

THE SIKHS
AND
TRANSFER OF POWER
(1942-1947)

Dr. KIRPAL SINGH



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PUBLICATION BUREAU
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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Punjabi Language Development Deptt.
Punjabi University, Patiala

**THE SIKHS AND TRANSFER
OF POWER (1942-1947)**

by

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ISBN 81-7380-982-8

2006

Copies : 500

Price : 180.00

Type-Setting At : S.M.Computer Printing, Patiala Ph.: 2226809

**Published by Professor Param Bakhshish Singh Sidhu, Registrar,
Punjabi University, Patiala and Printed at Leonard Printers.**

FOREWORD

The partition of Punjab along with partition of India 1947 proved to be a unique event in the history of modern India as it was accompanied by the forced mass migration of over ten million people, abduction of about forty thousand women and children and massacre of about half a million people.

One of the significant perspectives of partition of Punjab was the creation of Pakistan and division of the Sikhs who were recognised as third important community in the Cabinet Mission Plan (vide article 18). How the Sikhs reacted to various British Plans for transfer of power has been the subject of study of this book.

Dr. Kirpal Singh has taken pains to bring fresh record from Public Record Office, London which have been used for the first time in this monograph. Earlier his book entitled *Partition of Punjab* was published by the University in 1972 and its revised edition in 1989. This book deals with the formulation of Partition Plan, its implementation, the mass migration and its impact.

I hope this book will be useful for the students, researchers as well as for the public in general.

**Punjabi University,
Patiala.**

**S.S.BOPARAI
Vice Chancellor**

DEPARTMENT NOTE

The Department of Development of Punjabi Language has always tried its best to add new dimensions to its project of Punjabi Development. The Department envisaged a plan to involve the eminent scholars to produce source materials in different subjects. 'The Sikhs and Transfer of Power' is a valuable book written by Dr. Kirpal Singh during his tenure of fellowship in the university. It portrays the dreadful holocaust and unprecedented massacre during the partition of Indian sub-continent in 1947. The response of Sikhs to various proposals and Plans of the British Govt. for the transfer of power, forms the main subject of study in this book. I hope this book will be welcomed by those who are interested in the history of those fateful days of partition of Punjab.

The book in the present form presents fresh perspective on the theme. I hope it will be welcomed by all who are interested in Sikh history.

Department of Language Development
Punjabi University, Patiala.

DHANWANT KAUR
Head

PREFACE

The partition of Indian sub-continent in 1947 creating Pakistan and free India resulted in the division of Punjab. This event shall ever remain a watershed in the history of the land of five rivers. The bifurcation of Punjab was followed by unprecedented massacre of about half a million people, abduction of women and children on a very large scale, unrooting of about ten million people on both sides of the border resulting in enforced migration or exchange of population. The Sikhs suffered the most in this holocaust and the on-set of freedom left them downcast and humbled.

The Sikhs occupied a position of unique importance in the Punjab before 1947. According to the Cabinet Mission Proposals, they had been recognised as third community in India for the purpose of transfer of power. It was stated, "we think that for these purposes, it is sufficient to recognise only three main communities in India-General, Muslims and Sikhs, the general community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs". (Para 18c). In a memorandum to Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942, the Sikhs had demanded that the Punjab be divided along the river Ravi, as boundary line. That demand was partially fulfilled by the Radcliffe Award in 1947. It is, therefore, significant to study in detail the Sikh response to various proposals and plans of the British Govt. for the transfer of power. This forms the main subject of study in this book.

The subject '*The Sikhs and Transfer of Power*' has been occupying my mind ever since I started research work on the "Partition of Punjab" in the fifties of last century. For half a century, I worked on various aspects of partition of Punjab and brought forth following books:

1. 1946 *de Calcutta de fasadan vich Sikhian di Sewa* (1957) (Punjabi)
2. *Shahidian* (an account of communal riots in West Punjab) (1964) (Punjabi)
3. *Partition of Punjab* (English) 1972, 1989 (2nd ed.)
4. *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab* (1991) English

5. *Punjab Da Batwara te Sikh Neta* (Punjabi) (1997)

6. *Sikhan De Pakistan Vichon Niklan Di Gaatha* (Punjabi) (2001)

During the course of my intensive research in this area, I visited England thrice in 1964, 1983 and 1998. The first trip was financed by Punjab Government and I spent six months there to collect the historical material. The second was sponsored by Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi and British Council and I spent three months there. Third time, I visited England through the courtesy of my nephew S. Hardeep Singh, who had by then established his business in London. He paid all the expenses and also made my stay pleasant and comfortable, for which I am grateful to him. It was during this two months' stay in London that I consulted the records lying in the Public Records Office, London and examined Cabinet Papers relating to the Partition of Punjab and Private Papers of Sir Stafford Cripps etc. I was able to take notes and bring some photocopies which have been used for the first time in this book, for that my thanks are done to Public Record office London.

It is my pleasant duty to thank S. S. S. Boparai, IAS (Retd.) Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala who gave me fellowship for writing this book and also spared his valuable time to write the foreword. I am also indebted to former Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Dr. Harbhajan Singh Soch, who encouraged me to pursue research on this topic. I was a fellow of Guru Nanak Dev University when I visited England in 1998. I am grateful to Prof. Prithipal Singh Kapur, Former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar who spared time to go through the entire typed script and gave several valuable suggestions.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Dhanwant Kaur, Director, Punjabi Development Department, Punjabi University, Patiala for her unstinted co-operation and the Publication Bureau of the Punjabi University, Patiala for taking pains while printing and publication of this book.

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Dedicated To

***Shrimati Joginder Kaur, My Spouse
and***

Life long Companion

Who stood with me through thick and thin.

Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

The last independent and sovereign ruler of India was Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839 AD) who ruled over the vast empire extending from the river Sutlej to Khyber pass in the north west of Indian sub-continent. He consolidated Punjab by conquering the old Mughal provinces of Lahore and Multan, as also, the Kashmir and Peshawar, Sarkars of the Kabul province. The Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, and Farid kot had accepted his suzerainty before 1809. He was however, prevented by the British to rule over the cis Sutlej territory including Sikhs states of Patiala, Nabha and Jind . The treaty of Amritsar in 1809 AD made the river Sutlej the dividing line between the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh offers pageants of military exploits which every Punjabi can feel proud of. It presents unique picture how the Maharaja had countered and stopped the on-going invasions from north western frontier of the country. The turbulent areas of the north western frontier province were effectively subdued and a line of defence was organised to hold these territories. The Sikhs erected a bulwark of defence against foreign aggressions which had been continuing since past eight hundred years. A new record was created in the history of military exploits. The conquest of Tibet, the abode of snow, was attempted for the first time during this period. An hazardous campaign was undertaken during the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh (1841-1843 AD), the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by his feudatory Raja Gulab Singh and his General Zorawar Singh. The areas of the Leh and Ladakh which have been described as "The Little Tibet," were annexed to Lahore Durbar.

The British had long been following an aggressive policy towards the Sikh kingdom during his life time and even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 AD. Major G. Carmichael Singh wrote regarding the first Anglo-Sikh war, " I am neither of the opinion that the Sikhs made unprovoked attack nor we have acted

towards them with great forbearance".¹ J D Cunningham stated, "Yet further inquiry will show that the policy pursued by the English themselves for several years was not in reality to ensure pacific relations and they cannot therefore, be held wholly blameless for a war which they expected and deprecated, and which they knew could only tend to their own aggrandizement".²

The political intrigue of Raja Gulab Singh and treachery of Tej Singh and Lal Singh in the battlefield led to the debacle of Khalsa army in the first Anglo Sikh War (1845-1846). It was the bloodiest war, Sir Hugh Gough, Commander in Chief of the British Forces who fought the war against the Sikhs has paid rich tributes to the bravery of the Sikhs. He wrote " Policy prevented my publically recording sentiments of the splendid gallantry of a fallen foe and I declare were it not from a conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body "³.

After the termination of war treaties were made with the Lahore Darbar, on different dates. Agreement concluded between the British Government and the Lahore Darbar on 16th December, 1846 had its eleventh article which stated, " The provisions of this engagement shall have effect during the minority of his Highness Maharaja Dalip Singh, and shall cease and terminate on his Highness attaining the full age of 16 years or so, the 4th September of year 1854, but it shall be competent to the Governor General to cause the arrangement to cease at any period prior to the coming of age of his Highness at which the Governor General and Lahore Darbar may be satisfied with the interposition of the British Government is no longer necessary for maintaining the Government of his Highness, the Maharaja."⁴

About annexation of Punjab to the British territory by Lord Dalhousie in 1849, Major Even Bell writes " That was not true conquest- it was a breach of trust:... we had conquered the territories under our tutelage." ⁵

It view of the eleventh clause of the Agreement by the British

1. Carmichael Smyth, the *Reigning Family of Lahore*, P. XXI.
2. Cunningham J.D., *History of the Sikhs*, Oxford University, 1918, p. 287.
3. For details see Punjab, Pioneer of Freedom fighters. M.L.Ahluwalia and Kirpal Singh Orient Longman 1963, p. 18-19.
4. Cunningham J.D. *History of Sikhs*, p. 408.
5. Evan Bells the *Annexation of Punjab and Maharaja Duleep Singh*, 1969. p.134-35.

Government on December 16, 1846, the Sikhs had been demanding that Punjab should be restored to the Sikhs, as the British had taken it. After hundred years in 1947 transfer of power took place in the sub-continent of India the biggest event of the 20th century which gave birth to Pakistan. How the Sikhs responded to this significant and grave situation is a subject of absorbing interest.

Magna Carta of Pakistan was the Lahore Resolution of 1940. In their Lahore Session of 23rd March 1940 the All India Muslim League passed the following resolution which is synonymous to Pakistan resolutions:

"While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League, as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27th August, 17th and 18th September and 22nd October 1939 and 3rd of February 1940 on the constitutional issue, this session of the All India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to, and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

"It further records its emphatic view that while the declarations dated 18th October 1939 made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is reassuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Govt. of India Act, 1935 is based, will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests and communities in India. Muslims of India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *do novo* and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent."

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz. that geographically contiguous unit are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of

India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

"This session further authorises the working Committee to frame a scheme of Constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communication, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."⁶

It was clear from the wording of the resolution that Pakistan or Muslim Sovereign state would be established after grouping the Muslim majority provinces. Punjab was one of the Muslim majority provinces of the British India. So it was proposed to be included in the would be Muslim state. The Sikhs considered Punjab to be their homeland where the greatest number of Sikhs lived and Sikhs had very bitter memories of the Islamic rule.

Therefore, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, a minister in the Unionist Government of the British Punjab and a veteran Sikh Leader (died in 1941) was the first Sikh leader to condemn Pakistan scheme. The Khalsa Nationalist Party of which he was the leader passed the resolution within a week after passing of the Pakistan Resolution. "... the Muslim League has created a situation which may seen a parting of ways for the Sikhs and Muslims ... It would be the height of audacity for anyone to imagine that the Sikhs would tolerate for a single day the undivided communal Raj of any community in the Punjab which is not only their homeland but also their holy land'.⁷

Pakistan Resolutin indicated the growing communal awarenes among the Muslims. The right of communal representation granted to them in 1909 and extended to other communities in 1919 gave rise to communal consciousness and subsequent conflict. The Punjab was a key province for the solution of the communal tangle because it had a threefold communal problem viz. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, whereas the rest of India had only a Hindu Muslim problem. The Muslims constituted about 57 per cent according to the Census Report of 1940 had apparently very narrow majority over the Sikhs and Hindus. That made the communal problem acute between Muslims and Non Muslims. Sir Malcolm Darling wrote: "No where is communal feeling potentially so dangerous and so complicated as in the Punjab.

6. Indian Annual Register, Vol. 1, 1940, pp. 311-12

7. Indian Annual Register, 1941, Vol. 1, p. 357.

It is dangerous because of the Punjab's virile hot headed people and complicated because there is third and not less obstinate party the Sikhs who were more closely knit together than either Hindus or Muslims, fiercer too and prouder and more a dynamic they never forget that it was from them we conquered Punjab"⁸

The Unionist Party was a conglomerate of feudal interest of Punjab, represented by landlords and rich zamindars of all communities. They aimed at some secular arrangement which suited their interests. The Unionist Party had been ruling ever since the introduction of legislature in Punjab viz. since 1921. Sir Fazal-i-Hussain the founder of Unionist party firmly believed that any communal approach to political tangle in Punjab was likely to disintegrate the Unionist Party which was based on economic programme and mutual co-operation of all communities.⁹ It was on this account that he refused to accept the suggestion of Jinnah, President of Muslim League to join Muslim League in 1936¹⁰. Sir Fazal-i-Hussain's successor Sir Sikander who had been the Punjab Premier from 1937-42 (he died in 1942) joined Muslim League in 1937. Despite his joining Muslim League he was against Pakistan. He disliked the idea of Pakistan and irreverently called it "Jinnahistan" as he was convinced that Pakistan would mean massacre in Punjab.¹¹ He stated in the Punjab Legislature Assemble on March 11, 1941, "We do not ask for that freedom where there may be Muslim Raj here and Hindu Raj elsewhere. I have said it so before and I repeat it once again here on the floor of House."¹² Subsequently, he was so much disgusted with the policy of Muslim League that he asserted it in the Punjab Assembly, "Let us above all show to the rest of the world that we in Punjab stand united and will not brook interference from whatever quarter it may be attempted. Then and then alone we will be able to tell meddling busy bodies from outside hands off the Punjab."¹³ Later on Sir Sikander resigned from the Muslim League working committee before his death in 1942.¹⁴

The western part of the British Punjab was dominated by the Muslims and the eastern part by Hindu Jats. The Sikhs were mostly in the central Punjab. The four main centres of Sikh population were

8. Malcolm Darling *At Freedom's Door London*, 1949, p.XII.
9. Azam Hussain, *Fazal-i-Hussaini*, Bombay, 1946, page 945.
10. Mohammed Noman, *Muslims India*, Allahabad 1944, p.330.
11. Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1966 p.20.
12. Punjab Legislative Assemble debates dated March 14, 1941.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Khaliq-u-zaman. *Pathways of Pakistan*, p.789

Ludhiana and Amritsar in British Punjab and Faridkot and Patiala among the Punjab States. Though they were only 13 per cent of the total population of Punjab yet they wielded tremendous influence. In the central districts, they were the biggest landowners. In the Lahore Division, the Sikhs paid 46% of the total land revenue¹⁵. The Jat Sikhs from the central districts of Punjab were mainly responsible for developing the canal colonies of Lyalpur and Montgomery. Malcolm Darling wrote in *Punjab Peasants* {P.143} "Lyallpur is the daughter of Central Punjab as Shahpur is in the north and the west and its influence is felt accordingly. From Amritsar alone over 1,00,000 have migrated to Bar". The Sikhs supplied to the Indian army much more number's as compared to their population. It has been significantly remarked, "The Sikhs have won Punjab the envied title of the Soldiers' Land and they alone can boast of having erected a bulwark of defence against the foreign aggressors, the tide of which has run its course for several hundred years before the birth of the Khalsa"¹⁶.

Mr. Robert Needham Cust, I.C.S. Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society, and at one time Assistant to the Political Agent, Punjab, writing in 1859 AD at page 24 of LINGUISTIC and ORIENTAL ESSAYS, observes: " By a mere chance, by the fancy of a great man, by a fatality of circumstances, as writer found himself after a lapse of seven years again among a people whom he loved so well and in a position to study the character of the residents and visit the great cities of the rich tract which lies between the rivers Chenab and Beas, the original Sikh land, the cradle of the Sikh faith and the nursery of the chivalry of the followers of the Gurus". According to Robert Needham Cust the proper name by which this land ought to be known is the Sikh Land or the Land of Baba Nanak¹⁷.

15. Harnam Singh, *Sikh Memorandum to the Punjab Boundary Commission*, p.27.

16. *Ibid*

17. *Ibid*

Chapter -2

THE CRIPPS MISSION

In 1942 the World War took a significant turn. Prime Minister, Churchill stated in the House of Commons, "The violent irruption of Japan upon East Asia, the withdrawal of United States Fleet to the American Coast, the sinking of "Prince of Wales" and "The Repulse", the loss of Malaya and the surrender of Singapore and many other circumstances of the time left us for the moment without any assured means of defending India from the invasions of Japan. We had lost command of Bay of Bengal and indeed to a large extent of Indian Ocean. Whether the province of Madras and Bengal would be pillaged and ravaged by the Japanese at that time seemed to be hanging in balance and the question naturally arose with poignant force how best to rally all Indian elements to the defence of their native land¹."

The exigencies of war created a demand in Britain and United States for declaration of new policy towards India. The Atlantic Charter which had been agreed to by Britain and USA had a clause supporting "sovereign right and self government". President Roosevelt of USA assumed that it applied universally. But Churchill believed that it was not meant for India. The continuous pressure from United States, a weak position at home and drastic military reverses in the far East made Churchill agree to dispatch a political mission to India. A few days after the fall of Rangoon, capital of Burma (now Myanmar) it was decided that Lord of Privy Seal, Sir Stafford Cripps would visit India and discuss the government's proposed declaration with Indian leaders.

Richard Stafford Cripps had a brilliant student career at Winchester and Oxford.² Later he became M.P. (Labour) from Bristol East. Between 1940 and 1942 he was Ambassador in Moscow where he became famous for his lucid intelligence³. He was told that he could offer India "full dominion status" at some point after the end of hostilities." Amery the Secretary of State for India told Lord Linlithgow

1. W. Churchill's speech, 6th March 1942, Parliament Debates, Vol.434, page 663.
2. Liberty or Death, Patric French, London, 1997, p.139-140.
3. *Ibid.*

the Viceroy of India on 10th March 1942 that " his lawyer friend had said, Cripps was " first rate and most moderate when it comes to settling a case out of court and that is precisely what he is being told to do now"⁴.

Draft declaration

Following was the Draft Declaration approved by the British Government and issued by Sir Stafford Cripps in India:

"His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realisation of self government. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs."

"His Majesty's Government therefore, makes the following declaration":

- a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
- b) Provision shall be made as set out below, for the participation of the Indian states in the constitution-making body.
- c) His Majesty's Government undertakes to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed, subject only to:
 - i. the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution, giving them the same full status as Indian Union, and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

4. T.O.P. Vol. I, p.403.

- ii) The signing of a Treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities, but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship to the other member states of the British Commonwealth. Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its "Treaty arrangements", so far as this may be required in the new situation.
- d) the constitution making body shall be composed of as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities.

"Immediately upon the result being known of the provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the lower Houses of the Provincial Legislature shall, as a single electoral college proceed to the election of the constitution making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the electoral college."

"Indian states shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

- e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as a part of their world war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Govt of India with the co-operation of the people of India. His Majesty's government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the

Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."⁵

The Draft Declaration gave the right to the provinces of British India to secede from Centre and acquire the "Same full status as Indian Union". According to Prof. R. Coupland, who was on the staff of the Cripps Mission in India, the non-acceding provisions in the Draft Declaration were really meant to dissuade Muslim League from pursuing Pakistan policy. It was argued that Muslim League wanted for every Muslim majority province a right of separation so that it might have deterring effect on Hindu majority in the Centre and not actual separation.⁶ But this line of argument proved wrong in the long run because this non-acceding provision proved an incentive to Muslim League to press their demand for Pakistan rather than to leave it. In fact this amounted to the recognition of the principle of partition of India which Muslim League had been pressing for. According to Maulana Azad, "The right given to the Provinces to opt out meant opening the door to separation". Sir Stafford Cripps himself subsequently admitted that "this offer' contemplated that if two major communities could not reach agreement then it might become necessary to divide India between them."⁷ Lumby has rightly pointed out that non-acceding provision for a province in the Draft Declaration "was both recognition of the strength of the demand of Pakistan and a long step towards its ultimate realisation."⁹

The Draft Declaration in a way gave Muslim League the substance for Pakistan. Sir Stafford Cripps subsequently stated that it had the effect of encouragement to all parties in India to look for an early realisation of their freedom either by the path of unitary Central Government or the other path which envisaged possible division.¹⁰ Despite that, the Muslim League rejected the Cripps offer on the ground that "right of non-accession to the Union has been conceded but the method and procedure laid down are such as to negativate the proposed

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5. Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, Kirpal Singh, Delhi 1991, pp.2-3..
 6. Prof. R. Coupland, *The Cripps Mission*, Oxford University Press, 1942, p. 35.
 7. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India wins Freedom*. Orient Longman, 1959, b. 82
 8. Parliament Debates, Hansard, Vol. 433.
 9. E.W.R.Lumby, *Transfer of Power in India*, London 1964, p.2.
 10. Parliament Debates, *Hansard*, Vol.438.

object. In the draft proposal no procedure has been laid down as to how the verdict of the provinces was to be obtained in favour of or against accession to the one Union."¹¹

With regard to non-acceding of provinces as provided in the Draft Declaration, the Congress did not indicate any firm policy. On one hand it condemned the draft proposals on the ground that "the acceptance before hand of the novel principles of non-accession for a province was a severe blow to the concept of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the province" on the other hand in the same resolution it also recognised the right of the provinces to secede from the Centre by stating that the Congress committee "cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will."¹² This policy of non-compulsion of the provinces encouraged the separatist tendencies of Muslim League and strengthened their demand for Pakistan.

The Draft Declaration issued by Sir Stafford Cripps proved to be one of the great landmarks in the history of the Punjab. One of its main features was to give right to the province to secede from the Centre and "with such non-acceding provinces should they so desire" were to be given new Constitution "giving them the same full status as Indian Union".¹³ This greatly alarmed the Sikhs in the Punjab because it meant that Punjab being a Muslim majority province could secede from the Centre and could acquire the same status as that of the Indian Union. In that case, the Sikhs and the Hindus would be subjected to perpetual Muslim domination.

Therefore, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, Ujjal Singh and Sir Jogindra Singh met Sir Stafford Cripps on 27th March, 1942. They discussed with him the "possibility of having some redistribution of provincial powers between the eastern and western Punjab in order to carve out a province in which the Sikhs would have the decisive voice as an effective balancing force between Hindu and Muslims."¹⁴ With regard to the protection of minorities, Sir Stafford emphasised

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11. Resolution of Working Committee, April 2, 1942, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Constation* edited by Maurice Gwyer and Appadorai Bombay 1957 Vol.II, p.527.
 12. Resolution of the working Committee of the Indian National Congress dated April 2, 1942, *Ibid.*, p.525.
 13. R.Coupland, *Report on Constibutional Problem in India*, Part II, p.334.
 14. *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol.I, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1970, Documents No.396, p.496.

the importance of the Sikhs and argued that if they join Indian Union the Congress would have to satisfy them and they" might entail the sub-division of the Punjab into two provinces or setting up within the province of the Punjab of a semi-autonomous district of the Sikhs on the Soviet Model."¹⁵ He also assured that in case of Treaty being negotiated "contempo-raneously with framing of the constitution, we should be able to insist on the insertion of minority protection clauses in accordance with the definition set out in the document."¹⁶

Again, the deputation of the Akalis met Sir Stafford on 31st March, 1942. They handed over the memorandum to him and expressed the view that "they would like a special area in which vote could be taken to decide whether they should join the first or second union."¹⁷

Sikh Memorandum to Sir Stafford

The memorandum begins "after giving careful consideration to the proposals which have now been published from the point of view of India's integrity and the Sikhs position, we find them unacceptable because: (1) instead of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of India, provision has been made for separation of provinces and constituion of Pakistan (2) and, the cause of Sikhs community lamentably betrayed."¹⁸

It was argued in the Memorandum "Why should a province that fails to secure a three-fifth majority of its legislature, in which a community enjoys a statutory majority, be allowed to hold a plebiscite and given the benefit of a bare majority. In fairness this right should have been conceded to communities who are in a permanent minority in the legislature. Why should not the population of any area opposed to separation be given the right to record its verdict and to form an autonomous unit?"¹⁹

"We are sure you know that Punjab proper extended upto the banks of the Jhelum, excluding Jhang and Multan districts and the trans-Jhelum area was added by the conquest by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and retained by the British for adminstrative convenience. It would be altogether unjust to allow the extraneous trans-Jhelum population, which only accidentally came into the province, to

15. *Ibid.*, p. 496

16. *Ibid.*, p. 496.

17. Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol.I, Document No. 496, p.80.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Transfer of Power, Vol. I, Document No. 1167 p. 582

dominate the future of Punjab proper."²⁰

With regard to right to separation granted to the provinces, it was stated there "they (the Sikhs) are strongly opposed to the vivisection of India into two or three rival dominions or sovereign states as is contemplated in the British proposals. They feel that such a step would lead to a stage of perpetual strife and civil war in the country. If the object is to give self-determination to the province, in the matter of accession to the "Union of India", right to stand out and break the unity of India should not be exercised by bare majority but by atleast 65% of the Indian members present at the meeting of the Provincial Assembly where the resolution is considered. A plebiscite on the issue of accession is certain to lead to inter-communal riots of the most serious character and magnitude and should in no case be resorted to."²¹

The memorandum advocated the partition of the British Punjab: "The Sikhs, therefore, feel that they cannot attain their rightful position or can effectively protect their interests unless the Punjab is redistributed into two provinces with river Ravi forming the boundary between them. The population of the Punjab is so distributed that two western divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan are predominantly Muslim and two eastern Divisions of Ambala and Jullundur are predominantly non-Muslim. The three central Districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore have a balanced populatio. If a new provice of a contiguous area of two Divisions of Ambala and Jullundur plus three districts of Lahore, Gurdaspur and Amritsar is carried out, it will have a population with non-Muslims forming 63% and Muslims 37%."²²

The Draft Declaration issued by Sir Stafford Cripps had a great impact on the politics of Punjab in general and position of the Sikhs in particular. It would be seen that the demand of the Sikhs for bifucation of the Punjab with the river Ravi as the boundary with districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore has been partially fulfilled by Redcliffe Award in 1947.

Master Tara Singh, the Akli leader had stressed the idea of partition of the Punjab in his letter to Sir Stafford Cripps dated 1st may, 1942 as under:

20. *Ibid.*, p. 582.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 58/5.

22. Signed copy of the letter of Master Tara Singh preserved in the Sikhs History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, file No. 1815.

Dear Sir Stafford Cripps,

I am very much obliged for the sweet words you used in appreciating the services of the Sikhs in your speech delivered in the House of commons.on 28.4.1942. But sweet words, however, pleasing and tasteful they may be, cannot satisfy my appetite for bread. I need something substantial.

I am sorry to notice the following passage in your speech, "We have, however in the past given undertaking to these minorities, but in none of these cases, other than that of the Muslims, could these promises be dealt with by such a device as non-accession. The minorities are not sufficiently localised or self-contained even in the case of the Sikhs to make that possible, assuming that upon other grounds it will be desirable." I thought that I had convinced you at Delhi that you could give Sikhs substantial protection by dividing the present Punjab in two parts and giving right of non-accession to each part. The Sikhs and the Hindus do not want to go out of India. why should the non-Muslim majority of the Central and the Eastern Punjab be forced to go out of India against their wishes, simply because the overwhelming Muslim majority of the Western and Southern Punjab likes to have them as their subjects. Why should premium be put upon secession from India. One could understand if it was decided that those who liked to go out of India can do so with the consent of the minority in that province, provided the minority is a fairly large one. But it is an astounding thing to say that those in overwhelming majority in a part of provinces can take with them the majority of the other part simply because the combination of these two parts still leaves them in majority as a whole.

"You seem to be inclined to concede that the Sikhs deserve protection of the above said nature on 'other grounds' but it was not possible. This is not right. You cannot refuse to give a child half a loaf of bread on the ground that he cannot digest the full loaf. The Sikhs certainly cannot dominate in any decently large portion of the country and hence they do not demand domination. But a big province much bigger than many of the existing provinces, in area, population and wealth can certainly be carved out in which the Sikhs are dominated by no single community. We do not want domination. We cannot have it. This does not mean that we should not be given protection which we can have. If you can separate provinces from India for the domination of the Muslims, why you refuse to separate a big area for the protection of the Sikhs from the rule of a single community.

When we the Sikh representatives talked to you on this subject at Delhi, we got the impression that you were feeling the force of our argument. You told us of course that you could not commit but that our argument, was such as could be considered by the Cabinet. But in your speech in the Parliament, you ignored our argument altogether. This leaves the Sikhs forlorn and dejected.

"I may let you know that it is being talked everywhere amongst the Sikhs that they are between two fires. They are to have JAPANISTAN in case of defeat and PAKISTAN in case of victory. You can well imagine the impact that this frame of mind can have upon the Sikhs morale. I pray to you, consult your colleagues and give us some cheering assurance to raise our morale. Assure us that we shall not be thrown to the mercy of those who are disowning the MOTHERLAND."²³

In his press statement published on December 2, 1942, Master Tara Singh advocated the partition of the Punjab into two provinces, one predominating populated by the Hindu and the Sikhs and the other by the Muslims. He quoted the example of Orissa, Bihar and Sindh which had been created separate units without in anyway destroying the integrity of the country.²⁴

Sir Herbert Emerson former Governor of Punjab (from 1933-1938) wrote to the secretary of State for India in reactions to the Cripps proposals in his letter dated 3rd March 1941. The letter was circulated among the members of War Cabinet Committee. He wrote, "to take Punjab for instance, the province I know best. I would almost certainly contract out. This type of assumption would be made by non-Muslims. There is no suggestion in the declaration about the transfer of population or adjustment of boundaries. The province is an irrevocable unit. The immediate conclusion by the Sikhs would be that they are doomed forever to Muslim rule".²⁵

In the end, the perception of transfer of population and adjustment of boundaries proved correct. Commenting on the proposal, Sir B. Glancy, the Governor of Punjab wrote to Marquis of Linlithgow, Viceroy in his letter dated April 14, 1941 "From the offset the Sikh community were very seriously perturbed by potentially fissiparous nature of War Cabinet. The Sikhs were outspokenly apprehensive lest Punjab should decline to accede to the All-India Confederacy and

23. Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, Kirpal Singh, Delhi 1991, p.10 (Documentation 4)

24. The Tribune, dated December 2, 1942.

25. T.O.P. Vol. I p. 302.

should carry off the whole province into the utter darkness of Punjab. They regarded themselves as being in danger, of everlasting subjection to an unsympathetic and tyrannical Muhammadan Raj",²⁶

Again Sir B. Glancy, wrote to the Viceroy in his personal and private letter dated May 1, 1942 "as you are well aware, the practical objections to Khalistan are even greater than those which lie in the path of Pakistan. Apart from upheaval that would be caused by tearing out a large section of territory from the vitals of provincial body politics, it is worth remembering that there is not a single district in which the Sikhs command a majority- though there are half a dozen Sikh states in the agency, there was only one state, one Muslim State of Malerkotla where the majority of population were Sikhs."²⁷

On March 30, 1942, Master Tara Singh met Mr. C. Macl. G. Ogilvie of Ministry of Defence, Government of India and told him that the Scheme propounded by Sir Stafford, Cripps "was more likely to cause complete cessation of the war effort than to encourage them (Sikhs) to do more."²⁸ The Punjab's share in the Indian Army was very substantial. It provided 201,000 men in all and out of which 51,000 were Sikhs.²⁹

The Akali Party had been partially following the Congress activities. The Congress adopted the attitude of non-cooperation and started a mass movement known as Quit India Movement. So the Government was apprehensive that the Cripps Mission might not adversely affect the recruitment of the Sikhs during the war. In order to avoid this possibility, the government posted Major J.M. Short as Recruitment Officer in the central districts of Punjab. Major Short had served the XI Sikh Regiment and retired in 1931. He was reemployed in 1940 when the Sikh squadron of Central Indian House refused to embark for the Middle East. He was successful in restoring the loyalty of the Sikh forces.³⁰ He had influence over the Akalis and he was a personal friend of Master Tara Singh. He was successful in persuading a section of the Akali Leaders to have favourable attitude toward the recruitment of the Sikhs. He was able to affect an understanding between the Akalis and the Unionist Government in the Punjab which

26. T.O.P. Vol. I p.772.

27. The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. II, Her Majesty's Govt. London, 1971, Document No. D, p 8.

28. Transfer of Power, Vol. I, Document No.455 from Mr. Pinnel dated March 30, 1942, p.564

29. *Ibid.*, Document No. 180, p. 238.

30. Major J.M. Short Interview with the writer of these lines.

culminated in the Sir Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact in June 1942.³¹

The Cripps Mission was evidently a failure. No Indian political party accepted it. It was denounced by Indian National Congress, Muslim League and other political parties. Yet it proved to be a significant document. For the first time it gave the right to the provinces of British India to secede from Centre and form their own Union. It brought to reality what previously was considered "flight of imagination" belonging to "the Domain of Fancy". It accepted the basic principle of Pakistan. According to Brecher "Draft Declaration implied acceptance of Pakistan demand by the British"³² Since Punjab was a Muslim majority province it was likely to secede from centre and in that case Sikhs were to be subjects of the Islamic State. It was a challenge for entire Sikh people who began to work against Pakistan and what was their response to this challenge we shall study in the next chapters.

31. Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1961 p.32.

32. Brecher Nehru, *A Political Biography*, London, 1959, p.278.

Chapter - 3
THE SIMLA CONFERENCE
Nomination of Baldev Singh

The Simla Conference is a landmark. The government of India recognised Shiromani Akali Dal, the biggest and the most influential political party of the Sikhs and representative body of the entire Sikh community- Master Tara Singh was invited as its representative to participate in the deliberations along with the leaders of other political parties of all India stature.

After the failure of Cripps Mission Lord Wavel, the Viceroy of India took initiative to form proposal and to invite all the political parties for dialogue to end the political deadlock. For this new approach he had to work hard. The Secretary of the State for India M. Amery had his own proposal viz to strengthen the National Defence Council in order to boost war effort. It may be mentioned here that after the Cripps Mission Indian National Congress had started "Quit India Movement". Most of the Congress leaders had courted arrest. On the other hand Japan was knocking at the very doors of India. Wavell, therefore, wanted to mobilise the defence of the country by including the Indian leaders to join the Central Government. Lord Wavell felt that his own views would have better chances of acceptance by Cabinet if he wrote chiefly to Churchill who was the Prime Minister in England. One of the objectives of the Viceroy was that the British Prime Minister should declare that they intended to give India self government and convince Indians of the change of heart.

The Viceroy's proposal was discussed in the British Cabinet and it was felt that as per Viceroy's own proposal to summon Conference of political leaders was matter that called for personal discussion with the Viceroy. As such Lord Wavel reached London on 23rd March, 1945 and Churchill gave his comment for calling a conference of Indian leaders on 31st may.¹ Wavell returned to India on the 4th June.²

Lord Wavell in a broadcast on 14th June said, "to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of

1. Patrick French, *Liberty or Death*, p.198.

2. V P Menon, *Transfer of Power*, Orient Longman, 1993, p.181.

full government", it was his intention to hold a political conference in Simla on 25th June. For this conference he would be inviting twenty one leaders including Premiers of the provincial governments or persons who had held office of Premier in the provinces administered by Governors, the leaders of the Congress Party and Deputy Leader of Muslim League in the Central Assembly, the leaders of the Congress and the League in Council of the State, the leaders of the Congress and Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Central Legislative Assembly, Gandhiji and Jinnah as the recognised leaders of two main political parties and one representative each of the Sikhs and Scheduled castes. The purpose of the conference would be to take counsel with the Viceroy with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council which would be more representative of organised political opinion.³ The members of the Congress working Committee were released on June 15 and they decided that those invited by the Viceroy should attend the conference.

The Conference held its various sessions from 25th June to 14th July 1945. The main difference of opinion between two major parties was that Mr. M A Jinnah President All India Muslim League asserted during the deliberations of the conference that the Muslim League was the sole representative of the Muslims of India and it could only propose names of the Muslim members of Executive Council of the Viceroy. This claim was contested by the Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Sahib Premier of N. W. F. Province and Sri Khizr Hayat Khan, the Unionist Premier of Punjab. The members of the different political parties expressed their views but there was difference of opinion between Congress and Muslim League regarding selection of members for the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Viceroy, therefore, suggested that all parties represented in the conference would send to him by specified date the lists of persons whom they like to be included in the Executive Council. "We would consider them and possibly add some names of our own and try to produce a list which would be acceptable to all concerned." He would ask that list should contain more names than the number of seats in Council likely to be available for one party. He would like not less than eight or nor more than twelve names from Congress and Muslim League four, from scheduled castes and other parties including Sikhs should send three names each. He made it clear that these numbers referred to party members only and any outsiders names

3. *Ibid*, p.182.

submitted would be in addition.⁴

The Viceroy explained that the lists sent to him would be kept secret and before he put first proposals to the conference, he would consult the party leaders. Master Tara Singh suggested that if the final proposals were not accepted, there should be general elections after which the Viceroy might try again.⁵

Regarding the proposal of Viceroy to recognise his Executive Council giving more power to the Indian hands, Master Tara Singh approved the proposal in general, but he added that everything would depend on the spirit in which they worked, that coming together the parties might in the end drift further apart. The Sikhs did not identify themselves with Congress, though so far as Congress favoured India's freedom they were in sympathy with it. He thought future of Indian army needed careful consideration. It had its own history and traditions and the new ideas about it might injure people who had served the country well..⁶

In the concluding session Master Tara Singh suggested that the differences between the Congress and Muslim leaders should be put to arbitration. He was quite prepared to agree to Pakistan, if Jinnah on his part would agree to a separate state for the Sikhs. Pakistan was a far greater danger to the Sikhs than to the other communities.^{6A}

Almost in all sessions Mr. Jinnah asserted that Muslim League was the sole representative of Indian Muslims. Khan Sahib the Congress Premier of NWFP and Maulana Azad Congress President had all along been contesting this claim. The conference ended on the 14th July 1945. The deliberations in the Conference and list of names ultimately were used in the formation of Executive Council under the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1946., which was popularly known as Interim Government. It would be interesting to study how S. Baldev Singh was selected as a Sikh member in the Executive Council of the Viceroy in 1946 especially when Master Tara Singh had been accepted as the leader of the Sikhs in the Simla Conference in 1945.

Dr. Gopal Singh used to publish a Sikh weekly paper entitled "Liberator" during 1945 and 1946. In a statement preserved in Oral History Cell, Punjabi University he told the writer that he was present in press conference convened by Lord Mountbatten on the 3rd June 1947 and asked most of the questions relating to the Sikhs. He had

4. V P Menon, Transfer of Power, p.213.

5. V P Menon, Transfer of Power, Pages 203. *Ibid.*, p. 197

6. V P Menon, Transfer of Power, p. 212.

6-A. T.O.P. Vol V. page 1246.

been invited as press correspondent. There being a Sikh journalist he had been observing the Sikh politics closely during partition days. He writes in his "A History of Sikh people",the Sikhs and scheduled castes leader Shivaraj had to submit three names out of which one was to be selected by the Viceroy. Master Tara Singh was said to have given his own name thrice.⁷ This is confirmed by Lord Wavell in *The Viceroy's Journal* (July 6, 1945). "Master Tara Singh came to inform me that at the instance of his committee he had placed his own name at head of the Sikh nominees (other two names were complete duds). This may be awkward since Tara Singh would be poor member of the Council"⁸ It appears that there could not be unanimity on any other name except that of Tara Singh. However, it was a blunder on the part of Master Tara Singh to suggest his own name thrice. When there was no limit on the number of names, he should have given at least five names including the name of Baldev Singh who was already a minister in the Unionist Government in Punjab as representative of the Akali Legislative Party.^{8A} Ignoring his name was a serious mistake. About Master Tara Singh, Lord Wavell had a poor opinion as he wrote to H.M. King George VI in his communication dated July 19, 1945 while giving the gist of Simla Conference - "Next to him (Premier of Orissa) sat Master Tara Singh an elderly gentleman with white long beard, an ex-school master. Like most Sikhs, he is not very clever, nor has the political sense but he is quite pleasant and well meaning. During the conference I fancy he flirted in turn with the League, the Unionists and the Congress and I am not sure that the Congress could not win him over in the end, at

7. A History of Sikh People. Dr. Gopal Singh, New Delhi, 1973, p.692.

8. Wavell, Viceroy's Journal edited by Penderal Moon, Oxford University Press, 1973, p.152.

8A. All agreed that in 1942 when Baldev Singh was nominated by Master Tara Singh to join Sir Sikander Hyat's ministry he was a member of Panthic Assembly Party. No other Akali member was willing to join the government as they had filled forms of Congress also as Akali Dal has allowed its members to have dual membership (Master Tara Singh, Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udesh, 'Punjab'), Jaswant Singh, 1972, p.137. Prof. Prithipal Singh Kapur on the basis of his personal interview with late Master Tara Singh asserts that Baldev Singh had been elected in 1936 from Ambala-Ropar Sikh Urban constituency as an independent candidate with Akali Dal's support. That might be the case. The government records, however, indicate that he won election of 1936 as an Akali candidate as well as he was successful from the same constituency in 1946 as an Akali candidate. *Elections in Punjab 1920-47* by Kirpal C. Yadav, Tokyo University, Japan, 1981, p. 94 and 117.

any rate they included two names on their list in a kind of postscript.⁹ Prior to this communication, Baldev Singh had seen Lord Wavell as he wrote in his journal. "In the afternoon (June 27, 1945) Baldev Singh came to see me. He had two of the Congress ex-Premiers Kher of Bombay and Sinha of Bihar staying with him. He said Punjab would be quite satisfied if they had a Sikh and Punjabi Musalman in the Executive Council."¹⁰

Sir Evan Jenkins who had been on the Viceroy staff and had acted as Secretary for reporting was transferred to Punjab as Governor in 1946. He knew the mind of Lord Wavell regarding Baldev Singh and wrote the following, recommending Baldev Singh for Executive Council in his communication dated 15 May 1946.

No. G.S. 290:

I sent Your Excellency a telegram today recommending that if Baldev Singh is taken for the Interim Govt. at the Centre, he should have an opportunity of consulting the Premier before any announcement is made. I agree that Baldev Singh is probably the best choice among the Sikhs for the Executive Council, but his boss will be a serious one for his party in the Punjab, and it is wise to remember that, however, much the Sikhs may desire to be represented at the Centre for purpose of prestige, their heart is really in the Punjab. This is natural as they can never be an All India party or community. A Sikh Member of the Executive Council is largely lost to Punjab politics, and during the next few months and possibly in the coming years, much will depend upon the ability of the Sikhs in Punjab to keep their heads and their tempers. Baldev Singh has developed considerably since he took office and being both rich and a member of an Agricultural tribe is in an unusually good position to extend his influence. We can find a replacement for him in the Council of Ministers, but not a man of anything like the same influence. If the Sikhs in Punjab are behaving reasonably, any decent Sikh would do for the Executive Council, if they are misbehaving no Sikh will be able to control them effectively from New Delhi. I know, or used to know, a good deal about the Sikhs having served in Sikh Districts for 10 years as an Assistant and Deputy Commissioner and I think that this view is likely to prove the right one."¹¹

In the last week of June 1946 Jenkins again reported: "Baldev

9. T.O.P. Vol. V, p. 1278.

10. The Viceroy's Journal, p.148.

11. T.O.P. Vol.VII, p. 566

Singh had a bad time at the Sikh meeting in Amritsar on 22nd of June and the following days. The Sikhs decided unanimously that he must refuse your Excellency's invitation to join the Interim Govt. According to Baldev Singh they also decided to elect their representatives for Constituent Assembly. On this latter point intelligence reports tell a different story and suggest that no final decision has yet been taken".¹²

Baldev Singh wanted to join the interim Govt. but had certain reservations. Major Short reported in the Cabinet Delegation meeting on the 18th June 1946 "Baldev Singh had said that he was willing to accept the invitation to serve in the Interim Govt. but had to do so subject to reservation ... Baldev Singh then raised the question what his problem would be in respect of election to the Constituent Assembly. Would he by joining the Interim Govt./be debarred from taking part in these elections." Mr. Abell could not give satisfactory reply and promised to look into this matter.¹³

Giani Kartar Singh an influential Akali leader gave his views to Major Short regarding Baldev Singh accepting invitation of the Viceroy. He stated, "Baldev Singh can only accept the invitation to serve on the Interim Govt. if he gives a qualified acceptance. The qualification would be something to the effect that as a Sikh he must be free to work to have the statement of May 16th modified to meet the claim of Sikh community".¹⁴

Here Giani Kartar Singh was mistaken. He believed that Baldev Singh was being taken into the Interim Government as Akali Dal nominee but on the other hand he being taken there as government nominee and was unable to dictate terms and force the will of his community, Master Tara Singh's as Akali Dal's nominee had been rejected. As a loyal subject of British, Baldev Singh could request, explain, send petitions for certain concessions to be granted to the Sikhs. J.M. Short rightly gave Baldev Singh's estimate viz. "One of the principle charges laid against him by other Sikh leaders - that he has been bought by ourselves".¹⁵ Therefore Baldev Singh had to fight his battle alone. Sant Singh, Chief Minister of Nabha and Short advised him "that Baldev Singh must run some distance with present Sikh hare to hunt up hounds to run it down seemed to Sant as to me obvious".¹⁶ Indirectly, it implies that Baldev Singh should gain popularity

12. T.O.P. Vol. VII, p.1084.

13. Public Record Office P.R.O. London, Cal. 127/104.

14. *Ibid*

15. *Ibid*.

16. *Ibid*.

among the Sikh leaders before he could do something for the British government.

Both these advisers of Baldev Singh suggested him the following plan of action. To silence those Sikhs who attributed Baldev Singh's attitude to lust of power and love for British, he must place his resignation from Ministership of Punjab before Master Tara Singh. Then he should suggest formation of two sub-committee - one Action Committee and another Negotiation Committee - one to let off the steam and other to shut off the steam. In this way he should delay the matter.¹⁷

It will not be out of place to trace the circumstances leading to the rejection of Master Tara Singh as candidate for the Executive Council of the Viceroy and coming up of S. Baldev Singh with the support of the British as representative of the Sikhs in the Executive Council popularly known as Interim Government. It has already been mentioned that Master Tara Singh submitted his own name thrice instead of three separate names. It has been the policy of Lord Wavell to consult leaders of the major parties while selecting members of the minority community. This was done to have harmonious working of the council. The candidature of Tara Singh for the proposed Executive Council was rejected by both Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of Muslim League and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad., the then President of Congress. Lord Wavell was himself not very much impressed by Master Tara Singh as already mentioned British Government wanted some pliable Sikh leader. On the other hand Baldev Singh was making every effort to get himself selected as a member of the Executive Council. First he met the Viceroy in Bombay and impressed him. Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab who knew the mind of Lord Wavell, strongly recommended Baldev Singh for the membership of the Executive Council. Now the British Government began to groom Baldev Singh as a distinct Sikh leader so that he may be acceptable to the Sikh community. When Cabinet Mission came in India, the representatives of Sikh Community viz Master Tara Singh Giani Kartar Singh and Harnam Singh were given separate times on April 5, 1946 to meet the Cabinet Mission and Baldev Singh was also given an audience for an hour on the same day.¹⁸ The Governor of Punjab began to consult Baldev Singh on the Sikh affairs, writing to Lord Wavell and intimating him the reaction of various communities with regard to Cabinet Mission proposals.

17. *Ibid.* Situation before the Sikhs - a note by J.M. Short.

18. T.O.P. Vol. VII. Document No 56 and 57.

Governor of Punjab stated, "I will keep your Excellency in touch with developments. Baldev Singh is expected back from Delhi on the morning of 24th May and after consulting him I will if necessary send for some of the Sikh leaders .."¹⁹

As advised by Major J.M. Short, Baldev Singh was playing a double role viz winning the favour of British Govt. by advising and helping them in the Sikh affairs to get himself as a member in the Interim Government, on the other hand he was working and cooperating with the Sikh leadership to get himself accepted as a Sikh representative. How he was frequently quoted with reference to the Sikh affairs is evident from the following two communication of Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab: "Sir E. Jenkins (Punjab) to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell:

18 July 1946, 8.50 p.m.

1. Received 19 July 1 a.m.No.60-G. Constituent Assembly, Baldev Singh gives the following account of withdrawal of Sikh nominations:

2. "When Panthic Board met on July 9, Akalis favoured total boycott. Congress Sikhs had however, been ordered by High Command: (a) to support nominations acceptable to Panth as a whole or (b) failing (a) to make their own nominations. There was heated discussion and on both sides in the Board decided on boycott.

3. "On evening of 10th July Baldev Singh, communicated with Patel who made intention of High Command quite clear. He then saw Partap Singh Kairon recently appointed to Congress working committee and advised him strongly to nominate four Congress Sikhs. He knew that if this was done Akalis would follow suit. Baldev Singh's plan succeeded and eight Sikhs were nominated.

4. "On 14th Board held further meeting at which Partap Singh was strongly criticised both from Akalis and from Congress Sikhs who are jealous of his appointment to Working Committee. Sachar consulted Nehru on telephone and apparently informed Partap Singh that Sikhs might do as they pleased. Meeting then upheld boycott decision and withdrawal of nominations followed.

5. "Nehru has since telephoned insisting that four Sikhs be

19. *Ibid.*, Document No. 345

nominated and urging application for bye election. Baldev Singh says that if bye election is held and Congress Sikhs are nominated Akalis will again follow suit.

6. "I have told Baldev Singh I know nothing about the bye elections though presumably there will be machinery for filling casual vacancies. Please telegraph (i) whether bye election can be held for Sikhs and (ii) if so where and by what procedure, I presume formal Assembly session would not be necessary. Grateful for reply by July 22nd when Baldev Singh leaves Lahore on short holiday."²⁰

Baldev Singh was the foremost to intimate the Viceroy the Panthic Board's decision to rescind the boycott of the constituent body. George Abell communicated to the Viceroy: "Baldev Singh to Mr. Abell:

Simla 17 August 1946

I enclose herewith the resolution passed by the Panthic Board at a meeting held on the 14th instant for his Excellency's information:

"Full text of the resolution passed at the meeting of the panthic board held at Amritsar on 14th august, 1946:

"The Panthic Pratitnidhi Board met on 14th of August to consider the situation created by events and the developments that have taken place since July 5th when the Board reiterated its decision to boycott the Constiguent Assembly. During this period, the Secretary of state for India, during the debate in the House of commons on July 18th, made an appeal to the Sikhs to reconsider their boycott decision and His Excellency the Viceroy has also in his replies to communications from certain Sikh gentlemen expressed his willingness for the accommodation of the Sikh viewpoint.

"The main factor, is, however the resolution of the Congress Working Committee of August 9th in which the Congress has recognised that injustice has been done to the Sikhs by the Cabinet Mission's proposal and has declared that it will give all possible support to the Sikhs in redressing their legitimate grievances and in securing for the Sikhs adequate safeguards for protecting their interests".

The Congress Working Committee has further appealed

20. T.P.O. Vol VIII, Document 47

to the Sikhs to reconsider their resolution of boycotting the Constituent Assembly. This resolutions of the Working Committee must be read along with the Lahore Congress Resolution of 1929 - that no solution of the communal problem in any future constitution would be acceptable to the Congress that did not give full satisfaction to the Sikhs - as well as with the recent speeches and statements of the prominent Congress leaders to the effect that the Sikhs must be given similar safeguards as are provided to the two major communities in paragraph 15 and 19 of the Cabinet Mission proposals.

"Though the grave apprehensions of the Sikh Community concerning their future under the Cabinet Mission scheme continue to exist, yet the appeal and the assurance of the Indian National Congress carry weight with the Board.

"In these circumstances and after careful deliberations, the Board is of the view that the situation calls for an earnest effort by the Sikhs to give the Constituent Assembly a fair trial to secure for the Sikhs similar safeguards in the Union and the Provincial sphere as are provided for the two major communities in the long-term proposals.

"The Panthic Board is further of the view that like the boycott method, this method in order to be effective and successful requires for united, disciplined and determined support of the Panth and the Board earnestly appeals to all Sikhs for all support."²¹

In the first week of September 1946 Lord Wavell formed the Executive Council of twelve members which was popularly known as Interim Government. The Viceroy intimated to King George VI the twelve names with their brief accounts. Following brief description of Baldev Singh was given in the communication to H.M. King George VI dated 22 Oct. 1946:

"Baldev Singh Defence Member has more brain any good sense than any other Sikh. I have met him and so far as I know, he is honest. He is a rich industrialist. The Commander in chief likes him and is getting on well with him".²²

When Shormani Akali Dal came to know that Sikh nominee in the Interim Government has been selected with the consultation of Congress and Muslim League Master Tara Singh vigorously

21. T.O.P. Vol VII, Document No. 158, page 142-3.

22. T.O.P. Vol VIII, Document No. 493, page 77.

protested and wrote following letter dated October 30, 1946:

"Master Tara Singh to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell: 30 Oct. 1946 "I read your letter dated 4th October to Mr. Jinnah in reply to his letter. I feel very much astonished upon your reply of the point 6 of Mr. Jinnah's letter. The Congress and the Muslim League are free to nominate their own representatives. But in case of the Sikhs, you do not give the same right to the Shiromani Akali Dal, the representative body of the Sikhs. The last elections of the Central and the Punjab Legislative Assembly were fought by the Shromani Akali Dal against the Congress upon this issue alone. The Congress was defeated in both the elections and yet it seems that you do not recognise the Shromani Akali Dal as respresntative body of the Sikhs. In the Gurdwara elections which are being fought, no party has dared to put up its candidate against those put by the SAD of course, there are candidates fighting against the SAD and supported by disgrunted elements amongst the Sikhs, but they are not fighting under the banner of any party, and the fight will not be serious one. SAD will certainly gain more than 80% seats.

" On the other hand, you agree to consult the Congress and Muslim League both while filling a Sikh vacancy if it occurs. This is highly unfair to the Sikhs. The case of the Sikhs is not at par with that of the other smaller minorities. The Sikhs have been recognised as a separate entity and they have got their own representative organisation, which has established its right. The Christians and the Parsis have never so far forght a single legislative seat upon the ticket of any organisation of theirs and they may not be treated as independent entities. But the case of the Sikhs is quite defferent. They have always fought legislative elections upon the ticket of their own organisations and their representatives were elected upon the ticket of one or the other party of their own.

"If a Sikh Executive member is to be appointed with the consultation of the Congress and the Muslim League, the gentleman may be a good Sikh, but he will not be a Sikh representative. It appears that the Sikh aspirants of the Executive Council membership will have to flatter the Muslim League and the Congress just, in the same way as the aspirant from all the communities have been so far flattering the English officials.

"I, therefore, request you to modify your decision and assure the Sikhs that the Sikh Executive Member will in future be

appointed upon the recommendations of the Sikh representative body, and that no non-Sikh organisation will have any say in the appointment of the Sikh Executive Councilor.²³

In reply to Master Tara Singh's letter Viceroy Secretary replied on 10 Nov. 1946.

"My dear Master Tara Singh

His Excellency the viceroy asks me to acknowledge your letter of 20th October.

2. He is sure you will agree that the present Sikh Member of the Interim Government has the confidence of the Sikh community as a whole and he sincerely trusts the question of filling a vacancy will not arise. If however, unfortunately the need should arise, there is no question of His Excellency being precluded from consulting any Sikh leaders or representative body that he may wish to consult. It would not however be in the interest of the smooth working of the govt. of indeed of Sikh community that an appointment of a Sikh should be made without any consultation with two major parties.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. ABELL²⁴

When Baldev Singh reiterated the stand Master Tara Singh In his letter to the Viceroy dated November 13, 1946 and stressed, "May I point out that if the agreement you have unilaterally arrived at with Mr. Jinnah were to stand, the Sikhs will be reduced to a plight little better than that section of the scheduled castes from which Mr. Jinnah has drawn one in the League's five seats.²⁵ Ultimately Lord Wevell conceded this point and noted, on the same document "I have merely said I would consult, there is no question of Jinnah's consent being necessary"²⁶

How simple and submissive had been the attitude of the Akali leaders towards the British Government as compared with that of the Congress and Muslim League can be assessed from the following example. The Congress leaders very strongly protested to the Viceroy that among the Muslim League nominees for the Interim Govt. the name Abdul Rali Nishtar from North Western Frontier Province should not be there because he had

23. T.O.P. Vol. VIII, Document No 530, p. 838-32

24. T.O.P. Vol. IX Document No 22, p. 41.

25. *Ibid*, Document No. 31, p. 55.

26. *Ibid*, Document No. 31, p. 56

been defeated by the Congress candidate in the elections recently held. When Muslim League was apprised of the objection Mr. Jinnah, the president of Muslim League conveyed to Lord Wavell that either Muslim League nominees had to be accepted in toto or they would not join or they would quit the govt. Similarly when the Muslim League objected to the nomination of Jagjiwan Ram the Congress very forcefully defended him. The Viceroy had to accept all the nominations made by the party concerned. Now in the case of Sikhs, Shromani Akali Dal nominee was rejected, by the govt. and Baldev Singh was nominated as a Sikh representative. Master Tara Singh very mildly protested and ultimately reconciled with the situation. His last para of the letter addressed to Lord Wavell, Viceroy is note-worthy: "I, therefore, request you to modify your decision and assure the Sikhs that Sikh Executive member will in future be appointed upon the recommendations of the Sikh representative body and no non-Sikh organisation will have any say in the appointment of the Sikh Executive Councillor".²⁷

27. T.O.P. Vol. VIII, Document No. 530, p. 839.

Chapter - 4

THE CABINET MISSION PLAN

After the termination of the Second World War in 1945, circumstances took a favourable turn for the independence of India. In the election that followed in England the Labour Party listed the independence of India, as one of the issues in its Election Manifesto and won the elections.¹ Thus the question of granting independence to India came in the forefront. Moreover Mr. C.R. Attlee (later Lord Attlee) the leader of the Labour Party and Britain's Prime Minister, took personal interest in the various plans for the transfer of power to India.²

Soon after coming into Power Attlee sent a Mission to India consisting of three members of the Cabinet - Lord Pathick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V.Alexander. After coming to India they held discussions with various political parties and declared on the 16th May 1946 their proposals which are known as Cabinet Mission Plan for transfer of power. The proposals can be divided into two parts - short term and long term arrangements. The short term arrangement envisaged the formation of an interim government consisting of all the political parties. It was to have equal members of the Congress and Muslim League and other minorities like Sikhs, Christians etc. were to be separately represented. According to the long term arrangements, the Constituent Assembly was to be established with the following compulsory grouping for making constitution of free India:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Section 'A' | Consisting of Madras, Bombay, Uttar pradesh, Bihar, the Central Provinces and Orrissa. |
| Section 'B' | Consisting of Punjab, the North Western Frontier Province, Sindh and British Baluchistan. |
| Section 'C' | Consisting of Bengal and Assam. |

In 7 section B, the Muslim representatives were 22, Hindus 9 and and the Sikhs 4. ³

1. Herbert Morrison, Government and Parliament, p. 222.
2. C.R. Attlee, As it Happened, London, pp. 78-79 Mr. Attlee was a member of the Simon Commission and hence one of the architects of Govt. of India Act, 1935.
3. Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution Maurice Gwyer and Appadorai, Oxford University Press, 1957, Vol. II, p. 582.

The Sikhs vigorously protested against this proposal. In a memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Mission, Master Tara Singh argued: "Before the Mission arrives at a decision on the question (constitution making) we would emphasise that the Sikhs have as good a claim for creation of a separate sovereign state as Muslims for Pakistan and that Mission would not concede the claim for Pakistan without conceding at the same time the claim for separate state made on behalf of the Sikhs."⁴

Landen Sarasfield rightly stated, "... are Sikhs not entitled to self-determination as a nation? Are they not as virile as civilised and or capable of governing themselves as a separate nation? Are their traditions not as good in every way as those of Indian Muslims. Above all have they not as much reason to fear domination by Muslim as the latter had to fear domination by the Hindus and Sikhs."⁵ The main thrust of the Sikh memorandum was to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs as is clear from the following:

"The draft declaration provides for the right of non-accession of the province. The Sikhs make it plain that they are opposed to any possible partition of India as envisaged in the draft declaration.....Akalis demand: The statutory Muslim majority in the legislature of the Province must go and position of the Sikhs must be strengthened by increasing representation there in so as to ensure to the Sikhs an effective voice in the administration of the country."⁶

The Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar the oldest political organisation of the Sikhs submitted their separate memorandum. Its Honorary Secretary, Surjit Singh Majithia rightly agreed in that memorandum:

"Regarding Pakistan, the Chief Khalsa Diwan is definitely of the opinion that creation of such a state will not solve the communal question because there is set no part of India which is wholly peopled by Mohammedans".

In the last para of their representation, the Chief Khalsa Diwan demanded adequate representation of the Sikhs:

"The Chief Khalsa Diwan wishes to point out that although the principle of safeguarding the interests of the Sikhs

4. Indian Annual Register, 1946, Vol. 1, p. 200.

5. Landen Sarasfield, *Betraving of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1946, p. 2-3.

6. SDIC, cit op., Vol. II, p. 625.

was recognised as early as 1907, it has not been implemented adequately - Cheif Khalsa Diwan urges that whatever political machinery in the form of constituent assembly be set up for making out the constitution of India an adequate representation of the Sikhs be made in that constitution making body."⁷

Master Tara Singh's letter dated May 25, 1946 addressed to Lord Pathick Lawrence, leader of the Cabinet Mission was more realistic and rational:

"Since the British Cabinet Mission's recommendations for the future constitution of India have been published, a wave of dejection, resentment and indignation has been throughout the Sikh community. The reasons are quite obvious."

"The Sikhs have been entirely thrown at the mercy of the Muslim. Group 'B' comprises the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Provinces, Sindh and Baluchistan and the representatives given to each community will be Muslims 23, Hindus 9 and Sikhs 4. Can any body expect from this assembly, constituted as it is, any consideration of justice for the Sikhs? The Cabinet Mission recognises the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslim lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu majority rule? If the British Govt. is not aware of the Sikh feelings, the Sikh will have to resort to some measures in order to convince everybody concerned of the Sikh anxiety, in case they are subjected to a perpetual Muslim domination. This is evidently done to placate the Muslims. If the first consideration of the Cabinet Mission's recommendations is to give protection to the Muslims, why should the same consideration be not shown for Sikhs? But it appears that the Sikhs have been studiously debarred from having any effective influence in the province, group or central union. I refer to section 15 (2) and section 19 (7) in which it has been definitely provided that the majority of both the Hindus and Muslims is necessary for certain purposes. The Sikhs are entirely ignored, though they are as much conerned as the other communities."

"This is how I read the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission. But as the issues are very grave and momentous, the Sikh representatives, assembled here today to consider the situation created, have advised me to seek clarification from you and find out if there is any hope of such amendments as may save the Sikhs from perpetual domination.

7. File S.H.R. 1804, Sikh History Research Deptt., Khalsa College, Amritsar.

"So, I put three questions:

1. "What is the significance of recognising the Sikhs as one of the main communities?"
2. "Suppose the majority of Section 'B' frames a constitution under section 19 (5) but the Sikh members do not agree. Does it mean deadlock or does the opposition of the Sikh members mean simple disassociation."
3. "Is there any hope of obtaining for the Sikhs the same right as is given to the Muslims and the Hindus under section 15 (2) and 19 (7)?"⁸

In reply to Master Tara Singh's letter, Lord Pathrick Lawrence wrote in his letter dated 1st June:

"The anxieties of the Sikhs were kept prominently in mind when we were drafting the Cabinet Mission's Statement and I can certainly claim that of the various alternatives open to us the best one from the Sikh point of view was chosen.

"I have considered carefully the detailed points you raise at the end of your letter, I fear the Mission cannot issue any addition to, or interpretation of, the Statement. There is, however, no intention whatever to prejudice the position of the Sikhs in the Punjab or in the North West group, nor do I think their position has been prejudiced, for it is inconceivable that either the Constituent Assembly or any future government of the Punjab will overlook their special place in the province. The estimate of the importance of your community would never depend on the number of seats that you held in the Constituent Assembly."⁹

In his lengthy letter of 7th July addressed to Lord, Attlee, Baldev Singh vehemently opposed the compulsory grouping in the Cabinet Mission Plan and enclosed with his letter the following resolution passed in the Akali Conference held on 10th June, 1946:⁹

"This representative gathering of the Sikhs has given its anxious and earnest consideration to the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission and is of the opinion that these recommendations will perpetuate slavery of the country rather than offer independence to India. The recommendations are unjust to the Sikhs, particularly in regard to matters specified here are under:

- A. "That the Cabinet Mission while recognising that the

8. Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution, Vol. II, cit op. 626.

9. Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution, Vol. II, cit op. 627.

establishment of Pakistan would in particular affect adversely the position of the Sikh have, by the compulsory grouping of the provinces, made recommendations, which in the words of Lord Pathick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India made it possible for the Muslims to secure all the conditions of Pakistan without incurring the danger in it.

- B. "The Cabinet Mission while admitting that the cultural, political and social life of the Muslim might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their great superior numbers will be dominant element and thus in spite of the fact that the Muslims are nine crores in population and constitute a majority in several provinces of India, have deliberately blinded themselves to the same danger to a greater degree in the case of the Sikhs under Muslim domination which will be all the more aggravated by the proposed constitution. Needless to add that even under the existing constitution, the Sikhs have been reduced to a position of complete helplessness which has already exasperated them to the verge of a revolt.
- C. "The while admitting that the Punjab is the homeland of the Sikhs, the Cabinet Mission have by their recommendations liquidated the positions of the Sikhs in their homeland.
- D. "That the Advisory Committee set up under paragraph 28 of the Cabinet Mission's Statement is wholly ineffective to safeguard the just rights of the Sikhs.
- E. "That while the Cabinet Mission made provision for the protection of the rights and interests of the Hindus and Muslims in regard to major communal issues, they have made no such provision for the protection of the rights and the interests of the Sikhs in the Union or the provincial sphere. Therefore, this Panthic gathering expresses its strong condemnation of the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission and declares that they are wholly unacceptable to the Sikhs which does not meet their just demands and is settled without their consent."

In reply to this letter and resolution Lord Attlee wrote in his communication dated 7th August, 1946:

"I have given close personal consideration to this matter

and I am quite clear that Statement of May 14 which had the full approval of His Majesty's government at the time cannot be altered in the way the Sikhs desire" He hinted that the Viceroy could discuss the position of the Sikhs with the Presidents of Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.¹⁰ "It is unfortunate", he wrote, "that the Sikh community should in the meantime have decided not to elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly."¹¹

Landen Sarasfield, a British army officer wrote a book entitled 'Betrayal of the Sikhs', after publication of Cabinet Mission Proposals in 1946. He stated in conclusion of his book referred to above:

"British Officers are many who agree that the Sikhs have not been given a fair deal ... Cabinet Mission committed a grievous mistake in neglecting to case for the political aspirations of the Khalsa and affirm that a very dangerous situation indeed has been created by this neglect ... The only conclusion that can be reached therefore, is that the members of the British Cabinet were misled as to the true facts of the case, and treated the Sikhs as they would be the Parsees, the Anglo-Indians or Scheduled castes. That is greater error in statesmanship could be made will be obvious at once to persons who have studied the history past and present of the Sikhs.¹² It is yet possible to avoid the endless bloodshed and misery which otherwise will be rampant on the face of this unhappy land."

The Congress working committee in their meeting held on August 9, 1946 passed the resolution recognising that 'injustice had been done to the Sikhs by the Cabinet Mission Proposals and declared that it would give all possible support to the Sikhs in redressing their legitimate grievances and in securing for them adequate safeguards for protection of their interests. The committee also appealed to the Sikhs to reconsider their decision of boycotting the Constituent Assembly."¹³

The Prithinidhi Panthic Board, which had been formed by various groups of Sikhs including Akalis, passed the following resolution on August 14, 1946 withdrawing the boycott of the Constituent Assembly by the Sikhs: "..... after careful consideration,

10. M.B File 139, India Office Library, London.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Betrayal of the Sikhs*, Landen Sarasfield, Lahore, 1946, pp. 130-131.

13. *Transfer of Power*, V.P. Menon, Modway.

the Board is of the view that the situation calls for an earnest efforts by Sikhs to give Constituent Assembly method a fair trial to secure for the Sikhs similar safeguards in the Union and the provincial spheres as are provided for the major communities in the long term proposals."¹⁴

In his interview with sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab on 10th April, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh stressed the following points relating to the Cabinet Missions Plan: "Sikhs were dissatisfied with the statement of 16th May, 1946. They would go into the Constituent Assembly if they were guaranteed in Section 'B' the same right of communal veto as has been granted to the Muslims in the full assembly. Secondly, there must be an immediate partition of Punjab. The two new provinces could both be in Section 'B' but both must have the right to contract out of the new constitution".¹⁵

The Governor Punjab reported to the Viceroy in his letter dated 10th April, 1947 the above noted two conditions: He wrote that the Sikhs would apparently acquiesce in any agreement on two conditions: communal veto in the group of province to which they belong and partition of Punjab.¹⁶

In this interview, with the Governor of Punjab clear indication was given that partitioned Punjab to have right to contract out of the new constitution. In other words both parts of the Punjab should have the right to be independent. At another place, Jenkins report confirms this: "The Sikh conception was of a non-Muslim state including nearly the whole of the Sikh community. Such a state would be amalgamated or federated with the Phulkian states and could be free to join Hindustan or Pakistan or to remain completely independent and to make a separate treaty with."¹⁷ For the achievement of this aim, some sort of understanding between the Muslim League and the Sikhs appeared essential. Giani Kartar Singh who had been meeting the Muslim League leaders to probe their attitude towards Sikhs was of the view that 'Muslim League had shown no real signs of wanting a settlement. They had talked about it constantly but their whole attitude had been that they were a separate nation and must dominate the

14. T.O.P. Vol. VIII, Document No. 158.

15. M.B. 139, India Office Library (now known as British Library), London.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Enclosure of Sir Evan Jenkins letters to Viceroy dated 10th April, 1947, M.B. 139, India Office Library, London.

Punjab".¹⁸ Giani Kartar Singh's ideas of Sikh state was in conformity with the Akali Dal's resolution and policy.

Had Punjab been partitioned within the framework of Cabinet Mission proposals and these proposals accepted by both the major political parties of India, the large scale violence and bloodshed in Punjab would have been avoided.

After the end of the World War II, elections were held throughout India. In the elections of 1946, proved to be a turning point in the history of the Punjab. The Muslim League polled 75.26 per cent votes and secured 73 seats of Punjab Legislature Assembly out of 85 seats contested for where as the Unionist Party polled only 26.61 per cent votes of all communities.¹⁹ This landslide Victory for Muslim League in the Punjab clearly indicated that the Muslims of Punjab were solidly behind the Muslim League and were aspiring to establish Pakistan with Punjab as one of its provinces. In that event, the Sikhs and Hindu minorities of Punjab would have been left in Pakistan. In order to avoid this they demanded the creation of Sikh-Hindu province." It was stated in "A Case for a New Sikh-Hindu Province in Punjab":

If this demand is not conceded it will mean the ruin of Hindu martial as well as commercial classes under the permanent domination of those who believe in their belief a separate nation. Similarly, the Sikhs 95% of whose world population resides in Punjab will become politically extinct. A people who not hundred year ago were the rulers of the land would become subservient to those whom they had conquered and ruled. This is unuust, unfair and preposterous and shall not be permitter. Therefore, by the right of self-determination, by the right of majority and by an inherent right of culturally homogenous people to live their own life, the division of Punjab is absolutely essential."²⁰

The League emerged as the largest single party in the Punjab

18. *Ibid.*

19. Press Information Bureau, Govt of India, Series No.21 dated 5th March, 1946, p. 5.

20. Giani Kartar Singh, *The Case for a New Sikh Province in Punjab*, Delhi, 1946, p. 9. It was disclosed in this Oral History's statement presented in Punjabi University Patiala that this pumphlet was written by late M.S. Randhawa I.C.S. Published in the name of Giani Kartar Singh.

Legislative Assembly.²¹ But Sir Khizar Hyat Khan Unionist party formed a coalition Ministry with the support of the Akali Party²² and the Congress Party. He was right, to some extent, in foreseeing that the Muslim League with all its zest for Pakistan was not likely to come to terms with the non-Muslim political Parties. He, therefore formed a ministry as a matter of political expediency. But this had a very adverse effect of the Muslims of the Punjab who had been playing a leading role in the Punjab politics as their numbers entitles them to. Now for the first time the largest party found it self totally excluded by an undreamt combination of the Congress, Unionists and the Akali Party. If Sir Khizar had not formed the ministry and the League leaders had been left with some hope of office, they would have been compelled, just in order to gain power, to adopt a more consiliatory attitude towards the minorities. In that case they would have been less tempted to stir up strife. The allies forming the coalition government - the Congress the Akalis and the rump of the Unionists - must all share blame for the situation that arose. The Akalis and the Congress seem to have miscalculated both their own strength as well as that of the new Chief Minister.

On the 20th of Feb. 1947 Lord Attlee announced in the Parliament that "it is their definite intention to take necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948." The fixation of the date for the transfer of power to Indian hands had a significant impact on the Punjab politics. Soon after Attlee's statement Sir Khizar yielded to the pressure tactics of the Muslim League and resigned. Justifying his resignation he said, "If I were now to continue to lead a coalition in which the Muslim League is not represented, this might put in serious jeopardy such chances as might otherwise exist of a settlement being arrived at between the communities in the province."²³

Meanwhile, instead of any communal settlement in the Punjab, there broke out communal riots in the districts of Rawalpindi. The

21. Press Information Bureau Series No. 22, dated March 5, 1946, p. 5, 10 and 12. The relative strength of the various parties just after elections of 1945-46 was: Muslim League (73), Akalis (21), Unionist (19), Independent (11), Congress (51), Total seats 175.

22. The Akali Party was formed of the reformist Sikhs who wanted to reform their religious shrines. After the enactment of the Gurdwara Act 1925, the Akali Party entered politics. In the elections of 1937, the Akali Party won 10 Sikh seats. In the election of 1945-46 it secured 21 seats. *Ibid.*

23. The Tribune, Lahore, March 4, 1947.

trouble had started in Hazara district of North Western Frontier province in January 1947. Hazara District situated on the western border of Kashmir on eastern side of the river Indus, had population which was more easily excitable.²⁴ The Muslim League workers chose this area for their future plan of action. Members of the District Hazara Muslim League were sent in batches to Bihar, where at a large scale Hindu-Muslim riots had taken place and the Muslims had been killed. And on their return they started communal trouble in Hazara.²⁵ A school master hanged in his neck a human skull, "Wherever he went he excited the Muslims by saying that was the skull of a Muslim who had been killed in Bihar."²⁶ Thus the communal riots started in Hazara where Hindus and Sikhs were killed.

Some writers erroneously attribute the commencement of communal riots in Rawalpindi, Attock and Multan districts due to the tearing of Muslim League Flag by Master Tara Singh. But Master Tara Singh has contradicted it and told this writer that he never tore any flag. When the Muslim League workers came toward him shouting Pakistan Zindabad he only raised the slogan "Pakistan Murdabad." Meanwhile the police came in between the mob and members of Panthic party who had come out from the Assembly Hall after the meeting of the party. The Punjab Disturbed Area Act and the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance were promulgated to meet the situation.²⁷ The military had been called out several times to quell the disturbances.²⁸

According to Zia-Ul-Islam 'Sikh opposition to the formation of the League Ministry resulted in the communal riots in Rawalpindi and Attock'.²⁹ This proves the political nature of the causes which were earlier analysed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who said after visiting the riot affected areas, 'Obviously all that had happened is intimately connected with political affairs ... if politics is to be conducted in this way then it ceases to be politics and becomes some kind of jungle warfare which reduces human habitation to the state of desert.'³⁰

There were worst type of communal riots in district Rawalpindi

24. Hazara District Gazetteer, p. 19.

25. Muslim League's Attack on Hindus and Sikhs, p.42. Kirpalest, Shahichian (Phi), 11-36.

26. Tumult in India, George E. Jones, New York, 1948, p. 52.

27. The Tribune, dated 20th March 1947.

28. Northern Command Communique, The Tribune, 23rd March, 1947.

29. Zia-Ul-Islam, East Punjab's Bloodbath, Pakistani Publishers, Karachi, typed copt Khalsa Coll. Asr, p.2.

30. D.R.Bose, New India Speaks, Calcutta, 1947, p. 133.

where several Hindus and Sikh villages were wiped out. Entire Sikh population in the village was put to sword by Muslim mob. At Thohan Khalsa many Sikh women jumped in a well to save their honour. When Nehru visited the place photograph of the bottom of the well was taken after using flashlight. Decomposed limbs of women were visible.³¹ When Lord Mountbatten visited the area, he reported "after visiting Rawalpindi district the whole of the Hindu-Sikh part is an absolute wreck as though it had become subjected to air-raid."³²

On April 8, 1947 the Indian National Congress passed the following resolution: "... these tragic events (communal riots in Punjab) have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem of Punjab by violence and coercion and no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsions, this would necessitates the division of Punjab into two provinces so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from predominantly non-Muslim parts."³³

The communal riots of the Punjab received some attention in England. The Times, London, described the Punjab situation as 'most critical'. On the 11th March in an article 'Lesson from the Punjab' it is stated that 'the Sikhs' complain with justice that the Muslim League seeks to deny to them in the Punjab the position which it claims in the rest of India'. It reverted again to the Punjab communal riots on the 18th March and observed editorially "Prolonged agitation directed by the Muslim League against the Unionist Coalition Government of the Province paved the way for the present outbreak of communal violence". Punjab had been put under the Governor's rule under section 93 of the Govt. of India Act 1935. The riots in Rawalpindi vitiated the political atmosphere. Pt. Nehru said in a press conference at Lahore, after visiting the riot-affected areas, "Obviously all that has happened is intimately connected with political affairs"³⁴. "The resignation of Khizar Hyat Khan had not made possible the emergence of a Muslim League ministry in power. This had further exasperated the Muslims and Lahore had become a victim to constant rioting.

Alan Campbell Johnson has rightly put it, "We have inherited

31. My book, *Shahidian*, Amritsar, 1964, p. 69-70. The photo of bottom of well has been published in the book.
32. Viceroy's Personal Report No. 5 dated 1st May 1947, p.1./120/6/123. Select Documents Partition of Punjab - 1947 - p-xxi
33. Indian Annual Register, 1947, Vol. I, p. 118-119.
34. D.R. Bose, *New India Speaks*, Calcutta, 1947, p.133.

inter alia communal rioting and the key province of the Punjab with three-fold Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communal problem governed by emergency decree."³⁵

35. Alan Cambherl Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, 1951, p. 40.

Chapter - 5
**WAVELL PROPOSALS FOR
TRANSFER OF POWER**

The Cabinet Mission proposals were opposed by the Indian National Congress on account of the provision of compulsory grouping and the Muslim League boycotted the Constituent Assembly which had been provided in the Cabinet Mission plan. In this way both the major parties of India did not accept the Cabinet Mission proposals in toto.

The Indian National Congress was opposed to the compulsory grouping of provinces and passed the following resolution:

".... there must be no compulsion to any province or a part of a province by another province. The Congress cannot be a party to any such compulsion or imposition against the will of the people concerned ... the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised. In the event of any compulsion, a province or a part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary."¹ This greatly irritated the Muslim League which soon after condemned this resolution in these vigorous terms: "... these qualifying clauses confer the right of veto within a section on a province and what is more absurd on a part of a province and on the Sikhs in the Punjab".²

There were vital differences between the Congress and the Muslim League regarding the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Congress apparently felt that when it came to forming zonal government, a province or a part of a province could opt out of the zone. It had not really accepted either the three - tier government or limitations on the power of the Constituent Assembly. The Congress insisted on its functioning, As the Congress had a predominant majority, naturally it was likely to insist on its own interpretation of the Plan and secure that the Constituent Assembly went its way. Mr. Jinnah described this as "a blunder of a very grave and serious character".³ The Constituent Assembly started its working on December 9, 1946. The Muslim

1. Framing of the Constitution, Vol. I, p. 353.

2. SDIC Vol. II, p. 660-61.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 657.

League boycotted it and stated that 'the elections to and thereafter summoning of the Constituent Assembly in spite of strong protests and most emphatic objections on the part of the League, were *ab initio* void, invalid and illegal."⁴

Apart from fundamental differences regarding the long term arrangement, there had never been smooth working of the Interim Government. The Muslim League had at first refused to join the Interim Government in the hope that this would keep out the Congress. When the Governor-General invited Mr. Nehru to form the government, it was greatly upset. After sometime, it also decided to join the government. The object of the Congress members in the Interim Govt. was to bring into existence healthy conventions of non-interference by the Viceroy and the Interim Govt. working as a team, so that it may be replaced by a National Government in the due course. The Muslim League members had entered the government with the avowed object of holding Congress to ransom, lest anything should be done which might prejudice its claims for Pakistan. In this campaign, their chief weapon was the emphasis on legality "preventing the government from functioning as a cabinet and to increase the power and influence" of the Viceroy in order to save themselves from being overridden by the Congress majority.⁵ Mr. Jinnah held that the 'Interim Government has been formed under the present Constitution Act, 1919 which is in operation ... it is a sheer flight of imagination to call it a cabinet, a National Government or even a Coalition ... It can, therefore only function in the terms of the government of India Act of 1919, so far as the day to day administration is concerned."⁶ He was obviously mistaken. The constitutional development in Great Britain has mainly arisen because of the popular representatives in power, claiming more than the law allowed them. To the Congress members that attitude seemed reactionary as it insisted on keeping the *status quo* and forbade any progress by conventions. There was continual friction between the League and the Congress in the Interim Govt. Liaquat Ali Khan, who was the Finance Member of the Interim Government, seldom agreed to the proposals coming from Congress members.⁷ Lord Claydesmuir, who officiated as Governor General during May 1947 observed, "At that time relations between the Hindus and Muslims

4. *Ibid.*, p. 666.

5. E.W.R. Lumby, *Transfer of Power in India*, London, 1954, p. 123. H.V. Hudon, *Great Divide*, London, 1969, p. 182-83.

6. Mr. Jinnah's Statement dated Nov. 26, 1946, SDIC Vol. II, pp. 485-86.

7. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longman, 1954, p. 16.

(members of Government) had almost reached at breaking point. At Centre there was a joint cabinet in name only".⁸

Lord Wavell has been making every effort to have harmonious working of Viceroy's Executive council popularly known as Interim Government. During the Simla Conference 1945 he used great discretion in selecting members from the minority communities. His sole aim was they should cooperate with members of the major parties. But after the Cabinet Mission Plan, when the major parties joined the Interim Government such an element was brought in the government that they could not work in harmony. Wavell could not do anything as both the major parties threatened to quit if any of their selected members was denied entry into the Executive Council. There was constant quarrel between Indian National Congress and Muslim League members. Pandit Nehru and the Congress members were so much fed up with the negative attitude of the Muslim League members that Pandit Nehru threatened to resign from the Interim Government. Under these circumstances Lord Wavell realised that the Cabinet Mission plan had failed and new approach was needed to the entire problem. He, therefore, prepared following proposals for the transfer of power to Indian Hands and sent his outline draft proposals to the Home Government.

1. "H.M. Government have done their utmost to bring the Indian parties together and to find agreement on a constitutional framework which would ensure the unity of India, a peaceful transfer of power, fair treatment for the minorities, and the emergence of a stable and friendly central government with which it could conclude agreements to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power.

2. "H.M. Government do not think that any further discussions conducted by them in present conditions would have a successful result. They do not propose to hold up the progress of India towards complete self-government, and since they have failed to bring about agreement between the two main parties, they consider that the interests of both Great Britain and the Indian people will best be served by the early withdrawal of British control from India. They hope that the prospects of agreement between the parties will be improved by the knowledge that this withdrawal will take place shortly.

3. "In thus leaving India, H.M. Government propose to consider their own interests, as well as those of India; and to carry out the

8. Lord Clydesmuir, 'Transfer of power in India', Asiatic Review, London Oct. 1948.

withdrawal at a time and by a method laid down by themselves, without further consultation with the Indian political leaders on the main feature of the scheme; though they will continue to keep the closest possible touch with Indian political opinion during the withdrawal, both as to details of the withdrawal and the future set-up in India.

4. "The withdrawal will be conducted on a phased and timed programme in which the southern Provinces of British India i.e. Orissa, Central Provinces, Madras and Bombay, will first be handed over, in that order. The northern provinces of India will be handed over after a further short period.

5. "The removal of British control from these provinces will consist in the withdrawal of the Governors (unless the Ministries ask for their retention) and of the Secretary of State's services, except in so far as officials may be asked to serve under the Provincial Governments and may agree to do so. Authority in those provinces will be handed over to the Provincial Government in power. It is intended that the withdrawal from these provinces will begin on and will be completed not later than three or four months from that date.

6. "Withdrawal from the Northern Provinces will be begun as soon as the programme of withdrawal from the Southern Provinces is complete; and the whole process of withdrawal from India will be concluded not later than 31st March, 1948.

7. "While H.M. Government recognise that those provinces to which authority has been handed over cannot be compelled to maintain the existing Constitution or the same relations as at present with the Central Government, it is considered that it will be in their interests to do so during this period.

8. "It is hoped that the existing Central Government will continue to be in office during the period of withdrawal if it is unwilling to do so, it will be replaced by an official government appointed by the Governor General.

9. "The Central Government will continue to work under the existing constitution. As each Province is handed over, it will have to decide to what extent it will accept Central control.

10. "As the withdrawal takes place British nationals will be given all facilities for leaving India if they wish.

11. "British troops will be withdrawn from Provinces as they are handed over, but the Indian Armed Forces will be maintained intact as at present, under the command of and control of the commander-in-Chief

in India. British officers and other ranks serving with the Indian Armed Forces will not be withdrawn and will continue to serve with their units.

12. "Throughout the period of withdrawal, H.M. Govt. will continue to make every effort to bring the main parties together so that if may be possible to hand over control at the Centre on final withdrawal to a Government established by general agreement.

13. "Even if the Constituent Assembly cannot be fully representative, it should be possible, immediately after the cessation of sovereignty by Parliament, to bring into force, in all Provinces that will accept it the new constitution framed by the Constitution Assembly. H.M. Govt. still hope that a new constitutional framework may ultimately be devised which will be acceptable to the whole country. But they reiterate their recent statement that if a constitution is framed in a constituent Assembly in which a large section of the people has not been represented, they cannot contepate forcing such constitution upon unwilling parts of the country.

14. "Paramountcy will be transferred to the Indian States by stages as the adjacent portions of British India are evacuated. So far as possible the date of transfer of paramountcy to each state will be arranged in accordance with the desires of that state, but if there is any difference of view, the Crown representative will decide on what date paramountcy will be handed back.

15. "As each province is handed over, the members of the Secretary of State's services in that Province will unless they accept service under the Provincial Government in the province concerned, be available for use as directed by the Secretary of the State and Governor General, until the Secretary of State's services are finally wound up when the process of transference of power is complete."⁹

In this context Penderal Moon writes, "The main significance of Wavell's Viceroylty lies in the fateful decision that were in fact reached during his tenure of office. One of them that India should be granted independence within eighteen months was taken at his instance and largely because of his insistance and was announced before he left the country. The other that India should be divided, though it was not actually taken and proclaimed by the Brithish Government ... had in reality been reached by Indian political leaders before he handed over to his successor."¹⁰

9. Public Record Office London, Premier 8/541, Part 7.

10. Wavell - Viceroy's Journal Edited Penderal Moon, London, 1973, p. XI.

Lord Wavell's proposals for transfer of power to Indian hands were mostly drawn keeping in view the inevitability of partition of India. For the purpose of transfer of power he divided India into two parts viz Northern India and Southern Hindu majority provinces where division of India was not effective. These provinces were Orissa, Central Province, Madras and Bombay.¹¹ These provinces were to be made independent first. The British were to withdraw from these provinces. It was to be optional for these provinces to have connection with the Secretary of State for India in Britain and they were to develop their relations with central Indian Government in the way they liked. They might use the services of Viceroy or not it was their choice. This process of transfer of power was to be completed within four months from the date of proposal if were to be implemented.¹²

For rest of time, about at least six months were to be devoted to the northern provinces where Pakistan had to be carved out. Different communities had to be satisfied. More than six months were exclusively to be devoted to various issues connected with Pakistan.

Penderal Moon writes, "... if he (Lord Wavell) had been given freer hand or if the British government had followed his advice and acted with firmness and the decision he advocated, the transfer of power could have been effected without the disasters that actually accompanied."¹³

Lord Wavell had been advocating the principle of separating non-Muslim population from those provinces which were to be included in Pakistan. In his memorandum to the Secretary of State dated 27th December 1946, he wrote, "If at any stage, the Muslims brought about deadlock by their inflexible demand for Pakistan, he would tell Jinnah that if they persisted in this attitude, HMG would have to take decision themselves and their decision would be based on principle that large non-Muslim population could not be included in Pakistan against their wishes. This would mean that western Bengal including Calcutta and at least two fifth of Punjab would have to be excluded from Pakistan."¹⁴

It is evident if Wavell proposals were accepted partition of Punjab and Bengal would have been effected in case of creation of Pakistan.

The Punjab had been the key provinces for the transfer of power as it has been rightly stated by Alan Campbell Johnson¹⁵.

11. Public Record Office Premier 8/541 para 4 of the proposals.

12. *Ibid* of the proposals.

13. Wavell - the Viceroy's Journal, opcit., p.xiii.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

15. Mission with Mountbatten, Alan Campbell Johnson, London, 1954, p. 41

It needed more attention and careful handling. But the men at the helm of affairs after Lord Wavell had no time or inclination for deep study of the Punjab problem, Malcolm Darling rightly observed:

"The tragedy of Punjab could have been foreseen and we should not have handed over millions of helpless peasants for whose welfare we were responsible, to anarchy and ruins"¹⁶ Penderal Moon has rightly lamented, as to why the "ending of British Raj, which we have so long foreseen and so long proclaimed as our goal, should involve a last minute division of the country, the precipitatedly enforced migration of well over ten million people and casualties of the order of 2,00,000". He has described this as "a singular want of prevision and failure of statesmanship."¹⁷

This is very valid question why the British were in hurry to transfer power to Indian hands in 1947. The same question was asked by Lt. Col. V.F. Evaskime Crum to Lord Ismay, the Chief of Mountbatten Staff in India in 1947. Ismay stated in reply, "On the question whether power was transferred in too great hurry, I think, there were three reasons which made any other course highly dangerous if not impossible:

1. "Communal tension throughout the country was extreme.
2. " The power to deal with disturbances had almost ceased (an exhausted civil service on one hand and only a handful of British troops on the other)
3. "Most important of all, Nehru specifically said that unless the Muslim members were dismissed from the Interim Government, he would resign. The position would there have been impossible having special regard to (2) above."^{17A}

It appears that the real cause for hurry was the increasing conflict between Congress and Muslim League members in the Interim Government. In order to defuse this tense situation Wavell proposed a scheme to withdraw power province wise or region wise which was rejected and he was transferred.

Lord Wavell proposed to devote more than six months in his proposal for Punjab problem which was actually the Sikh problem. The Sikhs had been recognised as third Important community in India for the purpose of transfer of power, according to the Cabinet Mission

16. Malcolm Darling, The Punjab Disorder. The Hindu, Madras, Oct 11, 1947.

17. Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit, London, 1961, p. 283.

17.A Ismay Paper III/7/140 Military Archives, King College, London. Also Kirpal Singh : Select Documents on partition of Punjab, p. 716.

proposal.¹⁸ Mountbatten paid scant attention towards Sikhs and always looked towards Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru for every proposal which was made in connection with Sikhs. He did not assert himself to take decision. For instance when the Sikhs demanded transfer of population or exchange of population he referred this to Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah. The latter did not reply and Pt. Nehru's reply was evasive.¹⁹ No action was taken in the matter. On the other hand in Wavell Proposals there was ample scope and time for negotiation and decision making.

Malcolm Darling has stated "Had the Hindus and the Muslim alone been concerned, division of the Punjab might have been effected without bloodshed."²⁰ The Sikhs were as determined to prevent domination by the Muslims as Muslims were determined to prevent domination of the Hindus. The Nehru report stated, "The communal problem of India is primarily the Hindu-Muslim problem. The Sikhs in the Punjab are an important and well-knit minority which cannot be ignored."²¹ The working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board jointly passed a resolution on the June 14, 1947 emphasising that, "In the absence of the provision of transfer of population and property and the very purpose of partition would be defeated."²² As earlier resolution of Shiromani Akali Dal passed on April 16, 1947 states: "Shiromani Akali Dal demands that before transfer of power to Indian hands in June 1948 (which date was first fixed) the Punjab should be divided into two provinces. The Shiromani Akali Dal further demands that facilities be provided for exchange of population and property."²³ The Sikh leaders had stated in a memorandum to the Sapru Conciliation Committee "We have been asked as to whether we have any views to express in case the Pakistan scheme is imposed on us by an authority whose power we cannot hope to challenge successfully and which may be the British Government or the agreed will of the Hindus and Muslims of India. In that case we would insist on the creation of a separate Sikh state ... with provision for the transfer and exchange of population."²⁴

18. Cabinet Mission plan, Clause No. 18C, V.P.Menon, Transfer of Power, Orient. Longman, Madras p. 471.

19. Partition of Punjab, Kirpal Singh, Patiala, 1989, p. 203-204.

20. Malcolm Darling, The Punjab Disorder, The Hindu, Madras, Oct. 11, 1947.

21. All parties Conference, Allahabad, 1928, p. 27.

22. Civil and Military Zazette, Lahore, June, 15, 1947.

23. The Hindu Madras, July 11, 1947, IOR Dat 1947, GG 23.4.47 file No. 120, India Office London.

24. Constitutional Proposals of Sapru Committee 2nd Edition, 1946, p. LX.

Had the Viceroy made an effort to explore every angle of that complex situation in the Punjab, he would have surely secured some political arrangement in this regard between the Akalis and the Muslim League. As the subsequent events have proved, Mr. Jinnah would have agreed to the transfer of population. This presumption is based on the following grounds:

1. When Lord Ismay approached Mr. Jinnah in early August 1947 to issue a statement assuring the Sikhs their religious freedom and categorically stating that Pakistan was as much for the Sikhs as for the Muslims, the latter refused to issue any such statements.²⁵
2. The letter of Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of the West Punjab, to Mr. Jinnah proves beyond doubt that the Sikhs were not wanted in Pakistan. Sir Francis Mudie wrote, "I am telling every one that I do not care how the Sikhs get across the border the great thing is to get rid of them as soon as possible."²⁶
3. Giani Kartar Singh told the writer that he had information in 1947 that Mr. Jinnah had instructed Sir Francis Mudie to turn out the Sikhs from the West Punjab. It was this reason for which he went to Lyallpur to exhort the Sikhs to migrate to India.²⁷
4. Mr. Jinnah told Sir Francis after the August 15, 1947 that when he had proposed exchange of population, people laughed at him. Exactly the same thing was happening which he had said several years previously.²⁸
5. As discussed earlier Mr. Jinnah was in favour of an exchange of population on communal basis and he had given public statement to that effect.²⁹

Had the provision for the transfer of Sikh population from the West Punjab to the East Punjab been made in the 3rd June plan or an Indo-Pakistan Board been constituted to facilitate the transfer of population with an exchange of property, the Sikhs would have been satisfied to some extent. There were certain proposals to make some adjustments. V.P. Menon and Major Short suggested that Nankana Sahib

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25. Lord Ismay's conversation with the writer as recorded in Appendix of Interviews in this book.
 26. Vide chapter 'Nature and Causes of Migration' of my book Partition of Punjab, Patiala 1989, Punjabi University.
 27. Giani Kartar Singh's conversation with the writer.
 28. Sir Francis Mudie's conversation with the writer as recorded Appendix Interviews.
 29. Vide Chapter Nature & Causes of Migration in my book Partition of Punjab.

might be given 'Vatican status'³⁰. Sir Even Jenkin, Governor of Punjab, had suggested that the Montgomery district might be allotted to the East Punjab in order to accommodate the Sikh colonist in the West Punjab.³¹ But nothing came out of these suggestions. The main cause of failure of all these suggestions was lack of time as the time fixed by Lord Wavell for transfer of power to India was June 1948 which had been advanced by nine months.

Sir Penderal Moon, British ICS made some suggestions to satisfy the Sikhs. One of the most important suggestions was that the Sikhs should be migrated from West Punjab to East Punjab in order to make East Punjab predominantly Sikh area. Second suggestion was Southern Districts of Punjab viz Rohtak, Gurgaon and Karnal should be separated from Punjab. It will satisfy the Sikh demand also.³² Lord Ismay's reply was that "there was no time to fulfil the demand"³³ and to redraw the boundaries of provinces".³⁴

Another significant suggestion was to give East Punjab freedom to join India or Pakistan.³⁵

There was ample scope and time to consider and put to practice some of the suggestions mentioned above in the Wavell's Proposals for Transfer of Power. Definitely the Punjab tragedy could have been averted by accepting Lord Wavell's suggestion.³⁶ Sadly however Punjab was destined to undergo tragic events as the Proposal were rejected. Lord Attlee wrote, 'Wavell and his chief service advisers were despondent and could only suggest progressive retirement from India province by province which was in my view a counsel of despair well, I thought that was what Winston would certainly quite properly describe as an ignoble and sordid scuffle and I would not look at it.'³⁷ "A change in the holder of office of the Viceroy was considered necessary. The British Prime Minister added, "I had great admiration for Lord Wavel, both as a soldier and as a man, but I did not think he was likely to find a solution. I did not think that he and the Indians could really understand each other. New men needed

30. Lonald Mosleey, *The Last Days of British Raj*, London, 1961, IOR MB File No.130, India Office Records, London.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 212, Transfer of power, Vol. XII, Doc. 56.

32. *Transfer of power*, Vol. XI, London, 1982, p. 692, Doc. No. 371.

33. *Transfer of power*, Vol. XI (Document No. 373), p. 846.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.* Also Document No. 371.

36. Penderal Moon, *Wavell Viceroy's Journal*. cit. op., p. XIII.

37. C.R.Attlee, *As it Happened*, London, p. 183.

for a new policy."³⁸ Change in the office of the Viceroy was considered necessary.

On the appointment of Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy of India, the British Prime Minister made a very significant speech in the Parliament. He said, "His Majesty's government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948 ... His Majesty's Govt. will have to consider to whom the power of the Central Govt. in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central govt for British India or some areas to the existing provincial government or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interest of the Indians people."³⁹ This statement, according to Andrew Mellor, 'altered the course of history. The echoes of this momentous announcement reverberated the sub-continent.'⁴⁰ For the first time, the Indians felt that the British irrevocably intended to leave. It 'paved the way for partition and even represented as indirect concession to the League demand for Pakistan.'⁴¹ Gandhiji rightly perceived its meaning when he wrote to Nehru "This may lead to Pakistan for those provinces or portions which may want."⁴² This statement together with the Muslim League's policy of obstruction prepared the Congress leaders to accept partition as they were fed up with the Muslim League's tactics. Pt. Nehru subsequently said, "There was an overwhelming sense of conflict during the Interim Govt days by pulls in different directions by the Muslim League. It was felt that even if some arrangement could be arrived at to prevent partition, these conflicts and dis-ruptions would continue and might come in the way of any marked progress in the economic and other planning later. It would have left the Federal Govt. weak."⁴³ Unlike his predecessors, Lord Mountbatten had demanded, and had been given, a free hand in settling the Indian question without reference to the Home Govt. The negotiations could not bank upon an appeal to the Home Govt. He insisted on binding the parties to what he got settled.⁴⁴

38. *Ibid.*

39. SDIC, Vol. II, p. 668.

40. Andrew Mellor, *India Since Partition*, London, 1956, p. 9.

41. -do- p. 9.

42. Brecher, *Nehru - A Political Biography*, London, 1956, p. 336.

43. Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, Vol. II, Ahmedabad, p. 566.

44. Nehru's statement on India Wins Freedom, *The Tribune*, Ambala, Feb. 8, 1959. HV.Hudson, *Great Divide*, London, 1969, p. 201.

Chapter - 6

THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN

After discussing the Indian constitutional problem with different leaders, Lord Mountbatten came to the following conclusions:

1. On the assumption that Mr. Jinnah's power and purpose were sustained, partition would have to be provided for.
2. Partitioning of the Centre involved similar treatment for these provinces where two communities were evenly balanced.¹

The next problem, as Lord Mountbatten himself stated, 'was to see if the Congress party which had always stood for a unified India, would be prepared to consider the partition of the country as a price for quick transfer of power and the restoration of peace. It was pointed out that in the case of provinces, like the Punjab and Bengal, partition would undoubtedly be involved. The Congress was not prepared to agree to a partition of the country with the entire Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal going in Pakistan. Partition of India for them was necessarily acceptable only if the non-Muslims majority portions of the Punjab and Bengal were to be placed in India. When this was put to Mr. Jinnah, he was against the performance of a surgical operation on the provinces which had ancient histories of unity. Lord Mountbatten argued 'that the feeling invoked in his heart (Mr. Jinnah's heart) by prospects of partition of those provinces was the feeling invoked in my heart and the heart of the Congress against the partition of India itself.'² At last Mr. Jinnah came forward with a query whether the same principle of partition of provinces would be extended beyond the Punjab and Bengal which meant the partition of Assam, Lord Mountbatten readily agreed to that also:³

The following points which formed the basis of the partition plan, were circulated to the Governors of Various provinces:

1. The provinces generally speaking to have the right of self-determination.

1. Alan Campbell Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten* London, 1951, p. 55.
2. *Asiatic Review*, London, Oct. 1948, Speech of Lord Mountbatten.
3. *Time only to look forward*, (Speech of Lord Mountbatten), pp. 20-21, London, 1949, Hodson, *Great Divide*, p. 216

2. The Punjab and Bengal to be notionally divided for voting pupropses.

3. The predominantly Muslim sylhet district in Assam to be given the option of joining the Muslim Province created by partitioned Bengal through referendum.

4. Referencum to be held in the North West Frontier province on the issue whether it was to join one group of provinces or another.⁴

The Governor of the Punjab at that time was Sir Evan M. Jenkins who had spent 17 years of his career in the Punjab.⁵ He expressed his dissatisfaction with the plan and argued that it would satisfy neither Mr. Jinnah nor the Sikhs, because it would leave for Jinnah a truncated Pakistan and it would cut the Sikhs in almost two equal parts. Mountbatten was, however very optimistic on these two poits. He said that 'in the last analysis, Jinnah would acquiesce and the only way the Sikhs could improve their position was through negotiation.'⁶

Consequently, meetings between Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan and the Maharaja of Patiala and Sardar Baldev Singh the Defence Member of the Interim Govt., were arranged. Since the Sikhs had already put forth the demand for a Sikh state, the talks naturally centred on that issue. Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan agreed to the formation of the Sikh state with its separate military establishment within Pakistan, provided the Sikhs did not insist on the partition of the Punjab and agreed to join Pakistan.⁷ The Sikh leaders demanded the right of opting out of Pakistan for the Sikh state to which the Muslim League leaders did not agree.⁸ Master Tara Singh told the writer that if Mr. Jinnah had agreed they would have negotiated with the Congress for better terms. It is difficult to visualise what better terms the Congress could have offered short of creating an independent Sikh state in the portion of Punjab which fell to India's share. But Master Tara Singh, S.Baldev Singh or Maharaja of Patiala did not contact Congress after

4. Asiatic Review, Oct. London 1948.

5. Sir Even Jenkins was born on Feb 2, 1896, joined Indian Civil Servies in 1920 and served in the Punjab. He was Cheif Commissioner of Delhi in 1937, Secy of the Deptt of Supply from 1940-43, Private Secy to the Viceroy and Secy to the Governor General (Personal) from 1943-46. He was Governor of the Punjab from 1946 to Aug 15, 1947.

6. Mission with Mountbatten, p. 85.

7. Mr. Jinnah's is offer of Sikh State Maharaja Patiala's article 'The Tribune', Ambala, July 19, 1959. This would have left the Hindus of the Punjab in Pakistan either of its Punjab part or in the newly created Sikh Province of Pakistan.

8. Statement of Master Tara Singh, The Tribune, Ambala, July 23, 1959.

Mr. Jinnah's refusal to concede their demand.

There were several reasons for the breakdown of Akali-Muslim League talks. There had never been any previous understanding between them, though the Akalis and the Congress had baulked the Muslim League of its right to form a government in 1946. An influential Akali leader Giani Kartar Singh, attended the Muslim League MLA's Conference in Delhi in April 1947, and he tried to probe into Muslim League's attitude towards the Sikhs in case of the creation of Pakistan. He was told nothing, apart from being given assurances of good treatment.⁹ It has been rightly stated that Mr. Jinnah "himself knew no more of the Punjab than Neville Chamberlain did of Czechoslovakia".¹⁰ But this did not trouble Jinnah at all. He was trying to create Pakistan an Islamic state for the Muslim Nation. He was not anxious to give the Sikhs a Sikh state of their conception and his only concern was to keep as much of the Punjab in Pakistan, as he could by hoodwinking the Sikh, if he could.

From the Sikh point of view, the Sikh Muslim accord might at the most have saved them from the miseries of migration, death and destruction caused by the communal riots. But even this is doubtful as it is presumed that in Jinnah's Islamic state they would have been left alone. Nothing could grant them protection against Muslim fanaticism. As events were to show later, the Muslims could easily mount a *jehad* in Pakistan even against the so-called heretic Muslims, the Qadianis. Mr. Jinnah could not be expected to create a Sikh province in Pakistan stretching as far as Nankana Sahib at large. Mr. Jinnah would not have satisfied the Sikhs at large. Mr. Jinnah wanted the Sikh to join Pakistan and gave assurances of good treatment towards them. The Sikh leaders insisted on some constitutional guarantees when they met Jinnah in 1946 and 1947 which obviously Jinnah would not concede. The later failure of the Moon mission was from the very beginning foreseen. Mr. Jinnah's Islamic state had no place for zealot and aggressive non-Muslims. S. Baldev Singh rightly described the attitude of Mr. Jinnah to that of a salesman who wanted to sell a horse without convincing the customer of its good qualities by trial and always asserted that the horse was a good one.¹¹ When Lord Ismay approached Mr. Jinnah in early August 1947 to issue a statement assuring the Sikhs their religious freedom and categorically stating

9. Ian Stephens, *Pakistan*, London, 1963, p. 140.

10. P. Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1961, p. 37.

11. Writer's conversation with Major J.M. Short.

that Pakistan was as much for the Sikhs as for the Muslims the latter refused.¹²

An accord between the Akalis and the Muslim League would only have been possible if the Sikhs could obliterate their past bitter memories of Muslim domination. But to join Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's dream demanded great fool-hardiness on the part of the Sikh leaders when sufficient justification for joining it was not forthcoming from the Muslim League. In the communal riots of March, 1947, Sikhs had been killed in large numbers by the fanatical Muslim mobs. But not a word of regret had been expressed by any of the Muslim League leaders. Passions ran so high and tension so great that any understanding between the Sikhs and the Muslims appeared impossible.

The Sikh leaders made the right choice in the long run. Keeping in view their culture, history and past traditions, which were more akin to the Indian tradition than to Islamic tradition, they opted to link their destinies with India. Joining Pakistan by the Sikhs would have been just like their joining hands with Ahmed Shah Abdali to build an Afghan kingdom in the Punjab which, according to Rattan Singh Bhangoo, the immortal author of the *Panth Parkash*, was 'mingling fire with gun-powder'.

Lord Mountbatten publically announced the plan on June 3, 1947. The following provisions were made for the partition of Punjab and Bengal in that plan:

1. "The provincial Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and Punjab, excluding European member's will be asked to meet in two parts - one representing the Muslim majority districts and the other the rest of the province. For purpose of determining the population of the districts 1940 census figures will be taken as authoritative. The Muslim majority districts of Punjab as given in the Appendix of the plan, were defined as:

Lahore Division : Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Sheikhpura, Sialkot, Lahore.

Rawalpindi Div. : Attock, Gujarat, Jhelum, Mianwali Rawalpindi, Shahpur

Multan Division : Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan and Muzaffargarh.

2. "The members of the two parts of each Legislative Assembly sitting separately will be empowered to vote whether or not the Province should be partitioned. If a simple majority of either side

12. Lord Ismay's conversation with the writer. See Appendix Interview.

decides in favour of partition, division of the province will take place and arrangements will be made accordingly.

3. "In the event of partition being decided upon, for the purpose of the final partition of these provinces, a detailed investigation of boundary question will be needed. A Boundary commission for this purpose will be set up by the Governor General."¹³

The members of the two parts of Punjab Legislature met on 23rd June 1947. The members representing non-Muslim majority district decided in favour of partition of the province.¹⁴

The Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board jointly passed a resolution on June 14, 1947 emphasizing that "in the absence of the provision of transfer of population and property, the very purpose of partition would be defeated."¹⁵ Giani Kartar Singh, President of Shiromani Akali Dal, said on June 16, 1947 "The Sikhs will not rest contented till the boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85 per cent Sikhs in India and both the states of Pakistan and India are committed to facilitate the migration of the remaining 15 per cent Sikh population from Pakistan to India."¹⁶

Giani Kartar Singh met the viceroy on 20th June 1947 submitted a note to him in which it was stated.

1. The main problem confronting the Sikh community, at the moment, is the line of demarcation, separating the Eastern Punjab from the Western Punjab. Our anxiety in the matter is well-known. Our cultural linguistic and spiritual affinities as also our economic well being, and the solidarity and integrity of our populace have been placed in jeopardy by the notional division of the Punjab. Every Sikh in what ever situation he is placed feels most acutely about it. Faith is put in the words used in Your Excellency's broadcast speech and it is hoped that the permanent division will be fair and just to the Sikhs, as it is expected that the boundary line will be demarcated in such a manner that it brings a substantial majority of the Sikh population in the Eastern Punjab. The Sikhs will not be satisfied unless at least 80% of their population is brought into the Eastern Punjab by demarcating the boundary line properly. Nankana sahib the birth place of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith and the adjoining Hindu-Sikh

13. Paras 5-9, 3rd June Plan. Kirpal Singh, Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, New Delhi, 1991. p. 94-95.

14. The Tribune, Lahore, dated 4 June, 1947.

15. C.M. Gazette June 15, 1947.

16. The Hindu Madras July 16, 1947.

majority belt spreading in Lyallpur, Sheikhpura and Gujranwala Districts and a just share of the colony areas ought to be included in the Eastern Punjab, wherein the Sikh population can be shifted. After the wholesale massacre of the Sikhs in the Rawalpindi Division the Sikhs are in no mood to cast their lot with Pakistan. While demarcating the boundary of the Eastern and Western Punjab Province greatest good of both of the Province should be kept in view.

“Next to the demarcation of boundary line, the Sikhs insist that the exchange and transfer of Sikh population from the Pakistan areas and the Muslim population from Eastern Punjab area must be arranged. Unless this is done, bitterness and frustration will prevail on both sides. Resistance to and flouting of authority will occur again and again, intrigues will go on either side and perhaps will make peace impossible of achievement. The exchange of Hindu and Muslim minorities all over India is an impossibility but exchange of the Sikhs in Pakistan area with the Muslim of Eastern Punjab will involve not a very large number of persons. Even transfer of a million of Sikhs with a similar number of Muslim will solve the problem to a great extent so far as the Sikhs are concerned. If at least a million of the Sikhs or so are brought to the Eastern Punjab and similar number of Muslims from Eastern Punjab is sent to Pakistan, after demarcating suitable boundary line, and Hindi speaking population of this Eastern Province is separated from the non-Hindi speaking population of this Eastern province, then the Sikh problem is solved. The British Government and Your Excellency have devised means to give Hindus and Muslims their own separate countries, resourcefulness should not fail in the case of Sikhs and their problem must also be resolved to their satisfaction.^{16A}

Baldev Singh accepted the 3rd June Plan with partition of the Punjab on the basis of contiguous majority areas. Subsequently, he said in a statement, “If the verdict of the boundary commission went against the Sikhs, they should be prepared to make all sacrifices to vindicate the honour of the Panth.”¹⁷ He did not foresee that actual boundary line could not be much different from the notional division included in the 3rd June Plan. The issue of the Sikh shrines, the question of transfer of Sikh population and the exchange of the property for which the Sikh leaders struggled subsequently should have been pressed before agreeing to the 3rd June Plan. But As the Viceroy was keen to pacify the Sikhs, he recommended Major Short’s reemployment

16A. Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, Kirpal Singh, p.1378

17. C.M. Gazette July 10, 1947

to the Secretary of the State for India and instructed Lord Ismay, who was then in England, to bring Major Short with him. Major Short reached India on the 22nd of July 1947. As a matter of fact, by then it had almost been settled that population was to be the basis of partition subject to the weight of other factors. Meanwhile the Shiromani Akali Dal, a representative body of the Sikhs continued to exert itself for the inclusion of Nankana sahib shrines in the East Punjab.

On 26th July, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh sent to the viceroy a brochure entitled SIKHS CASE FOR NANKANA SAHIB of forwarding letter which was sent to the Private Secretary of Viceroy with the brochure, it was recorded 'This may be noted. Sd/- 1.8.47" ^{17A}

It was argued in this tract that the surrounding areas of Nankana Sahib was Sikh majority area which consisted some zails of District Sheikhpura, some zails of District Gujranwala and some zails of District Lyalpur. Facts and figures in support of the argument were given.^{17B}

It may be noted here that justice Din Mohammed, the council for the Muslims in the Punjab Boundary Commission asserted that the terms of reference followed the settled course decided by major political parties, so much so that terms of reference were even included in the 3rd June Plan in para 9 and to hold otherwise shake the very foundation of settlement.^{17C} So it was difficult to consider newly created majority areas in the Muslim dominated districts. The Sikhs thought that Baldev Singh hasty consent to the Plan affected the Sikhs adversely. But the British Govt., they hoped would assert its influence to give them concessions.

According to the Cabinet Mission Plan, Sikhs has been recognised as the third important community as it was stated therein. "It is sufficient to recognise only three main communities in India, general, Muslims and Sikhs, the general community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs."¹⁸ While drawing up the Plan for transfer of power, every possible care was taken to meet the point of view of the two major communities. Winston Churchill, the then leader of the opposition had also emphasised that if there was effective acceptance of the Plan by both the Congress and Muslim League,

17A. I.O.R. M.N. 123 Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, Kirpal Singh, p. 292.

17B. For details see 'Nankana Sahib Case' in Appendix

17 C. Partition Proceedings, Vol. XI, p.238

18. Para 18 Cabinet Mission Plan, Select Documents on Indian Constitution, Maurice Gwyer and Appadurai, Vol. II, p.581.

they would do all on their power to expedite the necessary legislation.¹⁹

But Subsequently events have proved that the meeting of the point of view of the Sikhs was equally important. Their point of view appears to have been ignored from the very beginning. When Lord Mountbatten was appointed for effecting transfer of power to Indian hands, he invited Major Short for the interview for appointment on his staff. But did not select him.²⁰ He was the person who was considered expert in the Sikh affairs, and could put Sikh point of view effectively. He had accompanied Cripps Mission as well as Cabinet Mission. Why he was not selected is a mystery. It appears that Mountbatten considered Hindus and Muslims only important communities and had decided to ignore the Sikhs even in the first instance.

The Plan was drawn in less than three months and agreements were made in hurry on the basis of the Plan. The plan was not comprehensive as it lacked depth of penetration into some of the vital problems of Punjab. No machinery was designed to make proper and proportionate adjustment in the Indus river system of irrigation which irrigated about 25 million acres of land and which was source of livelihood for about 46 million people.

How far is the criticism of Ian Stephen justified "The question has naturally since been asked, whether that final acceleration, that sudden cutting off corners on the last swift lap of the British regime's journey, was really necessary. Whether method less haste might have been as effective and much more humane, Hundreds of thousands of lives might have been spared had something different been decided during those critical days of May. Was such 'dynamism' justified, such ruthless pressure, which was as event, turned out meant advancing the transfer date by ten months. Could no better course possibly have been found." ²¹ Had more time and attention been given, to the various problem the people of Punjab would have been saved from bloodshed and miseries of forced migration.

Sir Penderal Moon was persuading the Sikhs to join Pakistan. He wrote to Lord Ismay, 'Certain Sikhs in touch with both Baldev Singh and Tara Singh are going to formulate informally and entirely private by the Sikh condition for joining Pakistan. If they offer, as I believe, they will, it will be a possible basis for negotiating certain

19. *Memoirs of Lord Ismay*, p.425.

20. Major Short talk with the writer in 1964.

21. *Pakistan*, Ian Stephen, London, 1963, p.80.

Muslim League leaders, will be informally approached.”²²

There are certain hard convictions which prevented Sikhs to join hands with Pakistan. For this purpose we have to understand the Sikh psyche. In all gurdwaras they repeat the litanical prayer viz ‘Hail all those martyrs who suffered for the sake of religion. Hail those who were cut to pieces, boiled alive in cauldrons and were tortured to death by removing their skins from their bodies’. This refers to the tortures inflicted on the Sikhs during the rule of later Mughals and it could not foster happy memories among the Sikhs about the Muslim rule. Ever since the introduction of provincial autonomy in Punjab, Sikhs had been complaining against the Muslim domination. This led to anti-Muslim bias especially due to the domination by the Muslim in affairs of Punjab. Muslim bias became more evident when in the communal riots of March 1947, in Rawalpindi District a large number of Sikhs had been made target by the Muslim fanatics. This had made compromise with Muslim League almost impossible in that tense atmosphere. In connection with the Sikhs, the correspondence exchanged between Lord Mountbatten and Pt Jawaharlal Nehru which is available in Mountbatten Papers is quite revealing. In his D O Letter dated 4th July 1947²³ Lord Mountbatten writes to Pt .Jawaharlal Nehru:

1. “As a result of discussions I have had from time to time with the Sikh leaders, I should like to put to you their point of view.
2. “They are naturally worried about the position in Punjab where unless major alterations are made by the Boundary Commission, the Sikh community will be so divided that almost half will remain in the Muslim province of Western Punjab.
3. “They hope that the Boundary Commission will make such major alterations. But that is not a point which immediately concerns the political parties. Apart from this they ask for assurance that they have weightage in the legislature of Eastern Punjab. They hope also that they will have weightage in the Central Houses of Union of India and a seat in Union Government.
4. “They have suggested that they should have special representation in the existing Constituent Assembly. Clearly, I cannot help them on this point or indeed on any

22. Transfer of Power, Vol. XI (Document No.371), p. 692.

23. I.O.R.M B 149. India offices Photocopy of Mountbatten Papers.

of others except by approaching you, but you may wish to consider the matter.

5. Finally they have suggested that the transfer of population should be seriously considered in the Punjab.
6. "I expect, all these points have been put to you but I should like to tell you how much I sympathise with the Sikhs and how much I hope you will be able to help them".

Similar letter with almost identical contents was addressed by Lord Mountbatten to Mr Jinnah. It appears that Mr Jinnah did not reply as his reply is not available in the Mountbatten papers. However, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru did send a reply dated 17th July 1947 which is as follows :

"Dear Lord Mountbatten

I thank you for your letter of the 4th July regarding your discussions with the Sikh leaders.

"We appreciate thoroughly the anxiety of the Sikhs. They have been hard hit by this division. They might be helped somewhat by the decisions of the Boundary Commission. As for assurances in regard to weightage etc. I fear this raises complicated issues. All our troubles or nearly all, have been due to the separate electorates and system of weightages originally introduced for the Muslims. It becomes clear that this did little to the minority concerned and only created separatist tendencies. The addition of a seat or two makes no essential difference. But it means the acceptance of a fundamentally wrong principle. Once admitted this principle leads to far reaching, consequences and ill will. It is possible of course, that without weightage and separate electorate some kind of reservation might be given with freedom to contest the general seats also. We should like to help any minorities getting additional seats from general constituencies.

3. "The question of transfer of population does not arise immediately. If the people concerned desire it. It must be seriously considered." ²⁴

The 3rd June Plan suggested a notional division of Punjab which had been included in the Indian Independence Act 1947 as already mentioned but the notional/division was 'only a preliminary step of a purely temporary nature as it is evident that for the purpose of a final partition of these provinces (Assam, Bengal and the Punjab), a detailed investigation of boundary question will be needed.

The first and foremost work connected with the Boundary Commission was the appointment of its Chairman. Mr. Jinnah suggested

24. I O R - MB-149, India Office Photo copies Mountbatten Papers.

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Vice-Chairman of the General Council of the English Bar to be the Chairman of the Boundary Commission of Assam-Bengal and the Punjab.²⁵ The Secretary of State for India confirmed the choice of Sir Cyril Radcliffe whom he described as 'a man with high integrity, legal reputation and wide experience.'²⁶ The formal proposal for the appointment of Sir Cyril Radcliffe (later on Lord Radcliffe) was, however, made by Lord Mountbatten in the form of a note, dated meeting 26th June which was accepted unanimously in the first meeting of the Partition Council on the 27th June, 1947.²⁷ The previous decision that the members of the Boundary Commission were to elect their own Chairman was modified on the ground that the appointment of a European Chairman would expedite the work which was to be finished by August 15.²⁸

According to the announcement of the Governor General, on the 30th June, the followed were appointed members of the Punjab Boundary Commission:

1. Mr Justice Din Muhammed
2. Mr Justice Muhammed Munir
3. Mr Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan
4. Mr Justice Teja Singh²⁹

The Punjab Boundary Commission had just started its work when a significant change occurred in the structure of the Commission. An amendment was introduced in the Indian Independence Bill signifying that 'in section 4 the expression 'award' means in relation to the Boundary Commission the decision of the Chairman of the Commission, contained in his report to the Governor-General at the Conclusion of the Commission proceedings.'³⁰ But for this amendment, the Commission could not have worked smoothly, because the Muslim members and the non-Muslim members, even though they had been selected from among the judges of the High Court, were likely to be equally divided on account of the clash of their communal interests. The chances of any compromise were remote: first, because members had no authority to promote any bargaining between the two sides likely to effect a settlement, secondly because the political atmosphere was too vitiated for any compromise settlement. It cannot, however,

25. Alan Campbell Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, London, 1951, p.124

26. PP Vol. VI, Governor General's Note dated 26th June, p. 6.

27. PP Vol. VI, Case No, CC/2/1/47, p.7.

28. *Ibid.*, p.6, Governor General's note dated 26 June 1947.

29. The Gazette of India Extraordinary Notification dated June, 30 1947, *Ibid.*, p.8

30. Hansard, Vol. No. 440, p.76.

be denied that this amendment as whole, finally reduced any chances to a settlement by the Commission, and practically reduced the commission to a one-man body.

The Commission followed a judicial procedure. Its first meeting was held on the 14th July under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe and it was announced that all interested parties should submit their memoranda to the Commission by the 18th July. Sir Cyril had planned to attend the meeting of the Bengal Boundary Commission first and he proposed that Justice Din Mohammad and Justices Mehr Chand Mahajan should preside in the absence of the Chairman of the Commission as the senior most members of the Commission.³¹ The Punjab Boundary Commission held public sittings from the 21st July to the 31st July 1947 where in eminent lawyers pleaded their cases. Mr. Mohammad Zafar Ullah Khan, Mr. Setalvad and Mr. Harnam Singh appeared before the Commission in order to argue the cases on behalf of the Muslim League, the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal respectively. Dr. O. H. K. Spate, Lecturer in Geography, School of Economics, London, was invited by the Ahmdya community of Punjab to plead their case before the Punjab Boundary Commission and he appeared before the Commission to support their case.

The counsels for the Muslim advocated that the boundary line to be drawn between the East Punjab and the West Punjab should be drawn near about the Sutlaj. The core of their claim rested on the population majority in the disputed areas and it was asserted that the population majority was the major test to be taken into consideration while determining the boundary. It was argued that the major political parties in India had agreed on the partition of provinces on the basis of "contiguous Muslim Majority Areas" because this basis was included in the 3rd June Plan itself. But it was not tangible as all the districts in the Jullundur Division were non-Muslim majority areas which could not be included in Pakistan.

In his report, Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan recommended that the boundary line should be near the Ravi including Lahore in the East Punjab and Justice Teja Singh advocated that the boundary line should be near the Chenab, including parts of the districts of Sheikhpura and Gujranwala, Montgomery and Lyallpur in the East Punjab. The Hindu-Sikh case rested on the economic conditions as the non-Muslim had played a major part in the development of the Central Punjab. The Bari Doab and more particularly the districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore had been described by the historiana

31. Mehar Chand Mahajan, Looking Back, p. 112

and settlement officers as the "home land of the Sikhs" who owned more than two thirds of the area and paid more than two thirds of the land revenue of this tract. This Sikh peasant proprietors tract had been developed as a single unit along the upper Bari Doab Canal which had been dug, it was ingeniously claimed, to resettle the disbanded Sikh soldiers after the Anglo-Sikh Wars. The districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery had been colonized by the sturdy Sikh Jats of Ambala, Jullundur, and Amritsar districts. Presently known as Sandal Bar and in the memory of Nankana Sahib martyrs in 1921 tract known as Shahidi Bar comprising a part of the districts of Gujranwala, Sheikhpura and Lyallpur was mostly owned by the Sikh peasants paid more than twice the land revenue paid by the Muslims. Historically, this was the most important tract for the Sikhs as one of their most sacred shrines, Nankana Sahib was situated in it.³²

32. For more details see the books *Partition of Punjab*, Kirpal Singh, 1989, Patiala pages 80-86 and *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Kirpal Singh, 1991, New Delhi, Document Nos. 102, 103 and 104.

Chapter - 7

THE SIKH STRUGGLE FOR SHRINES

The historic Sikh shrines connected with the lives of Sikh Gurus are considered sacred and are object of veneration by every Sikh. Some of the most important Sikh shrines are in Nankana Sahib District Sheikhupura now in Pakistan) birth place of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839 AD), the Sikh ruler had donated an estate of about eighteen thousand acres of land to the Nankana Sahib Sikh Shrines for their upkeep and management. In 1947 the Sikhs wanted that the demarcation of the boundary between East Punjab and the West Punjab should be done in such a way as to include Nankana Sahib in the East Punjab. It was one of the reasons that they had demanded that the territory upto river Chenab should be included in the East Punjab, This was argued in the Punjab Boundary Commission by Sikh member, Justice Teja Singh.

The Sikh-Hindu case rested on the economic factors. Justice Teja Singh advocated that the boundary line should be near the Chenab, so as to include parts of the districts of Sheikhupura and Gujranawala, Montgomery and Lyallpur in the East Punjab. The non-Muslims had played a major part in the development of the Central Punjab. The Bari Doab and more particularly the districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore had been described by historians and settlement officers as the 'home land of the Sikhs'.¹ This Sikh peasant proprietors tract had been developed as a single unit along the Upper Bari Doab canal. It was ingeniously reclaimed, to resettle the disbanded Sikh soldiers after the Anglo-Sikh wars. The districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery had been colonised by the sturdy Sikh Jats of Ambala, Jalandhar and Amritsar Districts. In a tract known as Shahidi Bar, comprising a part of the districts of Gujranwala, Sheikhupura and Lyallpur was mostly owned by the Sikh peasants who paid more than twice the land revenue

1. P P Vol. VI, p.176. The total revenue of these districts was Rs.55,23,439. The Sikhs paid Rs.32,31,951/- and Muslims paid Rs.15,88,293/- and others Rs.7,02,555/-. The total acreage cultivated was 37,55,127 acres. Sikhs owned 20,12,783, Muslims 124804 acres and rest by others. Report of Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan.

paid by the Muslims.² Historically, this was the most important tract of the Sikhs as some of their most sacred shrines at, Nanakana Sahib, were situated in it.

The Hindu and the Sikhs had played a major role in the development of industry, commerce and trade of Lahore, the metropolis of the Punjab. More than 75 per cent of commerce, banks and commercial institutions were in the hands of the non-Muslims. The survey of Lahore carried out by the Punjab Government Board of Economic Enquiry indicated that 80 per cent registered factories in Lahore belonged to the non-Muslims. Of the total capital investment in Lahore, viz. Rs. 6.29 crores, the non-Muslims' share was Rs. 5.12 crores. Of the 80 offices of banks and insurance companies, only two belonged to the Muslims. Of the 36 High Schools only four were run by the Muslims.³

It was argued that about one-third of the Muslim population was not rooted in the soil and was essentially of a floating character, consisting of faqirs, weavers, herdsmen, cobblers, potters, carpenters, oilmen, bards, barbers, blacksmiths, washerman, butchers and mirasis. According to the Census Report of 1931, out of the total Muslim population of 14,929,896 this class of persons numbered about 45 percent and were divided as under :

Faqirs	256,533
Jullaha (Weavers)	512,579
Cobblers	464,218
Kumhars(Potters)	436,617
Mussalis (Chamar Converts)	412,300
Carpenters	346,948
Oilmen	344,927
Bards	244,320
Barbbers	196,104
BlackSmiths	241,972
Washermen	162,224
Butchers	127,198
Mirasis	243,330
Herdsmen	421,347 ⁴

In case the argument followed by the Hindus and Sikh members was accepted, the main consideration would have been

2. *Idem.*

3. Hamam Singh, Sikh Memorandum to the Punjab Boundary Commission, pp. 60-61.

4. Census Report, Punjab 1931 Table XVII, Race, Tribe or Caste.

economic factors rather than population factor. It would have been contrary to the terms of the settlement arrived at between the two major political parties - the Congress and the Muslim League viz. partitioning on the basis of continuous Muslim-majority areas. Justice Din Mohammed asserted that the terms of reference followed the settled course decided by the major political parties so much so that the terms of reference were even included in the 3rd June Plan in Para No. 9 to hold otherwise would shake the very foundation of the settlement.⁵

The Sikhs had been agitating for the inclusion of Nankana Sahib, the birth-place of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in the East Punjab. To stress their point of view, they observed the 8th July as Nankana Sahib Day. The Maharaja of Patiala Maharaja Yadvinder Singh approached the viceroy to receive a deputation of the Sikh V.C.O's and soldiers. The Viceroy agreed and the date and time were fixed for this purpose when Mr Jinnah came to know of this he raised an objection to the Viceroy's meeting a Sikh deputation. He argued in the meeting of the Partition Council held on the 10th July that the question of demarcation of the Punjab Boundary was being discussed by the Punjab Boundary Commission and the Viceroy could not discuss this question with the Sikh deputation. The Viceroy agreed and said that in case he met the deputation a special communique would be issued.⁶

This had a very adverse effect on the Sikhs, because the Sikhs thought that it was their right to represent their point of view to the Viceroy who, they erroneously believed, could issue some instructions to the Punjab Boundary Commission regarding the Sikh shrines. Now, they realised the necessity of an interpreter who could represent their point of view to the Viceroy, Mr. V.P. Menon, Constitutional Adviser to the Governor-General, was in touch with Sardar Patel and Lord Ismay, who had commanded Muslim Reg. in Indian Army, Chief of staff of the Viceroy was in touch with Mr Jinnah. But Baldev Singh or the Sikh leaders had no such channel of communication. Baldev Singh, therefore, requested for Viceroy to recall and reemploy Major J.M. Short.

By 1947, Major J. M. Short had earned the reputation of being an expert on Sikh affairs. He served the XI Sikhs and retired in 1931. He was re-employed in 1940 when the Sikhs Squadron of Central

5. P.P. Vol. VI, page 238, it was stated in para 9 of the 3rd June Plan "It will be instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non Muslims."

6. P.P. Vol. IV, p. 186, vide Appendix.

Indian Horse refused to embark for the Middle East. During the war, when the pro-Congress activities of the Akali Party were likely to affect he was reemployed in 1940 when the Sikh Squadron of Central Indian adversely the military recruitment, he successfully persuaded the Akali leaders to have a favourable attitude towards the recruitment of the Sikhs. He was able to effect an understanding between the Akalis and the Unionist Government in the Punjab, which culminated in the Sir Sikander Baldev Singh Pact.⁷ He had explained to Professor Reginald Coupland and Sir Stafford Cripps the Sikh point of view when they visited India in 1942. In 1946, he had accompanied Sir Stafford Cripps when the Cabinet Mission visited India. He was attached to Baldev Singh when he visited London in December, 1946 alongwith Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mr. Jinnah.⁸

Lord Mountbatten had interviewed Major J.M. Short while selecting his staff before coming to India as Governor-General. He had then found him of no use.

The Sikhs decided to hold a big meeting at Nankana Sahib (Sheikhupura District) on 27th July 1947 for inclusion of Nankana Sahib in the East Punjab. The Punjab Government imposed ban on the meeting. The sale of railway tickets to a number of stations including Nankana Sahib was suspended. Nankana Sahib had fairly large Sikh population and many Sikhs had collected in Gurdwara some days before 27th July. It is estimated that from 1500 to 2000 outsiders attended. Speeches were made inside the Gurdwara. The Sikhs in Amritsar had already begun to defy the ban on processions as a protest against the banning of the Nankana Sahib meeting and the leaders present at Nankana Sahib were obviously upset. Late in the evening the Sikhs informed the authorities that they would disperse quietly, and the Deputy Commissioner said that in that case he would not interfere with access to the Gurdwara from 28th morning. During the night of 27/28th July Giani Kartar Singh turned up at Nankana Sahib, appearing in disguise and repudiated the local understanding. However, the Sikhs peacefully dispersed on the 28th morning.^{8A}

In the Viceroy's 65th Staff meeting held on 28th July 1949, the Viceroy drew attention to the reports which had appeared in that morning's papers to the effect that it had been necessary to open fire on a meeting of Sikhs at Nankana Sahib the previous day. He said that

7. Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1961, p. 32.

8. Major Short's talk with the writer.

8A. Document No.120, *Select Document on Partition of Punjab* Kirpal Singh, p. 284-5.

he considered it doubtful whether it had been correct on the part of Governor of the Punjab to declare this meeting illegal. Sir George Abell pointed out that a considerable number of people had been prevented from attending it as a result of this step.^{8B} One deputation was sent to England to mobilise British public opinion in favour of the Sikhs. The local Sikhs went in a procession to Downing Street to present a memorandum to the British Prime Minister regarding the Sikh demands.⁹

On the 14th July Mr. Arthur Henderson, the then Under Secretary of State in a reply to a question said in the House of Commons, "The provision that other factors will be taken into account has been made primarily to enable the Commission to have regard to the special circumstances of the Sikh community in the Punjab where considerations such as location of their religious shrines can reasonably be taken into account upto a point."¹⁰ Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan were upset over this statement and argued with the Viceroy that the accepted principle of partition was "contiguous majority areas" and that the "question of religious shrines of any community had never been discussed before."¹¹ The Viceroy agreed to convey their protest to the Secretary of State. Subsequently, the copies of the statement and the Muslim League's protest alongwith its acknowledgement by the Secretary of State were sent to the Punjab Boundary Commission by telegram No. 2329-S dated the 16th July 1947.¹² It is true that the question of the Sikh shrines had not been included in the terms of reference nor had it been discussed at any stage before. But it was a question of vital importance for the Sikhs. In order to ease communal tension on this score, some sort of arrangement was necessary. Justice Mahajan who was a member of commission, writes, "Lord Radcliffe's Secretary asked me whether I would be willing to treat the town of Qadian as neutral territory if the town of Nankana was similarly treated. I had personally no objection to this course. It was not however, acceptable to some of my colleagues."¹³ V. P. Menon made the suggestion that Mr. Jinnah should be approached and persuaded to declare Nankana Sahib, "a sort of Vatican".¹⁴ This

8B. *Ibid.*, Document No. 116. p. 278.

9. Statement of S. Rawel Singh, President of Central Khalsa Jatha, Britian, 79, Sinclair Road (London) 1964, who was one of the deputationist

10. Hansard vol. 40, p.74.

11. "Freedom But Danger Ahead", Dawn's Leading Article on 20th July 1947.

12. P P Vol. VI, p. 203, Report of Justice Teja Singh.

13. Mehar Chand Mahajan, Looking Back, Bombay 1963, p.115.

14. Michael Edwardes, Last Years of British India, London, 1963, p.212.

concession to the Sikhs might have had a wholesome effect on the Sikhs and Mr. Jinnah would not have lost much. But the rejection of such a suggestion indicated the mutual tension which existed between the Muslims and the Sikhs. Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, suggested to the Viceroy that the Montogomery District might be allotted to the East Punjab to accommodate the Sikh colonists from the West Punjab.¹⁵ It could not be acted upon due to the stiff attitude of the Muslim League.

The announcement of the Punjab Boundary Award raised a good deal of controversy. Mr Jinnah Governor General of Pakistan, Publically condemned the Award in his broadcast speech on the 31st of August, 1947. He said, "We have been squeezed in as much as it was possible and the latest blow that we have received was the Award of the Boundary Commission. It is an unjust incomprehensive and even a perverse award."¹⁶ It is curious that he took so long to discover its character. The Pakistan press was also critical of the Award and the Pakistan Government later quoted the following passage of the Pakistan Times, Lahore, in its widely circulated booklet. *The Sikh Plan in Actions*, "The blow has been hardest in the Gurdaspur District when the two *Muslim* tehsils of Gurdaspur and Batala with a Muslim majority of 52.2 per cent and 55.06 per cent respectively have been thrown into Hindustan alongwith Pathankot Tehsil taking away from Pakistan, the rich Muslim Industrial town of Batala. A part of Lahore District has also been broken off. Radcliffe has taken the trouble of drawing a village-to-village boundary at Ajnala Tehsil of Amritsar District with 60 percent Muslim majority and contiguous to the District of Lahore has been completely forgotten. The Tehsils of zira

15. Leonald Mosley, *Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 212. Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab, wrote to the Viceroy "I believe there is quite a lot in the claims of the Sikhs and for that matter other residents of the East Punjab, for a share in the canal colonies of the West and the Giani's (Giani Kartar Singh who had a long interview with the Governor) idea that the Montogomery district, should be allotted to the East is by no means as ridiculous as it sounds. The district, if so allotted to the East, could be recolonised so as to concentrate the non-Muslims there after transfer of Lyallpur". The contents of this letter have been verified by the writer from Giani Kartar Singh In- England. I learned from Sir Evan Jenkins as well as from Lord Ismay that L. Mosley got access to some original records which appear to have been quoted by him in his book : *Last Days of British Raj*. Now the records of this period are available and this forms a part of the letter of Sir E. M. Jenkins addressed to Lord Mount batten on 10 July 1947 vide Document no. 56, *Transfer of Power Vol. XII*, Led.

16. *Sikh Plan in Action*, Pakistan Government Publication, typed copy S.H.R. 1518, p. 5.

and Ferozpur with a clear majority have been dismissed with a talk of disruption of communication..¹⁷ Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan wrote in an article, "Never had the destiny of so many millions depended so helplessly on the arbitrary strokes of one man's pencil. It was because Mr Radcliffe happened to make a small dent on the side of the line that over 4,000,000 inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir have been locked in a life and death struggle for self determination for 13 long years."¹⁸

The case of the Ferozepur District rendered the entire award of Sir Cyril suspicious in the the eyes of Pakistan, Justice Mohammad Munir stated, "When I was replying to the Sikh case, I was told by Mr. Radcliffe in the most unequivocal terms that three tehsils of Ferozpur, probably, Ferozpur, Zira and Fazilka, were coming to Pakistan and that it was unnecessary for me to discuss that part of the case with them. I still remember the description of the terrain he gave me of their transfer to Pakistan and I communicated my congratulations to the Nawab of Mamdot. (Lord Radcliffe told the writer that his private talk always leaked out to the Muslim press). He was jubilant, but was disappointed a few days later, when by the award which came three days after the scheduled time, these tehsils went to India."¹⁹

The district of Ferozpur had five tehsils of which the following two had Muslim-majority population :

Ferozepur tehsil	55.2%
Zira Tehsil	65.2%

The Muslim in the Ferozepur District, as a whole, formed 44.6 per cent of the population.

It is clear that, if the Muslim population on a tehsil basis were considered for demarcating the boundary line, as demanded by the counsel for the Muslim and no other factor taken into account, then Pakistan could have had tehsils of Zira and Ferozepur and not the tehsil of Fazilka as afterwards claimed by the Justice Mohammed Munir. The Fazilka Tehsil was a non-Muslim majority area, with about 57 per cent non-Muslims. Sir Cyril Radcliffe gave the following reasons in his award for this transfer. "I have hesitated long over those not in considerable areas east of the Sutlej River and in the angle of the Beas and Sutlej Rivers in which Muslim majorities are found. But on

17. *Ibid.*, p.4.

18. 'Pakistan Perspective', Pakistan Anthology, 1961, Page 3-4.

19. The Tribune, Ambala Cantt, April 26, 1960.

the whole, I have come to the conclusion that would be in the true interests of neither state to extend the West Punjab to a strip on the far side of Sutlej and there are factors such as the disruption of railway communication and water systems that ought in this instance to displace the primary claim of contiguous majorities."²⁰

But it did not convince the Pakistan leaders as K. Sarwar Hassan writes. : "Disruption of railway line is not irreparable, for these could be re-aligned. But so far as the water systems were concerned, the effect of the Award was not to save them from disruption, but as we shall see, to disrupt them with disastrous consequences. Radcliffe as a trained lawyer could not but have known what he was doing."²¹

Before the Sketch Map incident publication of the Award, Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, contacted the Viceroy's Secretary and asked for advance information about the Punjab Boundary Award. He probably pleaded that it had been the previous practice of the British administrators to give advance information to the governments concerned regarding administrative decision likely to effect them so that they might make necessary arrangements. But Sir Evan Jenkins, while asking for advance information, forgot that the information required was relating to an international boundary and it was no longer an internal problem of the province of which he was the head.

The Viceroy's Secretary, whom Sir Evans Jenkins contacted on telephone, was Sir George Abell, one of the senior most members of the British I.C.S. in India. As Secretary to the Vice-roy, he corresponded with the Governors. In the Viceroy's staff he had succeeded Sir Evan Jenkins with whom he had friendly relations. Sir George, therefore, contacted the Secretariat of the Boundary Commission. According to Brecher, "Abell got in touch with the Secretary of the Radcliffe Commission and on the basis of a telephonic conversation drew a sketch map which was sent to Jenkins."²²

This telephonic conversation might refer to the description of the boundary which was produced before the Security Council. About the sketch map it appears certain that it was not prepared at Lahore or at Simla. It was sent from Delhi. Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of the West Punjab, who succeeded Jenkins, informed the

20. Para 10, Radcliffe Award, vide Appendix

21. Sarwar Hassan - Pakistan and United Nations, New York, 1960, p. 42.

22. Nehru - A Political Biography, p. 360.

writer that the sketch map left by Jenkins among the confidential papers could not have been prepared on the basis of a telephonic conversation. Sir Cyril Radcliffe appears to have been aware of a map being sent to Abell. It appears almost certain that the sketch map was sent to Abell from the Secretariat of the Boundary Commission. Sir Zafurullah told me that the Pakistan Government sent him the photo copies of three documents to be presented before the Security Council while discussing the Kashmir cases (1) the forwarding letter in which Abell had stated the map he was sending, was supplied to him by Mr. Beaumont, Secretary of Sir Cyril Radcliffe. (2) the sketch map which indicated that Punjab boundary line, and (3) the description of the boundary line like which tallied with the Radcliffe Award. Sir Francis Mudie denied the knowledge of the forwarding letter or the description of the boundary was left by Jenkins. The forwarding letter and the description might have been detached by Jenkins or his Secretary before the map was placed in the confidential Box of the Governor. The map was subsequently shown to Mr Jinnah, Governor General and Mr Liaqat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The map would have gone unnoticed, had there been no difference between what it depicted and the subsequent award. In this map, the Tehsils of Ferozepur and Zira were shown in Pakistan, whereas the Award put the Tehsils in India. Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of the West Punjab, was the first to note this change and had asserted that Sir Cyril Radcliffe had changed his original award. Pakistan leaders hold that the Award had been tempered with in order to make it favourable to India. The Pakistan leaders accused Lord Mountbatten, using his personal influence to alter the Punjab Boundary Award. Commenting on this episode, Lord Mountbatten declared that he considered it beneath his dignity to issue a formal denial of such a charge.²³

Lord Mountbatten wrote to Lord Ismay regarding Abell's letters on 2nd April 1948 " So far as my memory serves me the first indication I had that the award was almost ready when George Abell informed me (It must have been on the 9th August) that he had sent a note to Jenkins the night before giving him a preliminary forecast of where the boundary was likely to be drawn. He did not consult me before sending the forecast nor did he show it to me because he said that it was done on staff level and that he had obtained it from Beaumont (Radcliffe's Secretary) mere to give Jenkins an early

23. Nehru A Political Bibliography., p. 361.

warning of what was likely be coming. I might add that none of my personal staff nor John Christie whom I had consulted knew that forecast had been sent nor did I see the forecast as far as I remember". In a telegram to Lord Ismay, Mountbatten made the following comments about this letter and Sir George Abell: "The point that arises here was that Abell sent the letter concerned without my knowledge. It may be hard to convince people why it was so. It will look to have been as odd procedure."²⁴ In another letter to Sir Evan Jenkins dated 19th March 1948 Mountbatten stated "the information given in Abell's letter about the date when the award would be ready was of course, wrong."²⁵

Sir Evan Jenkins in a letter dated 7th April 1948 to Lord Mountbatten in which he discussed the points of controversy which had arisen on the Punjab Boundary described the two documents in question as follows :

"the enclosures were a schedule (I think typed) and a section of a printed map with a line drawn thereon, together showing boundaries which included in Pakistan a sharp salient in Ferozpur district. The salient enclosed the whole of Ferozpur and Zira Tehsils."

Jenkins also stated that "on about 10th or 11th August when we were still expecting the Award on the 13th August at least, I received a secrophone message from the Viceroy's House containing the words "Eliminate salient", this change caused some surprise."²⁶

Lord Mountbatten concluded "but the assumption that can be drawn is that the line indicated in the document attached to Abell's letter was only a tentative and it was amended subsequently to balance the Bengal boundary line."²⁷

Sir Cyril Radcliff later on Lord Radcliffe told me in 1964 that he had drawn several lines to determine the boundary between East and West Punjab. One such line was sent to Lahore but that was not the final line. The final line was in Punjab Boundary Award.

Lord Mountbatten in a personal letter dated April 2, 1948 wrote to Lord Ismay, "I shall always be grateful to you for having cautioned me not to try and bring any direct influence to bear on Radcliffe concerning the actual award beyond expressing the following general

24. Ismay 111/7/136 Centre for Military Archive King's college, London

25. I.O.R/L/PFS/10/119 India office Library, London.

26. *Ibid.*, Transfer of Power, Vol. XII.

27. *Ibid.* Mountbatten letter of Jenkins dt. 19.3.48.

view. So far as I remember, I said to him that Sikh attitude had become rather worse than we had anticipated and when he was balancing the boundaries of East and West Pakistan, I sincerely hoped that he would bear the Sikh problem in mind. I think I went so far as to say that if he was really satisfied that overall decision both East and West was absolutely fair to both the communities then I trusted that any generosity to Pakistan should be more in Bengal than in Punjab since there was no Sikh problem in Bengal.”²⁸

My personal findings also confirmed that these two Tehsils were first allocated to West Punjab then finally they were allocated to India. I had not known about the sketch map incident when I presented my Paper on Punjab Boundary Commission to late Mr. Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan and late Mr Justice Teja Singh, Mr. Justice Mahajan advised me during 1959 that I should contact S. Harnam Singh who had pleaded the Sikh case and he would throw some light on the Punjab Boundary Award. In January 1960 late Justice Harnam Singh told me that : “these two Tehsils have been allocated to India after his and Giani Kartar Singh pleadings with Major Short who contacted Lord Mountbatten and persuaded him to satisfy the Sikhs.” In a written statement Major Short stated to me “My impressions on getting to Delhi on 22nd July 1947 were that the Sikhs did not like the Plan (3rd June Plan) ...I reported accordingly to our authorities in Delhi. They felt as I did too that would not now alter the course but so far as they could trim a trifle to meet the Sikhs they would.”²⁹

The last sentence refers to Zira and Ferozepur Tehsils. After giving his statement Major short advised me not to get it published because it would create an embarrassing position. Again in 1965 he cabled “Do not publish it”. I assured him by a letter that I had no plan to publish it immediately. It was after his death in 1969 A.D. that his statement first saw the light of the day in my book Partition of Punjab published by Punjabi University, Patiala in 1972 A.D.³⁰

The implication of the statement of Major Short were later confirmed by Christopher Beaumont. Beaumont was the Secretary of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Punjab Boundary Commission.

28. Ismay III/7/246 Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, Kirpal Singh:Select Documents. Partition of Punjab, Document No.237.

29. Kirpal Singh, Partition of Punjab, p. 50-51.

30. Among the Indian writers, I was perhaps the first to discuss the probability of revision of Punjab Boundary Award before its announcement. But nobody took it seriously. Some thought my version to be a pro-Pakistan as Pakistan leaders had been asserting that the Award had been changed.

In an article in *The Time*, New York dated August 11, 1997 the disclosure that the Punjab Boundary Award was altered is significant as he was associated with the preparation of the Award at all stages. It was he who had sent the advance information about the Award to Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab. This is further confirmed by Patrick French who in his recently published book entitled *Liberty or Death - India's Journey to Independence and Division*, has discussed the causes and factors leading to the modification of the Punjab Boundary Award.³¹ Though Patrick French ; has not analysed the Sikh factors, for the amendment he has admitted that the award was modified before announcement. According to personal and private letter to Lord Ismay, referred to above, Lord Mountbatten advised Radcliffe, "Any generosity to Pakistan should be more in Bengal than in Punjab since there is no Sikh problem in Bengal". Here the implication is clear that the last Viceroy wanted to balance the boundary awards of Punjab and Bengal and in that process some modification were made.

What were exactly the compelling circumstances that led to the modification of the Award are not known. The Viceroy in his personal and private letter to Lord Ismay has hinted towards the "Sikh Problem". This may be the predominant factor as late Master Tara Singh told me that Tehsils of Ferozepur and Zira were awarded to India because Mountbatten wanted to pacify the Sikhs. Major Short also admitted this by using the term "trim a triple" Therefore it appears almost certain that the Sikhs problem was a major factor leading to the alteration in the Punjab Boundary Award.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the Sikhs were among the first to demand the partition of Punjab in order to avoid Muslim majority rule. They consistently opposed Pakistan and ultimately, they saved East Punjab for India just as their ancestors had wrested the entire Punjab up to Indus and beyond from the Afghan Emperor Ahmed Shah Abdali in the eighteenth century.

31. Patrick French, *Liberty or Death - India's Journey to Independence and Division*. Harper Collin Publishers, London, 1997, p. 325, 328-29.

Chapter - 8

THE PUNJAB RIOTS

The Punjab Communal riots in 1947 have been differently described by various persons. Ian Stephens gives the name of civil war to these riots and observes, "if non-military carnage and commotion, estimated to have caused about 500,000 death.....Cannot be called civil war, it is hard to guess what it could be."¹ Michael Brecher terms them 'the war of succession' and explains that "The term was coined by Sir Evan Jenkins, the last Governor of the undivided Punjab, to designate the communal riots in Punjab".² According to Hugh Tinker, a large number of people were involved in these riots and he terms these riots as a "People's war".³ Whatever we may call these riots, it can hardly be denied that these riots got widest possible publicity in the international sphere because Pakistan linked these riots with the tribal invasion of Kashmir while defending their case in the Security Council.⁴

There are two distinct phases of the communal riots in the Punjab in 1947:

- i. Riots of March, 1947
- ii. Riots of August and September 1947

According to Zia-ul-Islam, "Sikh opposition to the formation of the League Ministry resulted in the communal with in Rawalpindi and Attock."⁵ But this does not appear to be correct There had been a chain of communal riots in India starting with Calcutta riots of 16th August 1946, when the Muslim League observed 'Direct Action Day'. These riots had their reaction in Naokhali and Tripura. In retaliation there were riots in Bihar when Muslims were killed in large numbers. Soon after the Bihar riots, trouble started in Hazara district of North Western Frontier Province. Hazara situated on the western border of

1. Ian Stephen, Pakistan (London, 1963), p. 80.
2. Michael Brecher, Nehru - A Political Biographer (London, 1959), See f.n. pp. 318-19.
3. Hugh Tinker, India and Pakistan, (London, 1962) p. 107.
4. United Nations Security Council Official Record 226-240, mtg. 1948, p. 46.
5. Zia-ul-Islam, East Punjab's Blood Bath (Pakistan Publishers, Karachi), Typed copy available in Khalsa Colloge, Amritsar Library p.2.

Kashmir and on the eastern side of the river Indus had a population which was most excitable.⁶ The Muslim League workers chose this area for their future plan of action. Members of the Hazara district Muslim League were sent in batches to Bihar and on their return they started communal trouble in Hazara.⁷ One school master hung around his neck the human skull and excited people by saying that it was a skull of a Muslim who had been killed by the Hindus in communal riots.⁸ This resulted in communal riots where Swatis killed Hindu and Sikhs in Mansera Tehsil of Hazara District. Subsequently these riots spread in the whole district. Consequently the Hindus and the Sikhs began their exodus from Hazara in December 1946 and January 1947. The minorities in the neighbouring districts of Attock and Rawalpindi felt alarmed.

The appointment of the new Viceroy and fixation of a date for the transfer of power to the Indian hands had a significant impact on the Punjab politics. Soon after Attlee's statement Sir Khizar Hyat Khan, the Unionist Premier of Punjab, yielded to the pressure tactics of Muslim League and resigned. But instead of any communal settlement there broke out communal riots in the districts of Rawalpindi, Attock and Multan where the population was predominantly Muslim.

The Punjab Disturbed Area Act and the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance were promulgated to meet the evil.⁹ The military had been called out several times to quell the disturbances.¹⁰ The Home Secretary of the Punjab Govt. gave the following figures of casualties in the districts of Mutan and Rawalpindi in his communication No.9418 dated 25th July 1947.¹¹

District	No. of persons killed or burnt alive				
	Hindus	Sikhs	Muslims	Others	Total
Multan	171	1	14	-	186
Rawalpindi	2263		38	-	2301

6. Gazetteer of District Hazara, p. 19.

7. S G P C Muslim League's attack on the Hindus and the Sikhs (Amritsar), p. 48.

8. Gorge E, Jones, Tumult in India, New York, 1948, p. 213.

9. Punjab Government Communique dated March 19, 1947. See The Tribune, 20 March, 1947.

10. Northern Command Communique, The Tribune, 23 March, 1947.

11. The Home Secretary of Punjab's letter to Secretary of the Punjab Boundary Commission, Appendix J, Partition Proceeding, vol. VI, p. 22

		No. of persons injured			
Multan	87	2	59	19	167
Rawalpindi	234		126	-	360
		Value of property burnt			
Multan		Rs.20,00,000 (Hindu property approx.)			
Rawalpindi		Rs.14,00,000 -do-			

Regarding these figures the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi stated:

Greater accuracy is not possible owing to the wide-spread nature of the disturbances and the breakdown of the normal administrative machinery. The figures of lives lost are believed to be the minimum and information has been obtained from the cases registered with the police. The figures of property destroyed are also the minimum and are based on claims for compensation received so far. They do not include losses inflicted where the population was wiped out and no claims were made.¹²

After visiting tehsil Kahuta of district Rawalpindi; Pandit Nehru said that he had seen horrible scenes of which even Satan would be ashamed of.¹³ Lord Mountbatten wrote in a confidential report to the British Government after visiting Kahuta area, "the whole of the Hindu-Sikh part is an absolute wreck, as though it had been subjected to an air raid."¹⁴

At Thoha Khalsa village a number of women plunged into well to save their honour when they were attacked by a Muslim mob.¹⁵ Mr.J.A.Scott, Deputy Superintendent Police, Rawalpindi gave the following statement after visiting the riot of affected areas:

These villages suffered heavy losses in men and material - Thoha Khalsa, Syyid, Kahuta, Bhagpur, Bewal, Rihal, Panj Garan, Siala, Basali, Charnal, Usman, Khattar, Laitgarh, Balaji, Kahngarh, Kheri Baba Bhag Singh, Choh Bhagtan, Sihali, Adiala, Rawal, Nava, Mandhra etc.¹⁶

12. *Ibid*, p. 288

13. *Sikha De Pakistan Vichon Niklan Di Gatha*, Kirpal Singh, Brecher page 340.

14. Viceroy Personal Report No.5 dated May 1, 1947, 90 RL/PO/6/123 BOT/PO / 433.

15. Kirpal Singh *Shahidian*, Amritsar, 1964, p.

16. Kirpal Singh *Sikhan De Pakistan Vichon Niklan Di Gatha*, p. 73. Tribune, Lahore dated March 24, 1947.

The communal riots took the worst turn in the districts where there were British Deputy Commissioners like Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore and Amritsar. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru stated, "In the Punjab where there was cent per cent British rule despite the efforts of certain senior officers murder and arson continued. The trouble was prevalent most where there were British Officers in charge and divisions under the control of either Hindu or Muslim officers were comparatively quiet".¹⁷ He added, "The British are no longer interested because they are leaving. This probably explains why some officers asked the victims who came to them for help to go to me or Sardar Patel for help. They are not desirous of shouldering any further responsibility and many have become callous."¹⁸

According to Frank Moraes the noted Journalist "a few British officials had their hearts fully in the primary job of maintaining law and order. In the minds of some of them, the prospect of civil chaos in India on the eve of independence was not without its allurements. What better testimony to the mobility of Indian rulers and administrators to control the communal situation once the strong arm of British authority was withdrawn".¹⁹

The August riots (1947) in the Punjab are important as these have given a severe test to the practicability and viability of the 3rd June Plan. It indicated that certain section of society in the Punjab were not satisfied. Moreover these gave vent to the pent up feeling of communal revenge on both sides of the border. But for these riots there would have been no transfer of population. Subsequently these riots gained international fame when Pakistan raised the question of August riots in UNO.

Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India was of the firm view that there should be peaceful transfer of power. In case of disturbances he advocated the sternest possible action as he told Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, "At least on this one question I shall give you complete assurance. I shall see to it that there is no blood shed and riot. I am soldier, not a civilian. Once partition is accepted in principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbances anywhere in the country. If there should be the slightest agitation I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in bud. I shall not use even the armed police. I will order the army and the air

17. Bose note,6, p. 162.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

19. Frank Moras, Jawaharlal Nehru (New York, 1956) p. 329.

force to act and will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.”²⁰

Eversince the outbreak of communal disturbances in the district of Rawalpindi and Multan during the month of March, 1947 the communal situation had not improved. Sir George Abell, private Secretary of the Viceroy visited Lahore in the last week of April and reported that situation was serious. According to Sir Evan Jenkins there was grave danger of civil war.²¹ Sir Malcolm Darling who had served Punjab for a number of years also visited Lahore in April 1947 and noticed that there was extreme tension and the ‘province was a smouldering volcano’.²²

When Mountbatten plan or Partition Plan was announced, the situation in the Punjab had not improved. Simultaneous with the announcement of Partition Plan, ‘firm action to be taken’ orders were issued. Major General J.C. Bruce, the commander of the Lahore Area issued a special order on 3rd June in which he declared “if unfortunately disturbances do arise from the forthcoming announcement on future constitution of India we are well placed in dealing with them.”²³

The authorities in New Delhi were not unaware of the mounting tension in the Punjab. Lord Ismay writes. “Nevertheless I was worried at the prevalence of the idea that it was all now going to be plain sailing. I thought that there were still many fearful obstacles to be overcome. I was particularly worried about Sikhs.”²⁴ Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of All India Muslim League said in the meeting of Partition Council held on July 10, 1947: “Although he was doing everything in his power to retain hold over the Muslim sections of population concerned he had noticed that Sikh leaders were still reported to be inciting their followers to offer active resistance to the decisions which they might regard as unfavourable.” Lord Mountbatten said in reply that “he had made it abundantly clear to His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala. Baldev Singh, Master Tara Singh and all other Sikh leaders with whom he had interviews, the consequences of any attempt to offer active resistance ... In view of superiority of aeroplane tanks, artillery etc. that the armed force enjoy, such action would inevitably

20. Mualana Abdul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longman, 1972 Paperback, p. 170-71.

21. Alan Campbell Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 73.

22. *The Punjab Disorders*, *The Hindu*, Madras, October 11, 1947.

23. *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, June 3, 1947.

24. *Memoirs of Lord Ismay*, London, 1962, p. 420.

result in very severe losses”²⁵

On 4 August, 1947 Sir E. Jenkins, Governor Punjab wrote to Sir G. Abell, Personal Secretary to Lord Mountbatten. “I am sending savage (Genald Robert Savage) Superintendent of Police) with some papers which I think H.E. should see or know of .”²⁶ In an interview with Lord Mountbatten in the presence of Mr Jinnah, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Patel (Captain Savage related that ‘one of the first instigators of disturbances to be arrested had been one Pritam Singh, an ex-member of the INA ... He had made a long statement which involves Master Tara Singh in the production of bombs and a Sikh Plan to attack certain headworks.’

Capt Savage went on to say that Master Tara Singh had stated that four or five young Sikhs were planning to blow up the Pakistan Special with remote control firing apparatus and after wrecking the special set it on fire and shoot the occupants. Tara Singh had also said that Mr. Jinnah should be killed during the ceremonies at Karachi on 15th August”.²⁷

“Capt Savage said that independent and highly reliable source confirmed Master Tara Singh’s frame of mind as being completely one track on the subject of revenge on the Muslims. Tara Singh was collecting arms through Sikh army officers and dumping them in States”.²⁸ “Sir George Abell gave his opinion that Master Tara Singh should most certainly be arrested.”

“Captain Savage said that such a step would certainly create trouble in the central Punjab.

“Sardar Patel said that he place no reliance on the statements made by arrested people, particularly ex-members of INA.

“Capt Savage said that so far as one could be certain in these particular cases, those interrogated had been telling the truth. However, it was very difficult to produce a concrete evidence against Tara Singh, but he could be detained under section 3 of the Punjab Safety Act.”²⁹

The Viceroy after further considering the matter, decided to recommend to the Governor of Punjab that Master Tara Singh and the other ring leaders of this movement should be arrested, at about

25. Partition Proceedings, Vol.1, Govt. of India, Printing 1947, New Delhi, p. 146.

26. Transfer of Power or Vol. XII, Document no. 338, p. 527.

27. *Ibid.*, Document No. 345, p. 537.

28. *Ibid.*, Document No. 345, p. 538.

29. *Ibid.*, p.538.

the time of Boundary Commission's award. According to the instructions of the Viceroy Sir George Abell wrote on 4 August, 1947 to Sir Evan Jenkins a letter with following contents:

"My dear Jenkins.

Thank you for the personal letter you sent with Savage. I heard Savage's story at breakfast and then passed it on to H.E. He was having a Partition Council meeting this morning and decided at the end to keep back Jinnah Liaquat and Patel and get Savage to tell them the story.

"Savage told the story very well and it made a considerable impression. After some discussion it was agreed that it would be necessary to arrest Tara Singh and the more hot headed of the Sikhs. The only question was when this should be done. H.E. suggested that probably it would be best to do it at the same time as the announcement of the Boundary Commission's Award. He pointed out that if it was done before hand the trouble would probably spread and the announcement of an unfavourable award would make conditions even worse on 15th August than they will be if these are arrested on 12th. "It was agreed that there would have to be a common policy in the matter and H.E. said he would ask you to discuss the matter with Sir Chandulal Trivedi and in due course with the Premier of East Punjab and the Premier (as soon as he is chosen) of the West Punjab.

"It was recognised that you might wish for a little more time to consider the matter and possibly after your discussion to make other recommendations, but it was definitely the view of the meeting that (a) the arrests should be made and (b) that they should not be made for a week or so."

Yours sincerely,
G.E.B. ABELL³⁰

Lord Mountbatten wrote to Earl of Lostowel the Secretary of State on 8 August, 1947: "The man who had given away most information was an ex-member of the INA and had during the war been at the Japanese spy school at Penong and sent to India by submarine. This man's statement involved Master Tara Singh in the production of bombs and a Sikh plan to attack a certain headworks. The statements of other men who had been arrested involved Tara Singh in plans to wreck the trains carrying the Pakistan Governmental staff from Delhi to Karachi on 15th August. The evidence

30. *Ibid.*, Document No. 346, p. 539.

produced was so incriminating that Jenkins may have to arrest Tara Singh and the more hot headed of his confederates shortly before 15th August."³¹

In reply to Lord Mountbatten's Communication Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor, Punjab wrote to the Viceroy :

"I have now discussed this matter both with Trivedi (Sir Chandu Lal Trivedi - Governor designate for East Punjab) and Mudie (Sir Francis Mudie, Governor designate for West Punjab) and we all agreed.

- (a) "That the arrest of Tara Singh and his friends now or simultaneously with the announcement of Boundary Commission's award could not improve and might worsen the immediate situation; and
- (b) "That though it may be necessary for me to make arrests after announcement of the award and before 15th August if the Sikhs gave very serious trouble it would be far better to leave them to be dealt with by the new governments of West Punjab and East Punjab."³²

"In amplification of (a) it is clear that village raiding which is now causing so much concern in Amritsar and elsewhere in not specifically directed by Tara Singh and his associates, though it is undoubtedly by the result of their general propaganda. Their arrests now or simultaneously with the Boundary Commission's Award would almost certainly lead to a sharp reaction among the Sikhs.

- (b) "If the arrests were made by the section 93 administration, the leaders taken in the West Punjab would presumably have to be confined in a Pakistan jail and the leaders taken in East Punjab would have to be confined in a Indian jail ... it is impossible to say what attitude of the new government's would be ... on the other hand if the two new governments have to take decision of their own, they are more likely to adhere to them and to make suitable arrangement for the custody of prisoners - a matter which may cause considerable embarrassment."³³

"I have accordingly decided to plan the arrests but not to make them myself unless my hand is forced. The arrests may be far from easy as the Sikh leaders travel a good deal and usually live

31. *Ibid.*, document No. 384, p. 636.

32. *Ibid.*, document No. 403, p. 636.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 636.

in places like Golden Temple where Police action causes much excitement. This decision will probably be unwelcome to Jinnah but I believe that in all the circumstances it is the right one. The whole object of our policy has been to get as smooth a change over as we can, even at the considerable risk. The two new governments may have to fight the Sikhs, but if I start the fight now they will inherit it, and I do not think that this would be fair to them unless the arrests before the transfer of power are quite unavoidable."

Yours sincerely

E. Jenkins

Regarding the arrests of Master Tara Singh and other Sikh leaders Lord Mountbatten wrote to the British Govt. in England in his person report No. 17 dated 16 August 1947:

"Jenkins, Mudie and Trivedi (the present Governor and two future Governors of the Punjab) considered the matter together, and unanimously decided that arrests should not be made until after the Boundary Commission's award was announced and the new governments are responsible for law and order. I accepted this decision as it is quite possible that arrests earlier would have led even more serious trouble with the Sikhs."³⁵

The Finance Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Mohammed during his visit to England stated in the Press Interview in London on 5 July, 1948 " ... a part of blame almost the whole blame would rest on Mountbatten". The Pakistan Minister's charge was that the last Viceroy was aware of the deep laid conspiracy by the Sikhs and Rashtriya Swayam Sangh "to throttle Pakistan by eliminating Muslims" and yet he refused to take action".³⁶ "The most serious blame must attach," the Dawn commented "not to Lord Mountbatten but also to the British Government who approved his disastrous policy. Failure to do what was plainly necessary had been repeatedly urged and had been definitely promised cannot be excused or condoned. The main responsibility for the policy that led to horrors of that disastrously tragic period must rest upon the shoulders of Lord Mountbatten."³⁷

The British Commonwealth Relation office refuted this charge. It pointed out there were sanguinary riots organised by the Muslim League and Muslim National Guards in the north of Punjab (Districts

34. *Ibid.*, document No. 463, p. 637.

35. *Ibid.*, document No.489, p. 765.

36. Hindustan Times, New Delhi ed. July 7, 1948.

37. Dawn, Karachi, July 8, 1948.

of Rawalpindi, Attock and Multan) in March/April 1947 where in thousands of Hindus and Sikhs had been killed 'What happened in August 1947 in Punjab was more continuation of a bloody chain reaction which was set in motion by the Muslim League in Calcutta in August 1946 "³⁸ On the Indian side it was spontaneous outburst of people indignant at what they considered the weakness or appeasement policy of their leadership. On the Muslim side, the League, the bureaucracy, the police and army worked like Hitler's team with the tacit if not open approval of those in charge of Pakistan Government".³⁹

Some of the important facts on both side of the border were the refugees who wanted to take possession of the houses and lands, belonging to the opposite community. The administrative changes affected by partition of the province were also responsible for communal outburst in both the Punjab.

In August 1947, the refugees from West Punjab were mostly responsible for the trouble in East Punjab. The non-Muslims had been migrating ever since the disturbances in the districts of Rawalpindi, Multan and other areas. A camp for non-Muslim refugees had already been started at Wah, District Attock, because the Muslim population in those areas "often with the connivance, and even encouragement of Government officials" committed atrocities on the non-Muslims.⁴⁰ Wherever these refugees went they carried with them tales of woe and sufferings creating tension and panic. The Muslim leaders never expressed any regret nor condemned these attacks on the non-Muslims. There had been many instances where the Muslim ruffians had killed the individual Sikhs.⁴¹ According to Master Tara Singh it was in this atmosphere of frustration that the Sikhs and Hindus resorted to retaliation.⁴² Following the disturbances in Amritsar and Hoshiarpur, rioting, (arson and murder) broke out in other districts. As the refugee progressed eastward, communal troubles also spread causing migration of the Muslims from East Punjab, what had happened in West Punjab was re-enacted, in East Punjab in August and September on a large scale with more ferocity.

38. Hindustan Times, New Delhi, July 7, 1948.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Govt of India, After Partition, (Delhi 1948), p. 40.

41. Farrukh Amritsar : Khoon Ki Holi (Urdu), Transcribed copy, SHR 1963, p. 38.

42. Master Tara Singh's letter to Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India, dated 11.8.1947, S.H.R (1815).

Over large areas in East Punjab the Sikh mobs attacked almost every Muslim village, killed a large number of Muslims and harried the columns of Muslim refugee. At places like Dasuya district Hoshiarpur, where the Muslims were in a majority, they accommodated a large number of Muslim refugees and armed themselves with firearms, swords and spears. There were open fights between the hostile mobs.⁴³

This was further followed by counter retaliation with attacks on the Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab. A British Lieutenant-Colonel in the Pakistan army stated on 13th September, 1947 that some 250 armed Pathans from the Frontier have drifted into Lahore and the surrounding villages.⁴⁴ The same malady of death and fire was repeated on the Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore and the surrounding areas. The Muslims in West Punjab saw that by attacking the Sikhs and Hindus who owned property and land, they could acquire their properties. Exactly the same happened in East Punjab where the Sikhs and the Hindus attacked the Muslims to drive them out in order to acquire their lands.

The exchange of Deputy Commissioner's, magistracy and other high officials belonging to minority community in the opting out process provided by the Punjab Partition Committee undermined the sense of security of minorities in that tense atmosphere of communal rioting. The very presence of a strong officer belonging to minority had sufficient deterring effect on the majority community. The DLO Gujranwala wrote that "it is an admitted fact even by the Muslims that non-Muslim Deputy Commissioner of Gujranwala controlled the situation with a strong hand even though trouble had been brewing for a long time and tension grew from day to day. His departure was a signal to the Muslim officers of the district who openly became hostile to the non-Muslims."⁴⁵ One of the most conspicuous exceptions was that of a Muslim Deputy Commissioner of Shahpur. According to the DLO Shahpur, "It was due to his presence that the district had been much quieter than many other districts".⁴⁶

The officers who had been recently transferred as a result of partition were themselves affected by a communal rioting. After taking charge of their new posts they incited retaliation as in the case of

43. Sir Francis Taker, *while Memory Serves* (London, 1940), p. 479.

44. *Ibid*, p. 479.

45. Liaison Agency Report, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, File No. LIX/12, Report of DLO, Gujranawala.

46. Liaison Agency Report, File No. LIX, Report of DLO, Shahpur.

Bhakkar, district Mianwali, East Punjab. District Liaison officer, Mianwali wrote, "On the afternoon of 2nd September the Muslim Zamindars went to pay their respects to the newly arrived SDO, who had been relieved from Gurdaspur and some of the leading Hindus of the town were also there. In the presence of all these persons the SDO said that he was simply astonished to find that so far nothing had taken place at Bhakkar while in Gurdaspur district the Sikhs had raped and abducted Muslim girls and murdered and looted innumerable innocent Muslims. On the 3rd September there was a beat of drum and a mob of two or three thousand strong entered the bazar and set fire to the shops of the non-Muslims."⁴⁷

The police officers can hardly escape the responsibility for the communal riots both in West Punjab and East Punjab. In the United Punjab 74.1 per cent of the regular police force was Muslim and 78.2 per cent of the Additional Police Muslim.⁴⁸ Most of the Muslim constables had opted for West Punjab. As some of the Muslim constables were reported to have fled away to Pakistan with equipment etc. in the border districts of East Punjab. The East Punjab Government decided to relieve the Muslim constables at once. Consequently they were relieved at Amritsar on 10th August. This greatly unnerved the Muslims and undermined their sense of security. These affected police men along with a bulk of others openly indulged in committing crimes on the non-Muslims in West Punjab.

District Liaison Officer, Gujranwala reported that a Police Officer of Newshehra Virkan (District Gujranwala) 'proclaimed with a beat of drum that the *Kafirs* should accept Islam or be massacred. He collected Muslims at a bridge of the canal and told them that they should kill and loot the non-Muslims. The worst was the conduct of a police officer at Kamoke (District Gujranawala) where non-Muslims girls were distributed among police officers, their friend and relatives after massacre of a refugee train there .⁴⁹

In the East Punjab new police men had to be recruited because out of about 20,672 strong police force of the United Punjab, East Punjab had been left with only 7186.⁵⁰ The police men who had been transferred from West Punjab had seen communal rioting and were themselves affected. In the new recruitment most of the policemen

47. *Ibid.*, File No. LIX/8, Report of DLO, Mianwali.

48. G D Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, (New Delhi, n.d.), f.n. p. 278.

49. Liaison Agency Report, DLO, Gujranwala's Report.

50. *Punjab on the March* (Punjab Govt Publications, March, 1957), p. 2.

were refugees from West Punjab. In this way newly organised police force in East Punjab, instead of controlling it, these policemen abetted the wrong doors. Justice G. D. Khosla writes, "We must also confess that there was regrettable lack of honesty of purpose on the part of the police and certain other agencies in charge of the maintenance of law and order. This was found especially marked in the Railway Police in Ambala and a number of their men had to be arrested. A large number of arrests of policemen had to be made on charge of looting and murder in other districts also."⁵¹

The Pakistan government subsequently brought out a number of brochures to prove that the Sikhs were mainly responsible for these riots. It was argued that in order to carve out their state, the Sikhs had planned to kill the Muslims in an organised manner. The Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot provided them with ammunition, with the result that there started widespread communal riots in the beginning of August.⁵² A separate booklet was issued relating to the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, a Hindu organisation, and it was stated that they had joined the Sikhs in order to kill Muslims in East Punjab. The East Punjab Government and the Indian Govt. issued a number of pamphlets, stating that the August riots in East Punjab were a repercussion of riots in West Punjab since March 1947.⁵³ Several books published in India concur with this view.⁵⁴ M.C. Setalvad, Indian representative in the Security Council, in reply to Sir Mohammed Zafarullah Khan dealt with this point at great length.⁵⁵

No Pakistan publication makes mention of the riots in March 1947 in which the Hindus and the Sikhs had been entirely wiped out

51. Khosla, n. 24, p. 280.

52. Pakistan Government's Publications regarding the Punjab Riots are : A Note on the Sikh Plan : Sikh Plan in Action, Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, Tribal Repercussions.

53. East Punjab and Indian Govt's publications:

(i). Orphans of the Storm

(ii). Millions on the Move

(iii). Govt of India, After Partition (Delhi 1948)

54. Some of the books published in India regarding communal riots are:

i. SGPC Muslim League's Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus (Amritsar)

ii. G D Khosla, Stern Reckoning (New Delhi, n.d.)

iii. K. L. Gauba, Inside Pakistan (Delhi 1948)

55. United Nations Security Council's official Record 3rd Yr mtg. 226-240, p. 174.

M.C. Setalvad said, "The refugees brought with them tales of horror and gave rise to a desire to exact retribution and retaliate on the Muslim population".

in several villages. Whatever be the genesis, the technique and subsequent development of the pre-partition and the post-partition communal riots in the Punjab, the following facts can hardly be denied by any party :

1. In the Punjab, the communal riots first started in the Muslim majority areas in the West Punjab in March 1947 and not in the August 1947.
2. The Hindus and the Sikhs, who had been victims of communal riots in the districts of Rawalpindi, Multan, Attock, etc. migrated to the eastern districts of the Punjab. This created tension and communal hatred wherever they settled.
3. From March to August 1947, there had been communal rioting in the Punjab at short or long intervals.
4. If it is to be taken as true that the Sikhs received ammunition from the Sikh States, it was equally true and, in fact, it had been proved in the Mamdot Enquiry in a Lahore Court in 1949 that the Punjab Muslim League leaders purchased in 1946 hand grenades, jeeps and other war material.⁵⁶

The "Punjab's virile hot-headed people"⁵⁷ began now to work in a spirit of vengeance. The retired Sikh army men alongwith the Sikh soldiers of the disbanded Indian National Army organised small squads to kill the Muslims.⁵⁸ The Muslims retaliated. Attacks by the Muslims in West Punjab were followed by counter attacks by the Sikhs and the Hindus in East Punjab. The poison affected the unlettered and ignorant masses as well as the educated middle classes. It spread to the officials, police and army. The Muslims and the non-Muslims vied with each other in degrading themselves to the lowest level of barbarity. The grim sport of murder and repine flourished on both sides of the Punjab with equal ferocity. It is impossible to ascertain the actual number of casualties, as there was a complete breakdown of the civil administration in both the Punjabs after 15th August. However, a popular estimate of casualties is about half a million. According to G. D. Kholsa the loss of non-Muslim life had been

56. Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (London 1949), p. 82.

57. Malcolm Lyall Darling, *At Freedom's Door* (London, 1949), p. XII.

58. In the first session of East Punjab Assembly, *Armed Bands* (arrest and detention) Bill was introduced on the 3rd November. Sardar Swaran Singh, while introducing the Bill, said, "During the last two months or so ... certain elements in our society .. have taken to arms and formed themselves into bands and have been committing offences". *East Punjab Assembly Debates*, (From 1st November to 8th November 1947), Vol.I, p. 48.

estimated at a figure between 200,000 and 250,000.⁵⁹ It is believed that an equal number of Muslims perished. "The First Year of Pakistan" mentions "the massacre of half a million men, women and children".⁶⁰ Ian Stephen and Michael Edwards give the casualty figures to be 500,000 and 600,000 respectively.⁶¹ But the estimate of those Britishers who were actually amidst that holocaust are more reliable. Lord Mountbatten wrote to Sir Francis Mudie about the 59250 casualties in the various districts of West Punjab after August 15, 1947.⁶²

Lord Mountbatten's estimate coincides with the figure of casualties calculated by Sir Penderal Moon who writes:

In December 1947, I made some calculations regarding the number of persons killed in West Punjab and Bahawalpur. I had pretty accurate knowledge of the casualties both in Bahawalpur State itself and in the immediate adjacent West Punjab districts. Regarding several other districts, I had good information from old subordinates especially among the magistracy and police, with whom I was in touch. I was thus able to reach fairly precise figures for about half the districts of West Punjab and on the basis of these to make intelligent guesses regarding the remainder. Those calculations led me to certain figures for the total casualties from August onwards in West Punjab and Bahawalpur ... The figure was 60,000.⁶³

According to Moon, the casualties in East Punjab and the Punjab States had been heavier than in West Punjab, but not twice as high. The total casualties were near about 200,000.⁶⁴

59. Khosla, n.24, p. 299.

60. First Year of Pakistan (Pakistan Govt Publication).

61. Ian Stephens n. 1 p. 80 and Michael Edwards Last Years of British India (London, 1963), p. 223.

62. Lord Montbatten's letter to Sir Francis Mudie, dated July 25, 1962. The writer noted these figures from the original letter.

63. Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit (London, 1961). p.293

64. *Ibid*

Chapter - 9

THE FORCED MASS MIGRATION EXCHANGE OF POPULATION

The partition of Punjab was followed by the biggest ever mass migration not only of the Sikhs but also of Muslims and Hindus. According to Horace Alexander "there has never been such a huge exchange of population"¹ Hitherto known as biggest exchange of population between Turkey and Greece "caused uprooting of two million people"² But in the case of East Punjab and West Punjab more than eight million people crossed the border "the massive exchange of population that attended the partition of the sub-continent and conditions/under which it took place are almost unprecedented in history", says J. Russel Andrews.³ "Enforced" movements of people on a scale absolutely unparalleled in the history of world.⁴

There were numerous causes that laid to this mass migration. Mudie's letter quoted below proves that Sikhs of Lyallpur were loath to leave but the West Punjab Government was determined to drive them out. Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of the West Punjab in 1947, told the writer that Giani Kartar Singh met him at Lyallpur and requested him to give necessary facilities to the Sikhs for going to India as they have decided to leave Pakistan. Mudie assumed office as governor of West Punjab after partition. Naturally, this meeting took place when things had already started going wrong. Giani Kartar Singh told me that he made this request only after he had definite information that Mr. Jinnah had instructed the Governor of the West Punjab to expel all the Sikhs from Pakistan. Subsequently, this was confirmed by a letter of Sir Francis himself addressed to Mr. Jinnah and intercepted by the East Punjab Police. Sir Francis Mudie Frankly declared "I am telling everyone that I do not care how the Sikhs get across the border, the great thing is to get rid of them as soon as possible.

1. Horace Alexander, *New Citizens of India*, Oxford University Press, p. 7
2. Stephens P Landar, *The Exchange of Minorities 1932*, p. 3.
3. *Economy of Pakistan*, London, 1956, p.443.
4. O.H.K.Spate, *India and Pakistan*, London, 1934, p.110.

There is still little sign of 3 lakh Sikhs in Lyallpur moving but in the end they too will have to go."⁵

Another significant factor leading to the forced migration of the non-Muslim from the West Punjab was the "Economic Rehabilitation Ordinance" Contrary to the very spirit of agreement and the statement of the 3rd September where in both the governments of the East Punjab and the West Punjab had agreed "not to recognise illegal seizure of property belonging to the refugees"⁶ the West Punjab Government issued an ordinance which authorised the Rehabilitation Commissioner West Punjab to assume possession and control of the abandoned lands, and business undertakings and to grant their temporary lease for the period of one year. He was also empowered to permit the occupation of any abandoned building by the refugees or other persons.⁷ Consequently, not only the houses and shops of the Hindus and the Sikhs of Lahore who had left their homes in panic were allotted to the Muslim refugees but the forcible occupation by the Muslim refugees of the properties left by the Hindus and the Sikhs was also legalized. Even before the issue of his ordinance, the authorities in Lahore were responsible for the forcible occupation of shops and houses belonging to the non-Muslims.⁸ The Civil and Military Gazette Lahore, editorially pointed out on 4th September 1947. "It is a most point legally if the authorities are empowered to remove locks and occupy premises without first ascertaining if the owners are dead or unwilling to return ...it is open to question if authorities can refuse to allow the owners when they return to re-occupy their houses."

5. G D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning* New Delhi, p.315-1 Justice G D. Khosla said that a copy of this letter was supplied to him by the East Punjab Government. The text of the letter quoted in "Stern Reckoner" has got more details than similar letters quoted in other books. Subsequently I learnt from Sardar Sant Parkash Singh; Inspector General of Police in 1947 that this letter was intercepted by the East Punjab Police. The letter was addressed to M.A.Jinnah, Governor General of Pakistan. Sir Francis Mudie confirmed to this writer that it was his letter. He wrote several such letters ; the copies of which are now available in India Office Library, London. He stated in this letter "At Chuharkana in Sheikhpura District I saw between a lakh and a half of Sikhs collected in the town and round it, in the houses and roofs and everywhere. It was exactly like the Magh Mela at Allahabad. It will take 45 trains to move them at 4000 people per train or if they are to stay there they will have to be given 50 tons of Ata a day." For full text of this letter see my (Kirpal Singh) *Select statements Partition of Punjab* page 5-11-12. It was dated 5th Sep. 1947.
6. C & M September 4, 1947.
7. West Punjab Govt. 5 Economic Rehabilitation, No. IV, 1947.
8. C & M, dated September 10, 1947.

The Hindu businessmen who had left their houses in Lahore in panic on returning to the city found their houses occupied by the Muslims. The disposal of the Hindu and Sikh properties in this way without knowledge or consent of their owner was "another form of confiscation".⁹ which compelled the Hindu and the Sikhs to leave Pakistan for good. The Muslim refugees, in order to avail themselves of the houses and business of the non-Muslims, created panic and disorder to turn out the Hindus and the Sikhs. Sir Geoffrey Prior, agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan analysed the causes of migrations. He wrote, "the reason appears simply to drive out the minority community and enjoy the fruits of business which they have built through many years. The attitude of these persons to my mind is like that of a loathsome vulture who sits by a dying animal waiting to pick up its bones."¹⁰

The exodus of refugees from the West Punjab was mostly responsible for the trouble in the East Punjab.¹¹ The non-Muslim refugees had been migrating ever since the disturbances in the districts of Rawalpindi, Multan and other areas where often with the connivance and even with the encouragement of the Government officials committed atrocities on the non-Muslims.¹² Wherever these refugees Muslim mobs went, they carried with them their tales of woe and suffering, creating tension and panic. There had been many instances where the Muslim ruffians had killed individual Sikh.¹³ and Hindus. Master Tara Singh, believed that it was this atmosphere of frustration that let the Sikhs and Hindus in the East Punjab to resort to retaliation.¹⁴ Following the disturbances, at Amritsar, and the Hoshiarpur rioting, arson and murder broke out in other districts. As the refugees progressed eastwards, communal troubles also spread, causing the migration of the Muslims from the East Punjab. What had happened in the West Punjab was re-enacted in the East Punjab in August and September on a large scale, even with more ferocity.¹⁵

Over large areas in the East Punjab, the Sikh mobs attacked almost every Muslim village, killed a large number of Muslims and

9. The Indian News Chronicle, New Delhi, dated October 11, 1947.

10. C & M September 12, 1947.

11. After Partition, Publication Division, Govt. of India, p. 40.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Farrukh Amritsari, Khoon Ki Holi (Urdu) Transcribed copy S.H.R 1963, p.38.

14. Master Tara Singh's letter to Sardar Patel Deputy Prime Minister of India, dated the 14 August 1947, S.H.R. 1815.

15. *Ibid.*

harried the columns of refugees. At places, like Dasuya, District Hoshiarpur where the Muslims were in a majority there were open fights between the hostile mobs. One Jamadar, who was on leave in his village in District Jalandhar, wrote to a Major in the Eastern Command on the 23rd August: "this Country has become a battlefield since the 16th August. One village attacks another village and one community another community. Nobody could sleep for a week. Villages are being destroyed and thousands are being killed or wounded. Smoke fires are seen everywhere all around my village. Every day too many casualties take place in this country".¹⁶

This was further followed by counter retaliation with attacks on minorities in the West Pakistan. "A reliable British Lieutenant Colonel in the Pakistan Army stated on the 13th of September 1947 that some 250 armed Pathans from the Frontier have drifted into Lahore and surrounding villages.¹⁷ The same brutalities of death and fire were again perpetrated on the Hindus and the Sikhs who were still in Lahore and its surrounding areas. The Muslims in the West Punjab saw that by attacking the Sikhs and Hindus who owned property and land, they could acquire their properties.

One of the most important factors which paved the way for the law of nemesis to work in the East Punjab and the West Punjab was the exchange of Deputy Commissioners, the Magistracy and other high officials belonging to the minority community in the opting out process provided by the Punjab Partition Committee. Their departure from amidst the minorities to whom they belonged undermined their sense of security in that tense atmosphere of communal rioting.¹⁸

The policemen who had been transferred from the west Punjab had seen communal rioting and were themselves affected. In the new recruitment most of the policemen were refugees from the West Punjab. In this way, the newly organised police force in the East Punjab was infected with the communal virus.¹⁹

It had been rightly stated by one of the staff officers of the G.O.C. Eastern Command: "There is no doubt whatsoever that the police of both the East Punjab and the West Punjab joined in the slaughter and looting of the minority communities."²⁰

16. Sir Francis Taker, *While Memory Service*, London, 1950, p. 431.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 479.

18. L.A.R. Report of D.L.O., Muzafargarh.

19. *Punjab on the March, Police and Jail 1951*, p. 2.

20. *While Memory Serves*, p. 491.

It is unfortunate that under such circumstances both the Indian and Pakistan governments could not agree on a comprehensive plan to meet the fast deteriorating situation in the East Punjab and the West Punjab. The riots, arson, murders, loot and abduction of women were spreading like wild fire. Setting a chain of retaliation and counter-retaliation, uprooting the minorities on both sides of the border. The people belonging to the minority community were fleeing.²¹ Under these conditions of a grave nature, the representatives of India and Pakistan agreed on the 17th August 1947: "The Governments of the East Punjab and the West Punjab will give maximum assistance towards evacuation of refugees from one province to another and will make necessary arrangements for refugees prior to evacuation. The Central Government will give whatever assistance may be needed for maintaining services and communication."²²

As is evident from its very wording that this decision was vague and of a negative character. Normally, the term refugee is used for persons taking or seeking refuge in another country. Whether the members of the minority community who were encircled by hostile mobs in their own houses and streets were covered by that term was not clear. The most unfortunate aspect of this decision was that the Prime Minister of Pakistan asserted that the purpose of this decision was to evacuate those persons who wished to migrate and were afraid of remaining in their homes and this decision was to be applied only to the Muslims of the Jullundur Division. He said in a statement, "We had indeed hoped that the evacuation of Muslims from East Punjab would not extend to Ambala Division"²³ The Deputy Prime Minister of India was of the view that if the Hindus and Sikhs could not live in peace and honour in the Punjab and the Government of India have no means of ensuring this primary condition, it is better to allow migration, which is going on to find its natural termination by a complete exchange of population between the two Punjab.²⁴

How false and baseless rumours spread by the refugees wrought havoc can be estimated from the Shekhpura massacre of non-Muslims which has often been quoted as an example of the expulsion of the non-Muslim minorities from the West Punjab. The

21. Partition of Punjab

22. Concerning Evacuee Property Government of India Publication, p. 8.

23. Mr Liaqat Ali Khan's statement, C&M Gazette, October 10, 1947.

24. Hindustan Times, New Delhi, September 6, 1947.

Muslim refugees reached Sheikhpura on the 21st August ²⁵. Soon after the additional District Magistrate received a telegram that the Sikhs had attacked Joyoanwala Canal Colony and the Muslims living there. This telegram had been sent by the Subdivisional Officer, Canals. A curfew order was promulgated on the town from 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. during which the houses of the Hindus and the Sikhs were set on fire. On the following day, the Baluch Regiment of the Punjab Boundary Force fired indiscriminately on the Hindus and the Sikhs with the result that hundreds of men, women and children were massacred. It was subsequently found out that the story of the attack by the Sikhs was entirely baseless.²⁶

The District Liaison Officer Montgomery, wrote "on the auspicious day of Id-ul-Fittar on the 18th August at 3 P.M. a rumour was set afloat in the town that a batch of Sikhs had attacked Muslim women who had gone to celebrate Id-ul-fittar in the Partap Garden. The Muslim National Guard Volunteers ran to the spot with naked sword shouting provocative slogans and inciting the Muslim masses to rise and slaughter Sikhs. Whereover the trouble was started, he concludes, the attackers had always taken shelter behind the false plea that the Sikhs intended to attack and had taken the initiative. Shouts were raised to collect Muslims and to provoke them to attack the non-Muslims. As a result of these attacks, non-Muslims inhabiting the countryside were forced to migrate.²⁷ The D.L.O.,Gujrat wrote, "On the 11th August false and wild rumours were set afloat that the Sikhs were going to attack the Muslims, whereupon the Muslim Goondas (ruffians) took the law into their own hands and with the help of Muslim gangsters of the neighbouring village made concerted attack on peaceful and anxious non-Muslims citizens of Gujrat."²⁸

The minorities in the East and the West Punjab were faced with hostile mobs, communally infected military ²⁹ and police forces

25. C&M dated 3rd September, 1947.

26. C&M dated 27 August 1947. Soon after Pt Jawaharlal Nehru visited Sheikhpura and he held Sheikhpura administration responsible for this tragedy. The Governor of the West Punjab wrote to the Governor General of Pakistan "Pt Nehru by his hectoring manner did considerable damage to the morale of the district administration of Sheikhpura". Stern Reckoning,p.316.

27. L.A.R.,D.L.O.,Montgomery,File No. LIX/2.

28. *Ibid.*, D.L.O. Gujrat, File No. Lix/11.

29. Vide chapter VII, The Punjab Boundary Force in my book : Partition of Punjab.

and infuriated refugees who wanted the possession of their houses, lands and business undertakings. Loot, murder, arson and the abduction of women and children perpetrated at other places left them with no option but to migrate and leave the areas in which they and their ancestors lived for centuries.

On account of the communal riots spreading in a chain reaction, there were a large number of displaced non-Muslims and the Muslims to be evacuated on both the sides of the newly created border. To begin with, a hundred trucks were placed at the disposal of the Deputy High Commissioner of India in Lahore.³⁰ The East Punjab Government supplemented this arrangement with the appointment of a Liaison officer at Lahore, and a Transport Controller at Amritsar who was provided with one hundred trucks. The latter was to plan out convoys in consultation with the former. But soon it was found that this arrangement afforded no protection to the refugees, because there was no machinery to prevent attacks from hostile mobs on the convoys in the West Punjab. It was, therefore, decided to entrust this work of evacuation of refugees to the military. The East Punjab Area Headquarters at Lahore was converted into the Advance Military Evacuee Organization and a separate command, known as Military Evacuee Organization was established at Amritsar on 2nd September, 1947³¹. A similar organization was established by the Pakistan Government to evacuate Muslim refugee from the East Punjab.³²

It was decided on 7th September 1947 at the third meeting of the Emergency Committee of the representatives of India and Pakistan held in New Delhi that:

1. The situation in the Punjab has developed in such a way that mass movement of Muslims from East Punjab and non-Muslims from West Punjab has become inevitable.
2. The Government of India and Pakistan have, therefore, decided that the movement of these people from East to West Punjab and vice versa is to have first priority. They have agreed to co-operate with each other

30. C&M Gazette, dated 20th August, 1947.

31. According to the author of Economic consequences of Divided India (p.79) the Military Evacue Organisation was established in addition to Punjab Boundary Force which does not appear to be correct. The Punjab Boundary Force was abolished from 1st Sept. 1947 and the MEO started working on 4th Sep 47.

32. The author of Chronology of Pakistan states that the Pakistan Government established the Military Evacue Organization on 28th Aug 47.]

on this matter to the fullest extent and to take all steps to ensure that the movements in both directions are completed with greatest measure of security.

3. The Government of India and Pakistan are resolved to use all available resources to expedite and secure the safety of these movements and they armed themselves with most drastic powers to ensure that wrong doers are summarily dealt with in the severest manner.”³³

At a further conference, the representatives of India and Pakistan and those of the East and West Punjab Governments reiterated their policy and declared :

- a) The immediate task to which the Government must devote all their resources and energy is to give protection to all refugees and evacuees in both West and East Punjab and to set safety across the border all those who desire to cross over to either side.
- b) Both Governments have undertaken the responsibility for refugee camps for Muslims as well as non-Muslims.
- c) The evacuation from East and West Punjab will be organised by the military authorities of Pakistan and India, respectively, with proper escorts. Military Evacuees organisation (MEO) was established in both Punjab. Liaison officers will be appointed by both Governments in as many districts as possible to assist the refugees and maintain contacts with the civil and military authorities.³⁴

The Prime Minister of India at the 4th meeting of Emergency Committee on 8th Sept, 1947 made it clear that the “Primary allegiance of the head of MEO should be to the C-in-C of Indian army rather than to the Minister of Refugees”.³⁵

The Military Evacuee Organization was to perform the following duties :

1. To assist in the collection of non-Muslims from scattered villages to subsidiary bases.
2. To move under military protection refugees from the subsidiary bases to concentration camps.

33. Minutes of meeting of the meeting of Emergency Committee India and Pakistan, held at New Delhi on 7th Sept 1947. Brig Rajendra Singh, Military Evacuee Organisation, 1947-48, p. 11-12.

34. Brig Rajendra Singh, Military Evacuee Org. 1947-48, New Delhi, p.11-12.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

3. To guard non-Muslim camps against raids by Muslims.
4. To assist the civil authorities in providing means of substance in concentration camps.
5. To arrange transport for the move from concentration camps to refugees centres in India, and
6. To provide protection en route.³⁶

On the 2nd September, 1947, when the 1st of M.E.O.(I) HQ arrived in Amritsar only fifty to sixty dilapidated civilian lorries driven by civilian drivers were registered by the MEO (I) through the civil officers for the evacuation of the non-Muslim refugees. Obviously if the task had to be completed quickly it was necessary to acquire more transport. As military transport was not immediately forthcoming, MEO (I) got down to organise the civilian transport. Eventually, a fleet of approximately 200 civilian vehicles was organised into four civilian bus/general transport companies.³⁷

During the period between 2nd September and the 1st week of October work went on at high speed and succour was provided to millions, medical aid was rendered to the sick and the wounded and food was procured and distributed to starving men, women and children.

In the beginning of October more troops were placed at the direct disposal of MEO (I) by the Commander of 4th Infantry Division who had by then been redesignated as commander East Punjab Area.

During November, this work continued at great speed and by 8th December, the bulk of the non-Muslims had been evacuated from the West Punjab. And when this main task had been completed the thinning of the MEO (I) started from 2nd December onwards.

A nucleus MEO (I) organisation continued till 23rd August, 1948 and evacuated the numerous pockets and abducted girls and converted persons from Pakistan.³⁸

On account of unforeseen forced migration the members of the minority communities, there were left different categories of people to be evacuated. A large number of persons had been forcibly converted. Owing to the continuance of disturbed conditions and communal riots, a very large number of women and children had been abducted on both sides of the border. The refugees in the East Punjab and the West Punjab who had recently migrated wanted to recover their relations, movable properties, bank lockers etc. It was,

36. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

therefore, felt necessary that there must be some organisation which should be entrusted with such work. The East Punjab Government and the West Punjab Government, therefore, established Liaison Agencies for their respective provinces. Under a Chief Liaison Officer in each state, there were appointed District Liaison Officers and each District Liaison Officer was to work in a district placed under him. The East Punjab Liaison Agency had its headquarters at Lahore and it worked for more than a year.³⁹

The most urgent and immediate task before the East Punjab Liaison Agency was to evacuate the persons who had been forcibly converted in the West Punjab. "More than two lakhs of people had become converts in order to save their lives property and their young girls from abduction."⁴⁰ Accordingly to the District Liaison officer, Gujranwala, "the non-Muslims had embraced Islam as a matter of expediency in the hope that some day Hindu would come back to Pakistan and the old order would be re-established."⁴¹ In Multan "thousands of non-Muslims became converts to Islam in order to save their lives and the honour of their females. The assessed estimate of converts was 5000."⁴² In the District of Mianwali, about 5000 persons were forcibly converted. ⁴³ In Dara Ghazi Khan, "All the converts men had very sad tales to tell. Even men as old as forty had to undergo the pain of the conversion ceremony, resulting in profuse bleeding", due to circumcision." ⁴⁴

The governments of India and Pakistan in their meeting held on 6th December, 1947 took the following decisions regarding the recovery of abducted women and children:

1. Conversion of persons abducted after the 1st of March 1947 was not to be recognised and all such persons were to be restored to their respective Dominions even against the wishes of persons concerned.
2. The Primary responsibility for the recovery of abducted persons was to rest with the local police.
3. Social workers were to be associated with the scheme actively. The DLOs (District Liaison officers) were to supply information regarding abducted persons to be recovered.⁴⁵

39. East Punjab Liaison Agency was finally withdrawn on 30th Nov. 1948.

40. L.A.R. File No. LIX/2 Report of D.L.O. Montgomery, Document No. 228. *Infra*.

41. *Ibid.*, File No. LIX/3 Report of DLO Gujranwala Document No. 225. *Infra*.

42. *Ibid.*, File No. LIX/4 Report of DLO Multan, Document No. 229, *Infra*.

43. *Ibid.*, File No. LIX/8 Report of DLO Mianwali, Document No. 231. *Infra*.

44. *Ibid.*, File No. LIX/9 Report of DLO D.G. Khan, Document No. 224. *Infra*

45. PBR File. C.F. 119-ER-49. Document No. 197 *Infra*.

The decisions to alleviate the sufferings of women folk, who had suffered most during the partition of Punjab, were however, indifferently acted upon. A very large volume of the correspondence between the high officials of the East Punjab and the West Punjab indicated that the police officers in both the Punjab acted partially in favour of their own community while recovering the abducted women. The Deputy High Commissioner for Pakistan wrote to the Chief Secretary, East Punjab: "one has written to say that his daughter aged 13 years has been kept by one ... son of ... Jat of village Bhoma District, Amritsar. In reply to his request for the recovery of the girl he was informed by the India Military authorities (copy attached) that his daughter did not wish to leave her husband."⁴⁶ "The District Liaison officer, Campbellpur reported that the Deputy Commissioners of Campbellpur and Rawalpindi Districts were not handing over the recovered abducted women and the girls because they had been handed over to the Azad Kashmir Government."⁴⁷ In some cases, the police officers in various districts had openly declared that it was their duty to see that proper regard was paid to public opinion. When recovered, their statements recorded and the recovered women and girls were returned to their abductors by the district authorities⁴⁸ as it was said that they did not wish to leave their abductors.

The East Punjab Liaison Agency was closed on 30th November, 1948 along with the women Recovery Organisation which was associated with it. The work of the recovery of abducted women was brought under the Ministers of External Affairs in India and Pakistan. So far, there had been no special legislation for the recovery of abducted women, The Indian Government, however, established elaborate machinery for the recovery of the abducted persons. An ordinance called "Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Ordinance" was promulgated on January 31, 1949 and was subsequently replaced by the Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Act, 1949. One of the principal features of this Act was that it adopted a more comprehensive definition of the term 'abducted' than the one already provided in the Indian Penal Code. ⁴⁹ Another

46. PBR Letter No. DHC 115/47 dated 11.3.48 File No. CF 321-CR-48.

47. L.A.R.D.O.No. 8312/CLA dated 23.1.48. File No. LXVIII/3.

48. *Ibid.*

49. According to Clause No.2 of the Abducted Persons (Recovery & Restoration) Act, 1949, "abducted person" means a male child under the age of sixteen years or a female whatever age who is, or immediately before the 1st of day of March

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important aspect of this legislation was the provision for setting up of an Indo-Pakistan Tribunal to decide the disputed cases of the abducted women. Camps for the stay of the recovered persons were to be established. This Act applied only to the "affected areas" viz. U.P., East Punjab, Delhi, Patiala and East Punjab States Union and the United States of Rajasthan. A special provision was made to enable the recovery of the abducted women from the other states in India. The co-ordinating officers and staff were appointed to assist the police in the recovery of the abducted persons. Social workers were also associated with this work.⁵⁰ There was, however, no corresponding legislation regarding the abducted persons in Pakistan.

The abductors in Pakistan adopted several methods to evade the Indian recovery officers. Along with the abducted women they shifted from the West Punjab to those districts adjoining the Jammu and Kashmir territory, entry to which was banned to the Indian officials on account of hostilities in Kashmir.⁵¹

According to the provisions of the Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act, no option was to be given to any recovered person, he or she had to be sent to the other country. With the passage of time it was found that recovered persons were often loath to be sent across the border. The forcible restoration of much recovered persons resulted in great hardship to them as also to their children who were deprived of the affection and care at least of one parent. It was, therefore decided in the Indo-Pakistan conference held in November 1954 that suitable means should be devised with a view to ensuring that no abducted person was forced to go to the other country against her will. By this decision, special homes were instituted in both the countries where unwilling persons could be lodged and given full facilities to meet their relatives and to make their minds without fear or pressure. It was only after a sufficiently prolonged stay in such homes that the final wishes of the recovered persons were ascertained by the Indo-Pakistan Tribunal, in that case, if a recovered woman refused to go to the other country, she was not

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1947 was a missing and who on after that day and before 1ST January 1949 has become separated from his or her family and is found to be living with or under the control of any other individual or family and in the later case included a child born to any such female after the said date."

50. Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act No. LXV of 1949.

51. Pakistan da Safar (Chakkar Kaur Singh (Punjabi), edited by Kirpal Singh Khalsa Samachar Amritsar, 1959, p. 12.

forced to do so.⁵²

The Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act continued to be renewed every year upto 1957. By then, the abducted women began to show increasing reluctance to go to the other country against their wishes. Secondly, the most serious consideration which prevented the Government of India from renewing the Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Act of 1949, was the problem of the post-abduction children. During the period from January 1, 1954 to September 30, 1957, no fewer than 860 children were left behind by the Muslim women restored to Pakistan, whereas 410 children were taken by them. These children created problems for the state which had to care of them.⁵³

52. Recovery and Restoration of Abducted Persons in India, Government of India, Publication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 3.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

Chapter - 10

CONCLUSION

Lord Mountbatten who had been appointed as the last Viceroy to transfer power to Indian hands, arrived in New Delhi in the last week of March, 1947. Within four months he prepared as well implemented his Partition Plan which is known as Mountbatten Partition Plan. Had more time been devoted in the formulation of the plan and its implementation, there would have been less bloodshed and rioting. Lord Wavell's Plan which was to be implemented within eighteen months viz upto June 1948 was better suited to the Indian political conditions because Wavell was more conversant with Indian leaders as compared to Mountbatten. According to Penderal Moon, his Viceroyalty was significant as the major decisions regarding demitting power to Indian hands were taken before he left India. First, India should be made free within eighteen months upto June 1948 and second was 'Partition had become inescapable'. He wrote to Secretary of State for India that in the case of Pakistan Punjab and Bengal had to be partitioned.² Wavell's proposals were more realistic. In order to satisfy Indian National Congress who wanted immediate transfer of power, southern Hindu majority province were to be made independent within six months. Rest twelve months were to be devoted to the northern provinces where establishment of Pakistan was to create a number of problems. These problem were to be tackled one by one. Adequate attention would have been paid to the Sikh problem like Sikh Gurdwara in Pakistan, migration of Sikh population to East Punjab etc. etc.

In 1947 the Congress leaders fumbled in dealing with peoples agony in the Punjab. When the worst type of communal riots were raging everywhere in West Punjab Mahatama Gandhi visited Lahore on August 7, 1947 and said, "I am grieved to learn that people are running away from West Punjab and I am told Lahore is being vacated by non-Muslims. I must say that this is what it should not be"³ When forced exchange of population between East Punjab and the West

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1. Wavell, Viceroy's Journal edited Penderal Moon. London, 1973, p. Xi.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
 3. The Tribune, Lahore dated August 8, 1947.

Punjab was near completion after heavy loss of life (About half a million people were killed) Congress at the instance of Mahatama Gandhi passed resolution in November 1947."while it is impossible to undo all that has been done, every effort should be made to enable evacuees and refugees from either Dominion ultimately to return to their homes and to their original occupations under the conditions of safety and security".⁴

Pt. Nehru when approached by Lord Mountbatten with the demand "they (the Sikhs) have suggested that transfer of population should be seriously considered (Item 5, letter dated 4th July, 1947).⁵ Nehru wrote, back on 17th July, 1947 'The question of transfer of population does not rise immediately. If people concerned desire it, it must be seriously considered.'⁶ This reply was given at a time when the Sikhs and Hindus were fleeing from the West Punjab to East Punjab. That was the proper time when exchange of population should have been decided.

Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of Muslim League was in favour of exchange of population and had given statements to that effect.⁷ Perhaps Alan Campbell Johnson was right when he wrote "Economically such an exodus seemed to run counter to the interests of the two new governments."⁸ Economic interest could be left aside keeping in view the human suffering. There could be no excuse for such huge loss of human life and suffering and agony of such a large section of population.

The British government expected they had met the point of view of Muslim League for making provision of Pakistan the Muslim League should like wise satisfy the Sikhs who were affected by Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah's thinking was that the Sikhs should first recognise Pakistan then they could be considered for some concessions. The British government considered this as negative approach. When Lord Ismay asked Jinnah to issue statement that Pakistan was for Muslim as well for Sikhs, the latter refused. Francis; biographer of Lord Attlee, quoted Lord Attlee as saying that Mr. William was "not a man I ever thought high of. I have known him since 1927."⁹

4. Pyarelal, Mahatama Gandhi, Last Phase Vol. II, Ahmedabad, 1950, p.519.

5. Kirpal Singh, Partition of Punjab, Patiala, 1989, p. 204.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

7. Speeches and writings of Jinnah, Mohammad Ashraf Vol. II, Lahore see page 62, 475, 483.

8. Reflections on Transfer of Power, Asiatic Review, July 1952, p. 167.

9. A Prime Minister Remembers, Hienemann, Toronto, 1961, p. 211.

When I (the writer) discussed with Lord Attlee in 1964 the causes of bloodshed during the transfer of power, the latter remarked that the government at that time bogged down with Mr Jinnah who could not rise to the occasion.,¹⁰

The performance of Sikh leadership during the transfer of power cannot be termed as very commendable either. After the Simla conference 1945, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy demanded three names¹¹ from every political party out of which he was to select one for membership of his Executive Council. Master Tara Singh who had taken part in the deliberations of Simla Conference as representative of Shiromani Akali Dal went to Wavell gave his own name thrice instead of giving three different names.¹² Ignoring Baldev Singh who had already been working in the Unionist Punjab Government backed by Shiromani Akali Dal. Baldev Singh with the help of Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, Prime Ministers of Orissa and Bombay got himself nominated member of the Government and he was taken in the Interim Government ignoring the Shiromani Akali Dal. The latter did not protest. In the end of 1946, Master Tara Singh wrote very mild letter to Lord Wavell to which latter replied that 'Baldev Singh is acceptable to all Sikhs'.¹³ But Master Tara Singh ended his letter with the request that this type of mistake should not be done in future. This indicates that he did not understand that British were leaving and there might be no such occasion in the time to come.. The attitude of the other political parties for the formation of the Executive Council of the Viceroy which was popularly called Interim Government was different. The Congress Party and the Muslim League both adopted very assertive attitude. The Congress party objected to the inclusion of Abdul Rab Nishtar as Member of the Interim Government from the North Western Frontier Province on the plea that he had been defeated by the pro-Congress party of Red Shirts. Mr. Jinnah, the President of Muslim League insisted that if Abdal Rab Nishtar was not taken in the government, the entire team of the Muslim League would quit the Executive Council. Similarly, When Mr. Jinnah objected to the inclusion of Jagjiwan Ram as member of the Executive Council, Congress Party asserted that they would boycott the government if the name of Jagjiwan Ram was dropped. In the same way several objections were

10. See my Interview in the Appendix

11. V.P. Menon, Transfer of Power, 213.

12. Dr Gopal Singh, History of Sikh People, New Delhi, 1973, p. 692. for details see Chapter Simla Conference and Nomination of Baldev Singh.

13. T.O.I. Vol. VIII, Document 530, p. 838-39.

raised by both Congress and Muslim League. All were resisted by the opposite party.¹⁴ The Viceroy had to agree to the list submitted by the parties. In 1964 I enquired from Major Short who was considered an expert on Sikh affairs why the Shiromani Akali Dal did not assert their right to nominate the member of their choice for the Interim Government. His reply was that the Sikh leadership believed that the British Government would do its best to safeguard the Sikh rights. That was wrong. It was not advisable to depend on the British at that critical time when they had decided to leave.

Baldev Singh did not consult Shiromani Akali on following vital issues relating to the Sikhs:

1. Before supporting the 3rd June Plan, popularly known as Mountbatten Partition Plan, he did not consult Shiromani Akali Dal. Giani Kartar Singh who was President of Shiromani Akali Dal in 1947 complained about it to Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab during his interview with him.¹⁵
2. When Baldev Singh was called to London on December 6, 1946 alongwith Pt. Nehru he did not consult Shiromani Akali Dal. Nor he discussed any proposal for safeguarding the interests of the Sikhs which could be presented there. Of course Pt. Nehru and Baldev Singh opposed the compulsory grouping of provinces in the Cabinet Mission Plan in the London Conference on 6th December.
3. Major Short told me that Baldev Singh was invited by some members of the British Parliament to stay in England to deliberate on the demands of the Sikhs. But he did not stay because Pt. Nehru persuaded him to accompany him to India where the Constituent Assembly was to be inaugurated on December 1946. On the other hand, Muslim League President Mr. Jinnah and its Secretary stayed there after 6th December 9, 1946 and organised a big dinner where all members of the British Parliament were invited and Mr. Jinnah made speech and pleaded for Pakistan. Lord Attlee had, however, advised his Cabinet colleagues not to attend this dinner party.¹⁶ No such effort was made by the Sikhs to safeguard their interests or interest of Gurdwaras to be left in Pakistan or case of Sikh mass migration in case of Pakistan etc.etc.

14. Public Record Office, London,.

15. Kirpal Singh, Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, p. 165 (Item No. 5).

16. Public Record Office, London,(PRO)

Sir Stafford Cripps proposed to Baldev Singh that the Sikhs should jointly present the Sikh case alongwith the Sikh States in order to strengthen their demand, for Sikhs State. This intelligent suggestion should have been debated in the Sikh circles. Instead of giving full thought to this suggestion Baldev Singh replied that Sikh State would be too small for them. They want to expand in the whole of India.¹⁷

The 3rd June Plan (1947) was the result of settlement between Congress and Muslim League. The Sikhs had their demand and they had been recognised as the third important community of India by the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 wherein it had been stated ‘...it is sufficient to recognise only three main communities in India in general. Muslims and the Sikhs and the General Community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs.’¹⁸ The 3rd June Plan conceded Pakistan which had created difficulties for the Sikhs. The Shiromani Akali Dal, the most influential political organisation of the Sikhs was opposed to the creation of Pakistan. It was of the view that if Pakistan was to be created the Sikh state should also be established. Master Tara Singh, the veteran Akali leader in his memorandum to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had clearly stated.” If Hindus want Hindu Raj and Muslims advocate Muslim Raj, no alternative is left to us except to make the Sikh Raj as our goal. We want Sikh Raj for we cannot exist without it in view the present attitude of Hindus and Muslims. This Sikh Raj must comprise atleast those portions of land which are histotically, culturally, religiously, economically and traditionally connected with us ... But if it is finally agreed between Hindus and Muslims that they must separate and the country be divided into Pakistan and Hidustan there is no way left to us except to immediately demand a home land for the Sikhs.”¹⁹

According to the 3rd June Plan Pakistan was being conceded on the principle of ‘contiguous majority areas’ and the Sikhs were no where in majority in any district of British Punjab, where their population had been concentrated. In order to secure majority of Sikh population the Shiromani Akali Dal had been demanding not only partition of Punjab separating of Muslims majority areas of the west

17. Gopal Singh, History of Sikh People. New Delhi 1979, page 696

18. Statement of Cabinet Mission and Viceroy dated 16th May, 1946. Indian constitutional Documents and Munshi Papers, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan. Bombay 1967, p. 28.

19. Sapru Papers No. S.280, Volume 25, National Library, Calcutta.

Punjab from the east Punjab but also exchange of population as is clear from Shiromani Akali Dal's resolution passed on 16th April, 1947. Shiromani Akali Dal demands that before transfer of power to the Indian hands in June 1948 the Punjab should be divided into two provinces. The Shiromani Akali Dal further demands that facilities be provided for exchange of population and property and that special arrangements be made for protection of honour, integrity and sanctity of historically religious places."²⁰

In order to meet the Sikh point of view some Britishers in India were exercising their mind. One such British officer was Sir Edward Penderal Moon, ICS (died in 1987). He had served the Indian Government from 1929 to 1944 and for sometime he was the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. Later on he was appointed Secretary Development Board 1946-47. During 1947 he was working as Revenue and Public works Minister in Bahawalpur State now in Pakistan. Later on he wrote a book 'Divide and Quit' and was co-editor of Transfer of Power series published by Her Majesty's Government in England. He made two proposals to improve the position of the Sikhs after the 3rd June Plan. First was the formation of Sikh dominated East Punjab and the second was Joining of East Punjab with Pakistan.

While addressing Lord Ismay, Moon put forth a proposal that a Sikh dominated area might be formed in East Punjab wherein the Sikh population from the West Punjab might be migrated. He stated: 'It will considerably facilities matters if it was be so arranged that the new Eastern Punjab has the strongest Sikh complexion and does not, therefore, include Gurgaon, Hissar, Rohtak and Karnal. The Sikhs have already put this demand to Congress who hesitate to accept it. I would suggest that this Sikh demand should be encouraged and conceded. You can doubtless be of assistance in this regard.'²¹

How practical was this suggestion of Sir Penderal can be judged from the fact that ultimately there was exchange of Muslim and non-Muslim population between the East and West Punjab making East Punjab predominantly Sikh area (especially after separating the Hindi speaking areas from East Punjab viz formation of Haryana as a separate state in 1966.)

20. Dy No. 1497 OG Dated 23.4.1947 File No. 120 India office Library, London.

21. Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, Ed. N. Mansingh and P Moon. British Government, London, 1982, p. 692 (Document No. 371) Sir penderal Moon died in England in 1987.

This proposal however was considered at the highest level and was discussed with Pt.Nehru and Mr.Jinnah by Lord Mountbatten. Lord Ismay subsequently wrote to Moon on 31 July, 1947 : "The idea of eliminating Hindi speaking parts of eastern Punjab and thus dividing the poor Punjab into three bits instead of two was put to His Excellency, but both the leaders agreed that it was not possible for H E himself to meet their claim now. They seemed fairly content with his promise to write and draw the attention of leaders to their request and H E has done this."²²

Lord Ismay ended his letter by appreciating Moon's proposal. He argued things had gone too far making any changes in the 3rd June Plan. He replied, "From the point of view of avoiding a row in the central Punjab, I expect that you are right about the best course to adopt. But things have gone much too far for HMG to be able to take a hand and if provincial boundaries are again to be redrawn it would have to be done by the successor authorities."²³

Sir Penderal was not content with the formation of Sikh dominated East Punjab. That was perhaps the step in the right direction. But he went a step further and suggested 'The step would be to indicate that it is optional for this Sikh Eastern Punjab to join either Hindustan or Pakistan and there is no presumption that it must join one rather than the other. The Sikhs will probably make this clear themselves, but if they ask for some pronouncement to this effect from HMG it will probably be advisable to accede to their request."²⁴

Sir Penderal Moon advocated Sikh Muslim accord as a solution of the Sikh problem. He wrote to Lord Ismay, the Chief of Lord Mountbatten staff, "without Sikh Muslim Pact there will be a chaos in the northern India."²⁵ Viceroy's reply was that Sikhs could improve their position through negotiations.²⁶

The Viceroy invited for dinner Maharaja of Patiala and Mr. Jinnah, President of Muslim League who subsequently became Governor General of Pakistan for dinner. Mr Jinnah was accompanied by Liaquat Ali Khan and Begum Liaquat Ali Khan. Late Maharaja Yadvinder Singh of Patiala writes about his meeting with Jinnah "The talk started and offers were made by Mr. Jinnah for practically

22. Transfer of Power Vol: XI (Document No. 474) Page 846.

23. *Ibid.*,

24. Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, p. 692. Doc.No.371.

25. Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, Doc. No. 371.

26. Alan Campbell Johnson, Mission with Lord Mountbatten, p.85.

everything under the sun if I would agree to his plan. There were two aspects- one was based on the idea of Rajasthan and other for separate Sikh State - Punjab minus one or two districts in the south. I had prolonged talks with Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and others Sikh leaders and all the negotiations on behalf of the Sikhs were within my knowledge. I was to be Head of new Sikh state, the same as in Patiala. The Sikhs would have their own army and so on. I told Mr. Jinnah that I could not accept either of his two proposals."²⁷

It is significant to note why Maharaja Yadvinder Singh of Patiala refused the offer of Sikh State. He himself writes, "All these things sounded most attractive but I could not accept them being practical, and neither could I in the world that I was in, change my convictions."²⁸

What are those convictions which prevented Sikhs to join Pakistan. For this purpose we have to understand the Sikh psyche. In all gurdwaras they repeat the litanical prayer viz: "Hail all those martyrs who suffered for the sake of religion. Hail those who were cut to pieces, boiled alive in cauldrons and were tortured to death by removing their skins from their bodies". This refers to the Muslims rule of 18th century and it could not foster happy memories among the Sikhs about the Muslim rule. Ever since the introduction of provincial autonomy in Punjab, Sikhs have been complaining against the Muslim domination. This led to anti-Muslim bias especially against the Muslims domination. To crown all, in the communal riots of March 1947 a large number²⁹ of Sikhs had been killed by the Muslim fanatics in the district of Rawalpindi. This made the Sikhs bitter against the Muslims. No Muslim leader expressed regret over these merciless killings. This had made compromise with Muslims almost impossible in that tense atmosphere.

During the talks with the Muslims League leaders on another occasion, the Sikhs leaders insisted on some constitutional rights which Mr. Jinnah would not concede. Master Tara Singh and other Akali leaders insisted that the proposed Sikh State in Pakistan should have the right to opt out of Pakistan after some years. Mr. Jinnah did not agree to this. Subsequently talks broke down.³⁰ It has been rightly

27. "I Remember Mr Jinnah's offer of Sikh State." Maharaja Yadvinder Singh of Patiala, The Tribune, July 19, 1959.

28. I remember Mr. Jinnah's offer of Sikh State, Sunday Tribune, Ambala, July 19, 1959

29. Home Secretary Punjab Govt. Communication No. 9418 dated July 25, 1947 - Partition of Proceedings, Vol. VI, p. 288.

30. Writer's Personal Discussion with Master Tara Singh

said that the attitude of Mr. Jinnah was like salesman who wanted to sell a horse without convincing the customer of its good quality and always asserted that horse was a good one.³¹

At times, the Sikh leadership has been demanding that Punjab was taken as trust according to the Treaty of December 16, 1846. Since the British were leaving, they should hand it over to the Sikhs. This was not possible as there had been sea change after a hundred years. The society in Punjab with its political set up has tremendously changed. Democratic institutions like Punjab Legislature Assembly etc. had been introduced. Adult franchise had been granted to the Sikhs in the Gurdwara Act 1925. It was not possible to turn the clock back to the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh or Maharaja Dalip Singh.

Moreover, Lord Attlee had made it clear that England was a democratic country and power had to be transferred to Indian hands in a democratic way viz to the people of India. Unfortunately; Sikhs were not in majority in any of districts of British Punjab.

No doubt the Sikhs have been rulers of land before the British annexed Punjab. They had tremendous military importance as a very large number of Sikhs constituted significant element in the Indian army. They were biggest land owners in the Central Punjab. All these factors did not count. Secretary of State clearly in his communication to Viceroy dated 9th May, 1947 stated "on the other hand they are community numbering only some 6 million out of nearly 400 million and in the Punjab itself they number only 4 millions among 28 millions. On any democratic basis, therefore, they must definitely be regarded as a minority (and not even as a 'major minority,'). Owing to the fact that in no single district of the Punjab do they constitute a majority of population. It is out of question to meet their claim by setting up a separate Sikh state."³²

There could be autonomous Sikh state within India provided Pakistan would have been conceded on the condition that Pakistan would have to exchange Sikh population of West Punjab with that of Muslim population of East Punjab. Only the British could do that. But they were busy to leave India as early as possible. If however Lord Wavell had been allowed to continue and power would have been transferred by June 1948, instead of August 15, 1947, there were chances of Sikh problem having been adequately attended to But it would ever remain a big "if" history.

31. Kirpal Singh, *Partition of Punjab*, Patiala, 1972, p. 32.

32. *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Kirpal Singh, p.78.

APPENDIX-I

SIR CYRIL RADCLIFFE'S AWARD To His Excellency the Governor - General

1. I have the honour to present the decision and award of the Punjab Boundary Commission which, by virtue of section 4 of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 is represented by my decision as Chairman of that Commission.

2. The Punjab Boundary Commission was constituted by the announcement of the Governor-General, dated the 30th of June 1947. Reference No. D50/7/47R. The members of the Commission thereby appointed were-

Mr. Justice Din Mohammad,
Mr. Justice Muhammad Munir,
Mr. Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan, and
Mr. Justice Teja Singh.

I was subsequently appointed Chairman of this commission.

3. The terms of reference of the Commission, as set out in the announcement were as follows:-

“ The Boundary Commission is instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so, it will also take into account other factors.”

We were desired to arrive at a decision as soon as possible before the 15th of August.

4. After preliminary meetings, the Commission invited the submission of memoranda and representations by interested parties. Numerous memoranda and representations were received.

5. The public sittings of the Commission took Place at Lahore, and extended from Monday the 21st of July 1947. to Thursday the 31st of July 1947, inclusive, with the exception of Sunday, the 27th of July. The main arguments were conducted by counsel on behalf of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League; and the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly ; but a number of other interested parties appeared and argued before the Commission. In

view of the fact that I was acting also as Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission, whose proceedings were taking place simultaneously with the proceedings of the Punjab Boundary Commission, I did not attend the public sittings in person, but made arrangements to study daily the record of the proceedings and of all material submitted for our consideration.

6. After the close of the public sittings, the Commission adjourned to Simla where I joined by colleagues, and we entered upon discussion in the hope of being able to present an agreed decision as to the demarcation of the boundaries. I am greatly indebted to my colleagues for indispensable assistances in the clarification of the issues and the marshalling of the arguments for different views, but it became evident in the course of our discussions that the divergence of opinion between my colleagues was so wide that an agreed solution of the boundary problem was not to be obtained. I do not intend to convey by this that there were not large areas of the Punjab on the West and on the East respectively which provoked no controversy as to which State they should be assigned to; but when it came to the extensive but disputed areas in which the boundary must be drawn, differences of opinion as to the significance of the term "other factors", which we were directed by our terms of reference to take into account, and as to the weight and value to be attached to those factors, made it impossible to arrive at any agreed line. In these circumstances my colleagues, at the close of our discussions, assented to the conclusion that I must proceed to give my own decision.

7. This I now proceed to do. The demarcation of the boundary line is described in detail in the schedule which forms Annexure A to this award, and in the map attached there to, Annexure B. The map is annexed for purposes of illustration, and if there should be any divergence between the boundary as described Annexure A and as delineated on the map in Annexure B, the description Annexure A is to prevail.

8. Certain representations were addressed to the Commission on behalf of the States of Bikaner and Bahawalpur both of which States interested in canals whose headworks were situated in the Punjab Province. I have taken the view that an interest of this sort cannot weigh directly in the question before us as to the division of the Punjab between the Indian Union and Pakistan since the territorial division of the province does not affect rights of private property, and I think that I am entitled to assume with confidence that any

agreements that either of these states has made with the Provincial Government as to the sharing of water from these canals or otherwise will be respected by whatever Government hereafter assumes jurisdiction over the headworks concerned. I wish also to make it plain that no decision that is made by this Commission is intended to affect whatever territorial claim the State of Bahawalpur may have in respect of a number of villages lying between Sulemanke Weir and Gurka Ferry.

9. The task of delimiting a boundary in the Punjab is difficult one. The claims of the respective parties ranged over a wide field of territory, but in my judgment the truly debatable ground in the end proved to lie in and around the area between the Beas and Sutlej rivers on the one hand and the river Ravi on the other. The fixing of a boundary in this area was further complicated by the existence of canal systems, so vital to the life of the Punjab but developed only under the conception of a single administration, and of systems of road and rail communication, which have been planned in the same way. There was also the stubborn geographical fact of the respective situations of Lahore and Amritsar, and the claims to each or both of these cities which each side vigorously maintained. After weighing to the best of my ability such other factors as appeared to me relevant as affecting the fundamental basis of contiguous majority areas, I have come to the decision set out in the Schedule which thus becomes the award of the Commission. I am conscious that there are legitimate criticism to be made of it; as there are, I think, or any other line that might be chosen.

10. I have hesitated long over those not inconsiderable areas East of the Sutlej river and in the angle of the Beas and the Sutlej Rivers in which Muslim majorities are found. But on the whole I have come to the conclusion that it would be in the true interests of neither State to extend the West Punjab to a strip on the far side of the Sutlej and that there are factors such as the disruption of railway communications and water systems that ought in this instance to displace the primary claims of contiguous majorities. But I must call attention to the fact that the Depalpur Canal; which serves areas in the West Punjab, takes off from the Ferozepore headworks and I find it difficult to envisage a satisfactory demarcation of boundary at this point that is not accompanied by some arrangement for joint control of the intake of the different canals dependent on these headworks.

11. I have not found it possible to preserve undivided the irrigation

system of the Upper Bari Doab Canal, which extends from Madhopur in the Pathankot Tehsil to the Western border of the district of Lahore, although I have made small adjustments of the Lahore - Amritsar district boundary to mitigate some of the consequence of this severance; nor can I see any means of preserving under one territorial jurisdiction the Mandi Hydro- electric Scheme which supplies power in the districts of Kangra, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Lahore, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Sheikhupura and Lyallpur. I think it only right to express the hope that, where the drawing of a boundary line cannot avoid disrupting such unitary services as canal irrigation, railways, and electric power transmission, a solution may be found by agreement between the two States for some joint control of what has hitherto been a valuable common service.

12. I am conscious too that the award cannot go far towards satisfying sentiments and aspirations deeply held on either side but directly in conflict as to their bearing on the placing of the boundary. If means to be found to gratify to the full these sentiments and aspirations, I think that they must be found in political arrangements with which I am not concerned, and not in the decision of a boundary line drawn under the terms or reference of this Commission.

New Delhi,
The 12th August, 1947.

CYRIL RADCLIFFE

The Schedule.
Annexure A.

1. The boundary between the East and West Punjab shall commence on the north at the point where the West branch of the Ujh river enters the Punjab Provinces from the State of Kashmir. The Boundary shall follow the line of that river down the Western boundary of the Pathankot Tehsil to the point where the Pathankot, Shakargarh and Gurdaspur tehsils meet. The tehsil boundary and not the actual course of the Ujh river shall constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

2. From the point of meeting of the three tehsils above mentioned, the boundary (line) between the East and West Punjab shall follow the line of the Ujh river to its junction with the river Ravi and thereafter the line of the river Ravi along the boundary between the tehsils of Gurdaspur and Shakargarh, the boundary between the tehsils of Batala

and Narowal, the boundary between the tehsils of Ajnala and Narowal, and the boundary between the tehsils of Ajnala and Shadara, to the point on the river Ravi where the district of Amritsar is divided from the district of Lahore. The tehsil boundaries referred to, and actual course of the river Ujh or the river Ravi, shall constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

3. From the point on the river Ravi where the district is divided from the district of Lahore, the boundary between the East and West Punjab shall turn southwards following the boundary between the tehsils of Ajnala and Lahore and then the tehsils of Tarn Taran and Lahore, to the point where the tehsils of Kasur, Lahore and Tarn Taran meet. The line will then turn south-westward along the boundary between the tehsils of Lahore and Kasur to the point where that boundary meets the north-east corner of village Theh Jharolian. It will then run along the eastern boundary of that village to its junction with village Chathianwala, turn along the northern boundary of village, and then run down its eastern boundary to its junction with village Waigal. It will then run along the eastern boundary of village Waigal to its junction with village Kalia, and then along the southern boundary of village Waigal to its junction with village Panjuwan. The line will then run down the eastern boundary of village Panjuwan to its junction within village Gaddoke. The line will then run down the eastern border of village Gaddoke to its junction with village Nurwala. It will then turn along the southern boundary of village Gaddoke to its junction with village Katluni Kalan. The line will then run down the eastern boundary of village Katluni Kalan to its junction with village Kals and Mastgarh. It will then run along the southern boundary of village Katluni Kalan to the north-west corner of village Kals. It will then run along the Western boundary of village Kals to its junction with village Khem Karan. The line will then run along the Western and the southern boundaries of village Khem Karan to its junction with village Maewala. It will then run down the western and southern boundaries of village Maewala, proceeding eastward along the boundaries between village Mahaidepur on the north and village Sheikhpura Kuhna, Kamalpuran, Fatehwala and Mahewala. The line will then turn northward along the western boundary of village Sahjra to its junction with villages Mahidepur and Machhike. It will then turn north-eastward along the boundaries between village Machhikeo and Sahjra and then proceed along the boundary between villages Rattoke and Sahjra to the junction between villages Rattoke, Sahjra and Mabbuke. The line will then run

north-east between the villages Rattoke and Mabbuke to the junction of villages Rattoke, Mabbuke and Gajjal. From that point the line will along the boundary between villages Mabbuke and Gajjal, and then turn south along the eastern boundary of village Mabbuke to its junction with village Nagar Aimanpur. It will then turn along the north-eastern boundary of village Nagar Aimanpur, and run along its eastern boundary to its junction with village Masteke. From there it will run along the eastern boundary of village Masteke to where it meets the boundary between the tehsils of Kasur and Ferozepore.

For the purpose of identifying the villages referred to in this paragraph, I attach a map authorised by the then Settlement Officer, Lahore District, which was supplied to the Commission by the Provincial Government.

4. The line will then run in a south-westerly direction down the Sutlej River on the boundary between the districts of Lahore and Ferozepore to the point where the districts of Ferozepore, Lahore and Montgomery meet. It continues along the boundary between the districts of Ferozepore and Montgomery to the point where this boundary meets the border of Bahawalpur State. The district boundaries, and not the actual course of the Sutlej River, shall in each case constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

5. It is my intention that this boundary line should ensure that the canal headworks at Sulemanke will fall within the territorial jurisdiction of the West Punjab. If the existing delimitation of the boundaries of Montgomery District does not ensure this, I award to the West Punjab so much of the territory concerned as covers the headworks and the boundary shall be adjusted accordingly.

6. So much of the Punjab as lies to the west of the line demarcated in the preceding paragraphs shall be the territory of the West Punjab. So much of the territory of the Punjab Province as lies to the east of that line shall be the territory of the East Punjab.

K.V.K. SUNDARAM,
Officer on Special Duty

APPENDIX-II

STATEMENT OF MAJOR J.M. SHORT

In reply to my following queries, J. M. Short gave this statement:

1. How would you account for the bloodshed which followed the transfer of power in 1947.
2. What is your opinion about the 3rd June Plan especially with regard to the Sikhs?
3. When did you arrive in India and what steps were proposed by you to avert the coming crisis?

You ask me to account for the bloodshed in India soon after we handed it over in 1947. It was, I think, inevitable

You next ask where I was when the plan of June 3rd, 1947 was concocted. I was in England.

You ask if I found the Sikhs liked that plan and if not. What did I do about it. My impressions on getting to Delhi on the 22nd July, 1947, were these : The Sikhs did not like the plan ; they had only agreed to it to meet us more than half-way and to make it easier for us to go out of our way to meet their wish for some sort of Sikhistan I reported accordingly to our authority in Delhi. They felt as I did, too, that they could not now alter course; but in so far as they could trim a trifle to meet the Sikhs, they would. And so it was left.

J. M. SHORT

S.H.R. 3755

Khalsa College, Amritsar.

APPENDIX-III

THE SIKH CASE FOR NANKANA SAHIB TRACT

The Proposition

This small brochure is about a large non-Muslim majority tract west of the Ravi. This tract stretches itself out over an area of about, 2,800 sq.miles, an area which is larger than many districts of the Punjab and is greater than the total area of the Punjab districts of Jullundur and Ludhiana put together. It takes in the contiguous parts of Sheikhupra; Lyallpur and Gujranwala Districts and is contiguous to the Lahore District where the most important community, according to Mr. (now Sir) G.E.B. Abell, Settlement Officer, is that of "the Jat Sikh". In the proposed demarcation of boundaries between Pakistan and Indian this tract wishes to remain with India.

The Nature of this tract

This tract comprises 28 *Zails* of the Lyallpur district, 19 *Zails* and Nankana Sahib Estate of the Sheikhupra district and three *Zails* of the Gujranwala district. All these *Zails* are contiguous to one another. It has a total population of 9,98,545 of which 5,78,176 are non-Muslims and 4,20,369 Muslims. The number of Sikhs alone is 3,45,496. Of the total acreage of 13,73,215 the non-Muslims own 10,21,178 as against 3,52,037 owned by the Muslims. The total land revenue paid by this tract is 59,11,769 of which 41,88,414 is paid by non-Muslims as against 17,23,043 paid by Muslims, the percentage of population acreage land revenue is as under :

	Non-Muslims	Muslims
Population	58 per cent	42 per cent
Acreage	76	24
Land Revenue	71	<u>29</u>
		<u>293</u>

This large non-Muslim share in the land revenue might lead one to think that the non-Muslims own large estates here. Actually it is a land of small holdings. The owner tiller is an outstanding feature of this tract. In the canal colonies all the land available for distribution was cut up into bits of about 28 acres called squares. The colonist

were given one square each which they were to cultivate with their own hands. A few larger holdings were given to educated and rich people for doing the pioneering work in agriculture. With the increase of population these one square holdings have become further subdivided amongst the sons and grandsons of the colonists. In the non-Colony area of this tract as in other non-colony districts holdings are even smaller. This whole tract is thus a land of peasant proprietors who have small holdings which can be intensively cultivated by one pair of bullocks. Sir Malcolm Darling in his book *Punjab Peasant in Debt and Prosperity* (p.122) observes. "The peasant proprietor is the backbone of the colonies as he is of the Punjab. In the Lyallpur colony he holds 80 per cent of the land and in Shahpur nearly as much."

This large and preponderantly non-Muslim tract adjoins the Lahore District near Balloke Head on the river Ravi. There is however a seven mile patch with Muslim majority in between the Lahore district and this tract. This Muslim patch is sandwiched between two homogeneous non-Muslim tracts. For such cases there is well established rule for demarcating boundaries which says that the interests of a small group desiring self determination cannot be allowed to prevail the important and economic needs of a large neighbouring group especially when the linguistic cultural; historical and traditional affinities also lead to the same conclusion.

Other considerations.

In view of the above rule for demarcating boundaries, the seven mile Muslim majority patch cannot be a bar to this large tract joining India in the exercise of its right of self-determination. It is entitled to do on the recognised principle of contiguous majority. But there are certain other important considerations also which make it imperative that its choice should not be interfered with. These considerations have reference to certain special features of this tract which set it off as a non-Muslim tract. These will be considered one by one in the following pages.

1. Nankana Sahib

Nankana Sahib is the birth place of Guru Nanak; the founder of the Sikh religion. It was here that the faith sprang and spread on all sides. This place was also the scene of various activities of the Guru till he left it for reform journeys in other parts of the continent. This place is thus the holiest of the holy and comparable in sanctity only to the Mecca of the Muslims in the Arab Peninsula. There are six historical Gurudwaras here associated with various incidents in the life of the

Guru. A huge fair is held here annually in November to celebrate the birth anniversary of the Guru. Thousands of Sikh pilgrims from all over the country visit the place on that occasion. A number of special trains are run to cope with the enormous traffic. Attached to the Gurdwara is a flourishing Estate of 17,000 acres granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh king of the Punjab. Leaving this place in Pakistan would be like insulating the heart against the body.

Addressing the House of Commons on 14th July Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Under Secretary of State for India, said: "The function of the Commission was to demarcate boundaries between the two parts on the basis of the ascertained contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. The Commission would also take account of other factors.

"That surely must mean that the primary basis was to be whether the majority was Muslim or non-Muslim. But in certain cases there might be special factors which would justify departure from this principle.

"These special factors were being allowed to take account of the circumstances of the Sikh community in the Punjab so that the location of their religious shrines could be taken into account."

2. Other Historical Gurdwaras

Other historical Gurdwara in this tract as given in schedule 1 of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act are:-

1. Sacha Sauda, 2. Chitti Jatri, 3. Haft Maddar

Sacha Sauda commemorates an important incident in the life of Guru Nanak. A big fair is held on the birth anniversary of the Guru. The Gurdwara, owns hundred acres of land. It is situated in the centre of the large homogeneous Sikh community of the Virk Jats about which something will be said later on.

3. The Colonist

A majority of the non-Muslims in this tract are colonist who at the end of the last century came from the central and eastern Punjab and contributed in a great measure to the development of these colonies. The Sikh peasant proprietor in the heart of the colony hails chiefly from Amritsar, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, Ambala and Ferozepur districts. The following observation in regard to these colonists by Sir Malcolm Darling in his book *Punjab Peasant in Debt and Prosperity* (pp. 122-123) are noteworthy.

"A colony could hardly have had better material for Ludhiana, Jullunder and Amritsar represent the flower of Indian Agriculture. They are the home of the Jat Sikh who has been described as 'the

most desirable of colonist,' It would be difficult to say which of the three has produced the best types for industry and thrift the Ludhiana Sikh is hard to beat and the Sikh from Amritsar, though he may be spendthrift and violent at times, is unsurpassed as a cultivator. Grit, skill in farming and a fine physique are characteristics common to all and in his new environment the Jat Sikh has reached a point of development probably beyond anything else of the kind in India. In less than a generation he has made the wilderness blossom like the rose. It is as if the energy of the virgin soil of the Bar had passed into his veins and made him almost a part of the forces of nature which he has conquered."

Although these people devoted themselves whole heartedly to the exacting task of colonizing these districts they did not altogether cut themselves away from their original homes. They named their new villages after home villages in the Eastern Punjab which they had left behind. In the interests of efficient cultivation, families were divided up, some members living in the colony area and others in their original homes. The Gazetteer of the Chenab Colony Vol. XXXI (1904) records, "The bachelors always return to the home district for a bride when required doubtless because they know so little of their neighbours in the colonies. "Thus the fabric of social life in the colonies remained closely interwoven with life in home districts in the Central and Eastern Punjab. With the partition of the Punjab in case the colony areas are not included in the Eastern Punjab great complications including that of nationality in the same family are bound to arise. Two sons of the same father may come to belong to two different nationalities. This aspect of the question does not effect the Hindus or Muslims to any appreciable extent, as there are no colonists in the Eastern Punjab from the Western Zone. The colonists in the Lyallpur and Montgomery districts are mainly Sikhs Jats of the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions and Amritsar district of the Lahore of the Lahore Division.

Sir Malcolm Darling at page 143 of the *Punjab Peasant* writes: "Lyallpur is the daughter of the Central Punjab as Shahpur is of the North and the West and its influence is felt accordingly. From Amritsar alone, over 1,00,000 have migrated to the Bar."

Linguistically also the colonies are one with the Eastern Punjab, because both have a common language - Punjabi. The language of the Western Punjab is Lehnda which is different from Punjabi. Sir George Greirson in his book *The Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. IX observes at P.610, "Commence at the Northern end of the Pabbi Range in the Gujrat district to the Gujranwala town of Ramnagar on the

Chenab. Then draw a line nearly due south to the southern corner of Gujranwala, where it meets the northern corner of the district of Montgomery. Then continue the line to the southern corner of Montgomery on the Sutlej- Follow the Sutlej for a few miles and cross the northern corner of the State of Bahawalpur. Every thing to the east of this line I call Punjabi and everything to the west of this line I call Lehnda.”

4. Non-Muslim Share in Urban Development

Whereas the Sikhs played a major part in the development of the rural area of this colony, the urban area was built up mainly by the enterprise of the non-Muslims chiefly Hindus. It would be correct to say that almost the entire trade, Commerce and industry of the Lyallpur District are run by non-Muslims. This is shown by figures in regard to the payment of the Urban Immovable Property Tax; The Sales Tax and Income Tax. In the year 1945-46 the non-Muslims paid Urban Immovable Property Tax in the amount of Rs. 1,40,300 whereas the Muslims paid Rs. 22,900. The amount of Sales Tax paid by the non-Muslim was Rs 3,08,000 as compared with Rs. 17,000 paid by the Muslims. The Income Tax paid by the non-Muslims amounted to Rs. 89,50,000 compared to Rs. 5,00,000 paid by the Muslims. Of the total number of 72 registered factories in the district 75 factories were run by non-Muslims and only 15 were run by Muslims.

In the Sheikhpura district the Sales Tax paid by non-Muslims amount to Rs. 1,15,168 as compared with Rs. 7,465 paid by Muslims and the Income Tax paid by the non-Muslims amount to Rs. 4,41,382 as compared with 33,922 paid by the Muslims. In the whole tract the non-Muslims run two Degree Colleges, 14 High Schools for boys and 8 middle Schools for girls as against two High Schools run by the Muslims.

5. The Virks

Apart from the Sikh colonists there is a big original Sikh tribe of the Virks in Sheikhpura and Gujranwala Districts who have been living in this tract since pre-British days. Before the coming of the British they enjoyed a semi autonomous status. Sir Michael O'Dwyer Deputy Commissioner Gujranwal district (later Governor of the Punjab) writes in the Gujranwala District Gazetteer 1895: “ The Virks hold 120 villages. Politically they are by far the most important tribe in the district. They are mainly Sikhs, in the Bar nearly always so, and physically are a fine athletic manly race far surpassing in energy and industry; any of their Mohammedan neighbours... They were among the first to embrace the militant Sikhism propagated by Guru Gobind

singh, and to take advantage of the decay of the Moghals to establish themselves in the centre of the Doab. The native army and Military Police of Burma, Hongkong and Straits Settlement receive many recruits from this tribe; and even now some of them are to be found in the service of the British companies in East and South Africa."

The 120 villages mentioned in the Gazetteer were split up into two parts in 1921, a majority of them going over to the newly created district of Sheikhpura, As this tract takes in parts both of the Gujranwala and Sheikhpura districts it consolidates within its limits 90 per cent villages of the Virk community.

6. The Sikh Character of the Tract

There are in this tract about 800 Sikh villages and 1,000 Sikh Gurdwaras. Prof. J.C. Archer of Yale University (U.S.A.) in his book *The Sikhs* writes at page 1 "Even the unpretentious Gurdwaras of the Sikhs in the villages reflect the faith itself and preserve the essential meaning of all Sikhs' common worship" There is also a sprinkling of Khalsa schools for boys and girls all over the region. Various local Sikh fairs are held annually which celebrate the Sikh festivals.

This tract was further hallowed by a tragic incident at Nankana Sahib in Feb. 1921. A dissolute Mahant incharge of the Gurdwara was sought to be reformed. About two hundred Sikhs came to remonstrate with him on the laxity of his administration and morals. To continue the story in the words of prof. Archer "The visitors were admitted to the sanctuary and upon their entrance they gave the customary shout Sat Siri Akal "Truth, Honour, God." When almost on the instant, on signal from the Mahant the outer gates were closed and the company faced with the fire of the gunmen from their several points of vantage. Most of the band killed or mortally wounded. Within a brief half one hundred and thirty six in all were dead and steps were taken right away to cremate with lime and fire the bodies heaped in a pile in the outer courtyard. This episode appeared to be a ghastly outrage deserving not only Sikh but public and Government attention also. The Sikhs themselves responded first with bands of avengers bearing down on Nankana, until Govt. was forced to interfere by drafting and despatching thither large contingents of soldiers and police."

All these men of courage and devotion who were shot or burnt alive in the Sanctuary belonged to the villages in this tract As they had died for a sacred public cause every village which had sent a martyr built a sepulchre monument in reverence to his memory. The tract was studded with these monuments. It came to be known as the Shahidi Bar or the Bar of the Martyrs and acquired a new

significance and added sanctity.

7. Army

Mr. Butler in the Common Debate on the India Bill told the house that of all the martial races in the world Sikhs had built up probably the greatest reputation. Those Sikhs who would be left in Pakistan would not be encouraged to join the Pakistan Army because of the traditional hostility between the two communities. This bar to recruitment would necessarily kill the fighting spirit of the Sikhs a most undesirable thing to happen to any community.

8. The Muslim Population.

A majority of the Muslims in this tract live in Sikh villages and work as carpenters, ironsmiths, weavers, oilmen and shoemakers. They are not attached to any particular village or even tract and tend to migrate where the business is good.

9. Economic Weakness of Eastern Punjab.

The Eastern Punjab under the notional division would be short of food and clothing. The wheat production of the Eastern Punjab is 29 per cent of the total production against 71 per cent in the Western part, the quantity available per capita in the Eastern part being only 15.7 lbs. as against 26.3 lbs in the Western part. The figures of rice production show even a greater disparity, the percentage of rice production in the Eastern part being 14.4 as against 85.6 per cent in the Western part and quantity per capita being 1.6 lbs. and 6.5 lbs respectively. As regards cotton the output of American cotton in the Eastern Punjab is only about 40,000 bales against 6,99,000 bales in the Western Punjab. This disparity in the supplies essential to life is further accentuated by the density of population in the Eastern part being very much heavier than in the Western part, namely 327 persons per square miles in the Eastern part as against 264 persons per square miles in the Western Punjab. The Nankana Sahib Tract with its million and half fertile acres celebrated for the production of wheat, rice and cotton when joined with Eastern Punjab will go a long way in improving its food and clothing position. This demarcation will thus make the partition of the province economically more equitable.

IV. Sikh-Muslim Hostility

It is a notorious fact that Sikhs and Muslims have always been hostile to each other. Sikhism developed largely from the unforeseen need of self defence against the Muslims. Prof. Archer writes in *The Sikhs* "The Indian Muslims do not hold the Sikhs in high esteem and the Sikhs count the Muslims enemies." (page 2) Except under the pax Britanica, a state of perpetual warfare between

the two communities has been the rule. In the Second Sikh War Muslims helped the invading British Army against the Sikh Government of the country. Muslim tribes "rallied to the British standard, readily furnished supplies, brought in information of the movements of the enemy and fought on our side at Ram Nagar, Chellianwala and Gujrat. A plot to stir up Sikh population of the district by the agency of a religious pretender Guru Maharaj Singh who was fomenting rebellion in the guise of a religious mendicant was frustrated by the Pathans of Jandiala Sher Khan who gave timely information to the authorities. A force of horse was promptly despatched from Wazirabad, the offending villages, Karyal, Jhabbar and Chuharkana in which troops were being secretly enlisted were plundered and burned down; (Gujranwala District Gazetteer 1895). All these Sikh villages are located in this tract.

Even today although the old parties are no more the rival camps remain and new parties eagerly await to occupy the old camps.

Sikhs in Pakistan would find themselves in a hostile setting. That is why they have opposed it all through. Writes Prof. Archer, "Few if any, (Sikhs) have identified themselves with the theory and activities of Pakistan, the Muslim League's indefinite proposal of an independent state in North-West India, because Sikhs might be included in it; and they have no desire to be ruled again by the Muslims ... Sikhs are Indians and will continue to be such. They will link their own estate with the welfare of the whole of India, and towards this larger end they will take account of their own peculiar assets, insisting on these values in any further transformation of their status, both in ecclesiastical and political affairs." (The Sikhs Pages 307-308)

V. Conclusion

It is useless to try merely political unification of two communities so situated towards each other as the Sikhs and the Muslims. There has been much too suffering and sorrow in Rawalpindi and Multan to leave room for further experimentation. To think of the gradual subdual of religious or racial prejudices and traditional enmities is to ignore the realities. The World War has actually accentuated these difficulties. Neither can the laws help much because tradition and prejudices live on in spite of law. In America the land of education, culture, democracy and justice and Negro is still subjected to worst kind of discrimination and humiliation. Mr. Edwin Embree in his book American Negroes writes "Thirteen million native born American citizens continue to be bound by many restrictions and by thousands of daily hurts. While we reset Hitler's boast that he took his pattern

for handling minorities in Europe from our treatment of Negroes in America we still hold racial attitudes half democratic, half Nazi, Brown Americans still wear chains. The finest Negro is at the mercy of the meanest white man. Even winners of our highest honours face the crass colour bar.”

Today when charters of radiant liberty are going out to the other communities this predominantly Sikh tract also demands the right of self-determination. Only Muslim imperialism stands in the way. The desire to rule over others is found among individuals as well as among nations. It is particularly pleasing to have a whole group of people who by definition are beneath us.

The Nanakana Sahib Tract is determined that it shall not allow itself to be handed out to its enemies. The Hindu-Sikh case for this tract is based on contiguous majority plus other factors, religious, social, economic, racial and linguistic.

Select Documentation on Partition of Punjab, page 292-299.

APPENDIX-IV

AUTHOR'S INTERVIEWS WITH BRITISH DIGNITARIES RELATING TO THE SIKHS AND PARTITION OF PUNJAB

I.

Sir Francis Mudie, (S.F.) Governor of West Punjab in 1947 at his residence Eastercot, Esplande, Broughty Ferry, Angus Scotland (U.K.) on August 27, 1964:

Int.: We presume that the British never wanted the peaceful transfer of power should be marred by the riots. Then why did these riots occur ?

S.F. When any regime changes disturbances are bound to occur. You know, Muslims came as a conqueror in India eight hundred years ago. The British rule was going to end and they wanted to handover according to the democratic principles to the Hindus. When the Muslims wanted their share, there were bound to be riots. Do you think if Negroes in USA come to power there would not be riots?

Int. I agree. But these riots to such an extent could not be attributed to a mere change of regime. The riots could be lessened, or, if I say, could be avoided, had there been proper planning. For instance, the Sikhs were demanding their transfer of population in case Pakistan was established. If that demand of theirs was accepted definitely, one of the causes of riots would have been removed.

S.F. Once Mr. Jinnah and I were touring the West Punjab riot - affected areas where the refugees were coming and going. Mr Jinnah remarked "When I proposed transfer of population people laughed at me. Now what are they doing?"

Int.: Had Mr. Jinnah made any efforts to win over the Sikhs by agreeing to give the status of 'Vatican' to their shrines at Nankana Sahib which was very ordinary thing for him, that would have softened the feelings of the Sikhs. You see Mr. Jinnah was a ruler. It was for him to offer certain privileges to the Sikhs to

- win them over. The Sikhs could do nothing at that time.
- S.F.** When do you think Jinnah should have offered certain concessions to the Sikhs?
- Int.:** Anytime between 3rd June to 15th August, 1947.
- S.F.** I do not know about 3rd June or after. But in August, it was not possible.
- Int.:** You mean that the enmity between the Sikhs and Muslims had advanced.
- S.F.** Yes, I think it was far advanced by August.
- Int.:** I think, Mr. Jinnah was very rigid and rigidity is always unstateman like in politics. Had he issued an appeal to the Sikhs assuring them their religious freedom and their due share in the administration etc. those disorders might not have occurred and people could have stayed there in Pakistan.
- S.F.** I agree that Mr. Jinnah was very rigid. Once he wanted to issue a statement which was sent to me - I suggested him that its phraseology was not correct. But he did not change it. He said, 'Since you pointed it out I won't change it. He was very rigid no doubt'.
- Int.:** What was the cause of transfer of population in the Punjab?
- S.F.** I do not know, except that Giani Kartar Singh saw me at Lyalpur and told that 'we have decided to leave Pakistan - the law and order may be maintained so that Sikhs could go out of Pakistan'. I said, 'Alright I clamped section 144'.
- S.F.** Let us have lunch while we talk. What researches have you made about the change made in the Punjab Boundary Award?
- Int.:** That I wanted to ask you.
- S.F.** The Boundary Award had been changed
- Int.:** Are you sure?
- S.F.** Yes.
- Int.** Is it a fact that the Punjab Boundary Award was changed?
- S.F.** Yes, it was changed. I know Radcliffe. He may be Lord Privy Seal or anything else. I will never entrust my own will to him. He says, "I only lived in the Viceroy's House and I had nothing to do with him". But I know he changed the Award of Punjab Boundary Commission.
- Int.:** I met Radcliffe. I enquired from him about the Sketch Map incident. He told me that it was possible that he prepared so many maps for finalising the one. While the Award was being prepared one map was leaked out. But that was not the final one.

- S.F.** But he says that he has not changed it. Who else was important on his staff. His personal secretary or steno. His personal Secretary himself told about this map to Abell. Nobody else could give it to Abell without his knowledge. I am sure about this.
- Int.:** I think it was wrong on the part of Jenkin to ask for the Award in advance and also wrong for Abell to supply it.
- S.F.** Yes, I agree that it was wrong for Jenkins to ask for the map. But Abell could not supply it without the knowledge of Mountbatten since Abell was the Secretary of the Viceroy.
- Int.:** I saw Lord Ismay - He was of the view that the root cause of the trouble was that Sir Francis handed over the tentative map to Mr. Jinnah. Had he not done so there would not have been so much misunderstanding about this map.
- S.F.** I expect Lord Ismay to say so. Once there was a discussion about the Punjab Boundary Award with Liaquat Ali Khan and Jinnah, I told them that the Award had been changed. I showed them the map. This map was given to me by the Secretary of Jenkins.
- Int.:** I met Jenkins. He was justifying himself for demanding the advance information about the Award of Punjab Boundary Commission. We talked about Mosley's book 'The Last days of British Raj in India'. He said that he had showed Mosley a few letters and he had a lunch with him. But Jenkins denied most of the statements made in Mosley's book. When I enquired from him which of the statements he accepted and which he rejected, he refused to tell this and wrote back to me, ' I am sorry I cannot be more helpful'. This attitude does not appear to be very reasonable.
- S.F.** Jenkins is a funny man. We had an ICS Association. He never attended its annual meeting. He thought himself something else. But Lord Mountbatten wrote me about Mosley's book.
- Int.** I was simply taken aback to hear that Lord Mountbatten wrote you about Mosley's book. What did he write to you?
- S.F.** He wrote me that this book was no good.
- Int.:** It is surprising that Lord Mountbatten should take so much interest as to write about the most ordinary books. He is very big man. He should not mind whatever petty books may say or write. I wish that I could see that letter.
- S.F.** Sir Francis rose from his seat and brought me few letters. First letter was of Lord Mountbatten dated 25 July, 1962. It

was stated there that Mosley has written a book which exaggerates the number of casualties to be 6,00,000 (Six lakhs). Moon's book 'Divide and Quit' was praised wherein he had given the number of casualties to be 2,00,000 (2 lakhs) Lord Mountbatten had stated in his letter that he did not want to defend himself. It was for the future historians to judge. He was making out a case that exaggerated number of casualties had been given to malign him. A schedule of casualties in the West Punjab was attached there. I wanted to copy down the whole letter but Sir Francis did not want me to do.

Int.: I wish to have a copy of this letter.

S.F. I should not have shown you this letter.

Int. I want to copy down the figures of casualties for my further study, research and verification.

S.F. That you may do. I copied number of casualties from Lord Mountbatten enclosure sheet attached to the letter addressed to Sir Francis Mudie and dated July 25, 1962. In his letter Lord Mountbatten had stated that he thought that total number of casualties to be 1/4 of a million or it could be between 1/4 to 1/2 million:

ESTIMATED CASUALTIES AFTER 14TH AUGUST, 1947:

Dera Ghasi Khan	250
Muzza fargarh	500
Multan	2500
Montgomery	2000
Lyalpur	500
Sheikhupura	10000
Jhang	1500
Mianwali	4500
Lahore	10000
Gujranwal	4000
Sialkot	3500
Gujarat	3000
Jhelum	3000
Sargodha	3500
Attock	3000
Rawalpindi	4500
Bahawalpur	2000
Total :	59250

S.F. I do not believe these figures to be true. I think on both sides in the East and West Punjab about 1/2 million people were killed. That includes all number of casualties on a/c of natural death on their way, or deaths on account of natural calamities like floods in Beas etc.

Int.: Do you think that the casualties on East and West Punjab to be equal?

S.F. Almost equal.

Int. I saw Lord Attlee - When I asked him the causes of disturbances, he replied "Jinnah was a little man. He did not agree to any proposal. Had Liaquat Ali been there, the things would have been different". But Liaquat was not the master of the show.

S.F. Yes, Jinnah was the master of the show. Attlee made the appointment of Lord Mountbatten and also fixed date for British withdrawal. When you declare that you are leaving, you lose all powers, as persons in transit cannot exercise their powers effectively. When Lord Mountbatten took over he found that he could not pull on with both the parties upto June 1948. So the date had to be fixed earlier.

Int.: Why did you want that every Sikh should be turned out of Pakistan?

S.F. Because of law and order situation. Since they had started evacuation it was better they should have gone earlier. It would have solved law and order problem. In case they stayed there would have been cause of retaliation by the Muslims. Moreover Hindu behaved very peculiarly. I give you an instance of village Harianwan district Mianwali. The Hindus of this place fortified themselves in a tower with their ammunition and guns and they had asked the Muslims of Harianwan to leave the village. These Muslims went to the nearby camp and asked the military to remove these Hindus to the camp. The Muslims military came there for evacuation of the Hindus and wanted that all the Hindus should surrender their ammunition so that they could be evacuated. But the Hindus did not surrender their guns. On one side of the village a Muslim mob attacked them not knowing that the military was present. Then Hindus came out after killing their women and children. The most important thing is that government was never reported about such situation at all.

Int.: What about Sheikhpura Massacre?

- S.F. I do not remember.
- Int.: At Sheikhpura some hundred non-Muslims were killed.
- S.F. No, I do not know anything about that.
- Int. Why did you want that Nehru and Patel should not come to the West Punjab as you have stated in your letter?
- S.F. Did I? I do not remember.
- Int.: I again brought out Khosla's book from briefcase and showed him his letter particularly the paragraph dealing with Nehru and Patel.
- S.F. Yes, there was no military to guard them. They could not go without the escort of military in those days. Secondly Nehru had the bad habit of scolding the officials. He misbehaved with the officials at Sheikhpura especially the British D.C. (His name was Dinsay).
- Int.: Yes, once I read in the Civil and Military gazette that ministers issued order contradictory to each other - they did not know the procedure. I think the main trouble was that there was no stalward Punjabi Muslim like Sir Fazal Hussain or Sir Sikandar who could guide Jinnah about the affairs of Punjab as those were deteriorating day by day.
- S.F. Do you mean Mr. Jinnah was the man to be guided. Men like Shaukat Hyat Khan dared not speak to him. About riots I must talk you that it was a open secret that the refugees always gave unreliable account of their sufferings. I know the state of affairs because all important meetings wherein Nehru, Patel, Lord Mountbatten and Jinnah attended held at my Kothi at Lahore. Once perhaps P. N.Thapar agreed with me that refugees account should not be relied upon. They represented too much exaggerated account. You were talking about administration in the West Punjab. I think that police in the East Punjab was much worse than that of the West Punjab.
- Int.: I agree with you because the police in the United Punjab had about ninety per cent Muslims. After partition Muslims did not stick to the East Punjab. The entire police had to be recruited new in the East Punjab and these policemen in the East Punjab were recruited from the refugees who were affected by communal riots.
- Int.: We went for awalk on the bank of river Tay which is just in front of his beautiful house on Espolande. He took his dog with a leash. First he talked to me about his dog. There we

again reverted to our old topic.

S.F. They had organised this Punjab Boundary Force - which was a failure. Some mixed regiments were placed under General Rees. These regiments both Muslims - Gorkhas and Sikhs knew that British had left and they were to serve under their new masters. So they were to fight with one another. I knew they were to create a dangerous situation.

Int.: Excuse me. As far as I know Punjab Boundary Force was established by the Partition Council in which Jinnah, Patel and others were present.

S.F. Yes, I know. But this force proved useless. I wrote a very strong note against this force. I wrote to Mountbatten if you are serious to quell the riots requisition some British Forces from Karachi - this force which you have created is not fulfilling its purpose because this force is under neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. Its position is *na ghar ka na ghat ka* Responsibility for maintaining law and order should be entrusted to the respective governments. Jinnah laughed at my note and Mountbatten personally came to Lahore with the suggestion that Punjab Boundary Force would be abolished and it was abolished in September.

Int.: No Sir, it was abolished on 31st August (night).

S.F. That might be correct. I do not remember the date.

Int.: I want to enquire. Had there been common Governor - General so many problems might have been solved. There would not have been Kashmir problem. Sikhs might also have got some privilege to visit their shrines in Pakistan etc.

S.F. It would never had worked. It was impossible to have common Governor-General under those circumstances. Regarding Kashmir I suggested to Jinnah to agree to the principle of partitioning of Kashmir. But Jinnah was disgusted with the Award of the Punjab Boundary Commission and he said, 'I will not have more boundary commissions now'.

II.

Interview with Lord Ismay Chief of Staff of the Lord Mountbatten

At Wormington Grange, Boardway, Worcestershire, on 17th August, 1964, at 3.45 p.m. in this drawing-room. Lord Ismay was then seventy-six years old.

Qus. How could disturbances be avoided with the transfer of power

in India in 1947.

Ans. We expected trouble in the Punjab. We knew that great martial community was going to be cut in two. I submitted a report in which I clearly mentioned it. So it was not an unexpected trouble. We had anticipated it on the Sikh side.

Qus. Where is that report now?

Ans. That will be released after fifty years. Alan Campbell Johnson has mentioned this report in his book "Mission with Mountbatten" at page 430.

Qus. It was known that the Sikhs were the aggrieved party. What steps were taken to remove their grievances?

Ans. Nothing could be done by us. It was for Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Nehru. I suggested to Mr. Jinnah that he should issue a statement assuring the Sikhs that Pakistan was not only for the Muslims but for all the communities including the Sikhs. They would be given all opportunities in services and administration of the country, and Sikh shrines in Pakistan would enjoy the status of Vatican. Perhaps, he hated every thing Hindu; he said, "it was weakness to the hostages." When I repeated he did not respond at all.

Qus. There is a general feeling that the Sikhs who had been faithful to the British and had fought battles for them all over the world had been ignored. They had been assured by all the Viceroy's that their points of view would be taken into account when there would be transfer of power.

Ans. No doubt, the Sikhs were the friends of the British, but when we decided to leave India we had to leave our friends.

Qus. Was nothing done for the Sikh shrines?

Ans. Sardar Baldev Singh never brought this question before us. He was not a very intelligent man. This question should have been brought up before us by Nehru and Baldev Singh.

Qus. When you knew that there was going to be trouble in the Punjab and the Sikhs were opposed to Pakistan and wanted to come out of Pakistan it would have eased the situation, had there been a provision for orderly transfer of Sikh population to the East Punjab.

Ans. Who should have done this transfer of population?

Qus. The subsequent governments of India and Pakistan. I mean there should have been a provision for such orderly transfer.

Ans. In that case the plan should have taken three months to be prepared. But it was prepared within three days.

Qus. That is right-The plan was prepared in haste. It was not a comprehensive plan. Had it been a comprehensive plan, there should not have been canal water dispute. It should have contained some solution of every problem.

Ans. You know Nehru had threatened to resign. There was such a deterioration of situation, the delay would have been ruinous. When I went to India in 1947, I found that it was a strange India. Hindus and Muslims did not speak to each other. Ministers working on the same table would not wish each other. So much animosity I had never seen before.

I did my best to persuade Jinnah not to divide army. Regiments should not be divided. But he never agreed. He said, "you do not know the working of the Hindu mind."

Qus. Had Jinnah agreed to the common Governor Generalship of Lord Mountbatten, the Sikhs might have gained by this arrangement.

Ans. Jinnah did not agree to that. He was a very rigid type of man. Liaquat was quite different. But he was not the master of the show. Had Liaquat been there at the helm of affairs, the things would have been different. If we were to stay on we could suppress the disturbances. Like John Lawrence and Nicholson we would have adopted very strong policy but we were to leave.

Qus. But suppression would not have been the solution. Basic defect in the entire arrangement was that the leaders had decided everything in Delhi and were not prepared to face the masses.

Ans. No, Nehru and Liaquat toured in the Punjab in August. It had very wholesome effect.

Qus. Perhaps their tour was too late-then main ferocity of communal riots had spent itself. Was Sikh Muslim understanding ever tried?

Ans. No, they never met. They never wished to meet. How could there be any understanding?

Qus. You have written in your book that Sardar Baldev Singh accepted the 3rd June Plan with certain reservation. May I know what were those reservations?

Ans. They were absolutely foolish. Nothing practicable. Rubbish altogether.

Lady Ismay who had entered the room with tea, etc., and had been listening to our talk:

"Darling, give some example of reservation !"

Lord Ismay : O Dear, I do not remember." Immediately opened the book of Alan Campbell Johnson - read a passage from it emphasizing that the reservations asked for were foolish.

Qus. You have stated in your book that 3rd June Plan was a 'Hobson' choice." What do you mean by it. Who was Hobson?

Lord Ismay addressing Lady Ismay : "Darling, we never thought of it." She brought dictionary of quotations where in it was stated that." Thomas Hobson (1544-1631) was a master of stable at Cambridge. Who-so-ever want to take horse from him used to go to the stable. Hobson would bring the horse near the door and give it to the gentleman. Though there were several horses he never allowed the choice. Either one had to accept the horse or go."

Ans. Lord Ismay said that that was the case with the 3rd June Plan. Either accept it or go? I tell you that the 3rd June Plan was the best solution. I prepared several schemes. But it was the only one which could be acceptable to all. And it worked well Uptil September it was all right. After transfer of population, India and Pakistan would have entered friendly relation but Kashmir issue again spoiled the entire relationship. Jinnah was going to wage war on India. I went there to prevent it. I specially went to Karachi to explain what India was doing for the Muslim refugees.

Qus. There is general feeling that Menon represented the Congress point of view to the Viceroy-Abell and yourself represented what Jinnah and League wanted. The Sikhs had nobody to represent their point of view.

Ans. It is wrong that Abell was pro-Muslim. People have absolutely wrong notions. Similarly I differed with Jinnah at several places. I tell you-when we were in Delhi-a party of Muslim Leagues came and said, "Turn out Evan Jenkins, he was pro-Hindu." Then after a few days a party of Congress leaders came and said, "Turn out Evan Jenkins-he was pro-Muslim." So it was a very funny position.

Qus. Have you seen Leonard Mosley's book " Last days of British Raj."

Ans. It is rubbish. Mosley cleverly got an introductory chit from Lord Mountbatten and went to Menon who showed him certain "personal documents. These document Mosley quoted as Governmet of India Records."

Qus. What is your source of information for this.

Ans. Lord Mountbatten himself told me. When this book was out, Lord Mountbatten wrote to Menon regarding this.

Qus. I am in touch with Major James Short who was P.A. to Sardar Baldev Singh.

Ans. No, he was my P.A. I took him from England with me when I came here for the second time (July 5). Sardar Baldev Singh had asked Lord Mountbatten to bring him. He is a great friend of the Sikhs. "Alan Campbell Johnson has mentioned this fact in his book, Mission with Mountbatten."

III.

Interview with Lord Attlee, the British Prime Minister in 1947,

In the House of Lords, in Peers Guest Room at 2.30

P.M. on July 22, 1964.

Qus. Your Lordship has been the maker of modern India. You took active interest in the Simon Commission as you were one of its members. The government of India Act of 1935 was passed with your effort and again India got independence during your regime. Now I am writing history of the partition of the Punjab and wanted to enquire a few things.

Ans. Lord Attlee. Yes.

Qus. The British had been great friends of Sikhs. The Sikhs fought for them in many battles. But it so happened that this transfer of power hit them so severely.

Ans. Your member-I do not remember his name-Defence member [I: Sardar Baldev Singh] yes he was there. Mountbatten knows it well. Have you met him.

Qus. No Sir, not yet. May I see any record lying with you?

Ans. Everything is published. I have nothing else.

Qus. I have read your book. "*As it Happened*".

Ans. There is another book *The Prime Minister Remembers* by Lord Francis William.

Qus. Had there been concessions to the Sikhs at the time of partition, the Sikhs would have been pacified?

Ans. Mr. Jinnah was a very little man, really very little man. He did not agree to any thing. It would have been much better had Liaqat Ali been there in his place. He was a much better man. But your Tara Singh is also no good.

Qus. Yes. In the history of the nations such opportunities come

very rarely-if one is not imaginative and wise he can not acquit himself well. But the Sikhs had been very loyal to the British-they fought for them several battles in Europe and elsewhere.

Ans. But Jinnah was too little a person. He did not agree to any the proposals. The parties did not agree.

Qus. How is it that the date of transfer of power which was originally June 1948 was brought down to August 1947?

Ans. The Indian parties did not agree, the things were moving from bad to worse. Mountbatten knows it well. (Some-body brought the mail.)

Lord Attlee said all right-I am to read a report (perhaps in the House of Lords).

Lord Attlee-You can write me questions if you like.

IV.

Interview with Lord Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Punjab Boundary Commission in 1947,

On 23rd July, 1964, at his room in the House of Lords at 4.30 P.M.

Qus. I am writing history of the Partition of the Punjab and in that connection I have been meeting important officials who had served in the Punjab. I have seen Evan Jenkins and Lord Attlee. Since yours was the most important assignment I thought I must discuss a few points with you.

May I know what was the process by which you arrived at a particular decision. Did you arrive at your decisions with the help of memoranda submitted to you or you called forth others records from the Government of India and actually I wish to know what was your process of arriving at a decision.

Ans. I had before me various memoranda. I could call any records of the Government and actually this procedure was followed. When I went there I stayed in Delhi-both the Commissions were working at Calcutta and Lahore. Daily proceedings were brought to me by special plane. I read them and then discussed them with my colleagues-weighed the arguments in my mind, then arrived at a particular decision.

Qus. Did you consult anybody before arriving at final decision?

Ans. Consulting in what respect. I ask for any information I wanted.

I had quite independent an office and had to do nothing with the Viceroy.

Qus. Did you initiate any talk with the political leaders regarding joint control of irrigation-system in the Punjab.

Ans. I did not-but we were discussing this issue among our colleagues and through them I knew that they were not going to agree to the joint control.

Qus. Have you read Mosley's book?

Ans. Yes I did-he came to see me.

Qus. What is your opinion about the Sketch Map Story?

Ans. It is possible I might have two or three maps prepared before I submitted the final one. The final award is mine, entirely mine.

Qus. I am told that George Abell conveyed the Sketch map to Evan Jenkins.

Ans. I know in the case of Bengal this advance information was demanded for posting their troops as well as for making necessary arrangements. I remember to have given advance information in the case of Bengal and Assam. I do not remember about the Punjab.

Qus. I have read a statement of Muhammad Munir who was a member of the Punjab Boundary Commission that he asked you how you would prepare the report and you told him at Simla that you would do this after consulting the Viceroy.

Ans. Absolutely incorrect. I am not all happy about the attitude of my colleagues of Pakistan side. My every private talk was given the widest publicity.

Qus. I have read your Award. It is very logical. Wherever you have deviated from the usual practice of population factor, you have added a paragraph there. It is so clear. I know that you have performed the most difficult part of the job. But had there been more time, it could be better.

Ans. Yes. On my arrival I told all political leaders that the time at my disposal was very short. But all leaders like Jinnah and Nehru and Patel told me that they wanted a line before or on 15th August. So I drew them a line.

V.

Interview with Lord Patrick spens, Chief Justice of Federal Court of India and Chairman of Arbitral Tribunal, 1947,

2, Crown Office Row, King's Benet Walk, Inner Temple, London, on May 22, 1963, at 11 A.M.

Qus. May I know your views regarding partition of India or partition of the Punjab?

Ans. I am keeping a regular diary which can only be shown when I am no more and most of the people will be no more. That will not be transferred to any other place, it will be presented in Inner Temple.

Qus. After all what were the causes of all the bloodshed which followed the transfer of power?

Ans. The main cause was the haste with which we parted with India. The connections of centuries were severed within days without any proper thought. It has never happened anywhere in the British Empire. The best thing would have been that when Lord Mountbatten came to England in May he should have told the Indian leaders-Since they did not agree on the basic principles-the English would frame constitution for them instead of partitioning the country. But there was terrible haste. I must pay tribute to Lord Mountbatten for his quick decisions. Perhaps he was guided by precedent of separation of Burma from India.

Qus. Sir, May I know what were the causes for this haste?

Ans. The main factor was that the Labour Government here wanted to get rid of India as quickly as possible.

Qus. Sir, I think that in framing the Partition Plan, the Sikh point of view was totally ignored-one of its reason was that the Sikh leaders could not impress their point of view?

Ans. That is the point. And secondly Lord Mountbatten was entirely new to India. All the promises and pledges made by the British statesmen were forgotten. The main cause of every thing was haste. So far my department was concerned everything remained well. You know, I was the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal. All the decisions made by the Tribunal were accepted by the parties. Each one of them had the right of appeal but nobody appealed and both accepted what we decided.

Qus. Had the question of canal water dispute been referred to Arbitral Tribunal it would have been amicably settled?

Ans. We had been discussing canal water dispute and I wanted that it should be referred to the Tribunal but my both the colleagues were in favour of deciding this issue politically. Therefore, no state referred this question to the Tribunal.

Qus. Sir, You may have noticed a Sketch Map Story as stated by Leonard Mosley in the *Last Days of British Raj*.

Ans. I was deadly against this method of demarcation of the boundary. What do judges know about the demarcation of the boundary. It was wrong to associate judges with the demarcation of the boundary. The best thing would have been to depute this work to me with two experts. We would have studied the problem before demarcation. Such an important problem should have taken some time because it was a question of life and death for several people. The man appointed as Chairman neither knew the language nor the territory nor the inhabitants of the area. Nowhere else in the whole of British Empire boundaries have been demarcated in this way.

Qus. Sir! They say that the Award was altered in the final stage. This is contended by the Pakistan statesmen.

Ans. I know only one thing that the changes were made in the Award upto the last moment because Radcliffe himself knew nothing of the problem.

Lord Spens. You must have seen the Awards of Arbitral Tribunal.

Ans. Yes sir, I have read the Awards as well as the proceedings.

Lord Spens. You see, all orders of the Governor General from 3rd June to 15th August were prepared under my supervision we had to do hell of work. Some of the orders were issued by the Governor of the Punjab. Have you read my article on Arbitral Tribunal?

Qus. No, Sir.

Lord Spens. I give you the copy of the book in which it was published But you must return this to me as it is the only copy with me. He gave me the book entitled Problems of Public and Private International Law, Longman Green & Co., London, 1951. It contained an article "Arbitral Tribunal in India" by Lord Spens. It was not exclusively about the partition of Punjab. It referred to the partition of Bengal and Assam also. According to him the Tribunal had the legal powers to over-ride the provisions of orders issued by the Governor of Punjab under section 9 of the Indian Independence Act. Similar orders were not issued by the Governor of Bengal or Assam. In the

circumstances and particularly keeping in view the fact that these orders had been in operation for several months when the Tribunal dealt with them the Tribunal adopted the decisions or principles implied in these orders.

Qus. What were the causes of Calcutta riots of August 1946?

Ans. I was made the Chairman of the Royal Commission of Enquiry to investigate the causes. We have been holding enquiry in Calcutta. But no respectable man was forthcoming for witness etc. Ultimately this work had to be abandoned. Moreover, I told the Government this enquiry would complicate the matter. In case it apportioned a blame on a community more than the other, the members of community would finish the opposite community which had been held responsible within twenty four hours of the declaration of the findings of the enquiry. So ultimately the enquiry was abandoned.

VI.

Interview with Prof. Dr. W.H. Morris Jones,

Durham College at Indian house Aldwych, London, At 12 noon, July 17, 1964.

P.J. I have nothing to do with history-you- should have met some historian.I have explained my position in a letter you would have received.No, I did not receive it. It might be due to postal dislocation.

I. I briefly state the reasons for having the privileges of meeting you. Firstly I learn that you acted as Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy in 1947, Secondly Prof. Dr. A.L. Basham told me that you were interested in India, and he advised me to see you.

P.J. Yes, I worked for some time as Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy. As far as I can recall Sir Stafford and Lord Attlee called me in May 1947, when Lord Mountbatten visited England. I was informed to prepare a plan which could work two sovereign countries for defence, communication and other similar puposes. Lord Attlee asked me if I had read anything of Austero-Hungarian empire. How it worked. He advised me to study that and evolve that sort of plan.

As a matter of fact I was taken with a view that my services might be needed. It was just like game of golf-nobody knew what stick one might have to use and on what occasion. I was given a separate office in the Secretariat.

But nobody was in a mood to have any thing common so my services were particularly not required though I was given some other work.

P.J. However, I prepared a plan- which must be in some file. I resigned on 15th August, 1947.

I. I have been working on Partition of the Punjab for a number of years and in that connection I am meeting various persons. I would like to ask a few questions. What was the cause of bloodshed and riots just after transfer of power?

P.J. It had various aspects. One was military-Indo-Pakistan border was too long. Military allotted could not control it. Secondly no body properly anticipated the trouble.

I. Sir Evan is right when he says the leaders never prepared people for the decision they made.

P.J. Exactly I have been holding the same view- this is my view also.

I. Think that the Sikhs were recognised as third important community in India by the Cabinet Mission and in the last phase of 3rd June Plan their point of view was not taken into consideration.

P.J. In what way the Cabinet Mission Plan was favourable to the Sikhs-recognition or mention of Sikhs as third important community was one thing. How does it favour the Sikhs.

I. That way it was nothing in it which could be said that was favourable to the Sikhs. Perhaps it was the Sikh leadership which could not make its effective.

P.J. That was not the case. But what was the solution?

I. The Sikhs had made several resolutions that they would not live in Pakistan. Had there been some provision for orderly transfer of Sikh population from the west to the east Punjab there might have not been this trouble.

P.J. That is right. You see the atmosphere in Delhi was that V.P. Menon was in touch with Patel and he so thoroughly understood Congress that Mountbatten's every proposal put to Congress was acceptable to them. Ismay and Abell were in touch with Muslim League but they were not always correct as was Menon because several of Mountbatten's proposal, were turned down by Jinnah. There was no such media for the Sikhs.

I. But Short was there. He arrived there in the month of July 1947 when almost everything was settled.

P.J. I remember once Moon and Short were dining with Abell

and I was the fourth person there. Moon and Short were representing just that nobody knew anything about Punjab and there was going to be a storm there. But nobody seriously took them. Did Short tell you about his talk with Abell.

- I. No, Sir. Was Sikh-Muslim alliance possible?
- P.J. Certainly not in 1947. Otherwise Sikhism is nearer Islam. Sikh Muslim understanding was possible much earlier.
- I. This understanding had been more probable had Sir Khizar not formed the ministry?
- P.J. Yes, after the fall of the Unionist Ministry it would have been better had he not formed the ministry.
- I. According to Sir Evan there should not have been any partition of Punjab and it was only possible if Sikhs had accepted Pakistan. I think that Jinnah should have given them some assurances and handled them tactfully. But he was not prepared for all this.
- P.J. There was no remarkable Muslim League leader in Punjab who could guide Muslim League. Men like Sir Fazal Hussain had died.
- I. Do you know anything about Sketch Map Story? Have you read Mosley's book the Last Days of British Raj?
- P.J. No, I have no comment on it. I have written a review on Leonard Moselys book "*Last Days of British Raj.*" I shall be sending you its copy by post. It would give you some idea what I think of that book.

VII.

Interview with Mr. Ian Stephen , ex-Editor, The Statesmen, Calcutta,

At his residence at 49, Hertfort, Cambridge at 11-30 A M. on June 16, 1964.

- Qus. I have read your "*Sikhs An Over Blamed People*" also other works. May I know what was the cause of this bloodshed just after transfer of power?
- Ans. I have discussed it in my book Pakistan-Once a chain was started, there was no end to it.
- Qus. May I know where, in your view, the chain had been started. I mean the chain of communal riots.
- Ans. To my mind it was started form Bihar riots. There was nothing so terrific as Bihar riots.
- Qus. What about Calcutta riots? I think the Calcutta riots surpassed

all previous riots.

Ans. I agree. But Bihar riots, no pressmen could know anything-it was almost unassessed -moreover it shook the entire Muslim community-its effects were felt in Muslim community all over India, even N.W.F.P.

Qus. Yes, I know that George E Jones wrote in *Tumult in India* that some fanatics excited Muslim masses by showing human skulls and saying that these Muslims had been killed in Bihar. But you have stated some where that the Sikhs participated in the Calcutta riots in favour of Hindus. But how is it that H.S. Suhrawardy the then Chief Minister of Bengal gave a statement commending the Sikhs' role of impartiality during Calcutta riots. That statement was published in the Statesman, Calcutta, when you were editor of that esteemed paper.

Ans. I do not know about that statement.

Qus. I shall send you the copy of that statement when I received my sea parcel. (See Appendix.V) But what was the hurry in drawing of the third June Plan when the time limit had been fixed to June 1948.

Ans. It is now an open question whether delay would have been useful or not. I have taken both the sides-delay might have been more injurious.

Qus. Have you seen any document regarding Wavel Plan-from your book it appears that you always doubted it.

Ans. I know there cannot be Wavel Plan as comprehensive as the 3rd June Plan.

Qus. But Lord Attlee refers to it in his book, *As it Happened*. But that is a casual reference. He had not papers before him. The book had been written from memory. If there was any plan like Wavel Plan- it was a plan of military evacuation of the British.

Qus. But the plan of military evacuation more suited to the conditions of the Punjab. I cannot say about the rest of India.

Ans. Kept silent.

Qus. But how is it that at the time of transfer of power, the services of the Sikhs were entirely forgotten. Previous Governors General had given assurance to the Sikhs in writing that their interest would never be ignored.

Ans. That was the betrayal to the Sikhs. There were two betrayals-one to the Sikhs and other to the Princes. I knew on the 3rd June that there was going to be a trouble as the Sikhs had

been ignored. After coming from the Press Conference of Lord Mountbatten I told my staff that there was going to be a trouble.

Qus. But in the Punjab trouble was started by the Muslims during March riots in 1947. The Sikhs had never been party to the communal rioting so far. That was Muslim's first attack on the Sikhs that shook their confidence. Even if we assume that the Sikhs had taken part on the side of the Hindus in the Calcutta riots, the Calcutta Sikhs did not represent the entire Sikh community?

Ans. I perfectly agree.

Qus. Let us see how all this blood-shed could be avoided-one method was if there had been Sikh-Muslim understanding it could be avoided. But who was responsible for not having an understanding?

Ans. Evidently the Muslim League, they were quite unprepared for the task entrusted to them.

Qus. Moon has written that Jinnah was ignorant about the Sikh affairs.

Ans. That is what I have to state in my book and criticised the Muslim League leadership. I wonder how is it possible that senior officers, who had spent their entire lives in India would not have advised Mountbatten about the Sikh problem in the Punjab. I think Mountbatten did not listen to any body.

Qus. Lord Mountbatten, as Mosley stated, was surrounded by pro-Muslims influences-Abell and Ismay both were pro-Muslims. Ismay had all along been in the Muslim regiments and Abell, as I have been told by Master Tara Singh, always thought that the Sikhs would embrace Islam if Pakistan was established.

Ans. That is sheer silly.

Qus. The matter would have been different if some provision was made for peaceful transfer of Sikh population to East Punjab or some provision was made for the free visits to the Sikh shrines in Pakistan. Have you seen that "Sketch map controversy"? What are your views about that?

Ans. Sir Din Muhammad, the Governor of Sindh, talked to me about this. It was Abell who conveyed that map on telephone? Then it must be correct, because Abell was a very responsible man. One Assistant Secretary, now in India, who was at that time Assistant Secretary in the Punjab Boundary Commission,

was also involved? I shall have to dig out all my records.

Qus. What is your view about migration?

Ans. I have not thought over it.

Qus. Have you seen the letter of Sir Francis Mudie ?

Ans. Mudie is a very frank man. He will tell you every thing. He does not hide anything. I give you his address. But he is very far off.

Qus. I am going to Edinborough.

Ans. Then it is all right. (He gave me the address of Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of West Punjab in 1947.)

Qus. I learn that some body was editing Lord Wavels papers.

Ans. Yes, John Connel. But after such long years he has reached only 1941. But he is editing only his military papers.

Qus. I think Wavel would have acquired the insight into Indian problem.

Ans. He was quite ignorant as he never served Indian Army. He was in British Army. On account of war and military state during the war, he had been appointed as Governor General. There were two persons who were keenly interested in the Sikh affairs-Short and Moon-but both had no say in the high ups. They were too small. Moon had been dismissed during Sir Glancy's rule. So he was under the cloud.

We again held discussion on July 8, in the lawn of King's College, Cambridge. The main discussion was whether the Sikhs sided with the Hindus and fought against the Muslims during Calcutta riots of 1946? I showed him my book *Sikhan De Sewa* in which H.S. Suhrawardy's statement had been published. But Stephen stuck to his own view that he himself had seen Sikhs with taxis attacking the North Calcutta rushing to that side for attacking the Muslims.

APPENDIX -V

The Statesman, Tuesday, October 1, 1946

ALL REPORTS AGAINST SIKHS FOUND UNTRUE STATEMENT OF H.S. SUHRAWARDY

Chief Minister of Bengal has issued the following statements: I am deeply disturbed to find that the suspicion and distrust amongst Muslims against Sikhs still continues. I still hear rumours circulated from time to time and in various localities that the Sikhs are congregating in certain places for the purpose of attacking Muslims. Each of these reports has been investigated and has been found to be false. Places supposed to be full of Sikhs armed for the purpose have been searched and the reports has been found to be absolutely without substance.

I have personally looked into many of these cases and definitely state that these reports are absolutely false and are merely the out come of panic. Sikhs went about in their taxis and their buses during those dangerous five days for the purpose of rescuing their women and children and removing their belongings. Immediately rumours got abroad that they were moving about for the purpose of attacking Muslim *mohallas*. Not one Muslim Mohalla has been attacked by the Sikhs thus far, and yet the rumours still go on.

There are stories of one or two Sikhs here and there in those days of carnage having taken part in the riots. Some of these may be true and others may not. But that does not mean that the Sikh community is up against the Muslims.

I have been in constant touch with the Sikh leaders and I am absolutely convinced regarding their bonafides and the attempts that they are making to keep themselves neutral and not to be involved in any kind of a dispute. More than that during the riots they have saved as many as 5,000 Muslims from dangerous areas and carried these Muslims to safe places. Surely they deserve something better from the Muslims than this suspicion and distrust and hostility against them.

Some Examples

Small incidents take place here and there and misunderstanding grows. Let us give some example which may help to clear the situation.

A report is received that Muslims are being assaulted in a Hindu area, a bus comes along which is driven by a Sikh driver, and this bus contains both Hindus and Muslims; the Muslims stop the bus and request the Muslims to get out and not to go into the dangerous area; the Hindus in the bus think that the Muslims are being taken out for the purpose of assaulting the Hindus, and they urge upon the Sikh driver to drive fast; the Sikh driver drives fast and the Muslims outside think that he is running away with some Muslims so that they may be killed in the Hindu area, and they start throwing stones. This is how misunderstanding arises.

We all know of one case where a Sikh driver did not stop at a particular place as he got into a panic seeing a Muslim crowd standing by the Muslims in the bus who wanted the Sikh driver to stop thought that the Sikh driver was running away with him; he jumped out of the bus and injured himself. Immediately rumours got about that bodies had been thrown out of the bus that Sikhs had killed Muslims, that Sikhs had attacked Muslims with knives and so on.

All this must cease, My Muslim brethren must believe me when I say that this propaganda against the Sikhs is false and must stop at once, and the Sikh drivers whether of buses or of taxis, must not be stoned or molested in any way. In fact I should very much like that attempts should be made by the Muslim localities to contact Sikh leaders who are their neighbours so that mutual confidence may be restored.

“I hope that Muslims will respond to this appeal wholeheartedly and stop molesting the Sikhs and also stop this anti Sikh propaganda which has no basis in fact and which must be put an end at once for the sake of peace and general restoration of confidence.”

APPENDIX-VI

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