvetan Todorov points out that what we remember is necessarily an interaction between *disap-*

pearance (forgetting) and *preservation*, and a balance with other principles such as will, consent, reasoning, creation, and liberty. Thus, the memories that are retained, out of a potentially infinite set of possible memories, are special to individuals for their meaning in constructing specific identities and relationships.⁴⁴ Writing of modes of thinking that seem anachronistic today, David Gross suggests that these “elements of enduring non-contemporaneity must often retreat from the mainstream, either to the periphery of social life—to rural enclaves, ethnic subcultures, or religious sects . . . or, if there is serious risk of suppression or persecution, underground.”⁴⁵ My research suggests that Punjabi Hindu memories of Partition are complex, but the complexities have not retreated from the mainstream or eroded with time. However, the will to engage with the inconsistencies that do not cohere to the official Indian or Pakistani master narratives is, indeed, often absent.

To grapple with the multiplicity of Punjabi Hindu narratives of leaving West Punjab is to ask what these inconsistencies reveal today. For instance, why is it that Mrs. Gill’s persistent memory of her grandfather’s reluctance to leave Multan and her own friendships with Muslims in pre-Partition Punjab do not influence her attitude towards her children’s interactions with Pakistanis? How does Mr. B. L. Sharma’s involvement in the formal politics of Hindu Nationalism affect his interpretation of his past in pre-Partition Punjab? Why has Mr. Khanna returned to the memory of MacLagan Road and found in it traces of tension between Hindus and Muslims? Why does the record of some Muslims in the United Provinces who voted for the Muslim League in 1946 still rankle the Anejas? It becomes apparent that experiences since Partition embrace and entangle with memories of life in undivided Punjab and of fleeing Punjab. Memories are neither fragments unaffected by events at the centre, nor are they frozen in time; they are forged in the thick of everyday life, nurtured selectively, carefully, and often quite unimaginatively. This is expressed so hauntingly by Agha Shahid Ali in *Farewell*, the poem with which I began this book:

Your history gets in the way of my memory.
 I am everything you lost. You can’t forgive me . . .
 Your memory gets in the way of my memory . . .

Recording his visit to his ancestral home in Bangladesh and his meeting with its current residents, Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests that “only a capacity for a humanist critique can create the ethical moment in our

narratives and offer, not a guarantee against the prejudice that kills, but an antidote with which to fight it.”⁴⁶ In a similar vein, Peter Burke sees historians as the “guardians of the skeletons in the cupboard of social memory” who reveal “weaknesses in grand and not-so-grand theories.”⁴⁷ The sheer diversity of narratives proffered by my interviewees suggests that memories, in some small measure, can afford us the ground on which to combat the teleology of official nationalist histories. And a judicious equipoise between archival sources and memories can draw out the complexity of an event like Partition and its consequences for personal, ordinary lives.

Of post-Partition Lahore, Mohammad Qadeer has written: “Cities are like trees, they may add new branches, shed old limbs and burst into new forms, but they remain attached to their roots.”⁴⁸ What about people? Do they have roots like trees, firmly embedded on one ground or can they belong to many grounds, many earths, and many traditions? In the heart of New Delhi today lies a sprawling multi-storey office structure with state-of-the-art conference facilities and auditoria for cultural and literary events to suit Delhi’s elite—much of which is Punjabi and Hindu. *Dilli O’Dilli*, one of the more popular restaurants there, overlooks the *Purana Qila* (Old Fort) built by an Afghan ruler in the mid-sixteenth century. The walls of *Dilli O’Dilli*, meant to capture the spirit of 1947, are adorned with huge black-and-white photographs of Nehru and the smiling Mountbattens. The walls are silent on the tragedy of Partition, an event of massive proportions that strained all the material resources and secular credentials of the young government. People, however, seem more like trees; their memories are their roots and despite wandering in unpredictable directions, can sometimes work like anchors, lending meaning to their lives.

In the official historiography of Partition, there is no way to mark the distance between Mountbatten’s Partition announcement and the moment of evacuation—this distance remains hidden in narratives that veer between deeply felt betrayal and questions of state responsibility. Sixty years later, this past neither hangs casually nor is it easily brushed aside. Memories of life in a once-united Punjab and the violent Partition of India invade, conflict, and engage with contemporary politics, both in the home and the world. As these memories of the past spilt into concerns about the present, I witnessed discussions between and within generations of Punjabi Hindu families on the violence in Gujarat and the proper attitude to adopt with Muslims and Pakistanis, in India and abroad. At the

heart of these debates lies India's own future as a vibrant political community for, as Paul Ricoeur reminds us, "we must have trust in language as a weapon against violence, indeed the best weapon there is against violence."⁴⁹

Do we have a common language in which we might have a conversation about Partition in the sub-continent today? It seems to me that both language and the space for a civil conversation have shrunk just as much as the violence that, purportedly on behalf of the victims of Partition, has grown. Yet despite the Partition of 1947 and all the vicissitudes of the Indo-Pakistan relationship, some Punjabi Hindus continue to remember the abruptness with which their ways of life were destroyed by Partition. They continue to imagine what life might have been like in an undivided India. If, as Benedict Anderson suggests, the nation is an "imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign," the imagined communities that inhabit the political heart of the country, Delhi, continue to reach out and within. The ambivalences that constituted the decision to Partition and evacuate minorities have stayed within these continually reconfiguring memories. Voiced in the privacy of their homes or with friends as listeners, these memories remain unanchored in the nation's commemorative rituals and public histories, but vivid in their particularity; they remind us that at the moment of its founding, the nation was severally imagined. This suggests that these memories are deeply felt, but the triumph of Hindu Nationalism in India does drape them in a sheet of unreflective prejudice—sometimes muslin-thin, sometimes as thick as window-blinds.

CONCLUSION

Why did so many Punjabis insist that they never saw Partition coming? Was this the work of nostalgia or memories gone astray? Why did so many historians insist that Partition was inevitable? Were they victims of an inexorable faith in the power of historical explanation? Yet the players and writers of history often spoke the same language and frequently drifted into each other's modes of explanation. I found the questions that were posed to me as I conducted interviews in 2002–2003 returning as I re-read my notes from the archives. I felt that a whole range of powerful emotions about multiple loyalties to communities, regions, states, and nations in the making needed to be explored more carefully. Political history was complex and harder to fit into ideological categories than I had previously imagined. Very diverse Punjabi Hindu modes of political action forced me to pay attention to instances of inter-community cooperation in the political domain as much as to instances of conflict, so often better corroborated in British and other interested sources.

This book argues that the politics of urban Punjabi Hindus in the four decades before 1947 defy neat categorisation into anti-colonial nationalism or communalism. In 1947, influential sections of urban Punjabi Hindus, quite as much as their Bengali counterparts, acted in concert with the Congress High Command to demand the partition of their provinces. Yet there was no simple shift from anti-colonial nationalism to communalism in the Punjab. There was no point—temporal or spatial—that could distinguish the communal politics of Punjabi Hindu leaders from their anti-colonial politics, or any “parting of the ways” between Punjabi Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs until the moment of Partition.

Tracing inter-communitarian relations in the Punjab over a span of forty years, this book maps the changes in the meanings of the word “communal.” From being associated with patriotism and pride in one's

community in the writings of Lajpat Rai, Munshi Ram, and Lal Chand in the first decade of the twentieth century, the term came to connote prejudice and bigotry, often used to stigmatize the politics of the Muslim community or that of the Hindu Mahasabha. Straddling the worlds of the private and the public, the religious and the political, the politics of communalism and anti-colonialism converged in the Punjab. Yet these were never contained within the province—for Punjab’s Hindus, the centre—whether in the shape of the Congress working committee’s decisions or the federal centre to be—was of paramount significance. The inextricably complex negotiations of “community” and “nation” that were forged in the Punjab did not occur at the margins; they came to influence politics at the heart of the nation.

Chapter 1 discusses a style of politics that had led to the successful agrarian movement of 1907. The writings of Punjabi Hindus like Lal Chand and Munshi Ram in 1909 were produced in a context of British repression towards the Arya Samaj and the Morley-Minto reforms that afforded Muslims, a minority in all of India, separate electorates. These writings and debates, especially among Arya Samajis, raised the question of multiple loyalties to one’s religious community and nation. It would appear that “sedition” was a convenient construct to deploy against the imbrication of the religious and the political only if such mixtures adversely affected British interests. The First World War and the prospective dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire soon afforded the all-India Congress and the All India Muslim League (AIML) the opportunity to forge the Lucknow Pact of 1916. Among Punjabis worldwide, heightened anti-colonialism took the shape of the Ghadr movement. In the period between 1907 and 1918, politics in the Punjab was loaded with multiple possibilities, ranging from the loyalist to the extremely anti-colonial.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I argue that prominent Punjabi Hindus continued to act in concerted resistance to anti-colonial rule in the political public sphere, as well as to partake in a politics of increasingly shrill communalism in the decade of the 1920s. Shortly after the Kohat riot of 1924, Lajpat Rai urged the abandonment of “absolute rights”; yet he also severed his ties with the Congress and became president of the Hindu Mahasabha. On the crucial debates regarding the introduction of reforms in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), however, and on the attitude to adopt towards the all-white Simon Commission, Lajpat Rai was able to rise above provincial interests, to the detriment of neither provincial, religious, nor national concerns.

Swami Shraddhanand, portrayed as communal for his involvement in *shuddhi* in the early 1920s, was fiercely anti-colonial during the Rowlatt Satyagraha movement in Delhi in April 1919; his anti-colonialism did not need to take primacy over his religious credentials and beliefs. The charisma and sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and thirteen other prisoners could unite the entire spectrum of political opinion in the Punjab and beyond, a significant achievement for a particularly fractured Congress, but for reasons never clear, the non-violent hunger strikers failed to move Gandhi very much. At any rate, the “Punjab wrongs” brought Indians from the rest of India into the politics of the province, courting arrest, writing in the press, and returning their medals of honour in protest against British imperialism. The bounded categories of “communal” and “anti-colonial nationalism” cannot contain the multiple imaginings of the community and nation, as Punjabis conceived them.

The real problem lay, as Chapter 4 demonstrates, in the politics of irresolution grounded in the increasing absence of a coherent and genuinely inclusive anti-colonial nationalism. Despite narrowing down the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League in 1935, the Jinnah-Prasad talks ultimately fell through because of the growing influence of the Hindu Mahasabha. Thereafter, some Hindus belonging to the provincial Congress turned to the Congress High Command to seek advice on the contours of political relationships within the Punjab. Jawaharlal Nehru, who grew to have enormous influence in the Punjab Congress, prevented Punjabi Hindus from forging pacts with Punjabi Muslims, as well as, indeed, other Hindus belonging to the Unionist Party. Yet non-Congress Hindus joined the Unionist-led cabinet, forming a “coalition government” that included a “common minimum programme.” In the years after the Lahore Resolution of 1940, this program, to increasingly nervous Punjabi Hindu ears, required the premier of the Unionist Party, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, to distance himself from Jinnah’s conception of *Pakistan*. That he failed to do so convincingly is more a measure of Jinnah’s determination to foist the League onto the Punjab under the propitious conditions provided by a wartime colonial state than a reflection on inter-communitarian relationships within the province.

This book contends that the Partition of the Punjab ultimately occurred because those Hindus who did not want to concede Muslims their majority in the Punjab won over those Hindus who wanted to reach a consensus through renewed negotiations. Some urban Punjabi Hindus, such as Gokul Chand Narang, sought to cling to their status as

a religiously defined all-India majority; they did not accept their status as a religiously defined provincial minority and, as was becoming clear, a statutory minority. This became evident when a coalition with the League became impossible after the election results of 1946. So a fragile Unionist-Akali-Congress coalition of 1946 was cobbled together to prevent the Muslim League from coming to power in what was believed to be the lynchpin of *Pakistan*. But this only postponed the day of reckoning. When the Cabinet Mission Plan proposed Grouping, most Punjabi Hindus refused to see this solution for what it was—a way to avoid Partition.¹ Angered by the Congress's final acquiescence in Attlee's interpretation of the Cabinet Mission Plan, some then moved into the arms of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha. It is worth reflecting on the views of economist Brij Narain, who foresaw how planning could be worked out in the Groups created out of the Cabinet Mission Plan. It is also useful to reiterate that many Congress workers and leaders objected to the final decision to Partition: even those who favoured Partition had no idea it would be accompanied by so much violence and displacement.

Chapter 5 traces the failure of political negotiations at the center and the rise of violence in Punjab. The evidence presented shows that the British were well aware of the outbreak of violence if there were a breakdown in negotiations. Their unwillingness to maintain law and order in the last months were a clear signal to Punjabis that they alone could take responsibility for the safety of their lives, homes, and possessions. Violence—propelled by political and territorial ambitions—and uncertainties soared in the Punjab. The decision to transfer minority populations in the Punjab was then made, initially tentatively, by the fledgling governments of East and West Punjab, of India and Pakistan. The forced and final migration of Punjabis across the newly created international border endowed Partition with an abruptness and brutality that precluded a lasting reconciliation.

In Chapter 6, I listen to former Hindu refugees reminisce about life in undivided Punjab, and try to explain Partition in their terms and language. As other studies of European history have shown, memories cannot be recovered in some pure authentic form. The remembrances of the refugees I interviewed—of a pre-Partition past, of Partition violence, and of their sudden migration—had more to do with their place in the present than with the retrieval of a pure, objective history. Contrary to other oral histories of Partition, their memories did not revolve around feelings

of loss and trauma. These refugees had, by and large, fared well in the world. They had changed homelands, making Delhi and India their own, new homeland. Yet the place of Muslims in their understanding of Partition was filled with an ambivalence that is fully reflected in secular India's traumas since 1947. I also had the occasion to interview some of the next generation of Punjabi Hindus. Children and grandchildren of Partition, they refuse to devote their lives to their parents' and their nation's founding myths. Sometimes playfully and sometimes seriously, they questioned those myths, bringing fresh meaning to the idea of secularism.

Partition, in the final instance, was caused by shockingly petty political differences.² But its continuing salience in the politics of post-Partition South Asia cannot be underestimated. I conclude with two recent examples that flow from a particular narrative of Partition and its violence. In 2002, a pamphlet that was circulated in Gujarat declared:

I am not talking about thousands of years ago—just 53 years. In 1947, first in Sindh province, then in Punjab and Bengal, they attacked Hindu bungalows and killed about 15 lakh Hindus cruelly and without any pity. This is a historic fact and it can be repeated today. Then how safe are you and I in our own homes? In 1947, the Muslims living in this country of Hindus said that Hindus and Muslims are different nationalities, different people. Their religions are different, their culture is different, they have different places of worship and pilgrimage, tradition, language, dress, festivals, diet, beliefs, etc. So we will not be able to live with you in one country, so cut up the country and give us Muslims a separate Islamic nation and we gave them a Muslim country, Pakistan.³

In this sweeping indictment of *all* Muslims, there is no recognition that some Hindus and Sikhs demanded the Partition of Punjab, or that some Hindus and Sikhs attacked some Muslims and Muslim property, particularly in East Punjab and Delhi.⁴ Located in a stridently Hindu-majoritarian India, the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 caused the death of more than two thousand Muslims; more than a hundred thousand Muslims were forced to leave their homes and take shelter in refugee camps.

That such a narrative of Partition and Partition violence is not an aberration was made explicit in the controversy surrounding the visit to Karachi in 2005 of then president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), L. K. Advani. Widely believed to have orchestrated the destruction of the

Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, Advani quoted from Jinnah's first speech to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly and described the founder of Pakistan as a "secular" person. His comments caused considerable confusion in the ranks and leadership of the BJP, India's leading opposition political party. Calls for Advani's resignation were interspersed with statements calling him a traitor. The response was a measure of how completely the dominant ideology of *Hindutva*, which holds the "secular" Jinnah responsible for Partition, had established its sway over the cadre. An article in the RSS journal *Organizer* noted: "The day India appreciates Jinnah, will be the end of its existence as a *Hindu majority secular* nation."⁵ More recently, in August 2009, another major leader of the BJP, Jaswant Singh, was expelled from the party for his remarks on Jinnah in a book he authored. This time even Advani, who is leader of the opposition in India's current Parliament, did nothing to defend Jaswant Singh.

In post-Partition India, the complicity of some Punjabi Hindus in Partition is denied by an education system and official nationalist historiography that draws impermeable lines between an allegedly incorruptible "secular" Indian National Congress and an unswervingly "communal" Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. This book argues for a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between communalism and anti-colonial nationalism in late colonial India. Focussing on urban Punjabi Hindus, a well-placed minority within undivided Punjab, I follow their many different and counter-intuitive trajectories and trace the possibilities they envisaged for themselves in a free India. Partition was not the only option available, but its final acceptance has decisively shaped the substance of debate in the sub-continent. This book returns to some of those debates, via memory and history, to offer both older and newer ways of thinking through the place of religious differences in our political sphere—one of the most vexing issues in South Asia and the contemporary world.

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NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

AICC	All India Congress Committee (Papers, in NMML)
AIML	All India Muslim League
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BL	British Library
CC	Chief Commissioner
Cd	Command (Papers)
CID	Criminal Intelligence Department
CRL	Center for Research Libraries
CSSH	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
CWLLR	<i>Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai</i>
CWMG	<i>Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i>
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DSA	Delhi State Archives
FF	Frontier Force
FIR	First Information Report
GOI	Government of India
HMS	Hindu Mahasabha (Papers, in NMML)
HP	Home Political (Files)
HSRA	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association/Army
IMS	Indian Medical Service
INC	Indian National Congress
IOR	India Office Records
JAS	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i>
KW	Keep with (Files)
MAS	<i>Modern Asian Studies</i>

MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OHT	Oral History Transcript
Poll	Political
PBF	Punjab Boundary Force
PP	Parliamentary Papers
SAMP	South Asia Microfilm Project
SD	Sanatan Dharm (Sabha)
TP	<i>Transfer of Power</i> (Volumes)
UP	United Provinces

INTRODUCTION

1. Interview of Gokul Chand Narang by Hari Dev Sharma and K. P. Run-
gachary, 13 February 1967, OHT, NMML, 58; emphasis mine.

2. On the question of disbelief as a problem of historical reconstruction, see
Alon Confino, "Narrative Form and Historical Sensation: On Saul Friedländer's
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3. This phrase is from Sudipto Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," in
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4. For histories that focus on Muslim politics, see Francis Robinson, *Separat-
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5. I thus follow in the line of Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags: A
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6. For a recent set of essays that draw upon stereotypical understandings of the creation of Pakistan and the possibility of an Indo-Pak peace process, see Ira Pande ed., *The Great Divide: India and Pakistan* (Delhi, 2009).

7. Even Gilmartin, an exceptionally careful historian, can write that “communal ideology paved the way for the definition of an ‘imagined’ political community—a nation—whose presence justified the emergence of an independent state,” in Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 4. See also Norman Barrier, “The Punjab Government and Communal Politics, 1870–1908,” *JAS* 27, no. 3 (1968); Prem Raman Uprety, *Religion and Politics in Punjab in the 1920s* (Delhi, 1980); and Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics*. For a similarly inflected argument pitched at the level of North India, see David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920–1932* (Delhi, 1982); Sandria Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley, 1989); and Satish Saberwal, *Spirals of Contentment: Why India Was Partitioned in 1947* (London, 2008). For Bengal, see Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932–1947* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); and Bidyut Chakrabarty, *Politics of Accommodation and Confrontation: The Second Partition of Bengal* (Delhi, 2003).

8. Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab* (Berkeley, 1976); Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi, 1994); Anil Sethi, “The Creation of Religious Identities in the Punjab, 1850–1920” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1998).

9. Nonica Datta, *Forming an Identity: A Social History of the Jats* (Delhi, 1999); Farina Mir, “Genre and Devotion in Punjabi Popular Narratives: Rethinking Cultural and Religious Syncretism,” *CSSH* 48, no. 3 (2006); Anna Bigelow, “Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India,” *JAS* 68, no. 2 (2009). For histories that examine the relation between communal formations and other collective identities in North India, see P. K. Datta, *Carving Blocs: Communal Ideology in Early 20th Century Bengal* (Delhi, 1999); Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*; Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives from Village India* (Delhi, 2001); Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities: Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab* (Delhi, 2002); and Pandey, *Construction*.

10. See, for instance, S. R. Mehrotra, “The Congress and the Partition of India,” in *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935–1947*, ed. C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright (Cambridge, MA, 1970); Bipan Chandra et al., *India’s Struggle for Independence, 1857–1947* (Delhi, 1989); Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (Delhi, 2000); and Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History* (Delhi, 2004), 15–16.

11. Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” in *Subaltern Studies 1*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi, 1982); Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ, 1993).

12. Pandey, *Construction*, 10. For the debate on this, see Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Delhi, 1997); Datta, *Carving Blocs*; and Pandey, *Construction*, viii–ix.

13. Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 50. See also Ashis Nandy, *An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination* (Delhi, 2001).

14. David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," *JAS* 57, no. 4 (1998); and, more recently, Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York, 2007). For histories that focus on gender, see Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (Rutgers, NJ, 1998); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Delhi, 1998); and Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (Delhi, 1995) and *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley, 2006). New histories on the consequences of Partition include Tan Tai Yong and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (New York, 2000); Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh 1947–1962* (Karachi, 2005); Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar, 1947–1957* (Karachi, 2006); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge, UK, 2007); Papiya Ghosh, *Partition and the South Asian Diaspora: Extending the Subcontinent* (London, 2007); and Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (Delhi, 2007). On the split between high politics and history from below, see Mushirul Hasan, ed., *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India* (Delhi, 2000); and S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta, eds., *Pangs of Partition*, vol. 2 (Delhi, 2002).

15. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK, 1985) and *Self and Sovereignty*; see also Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India*.

16. Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (Delhi, 1979); S. Gopal, "Nehru, Religion and Secularism," in *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology: Essays in Honour of Romila Thapar*, ed. R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (Delhi, 1996).

17. For discussions on the Congress's role in fomenting communalism, see Chatterji, *Bengal Divided*; Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts*, 3; Mukul Kesavan, "Communal Violence and Its Impact on the Politics of North India, 1937 to 1939," *Occasional Papers on History and Society*, Second Series, XXIII, NMML (Delhi, 1990); Pradeep Kumar, "Hindu Nationalism and Lala Lajpat Rai's Political Discourse," in *Lala Lajpat Rai in Retrospect: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Concerns*, ed. J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Chandigarh, 2000); and William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge, UK, 2004). On myths and emotions, see Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhoomi," in *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid- Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, ed. S. Gopal (Delhi, 1991); Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Perceptions, Emotions, Sensibilities: Essays on India's Colonial and Post-Colonial*

Experiences (Delhi, 1999); and Rajat Kanta Ray, *The Felt Community: Commonalty and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Delhi, 2003).

18. See Mul Raj, *Beginnings of Punjabi Nationalism: Autobiography of RB Mul Raj* (Hoshiarpur, 1975).

19. P. H. M. van den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and Authority in Nineteenth-Century India* (London, 1972).

20. British officers posted in the Punjab feared that the volume of land transfers from peasants to moneylenders would foment unrest in the countryside. In British censuses, most of these peasants were “Muslim” and the moneylenders were “Hindu.” A classic statement embodying these fears is Septimus Thorburn, *Musalman and Money-Lenders in the Punjab* (Edinburgh, 1886).

21. Weekly Report CID, 30 October, HP Series B, 32-41/November 1909, NAI.

22. Lajpat Rai, “Hindus and Politics,” *The People*, 2 May 1926.

23. Lajpat Rai, “Differences with the Swaraj Party,” *Tribune*, 30 September 1926.

24. For examples of liberal historiography, see Datta, *Carving Blocs*, 48-50; Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India*, 210; Gyanendra Pandey, “Which of Us Are Hindus?” in Pandey, ed., *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today* (Delhi, 1993) and reprinted in his *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford, 2006), 122-125.

25. Although I focus on the non-violent actions of Bhagat Singh, a parallel debate in American history on the place of “terrorism” in the figure of abolitionist John Brown is of interest for its clear statement of the issues faced by historians working on episodes of violence these days. See James McPherson, “Days of Wrath,” *New York Review of Books* 52, no. 8 (2005).

26. An early version of this argument is in Neeti Nair, “We Left Our Keys with Our Neighbours: Memory and the Search for Meaning in Post-Partitioned India,” MIT Rosemarie Rogers Working Paper 29 (2004).

27. Richard Sennett, “Disturbing Memories,” in *Memory*, ed. Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson (Cambridge, UK, 1998), 22.

28. Charles Maier, “Doing History, Doing Justice: The Narrative of the Historian and of the Truth Commission,” in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 275.

29. See Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley, 2006); and Pandey, *Routine Violence*.

30. See, for instance, the essays by Ajai Sahni and Madhu Kishwar in Pande, ed., *The Great Divide*.

CHAPTER 1: LOYALTY AND ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM

1. J. T. F. Jordens, *Swami Shradhdhananda: His Life and Causes* (Delhi, 1981), 46; Norman Barrier, “The Punjab Government and Communal Politics, 1870-1908,” *JAS* 27, no. 3 (1968): 523-539.

2. For a different interpretation, see Ravindra Kumar, “Urban Society and Urban Politics: Lahore in 1919,” in *Five Punjabi Centuries: Polity, Economy, Society and Culture, c. 1500-1990*, ed. Indu Banga (Delhi, 1997), 187.

3. Braja Krishna Prasad to Bhai Parmanand, 3 January 1901, HP Series B, 25–26/January 1910, NAI; John McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton, NJ, 1977), 244–255.

4. Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation in Politics* (Lahore [1909], 1938), 111–112.

5. *Ibid.*, 77.

6. *Ibid.*, 4, 32. See also Nina Puri, *Political Elite and Society in the Punjab* (Delhi, 1985).

7. Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation*, 119.

8. *Ibid.*, 36–38; 49. Sri Ram Sharma records a proverb that was common in Punjab a generation before Lal Chand and was probably as common in his time: “One read in Persian is half a Muslim.” See Sri Ram Sharma, *Mahatma Hansraj: The Maker of the Modern Punjab* (Lahore, 1941), 7.

9. See V. C. Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings* (Delhi, 1965), 79.

10. Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi, 1994); Anil Sethi, “The Creation of Religious Identities in the Punjab, 1850–1920” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1998); Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in North India* (Delhi, 2006). See also Romila Thapar, “Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity,” *MAS* 23, no. 2 (1989): 209–231.

11. Lajpat Rai wrote: “It was from Maulvi Muhammad Hussain’s *Qasis-i-Hind* that I first learned to admire Hindu valour and to be proud of Hindus . . . At that time a book on Indian history called *Waqiat-i-Hind* used to be taught at Government schools. That book created in me the feeling that Mussalmans had subjected the Hindus to great tyranny. Gradually the respect for Islam that I had acquired from early training began to change into hatred because of study of *Waqiat-i-Hind*.” See Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings*, 77.

12. Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation*, 65; emphasis in the original.

13. *Ibid.*, 79, 97.

14. *Ibid.*, 101–102; emphasis in the original.

15. Lajpat Rai, *Panjabee*, 15 July 1909, HP Series B, 13–14/May 1910, NAI.

16. Lajpat Rai, “Grievances of Punjab Delegates,” *Panjabee*, 6 February and 6 March 1905; *CWLLR*, vol. 2, 2002, 20.

17. HP Series A, 154–156/October 1909, NAI.

18. Weekly Report CID, 4 September, HP Series B, 110–117/October 1909, NAI.

19. Weekly Report CID, 18 September, HP Series B, 110–117/October 1909, NAI. The Punjab Congress was itself split, with Harkishen Lal arrayed against Duni Chand and Ram Bhaj Dutt. Lala Harkishen Lal’s companies were targeted in the *Panjabee*, also considered to be Rai’s mouthpiece. See *CWLLR*, vol. 2, 2002, 379–381, 394.

20. Lajpat Rai, “Defects of the Congress and Remedies,” *CWLLR*, vol. 2, 2002, 4, 6, 9. The *shuddhi* movement is discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

21. Note on Ajit Singh, HP Deposit, 33/July 1909, NAI.

22. Pardaman Singh and Joginder Singh Dhanki, eds., *Buried Alive: Autobiography, Speeches and Writings of an Indian Revolutionary, Sardar Ajit Singh* (Delhi,

1984), 33–35, 37. Soon after the deportation of Rai and Singh, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a prominent congressman who was at this time a member of the Governor General's Council, complained that bracketing Ajit Singh with Lajpat Rai was a “monstrous injustice” to Rai. See Gokhale's correspondence in HP Deposit, 3/August 1907, NAI.

23. Lajpat Rai speech in *Panjabee*, 27 March 1907, HP Deposit, 33/July 1909, NAI, emphasis mine.

24. “It is my firm conviction that Hindus shall never cease to be Hindus and Mohammedans shall never cease to be Mohammedans. Their religious ideals are so different that it is impossible to expect a complete social union of them in the near future. But that is no reason why they cannot make common cause in political work.” Lajpat Rai, “Address to Punjab Provincial Conference,” 30 September 1906, in *CWLLR*, vol. 2, 2002, 61. For a different interpretation, see Norman Barrier, “Mass Politics and the Punjab Congress in the Pre-Gandhian Era,” *The Panjab Past and Present* (October 1975): 357.

25. Notes in the Army Department, HP Series A, 3–5/July 1907; speeches on 24 March 1908, 27 and 28 April 1907, HP Deposit, 33/July 1909; telegram 8 May 1907 from viceroy to secretary of state, HP Series A, 148–235/August 1907, NAI.

26. Singh and Dhanki, *Buried Alive*, 36.

27. Daily Reports CID, 24 July and 3 August, HP Series B, 5–90/August 1907; 30 May, HP Series B, 39–177/July 1907. See also HP Series A, 24/August 1907, NAI.

28. Daily Report CID, 9 July, HP Series B, 5–90/August 1907; telegram 19 June, HP Series B, 39–177/July 1907, NAI.

29. Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings*, 127–128.

30. P. D. Agnew, DC, Rawalpindi, to M. W. Fenton, commissioner, Rawalpindi, 5 October 1907, HP Series A, 64–72/January 1908; emphasis mine. See also Sri Ram Sharma, *Punjab in Ferment in the Beginning of the 20th Century* (Patiala, 1966), 18–22; appendices II and III have copies of the articles from the *Panjabee*.

31. E. D. MacLagan to H. H. Risley, Secretary GOI Home, 3 May 1909, HP Deposit, 33/July 1909, NAI.

32. Daily report CID, 13 July, HP Series B, 5–90/August 1907, NAI. The report adds that “the better class of Muhammadans do not regard its [*Watan*’s] privileged treatment as any concession to themselves while it intensifies the bitterness of the Hindus.” The colonial tendency to read all evidence in Hindu/Muslim terms here allows for difference in opinion along lines of class.

33. HP Series A, 181–185/July 1907; Daily Report CID, 15 July, HP Series B, 5–90/August 1907. This particular rivalry carried on for years and was the focus of a revealing conversation between British officials about the advisability of inviting both Mahbub Alam and Dina Nath to a garden party at the home of the lieutenant governor, Sir Louis Dane, in 1912. The secretary retorted: “I think I may safely say that Lahore Society will be surprised to see Lala Dina Nath and Moulvi Mahbub Alam at Government House—or to be accurate, would have been surprised under any other regime. The two men are second class journalists, and not of gentle origin. I have met Moulvi Mahbub Alam out at Indian parties, and have probably included him in my own, but never Lala Dina Nath. But this is a social

question. *Politically both men are now pro-Government. They have found this pays, and they get their sensations by stirring up Hindu-Muhammadan feeling. They hate each other.*" M. S. D. Butler, 18 March, HP Series B, 42-43/April 1912, NAI, emphasis is added.

34. HP Series A, 181-185/July 1907; HP Deposit, 29/July 1907, NAI.

35. The reporter was careful to assert that this was not to be taken literally and merely indicated the intensity of their desire to conciliate Muslims. Daily Reports CID, 2 and 8 July, HP Series B, 5-90/August 1907, NAI.

36. Among the special missionaries were Kesho Deo, Arora of Montgomery, Bhai Sohan Singh, *pujari* of Hasan Abdal, and Bal Dev Lal, alias Guru Mahant of Multan. Daily Report CID, 31 May, HP Series B, 39-177/July 1907. Weekly Reports 5 and 24 August, HP Series B, 135-145/August 1907, NAI.

37. Daily Reports CID, 2 and 3 June, HP Series B, 39-177/July 1907, NAI; James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India, 1907-1917* (Delhi, 1973), 24.

38. See Satya Rai, *Legislative Politics and Freedom Struggle on the Panjab, 1897-1947* (Delhi, 1984), 33.

39. Daily Reports CID, 21 and 27 May and 4, 17, and 25 June, HP Series B, 39-177/July 1907, NAI.

40. Weekly Reports 21 and 28 September, HP Series B, 40-49/October 1907, NAI.

41. Secret note on the Arya Samaj, 20 December 1909, HP Deposit, April 1912, NAI. See also Sharma, *Mahatma Hansraj*, 158.

42. Weekly Report CID, 14 September, HP Series B, 40-49/October 1907; report of a special private meeting in the Anarkali Arya Samaj Hall on 6 August, HP Series B, 135-145/August 1907, NAI.

43. Weekly Report, 30 November, HP Series B, 19-26/January 1908; Weekly Report 1 September, HP Series B, 40-49/October 1907, NAI.

44. Daily Report CID, 10 June, HP Series B, 39-177/July 1907, NAI. Lajpat Rai also was afraid "the bursting out may not be premature." Lajpat Rai to Bhai Parmanand, 11 April 1907, in *Perspectives on Indian National Movement: Selected Correspondence of Lala Lajpat Rai*, ed. Joginder Singh Dhanki (Delhi, 1998), 32.

45. "Oh Martyrs!!" HP Deposit, 19/December 1908, NAI; for one version of this speech, see also V. N. Datta, *Madan Lal Dhingra and the Revolutionary Movement* (Delhi, 1978), Appendix I.

46. "Proposed Prosecution of the 'India' of Gujranwala," HP Series A, 3-5/July 1907. Two to three thousand copies of this leaflet were believed to have been circulated amongst the army. Daily Report 21 May, HP Series B, 39-177/July 1907; and Notes, HP Series A, 178-180/July 1907, NAI.

47. Army Department, adjutant general's notes: "If the military authorities issue orders that no member of the Arya Samaj is to be recruited . . . we may be pretty certain that we shall have petitions to the Government of India, memorials to the Secretary of State and questions in Parliament . . . Now I doubt whether we could justify the assertion that the Arya Samaj is a seditious political society. Many of its members are undoubtedly loyal to the British nation and membership does not necessarily imply disaffection." HP Series B, 798-800/July 1910; and HP Deposit, 7 and 18/August 1910, NAI.

48. Munshi Ram and Rama Deva, *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors* (Dayanandabad, 1910). See also Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda*, 82–89.

49. Munshi Ram, *Arya Samaj*, 12, 16, 30–32; emphasis mine. For arguments that link the Arya Samaj with later developments in Hindu Nationalism, see Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford, 2001); Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York, 1996); and John Zavos, *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India* (Delhi, 2000).

50. This is probably a reference to James Mill's *Essay on Government* (1820) and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859).

51. Mr. Warburton was more than seventy years old, his pay was exorbitant, and he was due for retirement. He allegedly had been asked to resign by prominent Arya Samajis. Claiming the state was in the throes of an imminent revolution would provide an excuse for his continual service. Munshi Ram and Rama Deva, *Arya Samaj*, 61–63.

52. Weekly Report 11 December 1909, HP Series B, 120–127/February 1910 and 13 June 1910; HP Series B, 6/September 1910, NAI. See also Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda*, 87.

53. Munshi Ram, *Arya Samaj*, 129–130; emphasis mine.

54. *Science Grounded Religion*, quoted in Weekly Report CID, 10 May, HP Series B, 1–9/August 1910; also *Annual Report on the Native States Published in the Punjab*, HP Series B, 2–3/October 1912, NAI.

55. Weekly Report CID, 7 December, HP Series B, 19–26/January 1908, NAI; see Dhanpat Rai, *Life Story of Lala Lajpat Rai* (Delhi, 1976), 43.

56. Joginder Singh Dhanki, *Lala Lajpat Rai and Indian Nationalism* (Jalandhar, 1990).

57. HP Series B, 65–75/August 1909, NAI.

58. *Muhibban-i-Watan* described the lives of those who had struggled for the country; *Mutaliba-i-Mal* discussed land taxes; subsequent publications included *The Thoughts of Shivaji*; *The Speeches of Surendra Nath Banerji*; *National Education*; *The Speeches of Mr. Gokhale*; *How Nations Can Live*; *Government Service*; *The Story of India as Told by Mr. Keir Hardie*; *The Thoughts of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose*; *The Thoughts of Dadabhai*; *Mazamin-i-Har Dyal*; *Divide and Rule*; *Annexation of the Punjab*, *Bandar Bant*; *Inquilab*, *Twarikhi Nazmen*, *Mulki Nazmen*; and *Takarir-i-Ajit*. The Punjab government procrastinated with legislation to ban these books and arrest members of the Bharat Mata Society until a severely anti-colonial speech made by Ajit Singh forced their hand. HP Series A, 103–110/April 1909; HP Series B, 115–124/June 1909; HP Series B, 120–129 August 1909; HP Deposit, 33/July 1909; and HP Series B, 7–10/December 1910, NAI.

59. HP Series B, 49–58/September 1908; HP Series A, 105–112/February 1909, NAI.

60. Munshi Ram, *Arya Samaj*, 131. It is hard not to find this scold of contemporary relevance.

61. Interestingly the British halted in their pursuit because one of the members of Ajit Singh's party, Zia-ul-Huq, was a former informer being paid by the United Provinces government. They were not sure how much he would reveal in a court of law. HP Series A, 119–126/May 1910; HP Series B, 28–29/January 1911, NAI.

62. HP Series B/June 1911, NAI; Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation*, 80.
63. Lajpat Rai to Bhai Parmanand in London, 28 February 1907; reprinted in Dhanki, *Perspectives*, 28.
64. Weekly Report CID, 18 December, HP 120–127/February 1910, NAI; Datta, *Madan Lal Dhingra*; Bhai Parmanand, *The Story of My Life* (Lahore [1934], 1982), xv, 37.
65. Weekly Reports CID, 8 November, HP Series B, 7–10/December 1910; 19 February, HP Series B, 1–8/June 1910; 11 July, HP Series B, 41–44/August 1911; and 5 September, HP Series B, 46–49/October 1911, NAI.
66. Sharma, *Mahatma Hansraj*, 130–134. The Delhi Conspiracy Case concerned a failed assassination attempt on the viceroy, Lord Hardinge.
67. Munshi Ram, *Arya Samaj*, 283.
68. HP Series A, 42–46/March 1910, NAI.
69. Note on the political situation in Lahore, HP Series A, 155/October 1909, NAI. Also quoted in Satya Rai, *Legislative Politics*, 42.
70. HP Series A, 123–124/August 1910; and HP Series A, 21–42/May 1911, NAI.
71. Presidential address of Pt. Malaviya, Congress Session held at Lahore, 27–29 December 1909, HP Series B, 13–14/May 1910, NAI.
72. Lajpat Rai to Ramsay Macdonald, 24 November 1910, in Dhanki, *Perspectives*, 55–56.
73. The October 1906 deputation led by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca led to the founding of the All India Muslim League in December of that year. The deputation was a response to Curzon's infamous Partition of Bengal into two provinces along religious lines—Bengal with a predominantly Hindu majority and Eastern Bengal and Assam with a Muslim majority.
74. Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), 20.
75. See Barrier, "The Punjab Government"; David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920–1932* (Delhi, 1982); Bernard Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia," in *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, 1988); Gyan Prakash, "The Colonial Genealogy of Society: Community and Political Modernity in India," in *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, ed. Patrick Joyce (New York, 2002); Meeto Malik, *In the Making: Identity Formation in South Asia* (Delhi, 2007).
76. Home Department letters to local governments, 24 August 1907, in Cd 4435, Vol. II, Part I: 5–6.
77. E. D. Maclagan to all commissioners of divisions in the Punjab, 27 September 1907, in *ibid.* Urdu translations of the letter appeared in the *Government Gazette*.
78. See enclosure XXI to GOI letter, 1 October 1908, concerning council reforms, Lahore, 1908. Reprinted in PP 1908, Cd 4436. The next few pages rely on the evidence in this volume.
79. For instance, in the opinion of Shiv Ram Das, secretary, Sanatan Dharm Sabha Multan: "Matter-of-fact leaders should be selected . . . persons well-known for their wide sympathies, high moral culture . . . well-read and in no case be big-

ots, religious zealots, or persons who owe their existence and positions in life to the widening of the gulf between the Hindus and Muhammadans etc.” Rai Bahadur Lal Chand preferred “no election at all rather than an election by castes, classes and religions.” However, he acknowledged the respect accorded to the learned: both Brahmin and Maulvi. Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana was against distinction along lines of religions, creeds, or different classes of people. “If Muhammadans and Hindus are separated to choose their own representatives and the two become separate bodies, it would cause a great ill feeling.” These were also the views of Sardar Bikram Singh, honorary magistrate, Amritsar.

80. Tek Chand, DC, Ludhiana; Ishwar Das, secretary, Arya Samaj Multan; and Hari Chand, vice president, Municipal Committee Multan believed that Hindus and Sikhs ought to get one seat each in the Punjab Council and Muslims two seats, thereby bringing the two communities on par with each other.

81. Sham Das, government pleader and vice president, Municipal Committee, Hoshiarpur.

82. This was also the opinion of Lala Mul Chand, public prosecutor, Sialkot. Lala Rajendra Prasad, Nau Nehal Kishan, and Pyare Lal, pleaders of Delhi, claimed that Indian Christians, Sikhs, and Parsis would demand special representation. They wanted representation according to occupation. Tika Ram Narayan Singh, honorary magistrate and civil judge, Anandpur District, Hoshiarpur, demanded that the government protect Sikh rights in the same manner as they had for the Muslims.

83. Diwan Narendra Nath, DC, Gujrat. Lala Ishwar Das, secretary of the Arya Samaj, Multan; Shiv Ram Das, secretary, Sanatan Dharm Sabha, Multan; Rai Sahib K. B. Thapar, Lahore; and Chaudhri Narain Singh, zamindar of Shujabad, did not see the need for special representation for Muslims.

84. Lala Harkishen Lal, barrister-at-law, Lahore. Baba Gurbaksh Singh Bedi of Kullar wanted further efforts towards uniting the opinions of various classes. They suggested nomination if all classes were not represented.

85. K. B. Thapar, Lal Chand, Muhammad Hassan, and Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana.

86. These were also the views of P. D. Agnew, DC, Rawalpindi, and David Mason, CIE, Lahore. They warned that giving disproportionate electoral power would lead to dissatisfaction among members of other religions.

87. See Appendix D to Command Paper 4436.

88. K. B. Thapar; Lala Harkishen Lal preferred election through special electorates for the Provincial Legislative Council, while Rai Sahib Narayan Das believed election was unsuited. Abdul Ghafur Khan, Khan Bahadur Makhdum Husain Mukhsh, Quraishi, *Sajjada Nashin* of the shrines of Bahawal Haq and Rukn-i-Alam, Multan, Abdul Aziz, and Mian Muhammad Shafi were against elections as well. Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana preferred that the government nominate members to two seats reserved for the Muslim community because there were “72 different sub-divisions of the Muhammadan religion which are all different from each other . . . take Aligarh or the Islamia College Punjab or different Muhammadan rival associations of India, it will be difficult to recognize to which this privilege be given.”

89. HP Series B, 13-14/May 1910, NAI.

90. Weekly Report CID, 20 February 1909, HP Series B, 100-107/June 1909, NAI.

91. Mul Chand, in PP 1908, Cd 4436.

92. The Provincial Legislative Council proposed in this letter had twenty-one members, of which eleven were non-officials. Of these, one would be a ruling chief; one from the European, Anglo-Indian, and Native Christian unofficial and commercial classes; one from the university; two from larger cities; three would be Muslim; two Hindus; and one Sikh. The members shown for each creed would belong to the landholding classes. The urban representatives would be selected out of members nominated by cantonment and municipal committees. Since a large proportion of the men in municipal committees were nominated, this would tend to secure the nomination of "reasonable men." It is difficult not to realize how much energy and rivalry would be unleashed to such little consequence.

93. GOI to Secretary of State Morley, 1 October 1908, concerning council reforms, Lahore. Reprinted in PP 1908, Cd 4426.

94. The regulations for giving effect to the Indian Councils Act of 1909 affected the Punjab as follows: The Punjab would nominate two official members, one elected member (from the council of the lieutenant governor of the Punjab), and two non-official members nominated by the governor general—one representing Punjabi Muslims and the other representing the landholders of the Punjab—to the Imperial Legislative Council. The Punjab Legislative Council was expanded to have twenty-five members, including the lieutenant governor, twelve of whom were non-officials. There would be seven nominated members representing various interests, including two seats for Muslims, one for Hindus, and one for Sikhs. There would be five elected members—one from the commercial community, one by the Punjab University, and three from the larger cities. The city electorate would consist of three groups representing, respectively, the Cis-Sutlej territory, the Central Punjab with the Sikh districts, and the western Punjab, where the population was largely Muslim. Letter from GOI to Secretary of State, 1 October 1908, in Cd 4426 has both the proposals of the Punjab government with statistics showing how the population was divided and the amended proposals put forward by the GOI. In 1913, this was amended to give representation to district boards; three members would be elected from a district board electorate. Thus, the eight elected members included one from the Punjab University, three from municipal and cantonment committees, three from district boards, and one from the Punjab Chamber of Commerce. Of the sixteen members nominated by the lieutenant governor, not more than ten would be officials. In addition to these twenty-four, the lieutenant governor could also nominate two experts, official or non-official, depending on the issue under discussion in the council. See Cd 4987 (1910) and Cd 6714 (1913).

95. Presidential address of Pt. Malaviya, HP Series B, 13-14/May 1910, NAI.

96. Ibid.

97. Weekly Report 29 March 1909, HP Series A, 103-110/April 1909, NAI. Resolution VI, passed during the Congress session of 1909, protested the regulations for the Punjab for the following reasons: the numerical strength of the council did not permit the representation of all classes and interests of the population;

the elected element for the Provincial Council was too small; the principle of protection of minorities applied in the case of Muslims in provinces where they were in a minority had not been applied for non-Muslims who were in a minority in the Punjab, in the case of both the Provincial and Imperial Councils; and the regulations kept non-Muslims out of the Imperial Council. For a different reading, see Satya Rai, *Legislative Politics*, 38.

98. Resolution XVI passed at Allahabad Congress session, 26–29 December 1910, HP Series B, 52–55/May 1911, NAI.

99. Kenneth Jones, “Religious Identity and the Indian Census,” in *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Barrier (Delhi, 1981), 92.

100. Dhanki, *Perspectives*, 86–87.

101. See letters between Lajpat Rai and Narendra Nath, *ibid.*, 61–62.

102. Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings*, 79.

103. Weekly Reports CID, 8 and 15 August, HP Series B, 3–7/September 1911, NAI.

104. *Shanti*, 2 November 1912; *Panjabee*, 9 October and 14 November 1912, in HP Series B, 59/November 1912, NAI.

105. Dina Nath, quoted in HP Series B, 59/November 1912, NAI.

106. *Observer*, 30 October 1912, in HP Series B, 61/November 1912; *Paisa Akhbar*, 11 April 1910, in HP Series B, 44/May 1910, NAI.

107. Weekly Report CID, 24 July, HP Series B, 120–129/August 1909; HP Series A, 66–68/September 1909, NAI. See Datta, *Madan Lal Dhingra*, for a detailed account of the emotional transactions between the Dhingra family and British officials in the Punjab in the wake of the assassination.

108. Ker, *Political Trouble*, 232.

109. See Dhanki, *Perspectives*, 70–72; Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India* (New York, 1919).

110. Canada had instituted a new set of immigration laws to restrict the entry of “Asiatics.” According to these laws, every Asiatic immigrant had to have two hundred Canadian dollars and had to travel by continuous journey from his native country to Canada. Since there was no direct ship from India to Canada in those days, this was hoped to successfully ward off Indians. But Gurdit Singh chartered the *Komagata Maru* to make the journey from Calcutta to Vancouver and promised indigent Sikhs he would raise the requisite funds on their behalf. The 2004 documentary film *Continuous Journey* directed by Ali Kazimi captures the meanings of the *Komagata Maru* expedition very well.

111. *Ghadar*, 15 November 1913, quoted in Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadar 1915: India's First Armed Revolution* (Delhi, 1996), 20. The Ghadr was headquartered in the Yugantar Ashram, and became the voice of the Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast. The first issue of *Ghadar* was dated November 1913. Subsequent issues were translated into Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu, Gurmukhi, and for a brief while, Pushto.

112. Weekly Report CID, 23 June, HP Series B, 124–128/July 1914, NAI.

113. HP Series B, 416–419/April 1915, NAI.

114. HP Series B, 62–66/November 1913, and HP Series B, 5–17/June 1913, NAI; Ker, *Political Trouble*, 251.

115. Ram Chandra Peshawari to the *New York Times*, 21 July 1915, HP Series B, 582-585/September 1915, NAI.
116. HP Series B, 160-161/May 1910, NAI.
117. Parmanand, *Story of My Life*, 65-73.
118. Ker, *Political Trouble*, 372; F. C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy* (Meerut [1919], 1998), 13-14; HP Series B, 709-711/December 1915, NAI.
119. It is worth noting that Parmanand was released in 1920 on promise of "abstention from seditious agitation." HP 99/1/1925 and HP 28/5/1933, NAI.
120. Mark Juergensmeyer, "Ghadar Sources: Research on Punjab Revolutionaries in America" in *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh*, ed. Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (Patiala, 1976), 306.
121. Quoted in Foreword, Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account*. I have changed the original translation slightly.
122. Report on the Meerut Bomb Affair, 14 April, HP Series B, 436-439/May 1916, NAI.
123. *Tribune*, 28 November 1912; *Arjun*, 23 November 1912; *Jhang Sial*, 28 November 1912; and *Shanti*, 23 November 1912, in HP Series B, 107/December 1912, NAI.
124. *Observer*, 24 August 1912, in HP Series A, 45-55/March 1913, NAI.
125. Report on State of Muhammadan Feeling in the Punjab, C. A. Barron, 11 October 1913, HP Series A, 100-118/October 1913, NAI. This report claimed that the local government did not wish to support a Muslim university because that would "exaggerate the importance of the unity of Islam and increase the difficulties which are experienced when conditions such as those now existing arise."
126. Joan W. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 15-16.
127. HP Series B, 65-75/August 1909, NAI.
128. Meeting of the Council of the Governor-General, 1 November 1907, HP Series A, 64-72/January 1908, NAI.
129. Harkishen Lal, Speech on 26 December 1909, Report on Lahore Congress Session, HP Series B, 13-14/May 1910, NAI.
130. Weekly Report 6 July, HP Series B, 1-8/August 1908, NAI.
131. S. K. Datta to Bhowani Dass, 9 February 1910, HP Series B, 70-82/July 1910, NAI; emphasis mine.
132. G. L. Batra to Rai Bahadur Bhowani Dass, 24 February 1910, *ibid*.
133. "Judgment in Delhi Conspiracy Case," in Ker, *Political Trouble*, 362. Even as revolutionaries celebrated this attempt on the life of Lord Hardinge, Punjab's loyalists sent telegrams offering loyalty and fabulous amounts of money. HP Series B, 3-25/April 1913, NAI.
134. HP Series B, 124-128/July 1914; HP Series B, 51-59/September 1910, NAI; Ker, *Political Trouble*, 229.
135. Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings*, 197-222.
136. Lajpat Rai to Walter Lippmann, 17 January 1916, in Dhanki, *Perspectives*, xxv.

137. Lajpat Rai, *Young India: An Interpretation and a History of the Nationalist Movement from Within* (Delhi [1916], 1965), 79.

138. *Ibid.*, 63.

139. In 1907, the Arya Samaji leader Ram Bhaj Dutt had said: "Mahomedan kings whom we describe as bigoted and narrow-minded were in reality very good people. During their time and under their rule the Hindus enjoyed great freedom. Hindus used to hold high appointments under them. In matters of the empire the Hindus used to get their equal share. This we do not get now under the English rule." CID Report, 6 May, HP Series A, 181-185/July 1907, NAI.

140. Lajpat Rai, *An Open Letter to the Right Honorable David Lloyd George* (New York, 1917), 21.

141. Munshi Ram, *Arya Samaj*, 109; *Hindu*, 2 November 1912, in HP Series B, 62/November 1912, NAI.

CHAPTER 2: NEGOTIATING A MINORITY STATUS

1. Although aware of problems associated with the use of the word "riot" to describe very different instances of rebellion, for heuristic purposes I make use of the term. See Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today," *Representations* 37 (Winter 1992).

2. M. K. Gandhi, "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure," *Young India*, 29 May 1924. This paradigm had a long afterlife. See Interview of Dr. Gokul Chand Narang by Hari Dev Sharma and K. P. Rungachary on 13 February 1967, OHT, NMML, 23-24.

3. See, for instance, Shyam Krishna Dhar, "Life and Times of Dayananda Saraswati, Part IV," *The Vedic Magazine and Gurukul Samachara* 1, no. 5 (1907).

4. Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab* (Berkeley, 1976), 145-153; for shifting alliances during *shastrarth* between 1880 and 1920 in the UP and Punjab, see Catherine Adcock, "Religious Freedom and Political Culture: The Arya Samaj in Colonial North India" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 49-69.

5. R. K. Ghai, *Shuddhi Movement in India: A Study of Its Socio-political Dimensions* (Delhi, 1990), 37-40.

6. HP Deposit, 4KW/April 1912, NAI; also Lajpat Rai, *A History of the Arya Samaj: An Account of Its Origin, Doctrines and Activities* (Delhi [1915], 1992), 120.

7. Lajpat Rai, "Defects of the Congress and Remedies," in *CWLLR*, vol. 2, 2002, 6.

8. HP Series B, 120-127/February 1910, NAI; Swami Shraddhanand, *Vartaman Mukhya Samasya: Achhutpan ke kalank ko dur karo, Sanyasi ki appeal* (Delhi, 1924), BL.

9. Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation in Politics* (Lahore [1909], 1938), 66-67.

10. Zahur Ahmad to under-secretary for India, 16 April, HP Series B, 66-68/August 1910, NAI.

11. *Panjabee*, 17 May 1910; A. H. Grant, DC Peshawar to W. R. H. Merk, CC NWFP, 13 October 1910, HP Series B, 88-89/February 1911, NAI.

12. HP Series B, 122-123/August 1912, NAI.

13. The voting was as follows: Against amalgamation—twenty-seven Muslims, no Hindus, five Sikhs, six Englishmen, total=thirty-eight. For amalgamation—no Muslims, sixteen Hindus, five Sikhs, two Englishmen, total=twenty-three. The Punjab government abstained from voting, but expressed itself strongly against amalgamation during the debate. See *Report of the North-West Frontier Enquiry Committee* (1924), 22. The third option, preferred by Muslims, was to convert the five settled districts and the independent territories into a governor's province with full-fledged reforms. The British position was to maintain its direct hold on the province, while the Hindus wanted a re-amalgamation with the Punjab. For criticism of the manner in which the Enquiry Committee proceeded to ascertain views by pre-judging and collecting the evidence along communal lines, see the *Tribune*, 26 March and 5 April 1924.

14. *Report of the North-West*, 2.

15. Letter from the acting secretary, Kohat refugees in Rawalpindi, 3 October 1924. The letter included the signatures of petition writers, bankers, clerks, cloth merchants, a headmaster and a stamp vendor. See also Lala Nand Lal, *The Kohat Outrages* (Lahore, 1924), 2. *Janamashtami* is a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of the God Krishna. The letter stated that the poem was in response to another poem that had been published in the Punjabi Muslim paper *Lahaul* that invoked Muslims to burn the Gita, break the Krishna flute, and destroy Hindu goddesses. This letter recognized that the poem reprinted in the *Krishna Sandesh* was not harmless. H. N. Bolton, CC, NWFP, pointed out that *Lahaul* was a Punjab paper and had little or no circulation in Kohat. Correspondence and reports relating to the Kohat riot have been taken from HP Kws to 249/VIII/1924, NAI, unless otherwise noted.

16. Report by Inspector Fakir Chand, CID, 22 September 1924. Hymn No. 11, "To Arabia This Consignment Is to Be Booked." Krishen was the name of the poet from Jammu. See also Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York, 1982), 196-197.

17. Indian News Agency Telegram Simla, 15 September 1924. A telegram from Bolton, CC, NWFP, 13 September 1924, stated: "Provocative attitude of Sanatan Dharm Sabha is due to its capture by gang of young Hindus, headed by Gurditta Mal, pleader. Old Kohat Hindus were not involved at outset, and only slightly afterwards, and will no doubt soon return."

18. Acting secretary, SD Sabha Kohat to CC, NWFP, 7 September 1924.

19. N. E. Reilly to Sardar Ahmad Khan, 8 September 1924.

20. Rough draft report on Kohat riots by H. N. Bolton, CC, NWFP, 10 October 1924.

21. Secretary, Kohat refugees, Rawalpindi, to the special magistrate, 3 October 1924.

22. Maulana Syed Habib's report, *Tribune*, 21 October 1924.

23. Confidential report by Head Constable Abbas Ali Shah to Inspector Diwan Chand on 8 September 1924, in "Report on the Kohat Riots" by the inspector general of police, E. W. Tomkins, 21 September 1924.

24. Notes by Denys Bray, 22 September; Bolton report, 10 October; official GOI resolution, 9 December 1924.

25. Exhibit D in report by Tomkins, 21 September 1924; Nand Lal, *Kohat Outrages*, 4.

26. Reilly's response to criticisms, 23 September 1924. Curiously, although the chief inspector, Diwan Chand, lived in the Hindu Muhalla, he was unaware of these meetings on the morning of September 9. Report on the Kohat riots, 21 September 1924.

27. Telegram from CC, NWFP, 13 September 1924.

28. Telegram from the 6th Indian Infantry Brigade Kohat to Chief of General Staff Simla, 9 September 1924.

29. Viceroy to CC, NWFP, 30 September 1924. For a sense of the magnitude of criticism in the vernacular press, see Punjab Native Newspaper reports, 1924, IOR: L/R/5/205, BL.

30. Telegram from CC, NWFP, 14 September 1924. These confabulations were also mentioned in a later petition of Hindu and Sikh refugees submitted to the viceroy. They held the propaganda of Pir Jamaat Ali Shah and other Muslim leaders responsible for inflaming Muslims. Petition from Hindu and Sikh refugees of Kohat, 10 January 1925; and telegram from CC, NWFP, 17 January 1925.

31. Telegrams to and from CC, NWFP, 15 and 16 September 1924.

32. Bolton, Rough draft report on Kohat riots, 10 October 1924.

33. Col. C. Kirkpatrick, 3/12th FF (Frontier Force) Regiment (commanding Kohat at the time of riots) to the general staff, Kohat District, 9 October 1924.

34. G. Jacob, major-general, to CC, NWFP, 10 October 1924.

35. Bolton's draft report, 10 October 1924; Denys Bray, 20 October 1924.

36. "I do not think that the Deputy Commissioner can seriously be blamed for the release of Jiwan Dass [*sic*] on bail on September the 8th . . . Credit is due to the Deputy Commissioner for concentrating his police in the city . . . Credit is due both to the Officer Commanding troops and the Deputy Commissioner for having succeeded in keeping the tribes at a safe distance and localizing the trouble . . . [there was] nothing to show that from September the 2nd onwards both parties were preparing for the outbreak." Bolton's revised report, 13 November 1924.

37. Reilly also noted that about six hundred Hindus were protected by sympathetic Muhammadans. Response to Bray, 23 September 1924. The press also carried reports of Muslims sheltering Hindus.

38. Report by Col. Kirkpatrick, 27 October 1924. Officers in the General Staff Branch privately concurred. G. N. Cory, major-general, thought the civil intelligence on the extent and gravity of the trouble defective and W. R. Birdwood faulted the paucity of civil police. Notes in the General Staff Branch, 14 October 1924.

39. Reilly's replies, 28 and 29 September 1924. The viceroy also asked what precautions were taken on the night of September 9: "After the events of the 9th this was obviously a critical time and reprisals might have been expected that night or on the morrow." Telegram from viceroy to CC, NWFP, 30 September 1924; Bolton, revised report, 13 November 1924.

40. DC Kohat to CC Peshawar, 11 January 1925.

41. O. K. Caroe, Special Magistrate's Report, 3 December 1924.

42. Reports by E. L. Handyside, commandant, Frontier Constabulary, 1 October 1924, and H. Lillie, superintendent of police, Kohat, 29 September 1924.

43. Petition from Hindu and Sikh refugees of Kohat, 10 January 1925; emphasis mine. British reports did show an unabashed anti-Hindu bias. Caroe, for instance, wrote his report without interviewing refugees in Rawalpindi because he had no jurisdiction in Punjab, and Bolton recommended the expulsion of Hindu leaders if a settlement was not possible between the two communities.

44. In aggregate terms, both Hindus and Muslims suffered enormously during the riots: thirteen Hindus and ten Muslims were killed; thirteen Hindus and one Muslim were missing and believed killed; twenty-four Hindus and six Muslims were seriously wounded; sixty-two Hindus and seventeen Muslims were slightly wounded. Report by O. K. Caroe, special magistrate, 5 October 1924. Homes and shops were burnt—318 Hindu and 159 Muslim. Reported from Major M. E. Rae, secretary to chief commissioner, NWFP, 28 January 1925. The east side of the Kucha Zargarani was occupied by Muslims, the west by Hindus. The entire lane was burnt on 10 September 1924. This amounted to losses worth Rs 2,40,764 and Rs 2,23,807, respectively. The damage to the Hindu Muhalla amounted to Rs 3,26,624 and damages outside the city amounted to Rs 4770. Memo from Bolton, 11 December 1924. A total of Rs 1,03,944 was distributed among 2,530 men, mostly Hindus, at the conclusion of the Identification Committee. Report by Nawabzada Muhammad Nasir Khan, district judge, Kohat, and President Identification Committee, 6 November 1925.

45. Denys Bray, 9 December 1924.

46. M. K. Gandhi, "The Kohat Visit" and "The Kohat Tragedy," *Young India*, 31 October and 18 December 1924; emphasis mine.

47. Telegram from Pt. Malaviya to viceroy, 1 December 1924; *Tribune*, 6 December 1924.

48. Proceedings of a meeting of the Muslim Working Committee Kohat under the presidentship of Nawab Baz Muhammad Khan, chief of Khattaks, 5 December 1924.

49. Notes, Denys Bray, 15 December 1924.

50. M. K. Gandhi, "Speech at Rawalpindi," 5 February 1925, CWMG, vol. 26, 82.

51. M. K. Gandhi to viceroy, 19 February 1925, CWMG, vol. 26, 170.

52. Private secretary to viceroy to Gandhi, 22 February 1925, HP Kws to 249/VIII/1924, NAI.

53. "Mahatmaji on the Kohat Question," *Tribune*, 14 December 1924; and "Kohat Conciliation," *Tribune*, 16 November 1924.

54. M. K. Gandhi, "The Kohat Tragedy," *Young India*, 18 December 1924.

55. Mr. Gandhi's Statement, 19 March 1925, CWMG, vol. 26, 343-344; but see letter to editor by Eshwar Dass, a Kohat refugee, *Tribune*, 29 January 1925.

56. M. K. Gandhi, "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure," *Young India*, 29 May 1924.

57. Mr. Gandhi's Statement, 19 March 1925, CWMG, vol. 26, 342. An accusation of forced conversions was later retracted by the *Tribune*. See reports filed on 21 and 30 September 1924 and also Maulana Syed Habib's report, *Tribune*, 21 October 1924.

58. For the massive ramifications of the High Court ruling on the pamphlet *Rangila Rasul* published by Rajpal, see HP 132/III/1927 and HP 217/1928, NAI and debates in the press between 1925 and 1927.

59. Bhai Parmanand, "The Kohat Problem—An Appeal to Congressmen," *Tribune*, 12 November 1924.

60. Lajpat Rai, "The Hindus of Kohat," *Tribune*, 19 November 1924.

61. Lala Duni Chand, "Kohat and Its Barbarities," *Tribune*, 14 October 1924.

62. Raj Indro Lal Sahni, Montgomery, letter to editor, *Tribune*, 5 December 1924.

63. *Tribune*, 18 September 1924 and 7 April 1925; HP Kws to 249/VIII/1924, NAI.

64. David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1920–1932* (Delhi, 1982), 30. See also Lala Harkishen Lal's evidence to the Reforms Committee, *Tribune*, 17 August 1924.

65. David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley, 1988), 34–36.

66. Page, *Prelude*, 65.

67. *Ibid.*, 71.

68. Raja Narendra Nath, Punjab Hindu Conference, *Tribune*, 26 February 1924.

69. Prof. Gulshan Rai, "Communal Representation in the Municipalities," *Tribune*, 3 February 1924.

70. Nath, *Tribune*, 26 February 1924. See also "Local Self-Government in the Punjab-III," *Tribune*, 5 July 1925.

71. Brij Narain, "Sowing the Wind," letter to the editor, *Tribune*, 27 July 1924.

72. Gandhi had written: "I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga . . . the news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. . . . I must do penance. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins, unwittingly committed. It is a warning to the Hindus and Muslims who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts . . . I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself." *Tribune*, 30 September 1924.

73. These articles appeared between 26 November and 17 December 1924 and are reprinted in V. C. Joshi, ed., *Lala Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches*, vol. 2 (Delhi, 1966), 170–222.

74. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 28 November 1924.

75. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 30 November 1924.

76. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 3 and 5 December 1924. See, for instance, the criticism levied by Mr. Chamupati, who felt that Rai was on "insecure ground . . . it is only those whose life work is study, practice and guidance in the religious sphere that can determine which rite or form is essential and which not." *Tribune*, 18 December 1924.

77. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 3 December 1924.

78. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 5 December 1924.

79. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 10 December 1924.

80. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 12 December 1924. Contrast Rai's verdict with that of Fazl-i-Husain, who claimed that outstanding Congressmen like Gandhi, C. R. Das, and Gokhale never considered Sir Syed's desire for safeguards to be "anti-national." Muhammad Azim Husain, *Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography* (Bombay, 1946), 98.

81. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 11 December 1924; emphasis mine.

82. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 12 December 1924; emphasis mine.

83. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 17 December 1924. See also the discussion in Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in North India* (Delhi [1990], 2006), 213, 260–261.

84. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 13 December 1924; emphasis mine.

85. This was a reference to Jinnah's demand made at the Bombay Provincial League in October 1924. See Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai*, vol. 2, 479.

86. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 14 December 1924; emphasis mine. Also see his speech to the Punjab Provincial Hindu Conference in June 1925, *Tribune*, 6 June 1925.

87. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 14 December 1924; emphasis mine.

88. *Ibid.*, emphasis his.

89. Under the title "A Scheme of Indian Swaraj," Prof. Gulshan Rai of S. D. College in Lahore proposed a major redistribution of provincial areas such that of fifty new provinces, Muslims would dominate in nine and Hindus in forty-one. See his articles in the *Tribune*, especially parts II and IV on 27 May and 19 June 1925.

90. Lajpat Rai, *Tribune*, 14 and 16 December 1924.

91. *Ibid.*

92. Rai's presidential address, Bombay Hindu Conference, 5 December 1925; Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai*, vol. 2, 243–257.

93. Lajpat Rai to Motilal Nehru, 20 January 1926, cited in Joginder Singh Dhanki, *Lala Lajpat Rai and Indian Nationalism* (Jalandhar, 1990), 293. See also Motilal Nehru to Deva Rattan Sharma, secretary, Hindu Mahasabha, Misc. No. 24/1926, AICC. The election manifesto of the Swaraj Party in 1926 declared that "if a 3/4ths majority of any community desire to reserve to themselves full liberty of speech and vote on any communal question affecting them, all the members of the Party belonging to both communities in the legislature concerned shall have the same freedom." G-86/1928, AICC.

94. Motilal Nehru to Deva Rattan Sharma, 22 May, 22/1926, AICC.

95. *Tribune*, 5 and 7 February 1926.

96. *Tribune*, 19 February 1926.

97. Narendra Nath's address, Hindu Mahasabha, *Tribune*, 14 March 1926. Sadly, the punitive measures often hitting civilians among these neighbouring tribes continue to bedevil relations, now between the states of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United States.

98. *The People*, 21 February 1926.

99. Lajpat Rai, "North West Frontier Debate—III," *The People*, 11 April 1926; emphasis mine.

100. *Ibid.* For a different reading of Hindu reaction, see Mushirul Hasan, "Communalism in the Provinces: A Case Study of Bengal and the Punjab, 1922–1926," in *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, ed. Mushirul

Hasan (Delhi, 1985), 287–289. For a sharp critique of how the British transformed the revenue and legal systems and institutionalized inequality and fixity in place of an earlier fluidity in the legal system in the Frontier Province, see Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier* (Karachi, 2001), 30–35, 43–45.

101. Pt. Motilal's statement, *Tribune*, 21 March 1926. See also Mr. Mahomed Shafi's statement, *Tribune*, 23 April 1926.

102. Lajpat Rai, "Reflections on the Political Situation—II and III," *The People*, 22 and 29 August 1926.

103. The bill was vetoed by the governor. *The People*, 31 October 1926.

104. Lajpat Rai, "The Political Situation—III," *Tribune*, 16 December 1927.

105. *The People*, 12 December 1926.

106. Lajpat Rai, "Differences with the Swaraj Party," *Tribune*, 30 September 1926, in Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai*, vol. 2, 320. See also Dhanki, *Lala Lajpat Rai*, 305.

107. Lajpat Rai, "Communalism and Nationalism," *The People*, 12 September 1926; Independent Congress Party's Campaign, *Tribune*, 16 September 1926. On G. D. Birla's role in birthing this political party, see Medha Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G. D. Birla* (Delhi, 2003), 73–79.

108. *Tribune*, 23 and 24 September 1926. Members of the Sudhar Committee included Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, ex-president, Congress Committee Lahore, and Mr. K. Santanam, ex-president, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, and currently general secretary, AICC.

109. Pt. Motilal's speech at Lahore, reply to Lala Lajpat Rai: "He had not read the Vedas in the original, nor had Lalaji. He, however, still believed in the Vedas . . . which was the most magnificent system of thought in the whole world. Without believing that the Vedas were revealed, he as a Hindu accepted their authority. That was sufficient for his being a Hindu, but all that was beside the point. He had not come to them as a Hindu, but as a nationalist, a humble servant of the Congress. Argument ought to be met by argument, and the question of religion did not arise." *Tribune*, 29 October 1926. To this, Rai countered: "So long as the constituencies were based on community of religion and Hindus could only vote for Hindus and Mussalmans for Mussalmans, it was very pertinent to examine the religious leanings of candidates; and the electors would be justified in refusing to vote for candidates who did not go to them as Hindus but as nationalists. No one could effectively protect their interests who fought shy of approaching them as a Hindu and only claimed to be a nationalist." *Tribune*, 3 November 1926. See also Pandey, *Construction*, 255–256.

110. Satyapal to Motilal Nehru, 4 November 1926, File G-52 (ii)/1926, AICC.

111. "War on the Congress," *Tribune*, 15 October 1926. A decade later, Duni Chand wrote that the Punjab suffered the most from Lajpat Rai's "anti-Congress activities" and its effects continued to influence Punjabi politics long afterwards. See Duni Chand, *The Ulster of India or an Analysis of the Punjab Problems* (Lahore [1936], 2002), 77, 79–91, 142.

112. Dhanki, *Lala Lajpat Rai*, 313.

113. All Parties Conference 1928, Supplementary Report of the Committee, general secretary, AICC, *The Nehru Report: An Anti-Separatist Manifesto* (Delhi,

1975), 18. For a summary of the conflicting Muslim opinions that Jinnah sought to bring to a compromise, see Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930* (Delhi [1991], 2000); and Ian Bryant Wells, *Jinnah: Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity* (Oxford, UK, 2006).

114. *Tribune*, 22 December 1927; 6 June 1928.

115. Bhai Parmanand, "Mahasabha and Boycott Question," *Tribune*, 4 March 1928.

116. N. B. Sen, ed., *Punjab's Eminent Hindus* (Lahore, 1944), 215-224.

117. Narendra Nath, *Memorandum on the Rights Claimed by Hindu Minority in North-West India* (Lahore, 1928), 5.

118. *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

119. *Ibid.*, 5-7.

120. *Ibid.*, 15.

121. According to these figures, the Hindu agricultural tribes comprised 24.4 percent of the total population of Hindus (including Jains, Buddhists, and Christians), the Muslims more than 60 percent, and the Sikhs 66.3 percent of their population. *Ibid.*, 26.

122. There was some controversy over the definition of zamindars in the Regulation of 1919. Ministers like Chhotu Ram believed the 1919 definition to be too large. *Ibid.*, 40-42.

123. *Ibid.*, 45-46. See also the correspondence between Lajpat Rai and Chhotu Ram in *The People*, 27 March, 17 April, and 1 May 1927; Narang interview, OHT, 41-42; Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 35.

124. Nath, *Memorandum*, 48, 84, 89. Parmanand was referring to Hindus in the NWFP and Sind. Nath included the Hindus of the Punjab. He also, rather melodramatically, felt the act was "analogous" to the Anti-Asiatic legislation in South Africa.

125. *Ibid.*, 60, 69.

126. Lajpat Rai on Narendra Nath, *Tribune*, 2 June 1928.

127. *The People*, 15 March 1928.

128. "Hindus and the Simon Commission," *The People*, 24 May 1928.

129. Lajpat Rai, "The Political Situation and the Punjab Hindus," *Tribune*, 9 February 1928.

130. Lajpat Rai, "The Royal Commission and the Hindus," *The People*, 24 November 1927.

131. Replies to Lajpat Rai's circular letter, *Tribune*, 8, 12, and 15 August 1928.

132. "Punjab Not Fit for Autonomy," "Raja Sahib Is Right," *Tribune*, 15 August 1928; "That Reactionary Memo Was Never Adopted," *Tribune*, 17 August 1928.

133. *Nehru Report*, 48.

134. The report noted that in the Punjab, although the Muslims outnumbered the Hindus and Sikhs combined, the number of their votes was "far less than the Hindu and Sikh votes." This "anomaly" would end with adult suffrage. Appendix A analysed the population figures of the Punjab according to religion. Based on the 1921 census and an adult franchise, the report concluded that the distribution of population favoured the Muslim-majority community. Hence, there was no need for separate electorates or weighted representation in the Punjab. *Ibid.*, 92, 135.

135. Ibid., 119.
136. Ibid., 38.
137. Lajpat Rai, "The Hindu-Muslim Problem," *Tribune*, 14 December 1924.
138. Lajpat Rai, "Punjab and the Lucknow Decisions," *The People*, 4 October 1928.
139. Lajpat Rai's presidential address, Provincial Hindu Conference, 28 October 1928, in Ravindra Kumar, ed., *Selected Documents of Lala Lajpat Rai, 1906-1928*, vol. 4 (Delhi, 1992), 126; emphasis mine.
140. Lajpat Rai, "Simon Commission and Hindus," *The People*, 26 January 1928; "Pax-Britannica in NWFP," *Tribune*, 21 March 1928. See also Rai's reply to the debate on reforms in the NWFP on 14 March 1928, in Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai*, vol. 2, 400.
141. Beli Ram Malhotra, letter to the editor, *Tribune*, 16 June 1928.
142. Beli Ram Malhotra, letter to the editor, *Tribune*, 14 July 1928.
143. "A Kohati," letter to the editor, *Tribune*, 29 May 1928.
144. See, in particular, numerous letters to the editor of the *Tribune* by a "Satyarthi" between May and November 1928.
145. Bhai Parmanand, "Some Fallacies in Our Current Politics," *Tribune*, 22 January 1928.
146. Bhai Parmanand, *The Hindu National Movement* (Lahore, 1929), 23.
147. Ibid., 11, 52. Savarkar's *Hindutva* was published in 1922. Savarkar and Parmanand were old friends and had lived together in India House in London around 1907.
148. Ibid., 24.
149. Ibid., 15, 18. It is worth noting that Bhai Parmanand's text predated Jinnah's Lahore Resolution of 1940 by eleven years.
150. Bhai Parmanand, *Tribune*, 21 August 1928. See also the report on the political situation for the fortnight ending 31 August, HP 1/August 1928, NAI.
151. Lajpat Rai, "The Hindu-Muslim Problem," *Tribune*, 30 November 1924; emphasis mine.
152. Lajpat Rai, "Communalism vs. Nationalism," *Tribune*, 13 January 1928; emphasis mine.
153. For a different view on collective identities and co-existing claims, see P. K. Datta, *Carving Blocs: Communal Ideology in Early 20th Century Bengal* (Delhi, 1999), 12.
154. Nath had presented the first portion of this memo, word for word, two years earlier, as a lecture to the Tilak School of Politics, an institution founded by Lajpat Rai himself. Although en route to Europe, Rai had read the long reprint of the lecture and approved of it. *The People*, 23 May 1926.
155. "Libel on Punjabi Hindus," *The People*, 12 July 1928.
156. *Tribune*, 26 August 1928.

CHAPTER 3: RELIGION AND NON-VIOLENCE
IN PUNJABI POLITICS

1. For a list of works on the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement, see Ravinder Kumar, ed., *Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919* (Oxford, 1971); Hari Singh, *Gandhi, Rowlatt Satyagraha and British Imperialism: Emergence of Mass Movements in Punjab and Delhi* (Delhi, 1990); Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York, 1982); and Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000).
2. Duni Chand, Special Punjab Provincial Conference, Amritsar, 27 and 28 July 1918, HP Series B, 169-224/August 1919, NAI.
3. V. N. Datta, ed., *New Light on the Punjab Disturbances in 1919*, vol. 2 (Simla, 1975), 1120-21. *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government of India to Investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab* (London, 1920) (hereafter Hunter Committee Report, named after its president), 6. The British tried to counter these rumors through their own propaganda on the limits of the Rowlatt Act. By 6 April 1919 Punjab was flooded with more than 275,000 copies of Urdu and Gurmukhi translations of the Rowlatt Act. HP Series B, 447-448/August 1919, NAI.
4. M. K. Gandhi, "The Satyagraha Pledge," 24 February 1919, CWMG, vol. 15, 101.
5. Hunter Committee Report, 34.
6. Gandhi, "Satyagraha Pledge."
7. Shraddhanand, "In and Out of the Congress," in *The Liberator*, 13 May 1926. Republished in K. A. Agarwal, ed., *Contemporary Socio-Political Observations of Swami Shraddhanand* (Hardwar, 1999), 59, 62. Shraddhanand's editorials also were published by P. R. Lele in 1946, with the misleading title *Inside Congress*.
8. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 20 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 63.
9. M. K. Gandhi, 23 March 1919, CWMG, vol. 15, 145-146; Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 20 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 64.
10. Donald Ferrell, "The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Delhi," in *Essays on Gandhian Politics*, ed. Ravinder Kumar. For a critique of this formulation, see Ranajit Guha, "The Mahatma and the Mob," *South Asia* 3 (1973): 107-111.
11. C. A. Barron, CC Delhi, 31 March, HP Series B, 141-147/May 1919, NAI.
12. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 20 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 66.
13. Barron, 31 March, HP Series B, 141-147/May 1919, NAI.
14. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 20 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 69.
15. Hunter Committee Report, 5.
16. P. L. Orde, superintendent of police, 8 April, "Mahatma Munshi Ram Alias Swami Shraddhanand and the Delhi Riots," HP Series B, 268-273/May 1919, NAI.
17. Extracts from the *Pratap*, April 1919, HP 4 Part I/1921, NAI.
18. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 27 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*.
71. Hakim Ajmal Khan was one of Delhi's most influential Muslim political leaders

in this period. His family was associated with the Aligarh movement led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Hakim Ajmal Khan was himself a member of the Muslim League in 1906; he was closely associated with Gandhi during the Khilafat movement.

19. Extracts from the *Pratap*, April 1919, HP 4 Part I/1921, NAI; emphasis mine.

20. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 27 May 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 72.

21. Ibid., 75. Ram Raj is a reference to just rule, as believed to have been exemplified in the kingdom of the God Ram.

22. Ibid., 78.

23. Rgveda, 8.98.11. I am grateful to Michael Witzel for providing the correct transliteration and translation of this verse.

24. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 3 June 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 79. *Om shantih* is an invocation to peace recited at the end of chants. *Ameen* is an expression of approval, conviction, or assent used at the end of a statement or prayer. There is probably an error in the transliteration of the second line of the Urdu verse. I am grateful to Sunil Sharma for help with this translation.

25. "Note on the Influence of Delhi during the Disturbances," HP Series B, 373/February 1920, NAI.

26. H. C. Beadon, 30 April, HP Series B, 268-273/May 1919, NAI.

27. Gandhi to Shraddhanand, 3 April 1919, CWMG, vol. 15, 172; "The Delhi Riots," *Tribune*, 5 April 1919, in HP Series B, 373/February 1920, NAI.

28. Ferrell, "Rowlatt Satyagraha"; Ram Singhasan Tivari, *Swami Shraddhanand* (Ajmer, 1927), SAMP, CRL, 7.

29. Gandhi's Warning to Satyagrahis and Sympathizers, 11 April 1919, CWMG, vol. 15, 211.

30. Gandhi to Shraddhanand, 17 April 1919, *ibid.*, 238-240.

31. M. K. Gandhi, Suspension of Civil Disobedience, 18 April, HP Series B, 373/February 1920, NAI.

32. Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 101-102. In fact, Gandhi did regard the arrests of Satyapal and Kitchlew to be a "provocation."

33. Ibid., 103-104.

34. Rabindranath Tagore to Gandhi, 12 April 1919, CWMG, vol. 15, 495-496.

35. Mr. Gandhi's Second Suspension of Civil Disobedience, 21 July 1919, HP Series B, 373/February 1920, NAI.

36. Quoted in Swami Shraddhanand, *Vartaman mukhya samasya: Achhutpan ke kalank ko dur karo, sanyasi ki appeal* (Delhi, 1924), BL, 5.

37. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, ed. Ganda Singh (Amritsar, n.d.), 16; Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab* (Berkeley, 1976), chapters 4 and 5.

38. Harjot Oberoi has traced the process through which sacred space that used to encompass a range of village spots and tombs came to be concentrated in shrines. See Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi, 1994), 323-328.

39. Teja Singh, "The Gurdwara Reform Movement," in Singh, *Essays in Sikhism* (Lahore, 1944), 133, 137.

40. Rajiv Kapur, *Sikh Separatism: The Politics of Faith* (London, 1986), 44-45.

41. M. K. Gandhi, Talk with Khalsa College Students, 18 October 1920, CWMG, vol. 18, 356.

42. V. W. Smith, CID Punjab, "The Akali Dal and the SGPC, 1921-22," HP 459-II/1922, NAI.

43. Quoted in Sahni, *Struggle for Reform*, 180-182.

44. V. W. Smith, CID Punjab, 11 September 1922, HP 949/1923, NAI.

45. Shraddhanand, "My Present Views and Future Programme," *Tribune*, 21 September 1924.

46. Also cited in P. K. Datta, *Carving Blocs: Communal Ideology in Early 20th Century Bengal* (Delhi, 1999).

47. Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan: Saviour of the Dying Race* (Delhi, 1926), 14-15. Shraddhanand's program for sangathan closely followed that of another Arya Samaji, Mahatma Hansraj. See Sri Ram Sharma, *Mahatma Hansraj: The Maker of the Modern Punjab* (Lahore, 1941), 142-150.

48. Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan*, 120.

49. Shraddhanand, *Vartaman mukhya samasya*, 16-17.

50. Shraddhanand, *Khatre ka ghanta arthat Muhammadi shadyantra ka rahasya-bhed jismein Miyan Hasan Nizami ke sarva vishaile lekhn ke sath Maulana Abdul Bari adi Muhammadi Mubalighon ke shadyantra ka pol bhi khola gaya hai* (Delhi [1923], 1926), BL. Maulana Abdul Bari led the Firanghi Mahal madrasah in Lucknow. Khwaja Hasan Nizami was a prolific writer and scholar of Islam who belonged to the family of sajjada-nashin associated with the shrine of the Chishti Sufi Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi.

51. This hardly follows, since Shraddhanand himself refers to opposition against shuddhi from orthodox Hindus as well as Muslims and Christians from the 1890s onwards. In *Dai Islam*, Nizami refers to the princely states of Bharatpur and Kashmir joining the Arya Samaj shuddhi campaign in March 1923.

52. Shraddhanand, *Khatre ka ghanta*; see also Yoginder Sikand, "The Fitna of Irtidad: Muslim Missionary Response to the Shuddhi of Arya Samaj in Early Twentieth Century India," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1997).

53. Thus, I would argue that fears pertaining to the "dying Hindu" in the Punjab stem less from the actual move of lower castes than from the overt challenge of Muslim ideologues. For debates in Bengal, see P. K. Datta, *Carving Blocs*.

54. Nizami, too, while clearly referring to Shraddhanand and Malaviya as leaders of the shuddhi campaign, counseled the readers of *Dai Islam* not to attack them or treat them as enemies, but to fight their ideas. See Nizami in Shraddhanand, *Khatre ka ghanta*, 5.

55. *Tribune*, 26 February 1926.

56. I have relied extensively on Shraddhanand's memory of the 1919 moment to reconstruct the popular version of events in the earlier segment of this chapter.

57. N. B. Sen, ed., *Punjab's Eminent Hindus* (Lahore, 1944), 146.

58. S. M. Haq, advocate, Lahore High Court, Amritsar, letter to the editor, *Tribune*, 11 January 1927.

59. See J. T. F. Jordens, *Swami Shraddhanand: His Life and Causes* (Delhi, 1981).

60. Gyanendra Pandey, "Which of Us Are Hindus?" in *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today*, ed. Pandey (Delhi, 1993), republished in *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford, 2006); Datta, *Carving Blocs*; Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford, 2001); Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York, 1996); Kenneth Jones, ed., *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages* (Albany, NY, 1992). For a thoughtful examination of historiographical debates, see Anthony Copley, ed., *Hinduism in Public and Private: Reform, Hindutva, Gender, and Sampraday* (Delhi, 2003).

61. Shraddhanand, *The Liberator*, 3 June 1926, in Agarwal, *Contemporary*, 79.

62. Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Delhi, 1997), 363; Datta, *Carving Blocs*, introduction; Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 258–260; Pandey, *Construction*. Sarkar also refers to "a measure of reformist, anti-caste (or at least anti-untouchability) thrust" of early Arya shuddhi practices. See Sumit Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Relocating Postmodernism, Hindutva, History* (Delhi, 2002), 239.

63. Interview with Mr. Deepak and Rakesh Mahandru, *Laborian di hatti*, Nai Sarak, Delhi, 23 April 2003.

64. *Tribune*, 18 June 1925; 21 February 1929.

65. HP 130 and KW/1930, NAI; *Tribune*, 15 September 1926.

66. HP 375/1925, NAI.

67. "Royal Commission: What Lahore Thinks" and "Evidence before Commission: Gain and Loss to Punjab by Lajpat Rai," *Tribune*, 12 November 1927; 16 December 1927.

68. Report on Punjab, 15 April, HP 1/April 1928, NAI.

69. *Tribune*, 14 April–25 April 1928.

70. Jatinder Nath Sanyal, *Sardar Bhagat Singh* (Nagpur, 1983), 25–26; interview of Jaidev Kapoor by S. L. Manchanda, 3 October 1974, OHT, NMML, 50–51. See also the testimony of approver Hans Raj Vohra, *Tribune*, 5 December 1929.

71. HP 4/7/1930/1929, NAI.

72. *Tribune*, 7 and 20 November 1928.

73. *Tribune*, December 1928 and January 1929.

74. *Tribune*, 10 March 1929.

75. "Gandhi or Balraj—Neither?" *The People*, 18 April 1929.

76. Report of the Punjab CID, 2 August 1929, HP 130 and KW/1930; Fortnightly reports, January to May, HP 17/1929, NAI; *Tribune*, January to June 1929.

77. Interview of Abdul Majid Khan by Hari Dev Sharma, 16 June 1974, OHT, NMML, 36.

78. *Tribune*, 10 April 1929.

79. M. K. Gandhi, "The Bomb and the Knife," *Young India*, 18 April 1929, in CWMG, vol. 40, 259. Hindu-Muslim relations in the Punjab had reached a new low with the publication of the bigoted pamphlet *Rangila Rasul* in 1924. The ensuing tension abated only with the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act

XXV, which made it a cognizable crime to insult the founders and leaders of any religious community. However, the publisher of the pamphlet, Mahashe Rajpal, was stabbed on 6 April 1929. Gandhi was equating this stabbing with the bomb that Singh and Dutt dropped in the Legislative Assembly session in Delhi.

80. *Tribune*, 10 and 18 April 1929.

81. Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt, 6 June 1929, "Trial in the Sessions Court," *Tribune*, 8 June 1929.

82. *Tribune*, 8 June 1929. See Colin Lucas, "Revolutionary Violence, the People and the Terror" in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, ed. Keith Michael Barker, vol. 4 (New York, 1994) for a consideration of the place of terror in the French Revolution. Further evidence that the revolutionaries were grappling with the problem of violence is in the statement made on behalf of J. N. Sanyal and five others to the commissioner, the Special Tribunal Case at the commencement of the trial, 5 May 1930, in Misc. Papers, HSRA, NMML; Jaidev Kapoor, OHT, 227.

83. "Raid on Lahore Bomb Factory," *Tribune*, 13 July 1929.

84. "Bhagat Singh and Bhutukeshwar," *The People*, 13 June 1929.

85. Letter dated 17 June 1929, HP 244 and KW/1930, NAI.

86. *Tribune*, 25 June 1929.

87. The *Tribune* carried reports of meetings in Jullundur, Gujranwala, Multan, Rohtak, and Sargodha as well as Hardwar and Calcutta; *Tribune*, 3 and 4 July 1929.

88. *Tribune*, 2 July 1929; Brijlal Jain, *Lahore ke shahid* (Delhi, 1931), 87.

89. Dhian Singh, sub-inspector, "Note regarding the Celebration of "Bhagat Singh Day at Amritsar," 1 July 1929, HP 130 and KW/1930, NAI.

90. Quoted in A. G. Noorani, *The Trial of Bhagat Singh: Politics of Justice* (Delhi, 1996), 67. For the complete letter, see CWMG, vol. 41, 152-153.

91. Fortnightly reports from July to September 1929, Papers of Comrade Ram Chandra, Installments III and V, Subject file #3, NMML; *Tribune*, 16-19, 21, 23 July 1929, and 23 August 1929.

92. *Tribune*, 22 August 1929.

93. R. C. Lorimer, Delhi, letter to *The People*, 18 July 1929; emphasis mine.

94. Sanyal, *Sardar*, 59.

95. Report by Major P. D. Chopra, IMS, superintendent, Central Jail, and Lt. Col. D. H. Rai, Mayo Hospital, Lahore, 14 July 1929, HP 26/IV/1930, NAI. Medical reports were often reproduced in newspapers.

96. G. F. de Montmorency, 7 August 1929, HP 242/1929, NAI.

97. In keeping with a decision taken at a viceregal conference in Simla on 15 July 1929, the superintendent of police was provided with the discretion to order a special diet for the under-trial prisoners in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, including the convicted prisoners Bhagat Singh and Dutt in the Assembly Bomb Case. HP 130 and KW/1930; HP 242/1929, NAI.

98. F. H. Puckle to J. F. Ferguson, 7 August 1929, HP 242/1929, NAI; emphasis his.

99. *Tribune*, 13 August 1929.

100. Bhagat Singh, Dutta, and other Under-trials, Lahore Conspiracy Case, 28 January 1930, HP 137/1930, NAI. The letter traced their demands from the beginning of their imprisonment.

101. Lahore Conspiracy Case hunger strikers to the chairman, Punjab Jails Enquiry Committee and members of the Hunger-Strike Subcommittee, Simla, through the superintendent, Borstal Institute, Lahore, 6 September 1929; Lala Duni Chand to the under-trial prisoners of the Lahore Conspiracy Case, 12 September 1929, HP 244 and KW/1930, NAI.

102. Proceedings on 14 September 1929. Extract from Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. IV, No. 9, HP 21/63/1929, NAI.

103. For a similar argument about the distinction between political and ordinary crime, see Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922–1992* (Berkeley, 1995), 96.

104. Notes, 7 September 1929, HP 244 and KW/1930, NAI.

105. Noorani, *Trial of Bhagat Singh*, 273; Mohammed Jafar, I. A. Rehman, and Ghani Jafar, eds., *Jinnah as a Parliamentarian* (Islamabad, 1977), 223–235.

106. *Tribune*, 15, 17, and 18 September 1929.

107. I am grateful to Sugata Bose for this song and its translation. For Das's final moments, see Papers of Comrade Ram Chandra, Installments I, II, and IV, NMML.

108. *Tribune*, 21 September 1929.

109. Noorani, *Trial of Bhagat Singh*. Numerous articles in the press detailed these wrongs. See, for instance, “Bhagat Singh Kicked by Police, Bodily Thrown into Dock,” *Tribune*, 24 October 1929.

110. *Tribune*, 18 February 1930.

111. Bhagat Singh, Dutta, and other Under-trials, Lahore Conspiracy Case, 28 January 1930, HP 137/1930, NAI.

112. *Tribune*, 22 February 1930.

113. *Tribune*, 31 October 1930.

114. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Raj Guru were sentenced to death; Kishorilal, Mahavir Singh, Bijoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Varma, Gaya Prasad, Jaidev, and Kamal Nath Tewari were sentenced to transportation for life; Kundanlal was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment; Prem Dutt was sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment; Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, Jatinder Nath Sanyal, and Desraj were acquitted; Ramsarandas and Brahmaddutt—the two approvers who changed their statements—were to be prosecuted under a different section and the five approvers were discharged. *Tribune*, 8 October 1930.

115. *Tribune*, 24 February 1931.

116. See the last week of March 1931 in *Tribune*.

117. “Azadi ki ladai aur uske bad” (“The Fight for Freedom, and After”), 2 February 1931, in *Bhagat Singh: Patra aur dastavez*, ed. Virendra Sandhu (Delhi, 1977), 89. See also Jain, *Lahore*, 45.

118. “Azadi ki ladai”, 92. Yashpal remembered that when G. B. Pant released satyagrahis in 1937, he asked the other political prisoners if they were willing to promise they would not walk the path of violence ever again. The revolutionaries refused because that would have meant accepting that violence had been their aim. Violence, he reiterated, was never their aim. Corinne Friend, “Yashpal: Fighter for Freedom, Writer for Justice,” *Journal of South Asian Literature* 13, nos. 1–4 (1978): 87. For a different perspective on nomenclature, see Durba Ghosh, “Terrorism in

Bengal: Political Violence in the Interwar Years,” in *Decentring Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World*, ed. Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy (Delhi, 2006), 273.

119. “Sukhdev ka adhura patra” (“Sukhdev’s Unfinished Letter”), 7 October 1930, in *Bhagat Singh aur unke sathiyon ke dastavez*, ed. Jagmohan Singh and Chamanlal (Delhi [1987], 2005), 344.

120. Bhagat Singh, “Krantikari karyakram ka masauda” (“Draft of the Revolutionary Program”), 2 February 1931, *ibid.*, 397; interview of Durga Das Khanna by S. L. Manchanda, 19 May 1976, OHT, 69.

121. *Tribune*, 22 October 1929.

122. Gopal Thakur, *Bhagat Singh: The Man and His Ideas* (Bombay, 1953), 11; see interview of Jaidev Gupta by S. L. Manchanda, 10 May 1978, OHT, 49–50, for an account of the transformation Bhagat Singh underwent in jail.

123. Noorani has a detailed discussion of the debates. The Gandhi-Irwin correspondence is also available in vol. 45 of the CWMG. In an article in *Young India*, Gandhi admitted that he had not made commutation of the death sentences a term of the settlement with Irwin. “What Did You Do to Save Bhagatsingh [*sic*]?” *Young India*, 2 April 1931.

124. M. K. Gandhi, “My Silence,” *Young India*, 17 October 1929.

125. M. K. Gandhi, “One of the Many,” *Young India*, 23 April 1931, CWMG, vol. 46, 30. Sukhdev’s letter, received posthumously, is reproduced in appendix IV of the same volume.

126. M. K. Gandhi, “The Cult of the Bomb,” 2 January 1930, CWMG, vol. 42, 361; “To the Indian Critics,” *Tribune*, 29 January 1930. Although Yashpal and Hansraj did blow up a part of the track through which the viceroy’s train passed in December 1929, it is not clear that this act had the approval of the HSRA accused inside the prison. Indeed, it seems this was Yashpal’s attempt to regain the confidence of Azad and other leaders on the run who suspected Yashpal of being a CID agent. Corinne Friend, ed., *Yashpal Looks Back: Selections from an Autobiography* (Delhi, 1981), 114–123. Contrast the attitude of Yashpal regarding the raid on the Chittagong armoury with that of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, discussed above. Incidentally, the Congress Subjects Committee voted 117 for and 69 against the resolution of the Congress Working Committee deploring the bomb outrage on the viceroy’s train.

127. Editorial in *Tribune*, 27 June 1929. Also on 30 July 1929, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, editor of *Pratap*, released a statement to the press after a long interview with the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners. He pointed out that the question being raised by the hunger-striking prisoners related to the self-respect of the country and public opinion ought to be organized around this issue. He emphasised that the rights of political prisoners were not to be confused with violence. See *Tribune*, 1 August 1929. A summary of the thirty-year-long history of the question of the better treatment of political prisoners was the subject of an editorial in *Tribune* on 24 August 1929. See also Motilal Nehru’s assessment of the hunger strike in the *Tribune* on 6 August 1929, and his insistence on separating the issue of subscriptions to the Defence Fund with support for crimes of violence in *Tribune*, 22 December 1929.

128. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, "Review of David Hardiman, *Gandhi: In His Time and Ours*," in *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 41, no. 4 (2004): 493.

129. See, for instance, Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York, 1969); Judith Brown, *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience: The Mahatma in Indian Politics 1928-34* (Cambridge, UK, 1977); Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Princeton, 1988); B. R. Nanda, *Gandhi and His Critics* (Delhi, 1985); David Arnold, *Gandhi* (New York, 2001). A fleeting reference to Bhagat Singh ("With his creed of non-violence, the Mahatma could not press his plea for Bhagat Singh beyond a point") is in B. R. Nanda, *The Making of a Nation: India's Road to Independence* (Delhi, 1998), 196. Christopher Pinney's work on visual representations does pay attention to Bhagat Singh, but views him unequivocally as a terrorist. See Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (Delhi, 2004), 126, and Pinney, "The Body and the Bomb: Technologies of Modernity in Colonial India" in *Picturing the Nation: Iconographies of Modern India*, ed. Richard Davis (Delhi, 2007). Even David Hardiman's *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas* (London, 2003), an otherwise useful study of "dialogic resistance" and satyagraha within the Indian polity, omits a consideration of Bhagat Singh.

130. M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Ahmedabad [1928], 1950), 109.

131. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Boston, 1957), 349.

132. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, 114.

133. Kevin Grant, "The Transcolonial World of Hunger Strikes and Political Fasts, c. 1909-1935," in *Decentring Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World*, ed. Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy (Delhi, 2006), 258.

134. H. V. Brasted, "Irish Models and the Indian National Congress, 1870-1922," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 8, nos. 1, 2 (1985): 36.

135. Gandhi, *Young India*, 1 May 1924.

136. Gandhi, *Young India*, 8 May 1924. See also his "Some Rules of Satyagraha," CWMG, vol. 42, 492.

137. Gandhi, *Young India*, 22 May and 5 June 1924.

138. Gandhi, *Young India*, 29 December 1927.

139. Gandhi, *Young India*, 16 August 1928 and 20 September 1928. See also the discussion on Gandhi and prison reforms in David Arnold, "The Self and the Cell: Indian Prison Narratives as Life Histories" in *Telling Lives in India: Biography, Autobiography and Life History*, ed. David Arnold and Stuart Blackburn (Delhi, 2004), 34-43, and a criticism of Gandhi's silence by the Kakori revolutionary prisoner Manmathnath Gupta in his memoir, *They Lived Dangerously: Reminiscences of a Revolutionary* (Delhi, 1969), 199, 300-302.

140. Gandhi, *Young India*, 1 May 1924.

141. Gandhi, *Young India*, 29 September 1927. In a similar vein, Bhikhu Parekh has suggested that Gandhi always reconciled non-violence with other values like truth (including justice and integrity), national independence, courage, human survival, self-respect, and dignity. He justified the harm that was caused to

others in the course of pursuing one's legitimate self-interest and claimed it was not violence if the "element of malevolence was absent." See Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse* (Delhi, 1999), 134, 150.

142. *Tribune*, 3, 7, 9, 12 December 1925 and 3 and 5 January 1926.

143. Grant, "Transcolonial World," 258-261.

144. See Gandhi's letter to Samuel Hoare in CWMG, vol. 49, 190-193; letter to Ramsay MacDonald, 8 August 1932, vol. 50, 383-384; statement to the press, 16 September 1932, in CWMG, vol. 51, 62.

145. After the hunger strike, Bhagat Singh wrote a letter to his friend, Jaidev Gupta, asking for almonds and *suji*. Letter dated 24 July 1930, in Sandhu, ed., *Bhagat Singh*, 67.

146. The Kakori accused, who were serving sentences of life imprisonment, did join the hunger strike of the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners. Indeed, they also spearheaded this technique of protest in 1927. But as acknowledged by Manmath-nath Gupta, one of the hunger strikers, they were persuaded by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi to withdraw because of concessions promised (but later withdrawn) by the government. See Gupta, *They Lived Dangerously*, 295.

147. *The Diary of Bhagat Singh*, NMML.

148. Claude Markovits, *The Ungandhian Gandhi: The Life and Afterlife of the Mahatma* (Delhi, 2003), 95; See also D. R. Nagaraj, *The Flaming Feet: A Study of the Dalit Movement in India* (Bangalore, 1993), 17.

149. Sumit Sarkar, *A Critique of Colonial India* (Calcutta [1985], 2000), 104-107, 114.

150. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 1 (Bombay 1969), 456; H. W. Hale, *Political Trouble in India, 1917-1937* (Simla [1937], 1974), 64.

151. Pinney, "The Body and the Bomb," 63. It is worth noting that no photographs of a fasting Gandhi were made available to the press in 1932 or 1933. See Tim Pratt and James Vernon, "'Appeal from This Fiery Bed': The Colonial Politics of Gandhi's Fasts and their Metropolitan Reception," *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005): 104. Also, the special magistrate in charge of the Lahore Conspiracy Case did not allow photographs to be taken in the jail-turned-courtroom. *Tribune*, 7 August 1929.

152. One disturbing item in the *Tribune*, 6 July 1930, reported that under-trial prisoner Kamal Nath Tewari had begun eating his own body when subjected to solitary confinement.

153. Bhagat Singh's hunger strike was remembered by several informants I interviewed.

154. "Satyagraha," Chapter 4, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the INC*, vol. 1 (1920), 38-39.

155. For a very different conclusion on Gandhism's compromises between the utopian and practical aspects of satyagraha, unconnected with Singh, see Partha Chatterjee, "Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society," in *Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha, vol. 3 (Delhi, 1996), 189.

CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS AN ALL-INDIA SETTLEMENT

1. See Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 1 (Bombay, 1969), 623–626.
2. Proceedings of the All Parties Committee meeting held on 23 and 24 January 1925 at Western Hotel, Raisina, Delhi, File G-72/1925, AICC.
3. File G-57(ii)/1926, AICC.
4. *Tribune*, 31 December 1930. For a detailed analysis of the Fourteen Points at the time that they were formulated, see Ian Bryant Wells, *Jinnah: Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity* (Oxford, UK, 2006), 185–211.
5. *Ibid.* See also Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), 329.
6. *Tribune*, 1 January 1931.
7. Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, “Communal Problem,” *Tribune*, 23 April 1931.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Bhai Parmanand’s address to the Punjab and Frontier Hindu Conference, *Tribune*, 13 May 1931.
10. Dr. Moonje’s address at Punjab Hindu Youth Conference, *ibid.*
11. Ch. Afzal Haq’s statement, “Minorities in Punjab Are Out to Smash Majority Community,” *Tribune*, 11 June 1931. For correspondence between Malik Barkat Ali and Master Tara Singh, see issues of the *Tribune*, late June and early July 1931.
12. Malik Barkat Ali, *Tribune*, 21 July 1931.
13. Narendra Nath to Gandhi, *Tribune*, 5 August 1931.
14. “Punjabi Hindus Will Not Surrender,” Bhai Parmanand’s press statement, *Tribune*, 17 October 1931. See also “Mahatma Gandhi’s Blank Cheque, Bhai Parmanand Condemns This Attitude,” *Tribune*, 30 September 1931; emphasis mine.
15. Geoffrey Corbett, “The Communal Problem in the Punjab,” 12 October 1931, *Indian Round Table Conference*, Cmd. 3997, 107–109.
16. Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sardar Sampuran Singh, “Sikhs and the New Constitution for India,” 12 November 1931, *ibid.*, 74.
17. “A Scheme of Redistribution of the Punjab,” memorandum by Sardar Ujjal Singh, 8 October 1931, *ibid.*, 112.
18. Nath also noted that the Corbett scheme had elicited the opposition of UP Muslims. See his “Note on the Redistribution of the Punjab,” 13 November 1931, *ibid.*, 111.
19. Narendra Nath, “Claims of the Hindu Minority of the Punjab,” 13 November 1931, *ibid.*, 76–77.
20. Narendra Nath, “The Hindu Minority,” *Tribune*, 24 April 1932.
21. Narendra Nath, *Indian Round Table Conference*, Cmd. 3997, 118–119.
22. Pt. Malaviya, *ibid.*, 400.
23. Editorial, “Partition of the Punjab,” *Tribune*, 5 November 1931; emphasis mine.
24. The Report of the Franchise Committee had recommended that for the Punjab, the franchise be extended in order to increase the number of non-agricultural tribes who formed half of the population but only 25 percent of the electorate.

Report of the Indian Franchise Committee, Cmd. 4086, 1932, vol. 1, 65. But the constitutional reforms of the Government of India Act of 1935 did not weaken the position of the agricultural tribes. Only a quarter of the new electorate of 2.75 million voters consisted of members of the non-agricultural tribes. All landowners who paid 5 rupees and more in revenue and all tenants who occupied more than 6 acres of irrigated or 12 acres of unirrigated land were enfranchised. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947* (Delhi, 1988), 96.

25. *Communal Decision*, Cmd. 4147, 3, 7. In the Punjab, Muslims got 86 seats in a house of 175—a clear majority; Hindus got 43 seats; Sikhs had weighted representation with 32 seats; Indian Christians 2; Anglo-Indian 1; European 1; commerce and industry 1; landholders 5; universities 1; and labour 3.

26. Gulshan Rai, "The Communal Award," *Tribune*, 20 August 1932.

27. Chhotu Ram, "The Communal Award—I, II, III," *Tribune*, 22, 28, and 30 August 1932.

28. For a critique of the pact, see B. R. Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (Bombay, 1946); D. R. Nagaraj, *The Flaming Feet: A Study of the Dalit Movement in India* (Bangalore, 1993).

29. Moonje to Nath, 5 December 1932. Intercepted letter "of extraordinary interest," HP 21/14/1932, NAI; emphasis mine.

30. See Chapter 2 in this book.

31. Gulshan Rai, *Hindu Problem in the Punjab* (Lahore, 1934); articles by Bhai Parmanand, *Tribune*, 25 April 1931, 15 and 23 July 1931. See also Parmanand's speech in the Central Legislative Assembly, *Tribune*, 17 March 1933.

32. For Parmanand's acceptance of the Corbett Scheme, see *Tribune*, 16 December 1932.

33. Parmanand to Pt. Malaviya, *Tribune*, 23 December 1932.

34. Sitaramayya, *History*, 574-578.

35. Rajendra Prasad on the Communal Award, September 1934, in *Correspondence and Select Documents of Dr. Rajendra Prasad*, ed. Valmiki Choudhary, vol. 1 (Delhi, 1984), 213-214.

36. The White Paper awarded Hindus, including depressed classes, 105 seats and Muslims 82 seats in the 250 seats granted to British India in the proposed Federal Assembly. Princely India would get another 125 seats.

37. Sitaramayya, *History*, 596.

38. Notes of conversation between Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad on 28 January 1935, G-65/1937, AICC.

39. This was along the lines of Gandhi's Round Table Conference submission.

40. Notes of conversation between Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad on 12 February 1935, G-65/1937, AICC.

41. Rajendra Prasad, Daily Notes, 21 February 1935, *ibid*.

42. This was the opinion of prominent Hindus like Sir N. N. Sircar and G. D. Birla.

43. Rajendra Prasad, Daily Notes, 25 February 1935, G-65/1937, AICC.

44. Rajendra Prasad, Diary Note, 28 February 1935, G-65/1937, AICC.

45. Notes of conversation between Pt. Malaviya on one side and Sardar Patel, Bhulabhai Desai, and Rajendra Prasad on the other at Birla House, New Delhi, on

30 January 1935, between 10:00 p.m. and midnight, *ibid.* Prasad also noted that G. D. Birla, the prominent industrialist, had suggested ignoring or fighting Malaviya's opposition to the formula. Rajendra Prasad, Daily Notes, 20 February 1935, G-65/1937, AICC.

46. Rajendra Prasad, Diary Note, 28 February 1935, *ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

48. Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography* (Bombay, 1957), 401.

49. *Ibid.*, 402; emphasis mine.

50. "Congress-Jinnah Pourparlers," *Tribune*, 16 February 1935.

51. "Delhi Pourparlers," *Tribune*, 1 March 1935, emphasis mine.

52. Draft Note on the Congress Program, Prison Diary with Letters. The draft was probably written in August 1934, before Nehru was released on parole. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, ed. S. Gopal First Series, vol. 6 (Delhi, 1972), 271-272; emphasis mine.

53. Nehru to Malaviya, 20 April 1936; "Negotiations with the Nationalist Party," 22 June 1936, in *Selected Works*, ed. S. Gopal, vol. 7, 359, 365-366.

54. Gulshan Rai, "Punjab Politics under the New Constitution," *Tribune*, 12 February 1936; Pt. Nanak Chand, "Chaos in Punjab Politics," *Tribune*, 16 June 1936.

55. Indra Prakash to Parmanand, *Tribune*, 14 April 1934; Parmanand's rejoinder to Dr. Ansari, "Communal Award, Constituent Assembly and Congress," *Tribune*, 25 May 1934.

56. Bhai Parmanand, "Congress Pursues Communal Policy," *Tribune*, 20 June 1934; emphasis mine.

57. "Mr. Jinnah's Stirring Appeal for Cooperation," *Tribune*, 3 March 1936. For an analysis of Muslim politics in this period, see Ayesha Jalal and Anil Seal, "Alternative to Partition: Muslim Politics between the Wars," *MAS* 15, no. 3 (1981); David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley, 1988); Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 371-385.

58. Satyapal, "Congress and Hindus," *Tribune*, 29 July and 28 August 1936.

59. Nehru to Kundanlal Lamba, 7 July 1936, P-17, AICC.

60. Satyapal to Prasad, 13 November 1935; 25 December 1935; 1 January 1936, Misc. No. 4, AICC.

61. Nehru to Members of the Working Committee, 7 February 1937, E-17/1937, AICC.

62. Nehru to Pt. Malaviya, 26 January 1937, *ibid.* This militates against the argument by Anita Inder Singh that stressed electoral arithmetic to negate the significance of the Hindu Mahasabha. See A. I. Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936-1947* (Delhi, 1987), 13. The importance of the Mahasabha viewpoint never stemmed from its inings during elections; rather, from its ability to push at extremes when a reasonable compromise was within reach.

63. Nehru, Notes for 8 and 9 December 1936, Amritsar City Congress Committee Disputes, E-17/1937, AICC. See also letters from H. S. Nagi and R. L. Bhatia, E-17(i)/1936-37, AICC.

64. Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 376.

65. Gulshan Rai, "The Hindu Sabha, Muslim League and Recent Elections," *Tribune*, 12 March 1937.

66. *Programme and Policy of the Congress Progressive Party*, Deveshwar Varma to Nehru, 8 and 12 October 1937, P-17/1937, AICC.

67. Mayaram Deveshwar of Batti Hatta Amritsar to Nehru, 25 March 1937, E-17/1936, AICC.

68. Duni Chand of Ambala, "Causes That Have Handicapped in the Past and Are Still Handicapping the Congress Movement in the Punjab," 31 March 1937, P-17 and note dated 15 June 1938, E-17; see also Mangal Singh to Nehru, 9 April 1937, P-17/1937, AICC.

69. Niranjana Das to the General Secretary, AICC, 23 November 1937. See also Gurmukh Chand to the President, INC, 30 October 1937 and Narain Das Khanna, Guru Bazar Chaurasti Attari, Amritsar, 23 October 1937, P-17, AICC.

70. *Tribune*, 17-19 August 1937.

71. Nehru to Satyapal, 24 September and 19 October 1937, P-17, Pts. I and II, AICC.

72. Satyapal's Statement to the Press, 3 November 1937, P-17, Pt. I, AICC.

73. Nehru to Satyapal, 9 November 1937, *ibid.* Reproduced in *Selected Works*, ed. S. Gopal, vol. 8, 446.

74. Maulana Shaukat Ali, "Real Muslims," *Tribune*, 23 April 1937. For an analysis of the possibilities and failures of the Muslim mass-contact movement, see Mushirul Hasan, "The Muslim Mass Contacts Campaign: Analysis of a Strategy of Political Mobilization," in *Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-independence Phase*, ed. Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert (Berkeley, 1988).

75. *Tribune*, 17 March 1938. For a different perspective on Sikander's decision, see Gilmartin, *Empire*, 161.

76. In actual fact, Sir Manohar Lal, a member in the Coalition Cabinet, was elected as an independent and nominated by the National Progressive Party led by Narendra Nath. Duni Chand, "Lucknow Pact," *Tribune*, 21 October 1937; Raja Ghazanfar Ali's statement, *ibid.*; Dr. Gopi Chand's statement, *Tribune*, 22 October 1937. For historians' explanations of the Sikander-Jinnah pact, see Satya Rai, *Legislative Politics and Freedom Struggle on the Punjab, 1897-1947* (Delhi, 1984), 237-243; Gilmartin, *Empire*, 174-178; Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (Delhi, 1999), 134-137.

77. Nehru to Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, 5 February 1938, in *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, ed. J. B. Kripalani (Allahabad, 1938), 36.

78. Nehru to Jinnah, 25 February 1938, *ibid.*, 47.

79. Raizada Hans Raj to Gandhi, 25 September 1937, P-17, AICC.

80. Nehru to Bhargava, 1 September 1937, PL-10, AICC, emphasis mine.

81. Nehru, "On the Differences with Jinnah," 10 January 1940 in *Selected Works*, ed. S. Gopal, vol. 10, 426.

82. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 6 November 1939, *ibid.*, 365, 370. After Jinnah announced the Day of Deliverance, Nehru wrote that "our sense of values and objectives in life as well as in politics *differ so very greatly*." Nehru to Jinnah, 9 December 1939, *ibid.*, 390-391, emphasis mine.

83. Jinnah to Subhas Chandra Bose, 14 May 1938, in *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, ed. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (Karachi, 1977), 46.

84. For correspondence between Nehru and Habibur Rehman, the president of the Ahrars, see P-17/1936, AICC. Nehru's replies have been reprinted in *Selected Works*, ed. S. Gopal, vols. 7 and 8.

85. See also Mukul Kesavan, "Communal Violence and Its Impact on the Politics of North India, 1937 to 1939," *Occasional Papers on History and Society*, Second Series, 23, NMML (Delhi, 1990).

86. See, for instance, editorials in *Tribune*, 1 and 3 May 1933; 5 November 1940; 6 March 1941; "One Nation-walla", "Will Mr. Jinnah Please Answer?" *Tribune*, 8 January 1946.

87. Bhai Parmanand, "Let There Be Hindu Sangathan," *Tribune*, 24 September 1938.

88. For the full text of the Lahore Resolution, see *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906-1947*, ed. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, vol. 2 (Karachi, 1970), 325-349. For an analysis that sees the resolution as open to multiple interpretations, see Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK, 1985), 59-60; and debates in the *Tribune*, April 1940 to 1946.

89. Gokul Chand Narang, *The Plight of Punjab Minorities under the So-Called Unionist Government* (Lahore, 1941), 32, 94. It should be noted that the protests against legislation such as the Markets Act included Muslim and Sikh traders, as well as Hindus. For a different assessment of Unionist measures, see Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, and Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 118.

90. Narang, *Plight of Punjab Minorities*, 46, 62.

91. Narendra Nath's address, Hindu Minorities Conference, *Tribune*, 2 March 1941.

92. Kartar Singh Chamak, 29 September 1940, P-16, Pt. I, 1940, AICC.

93. Congress Resolution on 2 April 1942, Appendix I, CWMG, vol. 78, 398.

94. Gandhi on the resolution put forward by Jagat Narayan Lal, 12 August 1944, CWMG, vol. 78, 23; Jinnah to Gandhi, 25 September 1944, Pirzada, ed., *Quaid-e-Azam*, 123. The Quit India Resolution of 8 August 1942 called for the immediate independence of India, but Gandhi asked: "If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what could possibly prevent Muslims from participating in this struggle for India's freedom?" Gandhi, Speech at AICC Meeting, 8 August 1942, CWMG, vol. 78, 389.

95. Mian Iftikharuddin, "Why I Voted with Rajaji," *Tribune*, 10 May 1942; emphases mine.

96. Editorial, *Tribune*, 27 April 1942.

97. Gandhi to Jagdish Munshi, 12 August 1944, CWMG, vol. 78, 23.

98. Kanu Munshi to Gandhi, 9 August 1944, *ibid.*, 400.

99. Gandhi to Rajagopalachari, 12 September 1944, *ibid.*, 97.

100. Jinnah to Gandhi, 21 September 1944, *ibid.*, 410-411; emphasis mine.

101. Jinnah to Gandhi, 17 September 1944, *ibid.*, 408.

102. For a later replay of this debate, see discussion between Gandhi and Iftikharuddin in *Selected Speeches and Statements of Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din*, ed. Abdullah Malik (Lahore, 1971), 9-11.

103. See debates in the *Tribune* in the early 1940s. Sir Sikander, whose interpretation of the Lahore Resolution stressed a common center between Hindustan and Pakistan, passed away in December 1941.

104. Savarkar's telegram to the Punjab Provincial Hindu Conference and Hindu Students Conference, 10 November 1944, C-39, HMS. See also his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha published in the *Tribune*, 25 December 1941.

105. Letters from Shiv Singh, 16 January 1945, C-77, and Kundanlal Lamba, 14 and 21 June 1945, P- 65, HMS.

106. Gulshan Rai, "The Pakistan Idea," *Tribune*, 31 May 1942.

107. Indu Banga, "Sikh Perceptions in the Forties," in *Seminar India: The Sikh Spirit* (April 1999), 43-45.

108. Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 175.

109. Interview of D. C. Lall by Hari Dev Sharma and K. P. Rungachary, 7 February 1967, OHT, NMML, 89. For the full text of the letter signed by Bhargava, Lall, and Ghaznavi, see *Tribune*, 1 November 1945.

110. Report on Punjab for November 1945, HP (I) 18/11/45, NAI. For analyses of these important elections, see P. Chaudhry, "The Congress Triumph in South-East Punjab: Elections of 1946," *Studies in History* 2, no. 2 (1980); Ian Talbot, "The 1946 Punjab Elections," *MAS* 14, no. 1 (1980); David Gilmartin, "A Magnificent Gift: Colonial Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab," *CSSH* 40, no. 3 (1998); Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, and *Self and Sovereignty*.

111. See, for instance, editorial, *Tribune*, 2 April 1946.

112. See also A. I. Singh, *Origins of the Partition of India*, 141.

113. Muhammad Nazir, Ansari, Bahawalpur, "Thus Far and No Further," *Tribune*, 27 April 1946.

114. Group A included Hindu-majority provinces; Group B consisted of Muslim-majority provinces including Punjab; and Group C consisted of Bengal and Assam in the north-east. Of twenty-eight seats assigned to Punjab in Group B, Muslims were allotted sixteen, Sikhs four, and the rest (termed "general") eight. Statement by Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy, 16 May 1946, in *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47* (TP), ed. Nicolas Mansergh and Penderel Moon, vol. 7, 582-591.

115. Statement made by Jinnah, 22 May 1946, *ibid.*, 669.

116. Resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee, 24 May 1946, *Ibid.*, 679-682.

117. Punjab Congress Party Resolution on British Cabinet Mission's Proposal, 6 June 1946, CL-9, Pt.-II, AICC.

118. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *My Life and Struggle* (Delhi, 1969), 178; see also article in *Pakhtoon*, quoted in Brij Narain, *Economic Structure of Free India* (Lahore, 1946), 127-128.

119. See Narain, *Economic Structure*, 112-154; also Narain, "Mr. Attlee's Statement," "A Strong Centre—II," and "The Centre and Grouping," all published in the *Tribune*, 16 December 1946, 5 January 1947, and 2 February 1947, respectively. It is interesting to read these alongside Pranab Bardhan, "Disjunctures in the

Indian Reform Process: Some Reflections” in *India's Emerging Economy: Performance and Prospects in the 1990s and Beyond*, ed. Kaushik Basu (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

120. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *To the British Cabinet Mission* (Lahore, 1946), 28. The preface was dated 14 June 1946. The last few letters were probably written in May and June, as the grouping plan was announced.

121. Ibid., 66, 91, 97. See also A. I. Singh, *Origins of the Partition of India*, 246.

122. Patel added categorically: “The Cabinet Delegation has made certain recommendations for the consideration of the Constituent Assembly. It is open to the Constituent Assembly to accept or reject them . . . There is only one Constituent Assembly for whole of India. The idea of Pakistan has been unreservedly condemned and rejected. The group assemblies are not constituent assemblies in any shape or form. The provinces are free to do whatever they like and therefore there is no reason to be afraid.” Patel to Bhargava, 20 May 1946. See also Bhargava to Sardar Sahib, 6 June 1946, Bhargava Papers, NMML.

123. Bhargava to Sardar Patel, 7 June 1946, *ibid.*

124. Resolutions Passed by the Congress Working Committee on 8 March 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 900–901.

125. Jenkins to Wavell, 9 March 1947, *ibid.*, 903.

126. Note by Lall, 11 March 1947, *ibid.*, 913.

127. Minutes of Viceroy's First Staff Meeting, 25 March 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 15–16. Nehru's suggestions were incorporated into a statement issued on 21 April 1947 by Sardar Swaran Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 April 1947 in *ibid.*, 504.

128. Certain Members of the Indian Central Legislature from the Punjab to Pt. Nehru, 2 April 1947; signed by Pt. Thakur Das Bhargava, Raizada Hans Raj, D. C. Lall, Sardar Mangal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh, Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia, Capt. Harindra Singh, Sir Sobha Singh, Sri Chand, Sir Buta Singh, and Ft. Lt. Rup Chand, *TP*, vol. 10, 88.

129. Mr. Jinnah's Statement on Partition, *Dawn*, 1 May 1947, in *TP*, vol. 10, 543; emphasis mine.

130. Nehru to Mountbatten, 1 May 1947, in Non-categories File No. 71, 1946–47, AICC.

131. This resolution was passed unanimously at a general meeting of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee held on 4 May 1947. L. S. Sethi, general secretary PPCC Lahore to general secretary AICC, 6 May 1947, P-14, Pt. II, 1947–1948, AICC; emphasis mine.

132. Hardyal Devgun to V. G. Deshpande, 20 January 1947, C-135, HMS.

133. V. G. Deshpande to V. D. Savarkar, 21 May 1947, C-135, HMS; emphasis mine.

134. Circularized after Deshpande's release from the Lahore Central Jail on 19 May 1947 to Provincial Hindu Sabhas, C-147, HMS; emphasis mine.

135. Deshpande to Nehru, 30 May 1947, C-165, HMS; Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics* (Delhi, 1966); *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906–1947*, vol. 2 ed. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (Karachi, 1970), 345.

136. Mountbatten to Earl of Listowel, 2 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 53.
137. Record of interview between Mountbatten and Mr. Gandhi, 2 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 48. The centrepiece of this volume is a facsimile of Gandhi's message written on the back of five separate envelopes; see pages 561–562.
138. Partha Chatterjee, "The Second Partition of Bengal," in *Reflections on Partition in the East*, ed. Ranabir Samaddar (Calcutta, 1997), 42. Although an excellent review of the historiography relating to the Partition of Bengal, I find that Chatterjee's analysis can be fruitfully applied to the Punjab Partition as well.
139. Shashi Kapoor and Deepa Gehlot, *The Prithviwallahs* (Delhi, 2004), 30–35.
140. Dr. Shanker Das Mehra to Acharya Kripalani, 2 January 1947, P-16, 1945–1946, AICC.
141. Dr. Shanker Das Mehra to Acharya Kripalani, 3 April 1947, *ibid.*
142. Shareef Mateen to Acharya Kripalani, 22 March 1947, G-10, AICC.
143. Om Prakash Chopra, Chopra Street, Killa Gujar Singh, Lahore, 21 April 1947, G-10, AICC.
144. Acharya Kripalani to S. A. Bareilvi, 29 June 1947, Non-categories File No. 9, 1947, AICC. See also Acharya Kripalani in Ganpat Rai, ed., *Pakistan X-Rayed* (Lahore, 1946), 84–88.

CHAPTER 5: PARTITION VIOLENCE AND THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. Saadat Hasan Manto, "Shyam: Krishna's Flute," in *Stars from Another Sky: The Bombay Film World of the 1940s*, trans. Khalid Hasan (Delhi, 1998), 74–75.
2. For a survey of Partition historiography, see Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (New York, 2000), 8–28; and Yasmin Khan, "Asking New Questions about the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent," *History Compass* 2, AS 090 (2004).
3. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK, 1985), 126–140; Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936–1947* (Delhi, 1987), 121–122.
4. Glancy to Wavell, 16 August 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 72, emphasis mine.
5. Minutes of a meeting held on 29 August 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 175. Attlee was present at this meeting. Note by Wavell, 31 August 1945, *ibid.*, 188–190.
6. Glancy to Wavell, 27 October 1945 and 16 January 1946, *TP*, vol. 6, 414 and 807. Jalal's research on elections in the Punjab shows that the Ahrars and the Khaksars allied with the Congress also deployed religion in the electoral arena. See Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London, 2000), 453–471.
7. Report on Punjab, October 1945, HP (I) 18/10/45, NAI.
8. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 October 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 377–378, and 22 November 1945, *ibid.*, 521.
9. Breakdown Plan, 27 December 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 700–701.
10. Memorandum by Pethick-Lawrence, 10 January 1946, *TP*, vol. 6, 761.
11. Penderel Moon, *TP*, vol. 6, 771–775. See also Kripalani in Ganpat Rai, ed., *Pakistan X-Rayed* (Lahore, 1946).

12. "We should make it clear . . . that this is only an indication of areas to which in HMG's view the Moslems can advance a reasonable claim: modifications in boundary might be negotiated and no doubt the interest of Sikhs in particular would be carefully considered in such negotiations. Some such clause is indicated by *importance of preventing immediate violence by Sikhs*." Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 7 February 1946, *TP*, vol. 6, 913; emphasis mine.

13. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 1 March 1946, *TP*, vol. 6, 1089-90.

14. Of the 85 candidates put up by the League, 74 won; of the 86 contested by the Congress, 51 won, in *TP*, vol. 6, 1230-31. The Hindu Sabha's sole candidate in the Amritsar City (General) Constituency lost his security deposit.

15. The Unionists with only fifteen members cobbled together a coalition that exceeded that of the League by ten members. Note by Glancy, 7 March 1946, *TP*, vol. 6, 1138.

16. This was for twenty-one days within Lahore and Amritsar Districts. Report on Punjab, March 1946, HP (I) 18/3/46, NAI.

17. Report on Punjab, March 1946, HP (I) 18/3/46, NAI. See also Partha Sarathi Gupta, ed., *Towards Freedom: Documents on the Movement for Independence in India*, 1943-1944, Part III (Delhi, 1997); and Sumit Sarkar, ed., *Towards Freedom*, 1946, Part I (Delhi, 2007).

18. Reports from Delhi and Punjab, April and May 1946, HP (I) 18/4/46; 18/5/46, NAI.

19. Jenkins to Wavell, 2 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 400-401; also fortnightly reports for March, April, and May 1946, HP (I) 18/3/46, 18/4/46, 18/5/46, NAI.

20. Statement by Cabinet Delegation and Wavell on 16 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 591. Wavell predicted "very serious communal rioting" in Punjab, the UP, and Bengal if the Congress and Muslim League were unable to come to terms. Serious trouble would come "with great suddenness and unaccountability"; the important thing was to secure an agreement, not be "deterred from doing the right thing through fear of provoking the extreme elements." Appreciation of possibilities in India on 30 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 733-734.

21. Note by Abell discussed by Cabinet Mission and Wavell on 16 May 1946 *TP*, vol. 7, 570.

22. Appreciation of possibilities in India on 30 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 736.

23. Cabinet Defence Committee Paper, 12 June 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 898.

24. Cabinet Chief of Staffs Committee Paper, 1 December 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 576.

25. *Ibid.*, 579, 583.

26. *The Statesman*, 4 March 1946, *ibid.*, 1117.

27. Meeting of Cabinet Delegation, Wavell and Auchinleck, 6 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 438.

28. Nehru to Wavell, 25 May 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 693-694.

29. Wavell to Jinnah, 4 June 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 799. This "personal assurance" became crucial as it was made public during a meeting of the All India Muslim League Council on 5 June 1946. Note by Intelligence Bureau, *TP*, vol. 7, 819-820.

30. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee, 25 June 1946, *TP*, vol. 7, 1036-1038.

31. For details of the Cabinet Mission Plan, see Chapter 4.

32. Pt. Nehru's Press Conference on 10 July 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 25-27; emphasis mine. See Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New York, 1960), 179-185, for Congress reactions to this press conference. See also Nawab of Bhopal to Wavell, 14 July 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 57-59; Burrows to Wavell, 15 July 1946, *ibid.*, 61.

33. Account of Ghaznavi's speech after the Juma prayers at Quetta on 9 August 1946 in Report for August for Baluchistan, HP (I) 18/8/46, NAI. The letter to Narang was published in *Tribune*, 1 November 1945.

34. The resolution passed on 29 July catalogued recent events that led to the acceptance of the statements of 16 May and 16 June along with recent Congress statements that suggested "they will wreck the basic form of the grouping of the provinces and extend the scope, powers and subjects of the Union Centre" with no one to check them. The second resolution declared that Muslim India had exhausted all efforts to find "a peaceful solution of the Indian problem by compromise and constitutional means" and that the council of the AIML believed that "the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan, to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future Caste-Hindu domination." See *TP*, vol. 8, 135-139.

35. Wavell's interview with Nehru on 30 July 1946; and Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 31 July 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 145, 155.

36. Minutes of Conference with the Governors, 8 August 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 204-205.

37. Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee, 13 August 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 225-226.

38. Jinnah's statement, 7 May 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 690.

39. Sugata Bose, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics, 1919-1947* (Cambridge, UK, 1986), 223-231; Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge, UK, 1995), 230-240; Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947* (Delhi, 1991), 161-192; Tazeen Murshid, *The Sacred and the Secular: Bengal Muslim Discourses, 1871-1977* (Calcutta, 1995), 177-180, 213-214; G. D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading Up to and Following the Partition of India* (Delhi [1950], 1989), 41-68; Singh, *Origins*, 181-188.

40. Burrows to Wavell, 18 August, *TP*, vol. 8, 255; Chatterji, *Bengal Divided*, 114-116; Bose, *Agrarian Bengal*, 225.

41. Horace Alexander to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 August 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 288-289.

42. Gandhi to Wavell 27 August 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 313; Wavell's interview with Nehru, 3 November 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 440.

43. Report on Punjab, September 1946, HP (I) 18/8/46, NAI.

44. Report on Punjab, November 1946, HP (I) 18/11/46, NAI.

45. Jenkins to Wavell, 31 October 1946, *TP*, vol. 8, 849.

46. Report on Punjab, November 1946, HP (I) 18/11/46. For details of the violence in Garhmukhteshwar, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, UK, 2001), 92-120.

47. Report on Punjab, December 1946, HP (I) 18/12/46, NAI.

48. Text of resolution passed by the AICC on 6 January 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 463. The *Tribune* held this to be a “Himalayan blunder” by the Congress. Report for January 1947, HP (I) 18/1/47, NAI; F 1/47-C, DSA.

49. Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 January 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 566.

50. Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Richmond, Surrey, 1996), 158.

51. Jenkins to Wavell, 3 and 15 February 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 610, 720–721.

52. Quoted from the *Free Press Journal* in Patel to Wavell, 14 February 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 710–711.

53. Report on Punjab, February 1947, HP (I) 18/2/47, NAI; G. D. Khosla records that on February 28, Master Tara Singh gave an interview to the *New York Times* saying that a civil war was now inevitable and the Sikhs had started reorganizing their own private volunteer army in response to the monthlong agitation of the League. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, 100.

54. Jenkins to Wavell, Pethick-Lawrence, and Auchinleck, 16 February 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 730; emphasis mine. See also Anita Inder Singh, “Decolonization in India: The Statement of 20 February 1947,” *International History Review* 6, no. 2 (1984).

55. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, 100–101.

56. Khushwant Singh in Ahmad Salim, ed., *Lahore: 1947* (Delhi, 2001), 124. Yashpal’s two-volume novel *Jhoota Sach* develops the tensions around Master Tara Singh’s speech and the fall of the Khizr Ministry in significant detail.

57. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eye-Witness Account of the Partition of India* (Delhi, 1998), 77.

58. Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 4 March 1947, *TP*, vol. 9, 851.

59. Report about village Mogul police station Rewat Tehsil Rawalpindi (as stated by Satnam Kaur, wife of Puran Singh), C-165, HMS. For a different reading of these FIRs, see Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 74–79.

60. FIR regarding the arson, looting, and murders committed in village Bassali, District Rawalpindi, to the Superintendent of Police Rawalpindi, 18 March 1947, Refugees Camp, Rawalpindi, C-165, HMS.

61. Undated, signed by presidents of the Hindu Sabha, Singh Sabha, and Central Relief Committee, and one hundred other Hindu and Sikh residents of Rawalpindi, C-165, HMS.

62. *Ibid.*, 8.

63. Bhola Nath Sarraf, Rawalpindi City, to several senior police functionaries in Rawalpindi, governor of Lahore, and Pt. Nehru, 19 March 1947, C-165, HMS.

64. Emmet Alter, “Missionary Personnel Safe after Riots in Rawalpindi,” *United Presbyterian Magazine*, March 1947. From the private collection of Mr. Robert Alter; emphasis mine. Republished in Martha Payne Alter, Ellen Alter, and Robert C. Alter, eds., *Letters from India to America 1916–1951* (Mussoorie, 2006).

65. Martha Payne Alter to Jennie Payne, 18 March 1947, *ibid.*

66. An almost identical list of demands was submitted to Jenkins by the “Hindus and Sikhs of Rawalpindi,” File 142, D. C. Lall Papers, NMML.

67. The distressed inhabitants of Nadian St., Katra Karmarsingh, Amritsar, 21 March 1947, G-10, AICC.

68. Resolution passed by a joint committee comprising representatives of the Singh Sabha, Gurdwara Committee, and Sanatan Dharm Sabha of Gujarkhan to viceroy and Kripalani, 17 March 1947, P-16, 1945–1946, AICC.

69. The figures do not quite add up to ten crores, but this could be an early instance of Hindutva mathematics at work; C-154, HMS.

70. Resolution passed by the working committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress at Amritsar, 25 March 1947, P-16, 1945/46, AICC.

71. Note by Jenkins, 10 April 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 183–184.

72. Interview between Mountbatten, Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, and Baldev Singh, 18 April 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 324.

73. Baldev Singh to Mountbatten, 27 April 1947 in *TP*, vol. 10, 469. A cable from Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, and Swaran Singh dated 7 May 1947 to Attlee, Cripps, and others asserted that the proposal to make only twelve districts non-Muslim was unfair since this comprised “only 35 percent area as against 50 percent property and 43 percent population of Sikhs and Hindus of Punjab,” *TP*, vol. 10, 660. Mr. Jinnah had considered the possibility of an exchange of populations on a “purely voluntary basis” and minor frontier adjustments where Hindu and Muslim lands lay contiguous to Hindustan or Pakistan states. Ambala Division, being mostly non-Muslim, could be removed, but Pakistan had to be a “living state economically and culturally.” *Statesman*, 12 December 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 658–659; also note by Major Rankin, Woodrow Wyatt/Jinnah Talk, 8 January 1946, *ibid.*, 799; and in an article in *Dawn*, 15 November 1946, Jinnah asserted that “the exchange of populations will have to be considered seriously as far as possible after this Bihar tragedy.”

74. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 9 April 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 172–173.

75. Report on Punjab for April 1947, HP (I) 18/4/47, NAI.

76. *Ibid.*, *Note on the Sikh Plan*, 1948, 15.

77. Fortnightly Report, Gurgaon, F 38/47-C, DSA. Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity* (Delhi, 1997), 180.

78. Report on Punjab for May 1947, HP (I) 18/5/47, NAI; Jenkins estimated that about three thousand people had died in the Rawalpindi disturbances, six non-Muslim for every Muslim, Note, 16 April 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 282.

79. Manto, “Shyam: Krishna’s Flute,” 73.

80. Krishen Khanna, “On a Pilgrimage to Bygone Era,” *The Pioneer*, 31 May 1997.

81. Memorandum by the Punjab Sikh and Hindu members of the Constituent Assembly signed by Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Harnam Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Sardar Partap Singh, Bakshi Sir Tek Chand, Diwan Chaman Lall, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Choudhry Harbaj Lal, Mr. Prithvi Singh Azad, Rai Bahadur Choudhry Suraj Mal, and Pandit Siri Ram Sharma; submitted to Lord Ismay, 1 May 1947, in Kirpal Singh, ed., *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab—1947* (Delhi, 1991), 53–57.

82. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 131–132.

83. Muskets 5, cartridges 1,033, pistols 3, spears 69, knives 24, barchhis 1, cnackens 3, lathis 5, khokharies 4, kulhari 2, takwas 9, kirpans 11, bayonets 1, gup-tis 4, swords 5, kandhalis 1, phal barchhi CM bombs 25, rifles 9, revolvers 4, guns

14, light pistols 2, spear blades 3, balams 3, hockey sticks 2, dangs 13, among others. Crime Report for May 1947, Lahore Range, File No. 15, Khosla Papers, NMML.

84. Figures provided by DC Lahore from 14 April to 14 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 524.

85. Jenkins to Colville, 21 May 1947, *TP*, vol. 10, 927–928. Patel and Nehru both demanded martial law in the Punjab, *ibid.*, 969. Colville to Jenkins, 24 May 1947, *ibid.*, 984.

86. Viceroy's personal report, 25 July 1947, and minutes of meeting, 31 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 339, 279.

87. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 25 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 623–624.

88. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 25 June and 3 July 1947, *ibid.*, 625–626, 843–845. See also Bhisham Sahni in Alok Bhalla, *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home* (Delhi, 2006), 123.

89. Extracts from the crime report for March 1947, Amritsar, Gujranwala, and Lahore, File No. 15, Khosla Papers, NMML; emphasis mine. The 2003 film *Pinjar*, directed by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, revolves around a story of personal vendetta that happened during the moment of Partition, giving the episode a “communal” twist.

90. Report from the Director of Intelligence, 27 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 369; interview between Jenkins and Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh, 11 July 1947, *ibid.*, 103; interview with Kartar Singh when he brought along “The Hindu-Sikh Case for Nankana Sahib Tract” and a map, 30 July 1947, *ibid.*, 429–431. Mountbatten to Jinnah and Nehru, 4 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 884–885.

91. Report on Punjab for July 1947, HP (I) 18/7/47, NAI. A secret intelligence report from M. K. Sinha, deputy director, Intelligence Bureau, detailed Sikh plans that involved an alliance with the states of Patiala, Nabha, Kapurthala, and Faridkot to create a Sikh homeland. Rees Papers, Mss. Eur., F274/50, BL.

92. Report from Captain Savage to Patel, Liaquat Ali, Jinnah, and Mountbatten, 5 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 537. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 9 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 636–637. This attitude continued into post-Partition Delhi. On 16 September 1947, R. N. Banerjee, secretary to the home minister, wrote to Sahibzada Khurshid, the chief commissioner of Delhi that “while no reference need be made to Government for exercising legal powers against mischief-mongers in all genuine cases, a previous reference should be made to Government before any restrictive action is taken against any prominent person.” The prominent person in question was Mr. Ashutosh Lahiry, who was “training Hindus and Sikhs in the manufacture of explosives and bombs.” But the number of bombs being used in the disturbances was not on any “considerable scale.” Khurshid's externment order on Lahiry was withdrawn after he received orders from above to that effect. F66/47—C, DSA.

93. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 and 12 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 525 and 688.

94. Visit to Headquarters 5th Brigade, Amritsar, 10 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/66, BL; Papers of George Brander, Mss. Eur., F409, BL.

95. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 12 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 675, 688.

96. Altaf Qadir to T. W. Rees, 13 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/54, BL; emphasis his.

97. Abbott, 1 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 459; Abell, 10 August 1947, *ibid.*, 648. See also Swarna Aiyar, "August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947," in D. A. Low and Howard Brasted, eds., *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence* (Delhi, 1998), 18, 28.

98. Conference with T. W. Rees and Jenkins, 14 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/56, BL.

99. "Die with Dying Lahore: Do Not Run Away from It," *Civil and Military Gazette*, 8 and 20 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/67, BL.

100. Letter from Tarachand, president, Om Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 7 August 1947, P-110, HMS. In contrast, the Refugee Brahman Committee from Wah Camp in Rawalpindi District declared its unwillingness to "remain as hostages for the Muslim minority living in India . . . [seeking to] live in freedom in accordance with our Dharmashastras." They noted that places of pilgrimage such as Hardwar, Gaya, Allahabad, Benares, and Nasik would fall into the Indian dominion, making it hard for them to perform the last rites of their deceased relations. They demanded to be transferred to India. See petition by Hakim Pandit Damodar Bhardwaj of Kahuta, general secretary; Bhagat Ram of Nara, president; Pt. Hira Nand Rais Kahuta, vice president; Prem Chand of Kountrilla, secretary; and Subedar Jai Chand of Balahar, cashier. Eighty villages were believed to have been represented at the meeting. P-114, Part I, HMS.

101. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 132.

102. Auchinleck to Mountbatten, July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 146; Meeting of the Partition Council, 17 July 1947, *ibid.*, 206. Class here refers to religion; Minutes of Viceroy's 21st Misc. Meeting, Lahore, 20 July 1947, 272-273.

103. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 8 August, *TP*, vol. 12, 583-584.

104. Special Order of the Day, 5 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/59, BL; Notes from PBF Lahore Conference, 4 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/53, BL. Operating Instructions, 10 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/55, BL. These instructions were rated "excellent" and of the "greatest value" by Auchinleck. Mss. Eur., F274/73, BL.

105. T. W. Rees, 9 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/58, BL.

106. Circular letter from T. W. Rees, Lahore, 7 August 1947, Mss. Eur. F274/65, BL.

107. Headquarters 5th Infantry Brigade, Amritsar, Brig. N. J. B. Stuart to Rees, 10 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/51, BL. The next day, Rees authorized his commanders to ask area, sub-area, and static engineer units to provide troops to help the PBF focus on "offensive operations." Mss. Eur., F274/52, BL.

108. This circular letter is dated in pencil 4-7 September 1947 but internal evidence suggests it was written in late August when the PBF was still a live force. Mss. Eur., F274/65, BL.

109. *Ibid.*, also Mss. Eur., F274/58, BL. Satish Gujral remembers this episode vividly: "The worst among these was the attack on a Muslim girls' hostel in Amritsar. The inmates were stripped and forced to march in a procession through the Hall Bazar, the town's main market. There, these girls were gang-raped and subjected to the most perverse treatment that any sadistic imagination could devise, before being murdered. Our car was forced to halt as the thoroughfare was packed with crowds who wished to watch this gruesome *tamasha*. Sitting in the

car, I searched for signs of horror or compassion on the faces in the crowd. I could trace none." Satish Gujral, *A Brush with Life: An Autobiography* (Delhi, 1997), 80–81.

110. Situation reports, Mss. Eur., F274/62, BL. Daultana seemed to suggest he had control over the situation in Lahore. He wrote: "If the situation in Amritsar rapidly improves, as we hope it will through the efforts of the Sikh leaders pledged by Master Tara Singh, we can promise that the situation in Lahore will show immediate improvement. We pledge ourselves to use all our efforts and authority to safeguard and protect the minorities." Handwritten letter from Daultana, 16 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/58, BL.

111. Minutes of meeting at Ambala, 17 August 1947. Those present from India were Baldev Singh, Chandulal Trivedi, G. C. Bhargava, Swaran Singh, Nawab Singh, Tarlok Singh; from Pakistan were Liaquat Ali Khan, Francis Mudie, Khan of Mamdot, Mumtaz Daultana, Mohammed Ali, Akhtar Hussain, Qurban Ali; Rees and Lt. Gen. Arthur Smith from the army; and Erskine-Crum, conference secretary to Mountbatten. Mss. Eur., F274/52, BL.

112. Minutes of meeting in Amritsar, 18 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/61, BL; emphasis mine.

113. Cabinet Meeting, General Headquarters Lahore, 21 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/61, BL. See also Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York, 2007).

114. Interview between Stuart and Master Tara Singh, 22 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/61, BL.

115. Joint Defence Council meeting, Lahore, 29 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/61, BL.

116. "Exemplary sense of brotherhood: Muslim villagers give Hindus helping hand in Multan village," *Civil and Military Gazette*, 4 September 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/67, BL. Rees also records two instances of Sikh villagers escorting Muslims in Amritsar District and helping them reach Lahore. Mss. Eur., F274/62, BL.

117. Editorial, *Pakistan Times*, 31 August 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/67, BL.

118. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 16 October 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 350.

119. J. Colville to Wavell, 19 October 1945, *ibid.*, 362.

120. Reports for the Punjab, October and November 1945, HP (I) 18/10/45, 18/11/45, NAI.

121. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 13 and 16 November 1945, *TP*, vol. 6, 476–478, 488–489.

122. Transcript of a talk given by George Brander in his private papers, D409, BL. Also see Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (New York, 2006).

123. Auchinleck to Ismay, 20 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 531.

124. Messervy, Appreciation, 29 May 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/50.

125. A. E. Porter, 5 December 1945, HP 33/1/46, NAI.

126. A. A. MacDonald, Home Secretary Punjab, to Home Secretary GOI, 15 January 1947, HP 33/33/46, NAI.

127. *Hindustan Times*, 15 October 1946. The convention basically entailed not publishing references to the community of assailants or victims; explicit details of

violence were to be treated with circumspection; editorials should avoid encouraging or condoning violence; and attempts should be made to verify sources of information. For a dilution of this code, see notes by A. S. Iyengar, principal information officer, 14 May and 27 June 1947, HP (I) 33/31/46, NAI. A note from the home secretary, R. N. Banerjee, 22 July 1947, stated that greater use of the Press (Special Powers) Ordinance promulgated in January had not been made "mainly because of the shifting political atmosphere." But the argument to continue the ordinance after its expiry was also on the basis of the "fluid political and communal situation." See jottings, HP (I) 30/1/47, NAI.

128. See HP (I) 33/35/46; 33/36/46; 33/53/47, NAI.

129. Notes by P. E. S Finney, deputy director (A), 19 June 1946, and V. Shankar, private secretary to home member, 21 January 1947, HP (I) 5/12/46, NAI.

130. F 27/47-C, DSA has extremely detailed correspondence on the deliberate changes imposed on the composition of the Delhi police because of Patel's injunctions. By October 1947, the need for details on the composition of the police force had stopped because the officers of and above the rank of inspector were now completely Hindu-Sikh. See also HP (I) 5/58/47, NAI.

131. Opinion of K. Y. Bhandarkar, 10 May 1947, 2nd solicitor, Legislative Department; the article in question was "Technique of Riots in Bihar: Planned Attacks: Police," *Dawn*, 4 May 1947, HP (I) 33/57/47, NAI.

132. Lala Madan Lal, magistrate; Captain Indar Singh deputed in Sultanpur; Lala Salig Ram, sub-inspector of police; and Angad Singh, secretary, Municipal Committee Sultanpur, had made Muslim women give up their cash and jewellery and had divided up the loot amongst themselves. Letter from Chief Minister Lakhpat Rai Sikund to maharaja of Kapurthala, 25 September 1947, File No. 16, Khosla Papers, NMML. Nehru to Rees, 3 September 1947, Mss. Eur., F274/73, BL.

133. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 526; emphasis mine. In a letter written much later to Aloys Michel, Jenkins admitted that people could "literally get away with murder, and with the gravest offences against property, in the knowledge that if their victims were of the right community and they themselves were on the right side of the boundary on 15th August they had nothing to fear." Private papers of Jenkins, D807, BL.

134. Notes by I. D. Scott and G. Abell, 16 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 193-194.

135. General Arthur Smith to Lord Ismay, 3 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 851. See also the directive from Arthur Smith, chief; top secret and personal document to be divulged only to British officers, which spelt out the circumstances under which British troops could be used in "communal disturbances to protect Indian subjects." They were to be used only to protect British lives; 29 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 395. So Mountbatten informed the ministers of the Provisional Joint Defence Council that "British troops remaining in India after 14th August would have no operational responsibility"; 29 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 403-404. For a defence of the PBF, see Robin Jeffrey, "The Punjab Boundary Force and the Problem of Order, August 1947," *MAS* 8, no. 4 (1974).

136. Viceroy's Personal Report, 4 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 894-895; Burrows to Mountbatten, 12 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 126.

137. Mountbatten to Jinnah, 9 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 33. M. S. Randhawa to Sahibzada Khurshid, 23 October 1947, F 73/47-C, DSA.

138. Gujral, *A Brush with Life*.

139. Rajendra Singh, *The Military Evacuation Organisation*, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (Delhi, 1961), 25, 42–43, 48, 55–56, 132, and 202. For details of similar processes in the opposite direction, see Zamindar, *Long Partition*.

140. Singh, *Military Evacuation Organisation*, 134, 152; appendix 6, Joint Evacuation Movements Plan, *ibid.*, 184.

141. Paul Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle, 2003), 383; David Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative,” *JAS* 57, no. 4 (1998): 1069; Peter van der Veer, “Writing Violence,” in *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. David Ludden (Philadelphia, 1996), 250.

142. Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan,” 1086.

143. Prominent examples include Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Hanover, 1987), 24; Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), 8; Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT, 1981), 17–18, 66–67; Anders Bjorn Hansen, “The Punjab, 1937–1947: A Case of Genocide?” *International Journal of Punjab Studies* 9, no. 1 (2002). In *Remembering Partition*, Pandey names this violence an instance of “sectarian strife” and “genocidal violence.” This is surprising given his attention to the ways Partition was referred to in popular discourse.

144. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 14.

CHAPTER 6: MEMORY AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN POST-PARTITION DELHI

1. Paul Ricoeur details this impulse quite beautifully. See “Memory and Forgetting” and “Imagination, Testimony and Trust: A Dialogue with Paul Ricoeur” in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London, 1999).

2. Ashis Nandy, “Telling the Story of Communal Conflicts in South Asia: Interim Report on a Personal Search for Defining Myths,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 1 (2002): 4.

3. Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley, 2006), 8.

4. Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford, 2006), 18, 66–67.

5. Das, *Life and Words*, 5.

6. Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (Delhi, 2000) details the diversity in official narratives amongst leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, and Azad. For a similar argument on “slices” of history striking a balance between the particular and the whole, see Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 79.

7. See, for instance, Ganpat Rai, ed., *Pakistan X-Rayed* (Lahore, 1946); B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India* (Bombay, 1946); and debates in the press between 1940 and 1946.

8. Interview with Mr. I. K. Gujral, 25 July 2003. I have retained silences and mannerisms in the extracts to share the flavour of the original interviews. This interview was in English.

9. All India Hindu Mahasabha press note, 16 October 47, C-152, HMS.

10. I was referring to his brother, Satish Gujral's account of the tribals invading Jhelum District in *A Brush with Life: An Autobiography* (Delhi, 1997).

11. Ibid., interview with Mr. Satish Gujral, 29 July 2003.

12. Ibid., 77.

13. Interview with Mr. Chamanlal Mehra, 23 April 2003. *Pukka* refers to strong, one who adheres to the rules of the faith, a practicing Hindu/Muslim. He used the word *aafat*, which I have translated as "calamities."

14. This date from Mr. Mehra's memory matches exactly with archival records of disturbances in Lahore.

15. This is a reference to the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965.

16. Interview with Mr. B. L. Sharma, 3 May 2003. This interview was in Hindi. The faith led by Baba Vivek Shah was headquartered in Lahore, its main temple located on the banks of the river Ravi. After Partition, the faith was allotted a space on the banks of the river Jamuna in Delhi. The temple in Jamuna Bazaar is huge; it has been constructed and renovated by refugees from Lahore and Rawalpindi in the main.

17. For representations of Muslims in Hindi literature at the turn of the nineteenth century, see Shahid Amin, "Representing the Musalman: Then and Now, Now and Then," in *Subaltern Studies XII: Muslims, Dalits, and the Fabrications of History*, ed. Shail Mayaram, M. S. S. Pandian, and Ajay Skaria (Delhi, 2005). Amin's evidence is from the UP.

18. In traditional Islamic theology, *Dar-ul-Harb* refers to a land of war where the adherents of Islam are at war and unable to practice their religion in peace. *Dar-ul-Islam* refers to a land of peace.

19. See S. Gopal, ed., *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir* (Delhi, 1991), for a discussion of this sighting.

20. This couplet is by Maqmoor Dehlvi. I am grateful to my mother for supplying the complete reference and translation.

21. See Amrita Basu, "Mass Movement or Elite Conspiracy? The Puzzle of Hindu Nationalism," in *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. David Ludden (Philadelphia, 1996).

22. That Hindutva has definitely percolated into the armed forces came to light during the investigation probing the Malegaon blast of September 2008. B. L. Sharma's own involvement has also been noted. See Christophe Jaffrelot, "Abhinav Bharat, the Malegaon Blast and Hindu Nationalism: Resisting and Emulating Islamist Terrorism," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4 September 2010. For the 2009 general elections, Mr. B. L. Sharma rejoined the BJP to contest the North-East Delhi seat, but lost these elections.

23. Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Khanna on 22 and 29 June 2003. These interviews were conducted in English, except for rare occasions when they broke into Urdu.

24. Emphasis in the original interview.

25. Interview with Mr. Purushottal Lal Aneja, Mrs. Savitri Aneja, and their grandsons, Rahul Rajkumar and Karthik Aneja, 14 December 2002. Interview in Hindi and English. I have retained the original flow of dialogue, even where my interventions, in retrospect, seem too many.

26. These words were in English.

27. The sociologist M. N. Srinivas refers to patterns of behaviour where people adhere to traditional values in one context and modern ones in another as a manifestation of “dual culture.” Cited in G. K. Karanth, “Caste in Contemporary Rural India,” in *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*, ed. M. N. Srinivas (Delhi, 1996), 98.

28. References to Muslims minding the practice of untouchability abound. See, for instance, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley, 1994), 109. I also heard of discomfort on this point from other interviewees, notably Mr. G. P. Talwar. The writer, Krishna Baldev Vaid, has spoken feelingly on this point. See Vaid in Alok Bhalla, *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home* (Delhi, 2006), 177.

29. See also Jai Dayal, *I Go South with Prithvi Raj and his Prithvi Theatre* (Bombay, 1950), xxi.

30. Here Mr. Aneja spoke in English.

31. I am reminded of Munshi Ram's defence of the Arya Samaj in 1907, discussed in Chapter 1: “Why should a Church be called to account for the political proclivities of its individual members?” For a different perspective on the collective guilt for Gandhi's assassination that should accrue to all, see Pratap Mehta, “Why Bapu Matters,” *Indian Express*, 30 January 2008, www.indianexpress.com (accessed 30 April 2009).

32. This was said firmly, in English.

33. In this interview, the place “Hindustan” has a very different meaning to the one commented upon extensively in Shahid Amin, “Representing the Musalman.”

34. This is spoken in English in the original.

35. Interview in Urdu and English with Mrs. Gill and other members of her family, 19 December 2002. I have changed names in this account to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees.

36. “You know . . . young thinking maturity” are English words Mrs. Gill broke into in an otherwise Urdu passage. The words italicised were emphasised in the interview.

37. Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier* (Karachi, 2001), 99.

38. These words were narrated to me in English.

39. This has been thoughtfully examined in Krishna Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride: School Histories of the Freedom Struggle in India and Pakistan* (Delhi, 2001).

40. See, for instance, Manik Chandra Vajpayee and Sridhar Paradkar, eds., *Partition-Days: The Fiery Saga of RSS* (Delhi, 2002); and Madanlal Virmani, *Bharat Vibhajan ka Dukhant aur Sangh*, 4 vols. (Lucknow, 1999–2001).

41. Tridivesh Singh Maini, Tahir Javed Malik, and Ali Farooq Malik, *Humanity amidst Insanity: Hope during and after the Indo-Pak Partition* (Delhi, 2009); Ahmad Salim, Nosheen D'souza, and Leonard D'souza, *Violence, Memories and Peace-Building: A Citizen Report on Minorities in India and Pakistan* (Islamabad, 2006); Ian Talbot and Darshan Singh Tatla, *Epicentre of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar* (Delhi, 2006).

42. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York, 1980); Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell, eds., *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2002); Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1997); Richard Samuel and Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By* (New York, 1990); Richard Sennett, "Disturbing Memories" in *Memory*, ed. Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson (Cambridge, UK, 1998); Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1994); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, 1995). In the Indian context, see Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922–1992* (Berkeley, 1995); Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhoomi" in *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, ed. S. Gopal (Delhi, 1991).

43. Patrick Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Burlington, VT, 1993), 112–113; Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 10.

44. Tzvetan Todorov, "The Uses and Abuses of Memory," in *What Happens to History: The Renewal of Ethics in Contemporary Thought*, trans. Lucy Golsan, ed. Howard Marchitello (New York, 2001), 14; James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 1992); Maurice Bloch, *How We Think They Think: Anthropological Approaches to Cognition, Memory and Literacy* (Boulder, CO, 1998); Suzannah Radstone, "Working with Memory: An Introduction" in *Memory and Methodology*, ed. Suzannah Radstone (Oxford, UK, 2000).

45. David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst, MA, 2000), 143.

46. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago, 2002), 148.

47. Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory" in Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca, NY, 1997), 59; see also Luisa Passerini, "Memories between Silence and Oblivion" in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, ed. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (London, 2003); J. G. A. Pocock, "The Politics of History: The Subaltern and the Subversive," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (1998): 229, 234.

48. Mohammad Qadeer, *Lahore: Urban Development in the Third World* (Lahore, 1983), 70.

49. Ricoeur, "Memory and Forgetting," 17. For the debatability of the past, the significance of multiple discourses, and the practice of democracy, see Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man* 6, no. 2 (1981); William Connolly,

Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox (Ithaca, NY, 1991); Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (New York, 2005). For the significance of memories that are *shared*, see Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2002), 51–60.

CONCLUSION

1. See A. G. Noorani, “The Cabinet Mission and Its Aftermath,” in *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935–1947*, ed. C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright (Cambridge, MA, 1970), for a similar assessment of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

2. For a similar conclusion on the Bengal partition and the role of historiography in making Partition seem “inevitable,” see Partha Chatterjee, “The Second Partition of Bengal,” in *Reflections on Partition in the East*, ed. Ranabir Samaddar (Calcutta, 1997), 43.

3. “Pamphlet Poison,” in *Communalism Combat*, March–April 2002, www.sabrang.com (accessed 30 April 2009). See also Suvir Kaul, ed., *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (Delhi, 2001).

4. For a nuanced cinematic depiction, see *Rabba Hun Ki Kariye*, directed by Ajay Bhardwaj, 2007.

5. Manini Chatterjee, “On Advani, Two RSS Mouthpieces Speak Two Tongues, VHP, 3rd,” *Indian Express*, 15 June 2005, www.indianexpress.com (accessed 30 April 2009); Niranjan Ramakrishnan, “Unpardonable Acts of Statesmanship, Exit Right, Advani!” in *Counterpunch*, 8 June 2005, www.counterpunch.org (accessed 30 April 2009); emphasis mine.

GLOSSARY

ahimsa *Non-violence.*

akali A staunch follower of Guru Gobind Singh; a volunteer to take over Sikh temples during the Gurdwara Reform Movement; a member of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

akhand Unbroken, undivided.

allah-o-akbar God is great; a slogan to mobilize Muslims.

anna A unit of currency; sixteen annas made a rupee.

arthi Ashes.

ashrama-dharma The four stages in the life of caste Hindus, that is, *brahmacharya* (celibate student), *grihastha* (house holder), *vanprastha* (gradual renouncer of worldly affairs), and *sanyas* (renouncer).

badmash Persons of bad repute; prone to street violence; hired criminals; hooligans.

bagh A garden.

Baisakhi A Sikh religious festival that also marks the beginning of the harvest season.

bania A caste whose members were traditionally money lenders; pejoratively used to denote craftiness.

bhajan Devotional songs, hymns.

bharat mata Mother India.

bipta Difficulty.

burqa A veil that covers the entire body, worn by some Muslim women.

buzurg Elderly.

chakki A mill, a grindstone.

chatak A unit of measurement, about two ounces.

chaudhri Head of a clan, community, or village.

dalit A term for “depressed classes,” scheduled castes, untouchables; literally, “ground down.”

darogha Inspector or sub-inspector of police attached to a police station.

dharamshala Sikh temple, shrine.

dhobi A washerman.

duragraha Misguided zeal.

fakir An ascetic, also see *pir*.

Ghadr Rebellion.

ghi Clarified butter.

ghunghat A veil.

goonda See *badmash*.

gurdwara Sikh temple.

gurukul A place of religious instruction, often residential.

har har mahadev In praise of Shiva; a slogan to mobilize Hindus.

hartal General closure of shops signifying protest.

havaldar A collector of taxes; police constable.

Id A festival that marks the end of the fast of Ramzan; also celebrated after Hajj; a time of celebration with family and friends.

inqilab Revolution.

jal samadhi To take martyrdom in a body of water.

janaza A bier.

jatha A group or party of volunteers.

Jirga A tribal assembly of elders.

kafila A caravan of people; convoy of vehicles.

karmkaandi One who follows the karmkaand, that is, a part of the Veda that relates to religious ceremonies, ceremonies enjoined by Hindu law, or those established by custom.

khalsa The Sikh order instituted by Guru Gobind Singh.

kirpan A sword; one of the five Ks crucial to the identity of the *khalsas*.

kirtan Devotional singing.

kothi A house of brick or stone.

lambardar Civilian officials who were supposed to be loyal to the British, sometimes collecting revenue from villages for them, maintaining the villages' common assets, and so forth.

langarkhana Free kitchens associated with *gurdwaras*.

lathis Tall sticks, often bamboo, sometimes tipped with steel.

mahant A priest.

mandir A temple.

maulvi A teacher of Arabic or Persian; learned in Muslim law.

maund A unit of measurement, about eighty-two pounds.

mela A fair, a festival.

mistri A mechanic; skilled tradesman.

mleccha Outcaste, impure; could be used for untouchables, Muslims or foreigners.

muhalla A neighbourhood.

murdabad Literally, "death to."

namaz Prayers prescribed by Islamic law to be said five times daily.

naasur A wound that refuses to heal.

pagree/pagdi A turban.

panchayat A caste assembly or council, usually composed of five members.

panth Sikh brotherhood or community.

parmatma Supreme Soul, God.

pir A spiritual guide; Muslim saint; Sufi.

pracharak A preacher, worker.

pujari A Hindu priest who performs prayers; usually a Brahmin.

rakhi A sacred thread usually tied by a sister on the wrist of her brother during the Hindu festival Rakshabandhan. The thread is a mark of affection and trust that binds the brother to protect her.

sadhu A saint; religious mendicant.

sajjada nashin A shrine custodian; often the descendant of a *pir*.

sanatan Common, ordinary; traditional Hindus who did not believe in the new reforms associated with the Arya Samajis.

sangathan A movement to strengthen the Hindu community.

sanyas The renunciation of the world, associated with the fourth stage (*ashrama*) of life according to the *varnashrama dharma*.

sardar An honorific term; head, leader.

sarraf A jeweller, money changer.

satya Truth.

satyagraha Literally, “truth force”; form of non-violent protest pioneered by Gandhi.

sayyid/sayad A form of address for a Muslim dignitary; belonging to the family of the prophet Muhammad.

shahidi jatha A band of martyrs.

shakha A branch, branch meeting.

sharia A set of moral injunctions constituting Islamic law.

shuddhi Literally, “purification”; reconversion to the Arya Samaj.

subedar An officer in charge of a *subah*/province/area.

sudhar Reform.

suji Semolina.

swadeshi The use of goods, institutions created by Indian (as opposed to foreign) labour and capital; also, a reference to the movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905.

swaraj Freedom; polysemic word.

tabligh Religious preaching.

tahsil/tehsil A sub-division within a district.

talaq Divorce.

tamasha Spectacle.

tanzim Organization.

tonga A horse-pulled carriage.

waiz A preacher.

zaildar A sub-divisional officer.

zamindar A landlord; also used as shorthand for “agricultural tribes” by some members and critics of the Unionist Party.

zindabad Literally, “long live.”

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