



INTERVENTION PAPER



# *Hindus Betrayed*

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RELIGIOUS CLEANSING IN BANGLADESH  
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Dr. Saradindu Mukherji

**INDIA POLICY FOUNDATION**

Intervention Paper

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Religious Cleansing in Bangladesh

Dr. Saradindu Mukherji



भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान

India Policy Foundation

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## PREFACE

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The liberation of Bangladesh in December 1971 was a historic act in many ways. It was in essence, an assertion by a suppressed nationality against the religious fanaticism of a state itself founded on the untenable premise of religious nationalism — Pakistan. The formation of Bangladesh was the outcome of ceaseless battle and sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of people against a shockingly repressive Pakistani regime. The genocide unleashed by the Pakistani army, claiming millions of innocent victims, had earlier been tasted by the Hindus of Bengal in 1946, when Jinnah's murderous “Direct Action” against them was let loose, bringing in its horrendous wake, a wave of merciless killings and unspeakable outrage committed upon women and children. 1970 thus, was actually the repetition of the grisly 1946 story.

India, in keeping with its time-honoured values, gave shelter to hundreds and thousands of refugees from Bangladesh — its economic burden willingly shared by India's common man. A war tax was imposed and the people of the country stood firmly with the resistance fighters of East Pakistan. However, the unrelenting atrocities of the Pakistani army and its Islamic collaborators finally forced India to intervene militarily in the crisis that only threatened to get bigger. India, in fact even risked the ire of the US, a superpower, which openly backed the genocidal Yahya regime in Rawalpindi. It stands testimony to the Indian people's resilience and empathy for the sufferings of people from other countries that they bore the severe economic burden of refugees streaming in, as well as the war that followed. India fought the 1971 war not to serve any narrow national interests, nor with any imperialistic delusions of grandeur. Many millennia ago, Lord Rama vanquished Ravana not to annex Lanka but to restore the rule of dharma and virtue. After Rama triumphed, he restored Lanka to its people and ruler, Vibhishan. Similarly, India waged war to combat genocide, sectarianism and chauvinism. We won a victory, not only of arms, but of nobler ideals; of empathy and solidarity with others.

However, the growth of Islamic radicalism in the newly formed state came as an unfortunate development, taking monstrous shape by the late 80s. When fanaticism rears its tentacles, its first casualty is human dignity, culminating in the sacrifice of human life. The jihadi elements in Bangladesh have been equally remorseless in their assault on the lives and properties of the Hindus of that country. This has been no new experience for Hindus. Their forefathers underwent the same horror during the Moplah riots in 1922-23 (Kerala), in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Khilafat movement and subsequently organized violence orchestrated by the Muslim League, Khaksars and other like-minded elements on innocent Hindus of Punjab, Bengal, NWFP, Sindh and other parts of undivided India right up to 1946-47.

Tragically, the lives, privacy and property of Hindus have been remained unprotected in Bangladesh. The state remains indifferent, connives at, or worse, sponsors such outrageous acts. Women and children are the biggest victim of inhuman Islamic violence. The rape of Hindu women, plunder of their property and killings of innocent is carried out in the name of religion. The Hindu population has significantly diminished not only Pakistan but also

Bangladesh. Human rights for Hindus in those countries, remains at best, a pipedream. Their faith is targeted and insulted; idols and temples routinely desecrated or at times, simply destroyed. The rulers in these countries provide only one escape route — conversion to Islam. This was the case in 1922 and in 1946, too.

The Indian state and intelligentsia have taken shelter under the fig-leaf of this genocide of Hindus being an 'internal matter of Bangladesh' to cloak their shame of inaction on the one hand and unwillingness to be even seen as pro-Hindus on the other. The fact of the matter is that India has an inherent right to intervene in Pakistan and Bangladesh because their actions cast their portentous shadow on us.

The issue of Hindus' suffering in our eastern neighbouring country has been highlighted with the publication of S.K. Bhattacharya's work *Genocide in East Pakistan/Bangladesh: A Horror Story* (1988). However, the work of Shri Baljit Rai (retired IPS officer), *Demographic Aggression against India* (1993) proved a pioneering one. He has traced the role of politics and ideology behind the systematic repression of Hindus in Bangladesh. Shri RNP Singh in his work *Bangladesh Decoded* (2006) unveiled the influence of Jihadi elements on society, politics, military and the clergy of Bangladesh.

The *Empire's Last Casualty: Indian Subcontinent's Vanishing Hindu and Other Minorities* (2008) by Dr Sachi G. Dastidar documents the loss of about 49 million Hindus 'missing' from Bangladesh in the 2001 Census. Dr Richard L Benkin's work *A Quiet Case of Ethnic Cleansing: The Murder of Bangladesh's Hindus* (2012) is yet another seminal work. The tragedy is that despite all such outstanding works and unconcealed anti-Hindu actions, and the systematic violation of their human rights, the debate has remained confined to a closed circle. The influential Indian intelligentsia and the Indian state have deliberately kept their eyes and ears closed.

The present intervention paper has been penned by Dr Saradindu Mukherjee, who traces the past, present and the future of the Hindus in Bangladesh, and the role of Islamic society and the State. I hope this work will serve to expand the horizon of the debate on an issue that is more humanitarian than religious concerns. Those who parade themselves as 'secular' and 'democratic', and are often loquacious on the Palestinian issue or Syrian crisis, are well-advised to show the honesty to speak about a silent, yet horrendous genocide in their backyard.

**Prof Rakesh Sinha**

Hony. Director,  
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**21-10-2013**

# **On the Way to Extinction?**

## **Plight and Predicament of the Hindus and other Minorities in Bangladesh: A Historical Perspective**

It needs to be remembered that very few communities in recorded history have suffered as much as the Hindus of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> But then, they were not a hapless minority all throughout its history. This has been their land since time immemorial.

To understand the current sufferings and exodus of the Hindus from Bangladesh in 2013, one has to keep in mind the fact that it is just another chapter of a tragic story which has been going on for a long time, and not a sudden and unforeseen consequence of the popular protest raging in Bangladesh over the punishment to be given to those guilty of inhuman crimes against the local people by the erstwhile Pakistani authorities and its collaborators during the Bangladesh war of liberation in 1971.

The British-ruled Presidency of Bengal (1757-1947) incorporated the present Indian state of West Bengal and Bangladesh. The eastern part of British Bengal became East Pakistan in 1947, and thereafter an independent country in 1971, following the war of liberation, and broke off from West Pakistan - an entity geographically set apart by more than thousand miles.

In East Pakistan/ Bangladesh, Hindus, Buddhists and other non-Muslim minorities have been subjected to every conceivable form of indignity, discrimination, denial, dispossession, terrorizing and humiliation - including forced conversion to Islam and forced marriage of their women. Sometimes, their menfolk too are converted and suffer in pathetic silence. Most often they seek shelter in India as refugees.<sup>2</sup> Various studies have been done by scholars, both in India and Bangladesh to study this phenomenon of unprecedented scale of “missing population”.

Given the ideology of hatred and intolerance of Muslim separatists in the pre-partition days against the Hindus, and the very concept of an united India to be built on modern values of democracy and the ancient Hindu-Buddhist spirit of toleration and accommodation (or secularism in modern parlance), it was very much expected that the non-Muslim minorities, being polytheists, would be shown no mercy in the new land. India's national leaders simply failed to anticipate the disaster which would fall on the hapless and beleaguered minorities in the newly created Islamic country. As the then, British High Commissioner to Pakistan observed, and reported to Whitehall (1948),

“Muslims are religious and fanatical, and they are more fanatical about religion than about anything else. Because religion rouses them quicker than anything else it has invariably been

used as a means to an end by persons who wishes to influence the Muslim masses for some purpose or another. What Jinnah appears to be aiming at is a State sufficiently Islamic on a high level to make it acceptable to the brotherhood of Islamic States”.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps, what the High Commissioner meant by 'high level’ and its implication was the “high” level of perpetual- pressure-persecution to be perpetrated on the hapless Hindu-Sikh, Buddhist, Christian and other minorities and a “high” level of exodus to India !

## **Historical Background: The Islamic Conquest of Bengal, Communal Divide and its Effects**

To understand the tragedy of the Hindu and other non-Muslim minorities in Bangladesh, we shall take a quick look at some of the salient points in Bengal's history beginning with its conquest by the Turkish invader Bakhtiyar Khilji (late 12th and early 13th century), and the subsequent Islamisation/Arabisation of Bengal, spread over the next five centuries, which was achieved through a combination of military and political power, sustained proselytization, most often through force and inducements, or through the Sufis and various forms of manipulation and societal pressure.<sup>4</sup>

## **British Colonial Rule and its Impact on Bengal Society: The Hindu Response**

The British conquest of Bengal(1757) created a cultural-political space for the oppressed Hindus of Bengal. Beginning with the official support for “Orientalism” in 1780s, associated with Warren Hastings and William Jones,<sup>5</sup> modern education and English language along with the ideas of liberalism and reform became popular with Bengal's Hindu intelligentsia leading to the so called Bengal “Renaissance”. The Cornwallis Code (1793) provided the basis for certain legal security too. Social/religious reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Swami Vivekannada and literary figures like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore and many more promoted the idea of an enlightened society wedded to democratic/liberal values.

The Hindus of Bengal were the pioneers of modern politics and the anti-colonial movement along with their compatriots from other parts of India. Surendranath Banerjee, the “Prophet” of Indian nationalism, Romesh Chandra Dutta, Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Subhas Chandra Bose and a host of revolutionaries were the leading activists in the vigorous anti-colonial

movement. Many of them were ardent admirers of the British parliamentary system, ideas of French Revolution, Irish revolutionaries and the Italian ideologue Mazzini.<sup>6</sup>



## **Muslim Response to British Rule: Further Growth of Separatist Tendencies**

On the other side of the socio-religious divide, there was the Muslim society of Bengal.

While many Muslim converts, mainly in rural Bengal had not been fully Arabised/Islamised except in their names, and had maintained cordial relations with their Hindu relatives/neighbours, a sustained campaign was set in motion by the Wahabis/Faraizis in the first half of 19th century

with their militant campaign for purifying Islam, weeding out the Hindu-Buddhist-Animist remnants from their religio-cultural baggage, coupled with a strident Jihadi campaign which deepened the existing divide between the Hindus and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> Thus emerged a fault line over and above the historical divide.



The Muslim community, exceptions apart, remained cut off from this Indian resurgence.<sup>8</sup> The assassination of Acting chief Justice of Calcutta High Court Norris and Governor-General Lord Mayo in 1871/72 by the Wahabbis marked the re-entry of political Islam. The National Mohammedan Association, leaders like Syed Ameer Ali coupled with the visit of Jamal-al Afghani, and spread of pan-Islamic ideas in India in the late 19th century strengthened the Muslim separatist/communal trends further.<sup>9</sup>

Surendranath Banerjea records how he had worked hard and traveled all over India in 1876-77 for the “establishment of friendly and fraternal relations between Hindus and Mohamedans”.<sup>10</sup>

Sir Syed Ahmad, founder of the Aligarh movement (later Aligarh Muslim University), with his divisive politics, opposition to the Indian National Congress, loyalty to the British, added threats of violence against the Hindus, particularly to the Hindus of Bengal with reference to the Islamic conquest of India.<sup>11</sup>

Amidst all these turbulence, there was one more added - the census operations in 1881 which revealed that Muslims composed almost half of Bengal's population while Hindus were a community in decline.

## **Deterioration in Inter-community Relationship**

The first partition of Bengal in 1905 sought to provide Muslim separatism a territorial basis.

The Swadeshi movement and communal rioting followed. Though the partition was annulled in 1911, the Hindu-Muslim differences had continued to grow through the Simla deputation (1906) asking for a preferential position for the Muslims in the political-administrative set up, which they succeeded in securing through the Morley-Minto Reform Act of 1909. The Muslim League (1906) was set up in Dhaka. Yet the nationalists continued to hope for Hindu and Muslim unity.<sup>12</sup>

The first ever attempt in modern India-when an attempt was made “to use mob violence as a political weapon” happened in September, 1918, when a mob came out on the streets following a call from the Nakhoda mosque in Calcutta, leading to widespread mayhem and destruction of property, and the army was called in. As Nawab Khan Bahadur Saiyid Nawab Ali Chaudhuri, a leading gentry from Eastern Bengal, and a member of the Imperial Legislative Council put it in 1920, “Hitherto the whole history of India since the advent of the Mussalamans in this country is a history of a continued antagonism of the two communities and we need be very cautious in clasping too eagerly the hand of fellowship stretched forward so very gracefully by the other community.”<sup>13</sup>

In India, communal violence has been centuries- old, dating from the Sultanate/ Mughal eras. The communal situation worsened further in the wake of Gandhi's Khilafat/Non cooperation Movement leading to the Moplah attacks on Hindus resulting in large-scale massacre and conversion of thousands of Hindus, anti-Hindu Kohat riots and the assassination of Swami Shraddhanand in Delhi in 1926 by a Muslim. It needs to be mentioned once again that communalism was not a creation of the British masters as some politically motivated historians/politicians have argued in recent times. The British were sometimes impartial, sometimes partisan, taking advantage of the existing divisions as and when they required it, and in the process often widened the gap. By the 1940s, they had turned blatantly pro-Muslim. That was the British culpability.<sup>14</sup>

Subhas Chandra Bose as the Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Corporation, (with Chittaranjan Das as Mayor, and Suhrawardy as deputy Mayor) in 1924. sought to appease the Muslims by giving 23 out of 25 appointments and earned Gandhi's praise.<sup>15</sup> Bose (Feb 1938, Haripura) also assured the Muslims nothing to fear, and “everything to gain” when India secured freedom .<sup>16</sup>

## **Communal Violence and Further Separatist Tendencies**

Jinnah's speech at Lucknow (15 Oct 1937), referred to the possibility of 'a communal war'. the Raja of Mahmudabad who was a key Muslim League leader had sought to project the Congress refusal to form a coalition with them as a refusal 'to recognize even the existence of the Muslim community as such'.<sup>17</sup> As early as October 1938, at the Sind Provincial Muslim League at Karachi, Fazlul Haque, the then Premier of Bengal said, “If Mohammad bin Qasim,

an eight year-old lad with 18 soldiers could conquer Sindh, then surely nine crores of Muslims can conquer whole of India”.<sup>18</sup> Only if his opponents had taken him seriously, they could have saved themselves or could have escaped with lesser damage.

In fact, Subhas Chandra Bose thought of Sind as a synonym for Muslim communal intolerance. He urged the authorities in 1940, “I say, 'Cry halt to your mad drive along the path of communalism and injustice. Do not use a boomerang which will soon recoil on you. And do not make another Sindh of Bengal'”.<sup>19</sup> Broomfield points out, “The most striking fact in this account is the Muslims' assertion, at every point, of their community's right to a separate political existence---this determination to maintain a distinct political identity was throughout the basic factor in Muslim thinking.”<sup>20</sup>

As for the Hindu Mahasabha, (founded in 1915), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and their so-called Hindu communalism, it was always marginal and remained wedded to Indian nationalism, while opposed to the policy of appeasement of Muslims by both the Congress and the British. The politically active Muslims of India dubbed the Gandhi-Bose-Nehru led Congress too as Fascists and Hindu communalists.

## **Political Developments After the Lahore Resolution 1940**

After the demand for Pakistan was made at the Lahore session of the Muslim League (1940) with Bengal as one its constituents, communal tension rose rapidly.

The Dacca riots (1941) onwards, followed by the Quit India movement (1942), political conditions became uncertain. By then, the Muslim League was eyeing Calcutta as a part of the proposed eastern part of Pakistan. Jinnah wrote to Suhrawardy (6 October 1940 or 1941), “I am in agreement with you that Bengal has to be made 100% “League-minded.”<sup>21</sup> The Congress having expelled Bose was politically weak. The Communist Party had supported the Muslim League demand for Pakistan earlier, and the British during the Quit India movement. Their role in Indian politics of that time was suspect and the government also exploited them to the fullest extent.

The gory happenings known as “Direct Action (16 Aug 1946), orchestrated by Jinnah and his Muslim League, ably executed by the then Chief Minister of undivided Bengal Shurawardy began with a ferocious assault on the Hindus of Calcutta and Dhaka. The pogrom on the Hindus of Noakhali (Oct 1946) gave a foretaste of the fate of the Hindus in the proposed Islamic state of Pakistan.

## **Developments after the Partition of India: August 1947 in East Pakistan**

In East Pakistan, Hindus, Buddhists and animists were about 29 % of the population in 1947, and they have now been reduced about 8% of the population. It is true that Eastern Bengal/ Eastern Pakistan did not throw out its entire Hindu/Buddhist population at the time of partition

as it had happened in the Western part. As this author has pointed out elsewhere, “In Islamic parlance, it may be said that while the Hindus and the Sikhs in West Pakistan were subjected to jhatka - instant slaughter at one go, the Hindus and the Buddhists in East Pakistan became items for halal - the process of slow slitting of the head from the torso”<sup>22</sup>

As Prafulla K Chakrabarty writes in his masterly account, “—in the Western zone of India Nehru effected an exchange and then proceeded immediately to solve the problem of the West Pakistan refugees with such thoroughness that within two years they were resettled and integrated into the body politic of India”. Chakrabarty further adds, “Yet this tragic migration, which was the most formidable challenge to the people of post-partition West Bengal and which was never faced with the seriousness it demanded either by the people of West Bengal or by the Central and State Governments, has become a forgotten episode in West Bengal, although the results of this unresolved problem confront us at every step today”.<sup>23</sup>

According to Chakrabarty by March 1948, the number of refugees had swelled to a million and by June 1948, the number had crossed 1.1 million. Interestingly enough, GOI's police action against the Nizam of Hyderabad's ruthless and rabidly communal government is also said to be one of the factors adding to the sense of insecurity of the Hindus in East Pakistan. Majority of those who fled to India belonged to the rural areas and from the lowest strata of the society. Those who mischievously propagate that in East Pakistan, the Hindus suffered at the hands of their Muslim neighbours because of their wealth and high status are absolutely wrong. The poor and the deprived suffered and lost no less than their social superiors.<sup>24</sup>

Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the doyen of Indian historians, conversant with the behavioural pattern of India's Muslim rulers had warned in August, 1948, “Our Central government had admitted that up to the end of July last, i.e. in less than twelve months of our freedom, eleven and half a lakh of men from East-Bengal have migrated to West Bengal. And this stream has not ended: five days ago 760 persons from East Pakistan landed at Sealdah, and the flow is sometimes reaching the thousands-man-a-day height. Nor do I see any prospect of this migration ever stopping altogether as far as I can look into the future; for years and years to come a thin trickle of humanity, and about a hundred will daily transfer themselves from East Bengal to West Bengal and Calcutta will be the first depot of this human cargo”.<sup>25</sup> How prophetic Sir Jadunath was !

As Jayanta Kumar Ray had said, “Minorities in East Pakistan- Buddhists, Christians and, by far the most numerous Hindus have been systematically discriminated against and pushed out into the neighbouring areas of India. The degree and extent of discrimination vary from time to time and place to place but it has occurred continuously”.<sup>26</sup>

## **Political-Administrative System in East Pakistan**

Talking about East Pakistan in particular, Taya Zinkin had observed, '—so long as there are

Hindus in East Pakistan-there are practically none left in West Pakistan the status of India's Muslims cannot be finally settled. Hindus are very tolerant, but if the remaining 9 million of Hindu of East Bengal was to flood into India, Hindu tolerance might be tested beyond endurance, and pressure might be brought to bear on Muslims to migrate to Pakistan and make room for the newcomers<sup>27</sup>

## **The Pogrom of 1950**

Before the pogrom began in 1950, there were many cases of attacks and atrocities against the Hindus in many parts of East Pakistan, August 1949 onwards, causing extensive damage to them leading to the flight of thousands of Hindus to India. The fresh attack on Hindus had begun with an attack on them by the East Pakistani police in Kalshira village in Khulna district on 20 Dec 1949, which had its impact in some anti-Muslim disturbances in Calcutta, and then there were massive attacks on the Hindus in various parts of East Pakistan.

As Chakrabarty described, “This time the migrants came down like an avalanche” Marginal 28 There was an extensive and organized attack on the Hindus, with officials including the police remaining “completely indifferent” and the armed Muslim marauders, known as Ansars on the rampage. The much respected Dharendra Nath Dutta, who took up this genocidal attack on the Hindus in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan(March 1950) rightly said that the “very existence of our community” was threatened.<sup>29</sup>

About 1.75 million refugees had found shelter in India in 1950. Graham sounds unconvincing in suggesting that “economic distress had undoubtedly contributed to communal unrest”. And he mentions, India devaluing her rupee( linked to sterling pound) and Pakistan's refusal to do so, India stopping coal supplies to Pakistan, East Pakistan not supplying raw jute to India etc etc. From the scale of pogrom unleashed on East Pakistani Hindus, the fact of Islamic strand and intolerance of the Hindus come out clear. Graham blunders egregiously in comparing the active collusion of Nurul Amin's government in Dhaka with the fair mindedness of Dr B.C. Roy in Calcutta.<sup>30</sup>

This is when Syama Prasad Mookerjee, a leading Minister in Nehru's Cabinet felt that the sufferings of the Hindus of East Pakistan did not have much effect on Nehru's government. This is when he and Sardar Patel wanted strong action against Pakistan and once again revived the old idea of an exchange of population, which however, was rejected by Nehru. According to N.V. Gadgil's (another Cabinet Minister) account Syama Prasad told Nehru, “When Muslims in Kashmir were attacked you sent Indian armed forces and spent crores of rupees. What do you care for us Bengali Hindus ? What do you care for the criminal assaults on our women ?”<sup>31</sup>

There is much truth in what the indomitable Syama Prasad Mookerjee had pointed out. As we all know that the Nehru-Liaquat Pact which was concluded in April 1950, 32 turned out to be

another victory for the Pakistan, and a resounding defeat for Nehru and his Congress party the Government of India.<sup>32</sup> ( see Enclosure I) But by then, with his brute majority in Parliament, Nehru had turned a deaf ear to the sufferings of Hindus, particularly in East Pakistan. He had re-confirmed his “secular” credentials by being over-generous to Pakistan and apathetic to its “Holy” Mission of exterminating its entire Hindu-Sikh population.

What the Nehru-Liaquat Pact did was to seal the fate of Hindus for all time to come in both the wings of Pakistan, particularly in the East, while Muslims in India, most of whom had stayed back were given full guarantees of protection and fair treatment. In fact, many Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan returned back very soon. For Hindus, however, it remained only one-way-movement towards India.

Syama Prasad saw through Nehru's game-plan. The anti-Hindu pogrom in East Pakistan he said, “formed part of a deliberate and cold planning to exterminate minorities from East Bengal; to ignore this is to forget the realities.” He told the Parliament that the recent riots in East Pakistan were fomented by its government and they had deliberately exaggerated the happenings in India. But Nehru remained unmoved. It is not at all surprising that the attitude of the GOI towards Pakistan, Bangladesh and overall Islamic violence and atrocities against Hindus and their sufferings has remained consistent, and turned more accommodating of the ultimate objective of the oppressors.<sup>33</sup>

Syama Prasad was perhaps right in asking for an exchange of population, while Nehru rejecting it committed another blatantly anti-Hindu act of unimaginable proportions. Even Jogendra Narayan Mandal resigned from the Central Pakistani Cabinet and fled to India.<sup>34</sup> (See Enclosure.II)

## **Genocide in East Pakistan, 1964**

This was triggered by the theft of a relic of associated with the Prophet of Islam from the Hazratbal shrine of Sringar. There was a call for Jihad against the Hindus and the then military dictator- ruler of Pakistan, Gen Ayub Khan had said in Dhaka that if there was any repercussion of the incident of this theft, he could not be held responsible.

Soon one- sided attack was unleashed on the hapless Hindus. Speeches were made by a Central Minister of Pakistan to attack the Hindus in Khulna, Leaflets spewing venom against

Hindus asking them to leave Pakistan and go away to India, and threatening them with massacre were widely circulated. In a series of mass attacks they were killed in large numbers in Khulna, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet (originally Srihatta, a famous Hindu place for pilgrimage and a Shakti-pitha too), and various places, in both rural and urban areas. What makes the gory happenings in Sylhet was force-feeding of beef to a Hindu holy man, Basudeva Sharma on the Id-ul-Fitr day, and forced conversion of 35 Hindu labourers in the tea gardens, having been forced to eat beef.



Hindu victims belonged to all stratas of the society-both high and low. There is obviously nothing on record to show that the lower strata of the Hindu society was treated with dignity and honor because they and the Muslim attackers came from the same social status, and only the upper strata were subjected to indignities and then thrown out.<sup>35</sup>

Khulna which was the only Hindu majority district handed over to Pakistan saw such a massive exodus of Hindus that it was turned into a Hindu minority district thereafter.

One may compare this with the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, a Muslim majority district, which became a part of India in 1947, but predictably has not only maintained its Muslim majority demographic composition but has also seen a depletion of its Hindu population. It is also crucial to bear in mind the fact, five more districts of West Bengal, like many districts in Assam have been turned into Muslim majority districts.

One may take note of the fact that another area of East Pakistan, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which had a Buddhist majority(97%) at the time of partition has been turned into a Muslim majority area and consequently a Buddhist minority area. Christians also suffered as about 35,000 Christians fled from East Pakistan, and they mainly found shelter in Assam and they were mostly Garos, Hajongs and Dulus from the Mymensingh district of East Pakistan. Even the fleeing refugees from East Pakistan were fired upon by the East Pakistan Rifles as stated by Lakshmi Menon, the then Deputy Foreign Minister in the GOI. <sup>35</sup> This genocide has been rightly characterized as “gruesome massacre and ethnic cleansing of Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan.

Besides this comprehensive program, the Hindu minorities had one more devastating blow aimed at their landed property. Never perhaps any government anywhere had ever done this kind of gross injustice against its own people as done through the Enemy/ Vested Property Act of 1965. It has been described like this, “Part of a comprehensive package to systematically eliminate the minorities from the eastern wing of Pakistan, which had become an Islamic state in all but name, the Government of Field Marshall Ayub Khan enacted the Enemy Property Act in 1965 during the Indo-Pak war to confiscate the land of the minorities by branding them as enemies of state. This was however, in a long chain of legislative acts or ordinances, beginning with the East Bengal Evacuee Property Restoration, Possession Act, 1951, the East Bengal

Evacuee Administration of Immovable Property Act of 1951, the East Bengal Prevention of Transfer of Property and Removal of Documents and Records Act of 1952, the East Bengal Disturbed Persons(Rehabilitation Ordinance of 1964(which provided that the properties belonging to the members of the minority communities could not be sold, which were compelling the Hindus to leave their homeland without being able to dispose their movable and immovable properties”.<sup>36</sup>

“The expropriation of Hindus through the 'motivated application' of the V.P. Act increased

manifold after that. Legal experts maintain that the law has been extensively misinterpreted and misused to harass and deprive the hapless minorities. Despite various amendments and promises to end this iniquitous anachronism, the Act exists. This, however, is just another aspect of the state-sponsored tyranny against the minority communities and one major factor behind their continuous exodus to India”.<sup>37</sup>

As Abul Barkat, a Bangladeshi scholar known for his very competent work on this matter has pointed out, “Religious communalism became so powerful in Pakistan that in the 1965 Indo-Pak war, the feudal –army rulers of that time did not take even twenty four hours time to label all the Hindus of East Pakistan into Hindustani. They proclaimed the Enemy Property Act' which implies that all the Hindus residing in Pakistan are enemies”.<sup>38</sup> The estimated loss of landed property incurred by the Hindus has been estimated at- 2.6 million acres belonging to six million Hindus.<sup>39</sup>

Incidentally Amartya Sen's ancestral property was declared as Vested Property and so was the property of Surya Sen, the legendary revolutionary of the Chittagong armoury raid case fame. The enormity of dispossession on the basis of religion, and being one of the worst-ever example of misuse of State power, led to an international campaign to abolish it, and later, despite its abolition, most of the dispossessed have not been restored their legitimate ownership back. Many of illegal occupiers continue to remain in unlawful possession of such stolen property because many of them are functionaries of various political parties, including the Awami League.<sup>40</sup>

## The Pogrom of 1971

During the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war over the liberation of Bangladesh, about 10 million people had fled to India, while 3 million people were killed by the Pakistani armed forces and its local collaborators. More than 90% of the refugees and victims of genocide were Hindus. Being in the news once again and of relatively recent memory, I refrain from giving a detailed account of the gory happenings.

It is a matter of great shame that along with the negationist in the Pakistani camp, one India lady scholar is also campaigning to wash off the inhuman crimes of her Pakistani patrons-collaborators.<sup>41</sup>



Tribal Hindu housewives, gang raped by Islamic fanatics. The insult made them speechless. (Mukto-Mona.com)



Name a crime, think of a cruelty, and the worst possible behavior ever perpetrated against

fellow human beings, the Pakistanis, and their local collaborators - the Bihari Muslims/Urdu-speaking Muslims, and some Bengali speaking Muslims, Jamat and Ansar types too indulged in fiendish behaviour without any inhibition. Right from pulling down the ancient Ramna Kali bari, and desecrating the ancient Dhakeshwari Kali mandir, after which Dhaka is named, there was genocide of unimaginable proportions-mass rape to mass graves. Villages after villages were burnt and their inhabitants held captive, tortured, raped and often converted to Islam. Women were naturally a major victim of all sorts of inhuman crimes.

The intellectuals of Dhaka university, Jagannath Hall - both Hindus and Muslims, the members of Sheikh Mujibur's Awami League were marked out for most inhuman treatment. As one description of this genocidal attack by a senior Indian journalist goes,

“This writer would not have believed that humans could stoop down to such acts had he not been an eye-witness to some of the results.” He cites an article by one Prof. Hamida Rahman, titled, “Kataser Bad badhyabhumi” originally carried in Dainik Azad (2 Jan 1971) regarding the number of persons who were killed, “Field stretched after field. Skeletons of the dead in the thousands of mounds of earth beside every wetland bore witness to the number of people killed----”.<sup>42</sup> And it is this extensive genocide by the Pakistanis that the present International Crimes Tribunal was set up and this was in response to an international demand for such a tribunal.<sup>43</sup>

It is believed that while an overwhelming majority of the Hindu refugees went back but a substantial number stayed back. What however, was a cause of perpetual embarrassment was that many of them, and in many case the children of these returnee refugees were again faced with discrimination and persecution had to flee to India.

## **Developments in Bangladesh after 1971**

Hindus, Buddhist and other non-Muslim minorities had no peace, except during the period when Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Awami League were in power. And there have been countless episodes of mass migration. The flight of families and stray individuals go on all the time.

Liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistani clutches and the proclamation of its commitment to secular and democratic principles gave some hope to its beleaguered minorities. But the brutal assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his close family members and the military coup arranged by the anti-liberation forces and religious zealots aided by their patron,

Pakistan, and other international forces turned everything upside down.

“- once the short-lived experiment with secularism ended in 1975, Islamisation was vigorously pursued by the governments of Gen. Rehman and more specially after the 8th

amendment to the Bangladesh constitution by Gen. Ershad, making Islam the State religion.<sup>44</sup>

Subsequently, Hindus, the Jumma people of the CHT and other smaller minorities have continued to suffer from time to time, particularly in the pogroms during the Ayodhya movement and the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri masjid demolition, the BNP led genocide in 2001, and many such major and minor occasions. And most of time no action worth the name was undertaken by their government. And there have been countless episodes of mass migration. The flight of families and stray individuals go on all the time. The One in 2001 orchestrated mainly by Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP and their associates has been most vividly and poignantly described in a masterly study edited by the noted Bangladeshi intellectual Shariyar Kabir, spread over 2760 pages. As we shall see that one particular aspect of this dastardly attack was on Hindu women-to take away their izzat or honor, and thus compelling these traumatized families to immediately flee away to India. Shariyar Kabir ed,

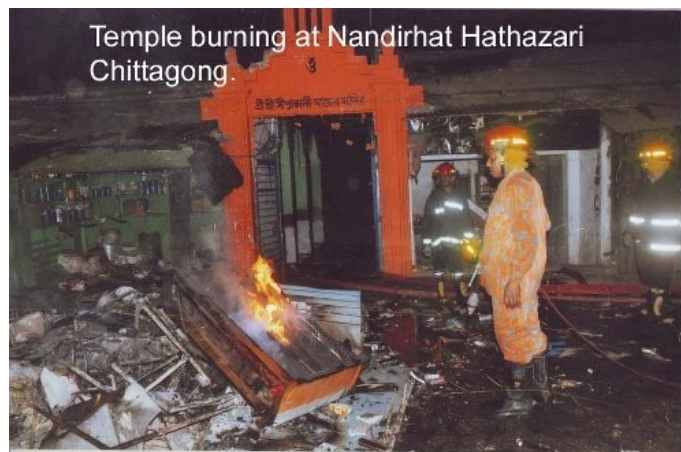
White Paper: 1500 Days of minority persecution in Bangladesh. Vol.1. Part. I. A Collection of news clippings, articles, field reports, photographs and observation on minority persecution in Bangladesh). Committee for Resisting Killers and Collaborators of 1971) Dhaka, 1971. In three volumes spread over 968+912+880= 2760 pages, is a magisterial collection of articles on the persecution and sufferings of the Hindus, Buddhist and Christian minorities in Bangladesh over a period of 1500 days—between 15 July 2001 to 25 August 2005, is a unique collection of documents contributed by many eye-witnesses, activists and culled from many newspapers after due verification about their authenticity.<sup>45</sup>

## The Latest Round: 2013 So Far

As for the latest bout of attack on the Hindus, again they have become victims of pro-Pakistani, Jamat and similar fanatical elements, and once again treated horrendously.

A Report from Amnesty International dt 6th March 2013 mentioned desecration of about forty Hindu temples, and destruction of a large number of Hindu houses, shops and various

other atrocities inflicted on them. In the process, thousands have been rendered homeless while losing whatever possessions they had. Some of them have been provided shelter in government-run accommodation.



Scores of shops and houses belonging to the Hindu community have also been burned down, leaving hundreds of people homeless. “The Hindu community in Bangladesh is at extreme risk, in particular at such a tense time in the country. It is shocking that they appear to be targeted simply for their religion. The authorities must ensure that they receive the protection

they need,” said Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International's Bangladesh Researcher. Attacks have happened across Bangladesh, but mostly in remote areas in the country as in Daudkandi village, south-eastern Comilla district, where a Hindu temple was vandalised and burned down. One survivor told Amnesty International that on 28 February, his family's village of Rajganj Bazar in the south-eastern Noakhali district was set on fire by people taking part in a Jamaat-organised strike.

“They moved into our properties and set fire to 30 of our houses. Seventy-six families were living in these houses. They also set fire to our temples – all are now vanished,” one survivor said, who asked to remain anonymous out of concerns for his safety. He said the authorities have provided temporary accommodation to the affected families, who had lost almost all their belongings to theft or destruction in the violence. Another survivor said that on 2 March, a group of about 100 young men holding banners in support of JI looted and damaged four shops in Satkania near Chittagong and vandalised a Hindu temple in the village.” :

As the aljazeera T.V. channel reported “A few weeks ago, after Friday prayers, a mob of more than 3,000 people attacked the house of Sadhanchandra Mandal, a Hindu, in southwestern Bangladesh. “They attacked our houses shouting slogans such as ... "We are the Taliban, this Bengal will be Afghan', and looted everything," said 60-year-old Mandal, who said the attackers used petrol and weapons in the assault against his home.

"I don't understand how we will survive here - anytime I will be killed, as they are threatening me." Mandal said the police and a paramilitary battalion did nothing to stop the crowd from attacking houses in the remote villages of the Satkhira district where he lives. "My wife and daughter-in-law with her two kids saved their lives by swimming across a pond," Mandal told Al Jazeera. "We are still not safe." With tensions running high, minorities have come to be seen as soft targets to vent frustration. The minorities have also been complaining of government ineptitude in ensuring their safety. Besides Hindus, Buddhists are reported to have come under attack from marauding mobs. With more war crimes verdicts expected over the coming months, they are continuing to live in fear. Surobhi Rani Mandal, who is from Khulna district, explained with tears in her eyes that “religious bigots ransacked and torched my house. Where can we go now?”. “How can I pray now?” asked Rani, whose personal idols were destroyed in the attacks. “Nobody is coming to help us. I lost my three cows on which I depended for my livelihood by selling milk. I am worried Jamaat Chhatra Shibir [the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami] hooligans will attack again.” Though Surobhi Rani has identified some of the attackers, no action has yet been taken against them. “Impunity for lawbreakers is a major

problem in Bangladesh. Corruption and lack of professionalism among the police force worsen the situation of the country's minorities,”

Rabindra Ghosh, founder of Bangladesh Minority Watch, said he himself has been assaulted in the past, but the police failed to find the culprits. In most cases, he claimed, the police know the identity of the perpetrators but do not act.

Many attackers target minorities for their property, while others aim violence specifically against Hindu women, said Ghosh. He mentioned the case of a 14-year-old kidnapped nearly two months ago in Sylhet district, in the country's north. Her family filed papers with the police naming the suspect, but to no avail.

When Al Jazeera asked Sakhawat Hossain, the superintendent of police in Sylhet, about the case, he said he was not aware of it. However, he said the police do act when they receive allegations from victims' families, and promised to inquire about the incident.”

“In many cases, supporters of the Awami League, which is seen as sympathetic to minorities, have also participated in the attacks against minorities. Global Human Rights Defence, a Netherlands-based rights group, documented in a 2010 report a number of cases in which ruling members of the Awami League were found to be involved in persecution of Hindus and ethnic minorities.

Minorities say attackers are often seeking to exploit any available pretext to grab their land and property. It further commented, “The highly polarised politics of Bangladesh, exemplified by the bitter political rivalry between two leading politicians - current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and opposition leader and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia - have not helped the cause of minorities. Hasina's Awami League has dithered on working towards equal economic and political opportunities for minorities and restoring the secularism originally laid out in the Bangladeshi constitution. The country's constitution, which treats all citizens as equal, adopted Islam as the state religion in 1988.”

In some cases the Judiciary has successfully intervened and sought to provide some relief to the criminals in intimidating and demanding extortion from the Hindus. Recently the Hon'ble High Court had ordered the arrest of the perpetrators who had attacked 13 Hindu families of Gopalpur upazila in Tangail district. In fact, it was alleged that some of them enjoyed the support of the Awami League partymen also. Grim stories of the suffering of Hindus are just pouring in.<sup>46</sup>

In early March Sri Sri Hari Mandir in Baghacahri P.S. Rangamati district was totally burnt down by some BNP activists involving a loss of about Taka Three lakhs. The culprits were however, arrested subsequently. The deity of Devi Saraswati was taken away from the family puja room of Soumendra Nath Paramanik of Ramnagar village and broken as a mark of deliberate sacrilege. In Lakshmipur village (Noakahli district) Ghosh Mistanna Bhandar

and Janani Hair Cutting saloon were attacked besides many Hindu –owned shops. Dainik Samaya.<sup>47</sup>

One of the observations made by a senior Bangladeshi journalist on the anti-Hindu violence goes like this, “A terrible fallout of this turmoil has been the systematic attacks on Hindu homes and temples across Bangladesh by activists of the Jamaat and others who have never conceived of Bangladesh as being anything other than a state based, a la Pakistan, on Muslim communal foundations. Thousands of Hindu homes have been ransacked; Hindu families have had their valuables looted by fanatic mobs; and still last count, as many as 42 temples were vandalized or burnt down. The BNP has now embarked on a Goebbelsian mission of propagating the untruth that the Hindus have been the target of ruling Awami League. It is unwilling to admit the provocation it provided to those (and they were elements in the Jamaat besides being bigots from other organized gangs) who have carried out the mayhem. The sense of insecurity in the Hindu community is, understandably, well pronounced. The same is true of Bangladesh's Buddhists, who saw their temples and religious scriptures put to the torch in southeastern town of Ramu last year. There have been reports of Christians being threatened by Muslim bigots in Dhaka”<sup>48</sup>

Manash Ghosh, Editor of Dainik Statesman, attributes much of the responsibility for the havoc caused in Bangladesh, and particularly the sufferings of the Hindus to the Opposition leader Khaleda Zia, and her “Pakistani mentors” whom she had met in Singapore earlier. She and her “alliance partner”, the Jamaat besides opposing the visit of Indian President through a call for hartal, “ordered the systematic cleansing of the minorities in Bangladesh. Hindu and Buddhist villages were targeted for attacks all over the country with the message; “Go to India if you vote for the Awami League in any future election”<sup>49</sup>

## **Towards a Conclusion**

Though the movement at Shahbag Square was peaceful and non-violent, and slogans like - “Who You are, Who You are?” were responded with equally powerful chants, “Bangali, Bangali”, and “Religion is personal, Nation belongs to all” rent the air, yet for many sections of society, it was un-Islamic, and pro-India/inspired by Bharat/ India etc. Be that as it may, it also coincided with one of those periodic outbursts of anti-Hindu frenzy and widespread mayhem which has characterized East Pakistan/Bangladesh over the decades and Islamic Bengal over the centuries.

The spirited protestors, many of them educated and modern in their outlook, who flaunted their ethnic identity so clearly and asserted their inspiration to the legendary freedom fighters/ revolutionaries like Surya Sen, Pritilata Wadedar and the likes of those who led the Chittagong armoury raid, had proclaimed their commitment to an all-embracing Bengali identity. But they also faced another challenge-how to check the dangerous game-plan of their Pan Islamic



adversaries.

It is believed that some of the Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, the fountain-head of Wahabi intolerance and Pan Islamic expansion, backed as it is by abundant resources operates through the madrasa-mosque-NGO trinity and many more outfits( they are also active in various parts of India, especially West Bengal, where they have become hyper-active for sometime) are behind this virulent religious strand which has caused so much of trauma and loss to the hapless Hindu minorities there. Further Ghosh points out that Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey are “now doing a repeat of what they did in 1971 to undermine and frustrate liberation war. But this time they and their world forum, the Organisation of Islamic Countries(OIC) are opposing the movement which has posed them the biggest threat.”<sup>50</sup>

Whatever positive tone Ghosh's plain-speaking had in this article was more than neutralized by his subsequent article, an irrational criticism of Mamata Banerjee for refusing to part with Teesta water to Bangladesh as responsible for the rise of anti-secular forces in Bangladesh.<sup>51</sup> In the process,

Ghosh ignores the basic fact that despite giving the Farakka water to Bangladesh by Jyoti Basu-Inder Gujral combine, which has permanently damaged the navigability of the Calcutta port and caused other collateral damages,<sup>52</sup> there has been no corresponding increase in the secular quotient in Bangladesh.

We have seen above how and why the Hindus and other non-Muslim minorities continue to suffer terribly. But there is one more reason that encourages, abets and emboldens the deeply ingrained anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist forces in Bangladesh and Pakistan (and Malaysia also for that matter) that there is no one in India to take up their cause and bring it before to the appropriate national or international fora worth the name.

There is always some reaction in Tamil Nadu whenever the sufferings of the Tamils in Sri Lanka are reported. One might take note of Ms Jayalalitha's statements about the genocide of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and steps being taken by her government like sending back the Sri Lankan defence personnel undergoing training in Chennai and barring their cricket players from playing in Tamil Nadu. Even the DMK withdrew support to the UPA-II government in



New Delhi on this issue.

Nothing like this happens in West Bengal. Marcus Franda had noted long back as to how the “West Bengal intelligentsia shied away from any description of communal violence and

uprooting of Hindus in East Bengal”<sup>53</sup> For example, one may ask people of such eminence as Amartya Sen, whose ancestral roots are in Dhaka, and who is a regular visitor to Bangladesh as to why he remains reticent on the sufferings of the Hindus of Bangladesh, especially when he is so vocal on other non-issues ?

Even in the projection of the recent past, people like Amartya Sen are guilty of suppressio veri and suggestio falsi. Sen writes about the suddenness of “sectarian politics” engulfing the people in India, and the beginning of “divisive politics” in the 1940s, and in the process, he obviously withholds certain basic and well known facts of Indian history and the role played by the Islamic conquerors. He smothers the destructive consequences of Islamisation/Arabisation going on for centuries all over India. He also suppresses the role of the Wahabis and Faraizis in 18th century Bengal and elsewhere in India. He refrains from mentioning the foundation of the Muslim League in his native Dhaka, certainly not very far from his ancestral home and its dangerous politics of separatism/communalism. Nor does he write about the Lahore Resolution(1940) demanding India's partition which was also moved by Fazlul Haque from a neighbouring district, the “Direct Action”(16 Aug 1946) mayhem orchestrated by Suhrawardy's government in Bengal, and the brutal pogrom at Noakhali unleashed by the Muslim League-and all of them happened close to Sen's Dhaka/Shantiniketan homes.

Sen's “objectivity” is perhaps best illustrated by a carefully chosen solitary example that he cites- the murder of a poor Muslim labourer close to his Dhaka home. While he has every valid reason to grieve the death of a fellow human being, and most of us do the same, but then the question is as to why he withholds the much larger picture, the merciless attacks on the Hindus ever since the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji in Bengal and their declining population. Even in the 1940s, the biggest holocaust of the Hindus in Bengal were done at the behest of the Muslim League and the Muslims. In justification of Sen, the philosopher of justice and moral values, one may have to accept that probably he had no access to any information on such anti-Hindu pogroms except that of a solitary individual he chose to “remember” and “recollect” !<sup>54</sup> In fact, in Dhaka city itself, in course of the “Direct Action”, at least twenty two people were killed and 75 were injured.

It is believed more Hindus were killed.<sup>55</sup>

Next, he does not mention a word on the War of liberation of Bangladesh against Pakistan and the genocide of three million people. There is not a word on the sufferings of the Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Ahmediyas in Bangladesh.. Sen also writes about his visits to Dhaka

university and the academics he meets, and the names he cites are all Arabic.<sup>56</sup> Sen, does not ask as to why the university in which Ramesh Chandra Majumdar was a Vice Chancellor, where Satyendranath Bose(of Boson fame) and Ashutosh Sen, his father had once taught, there is no Hindu academic worth the name. And this is the tragedy of the Hindus of

Bangladesh. The people in West Bengal/India, with roots in eastern Bengal can see the difference, and yet unwilling to make the necessary conclusion or do the minimum to offer any meaningful solution.

In his “The Argumentative Indian”, Sen confirms his bias once again. Discussing the relations between India and her neighbours he says, “Similarly, relations between Bangladesh and India demand much more subtlety of perception, linked as the two countries are not only by history, but also by language and literature (Bengali culture flourishes on both sides of the border), religion (the Muslim minority in India constitutes about the same proportion of the Indian population as the Hindu minority does of the Bangladeshi population), migration (fairly extensive, taking illegal with the legal), politics (both secular but with a substantial presence of religious sectarianism in both countries), and economics(great potentiality of close economic ties that continue to remain largely unrealized). He writes also on the Gramin Bank of Bangladesh and influence of Tagore in Bangladesh but scrupulously avoids writing a word on the pathetic plight of the Hindus there Their declining numbers, constant insecurity is known to everyone –and this is easily available from the census/ actual economic condition-employment figures, conversion to Islam and their steady flight to India. Sen who surely has an excellent training in arithmetic and statistics and various primary sources should have known the reality. But he refrains from doing that in all his writings and public speeches. It is this attitude of the intellectuals Indian academics/ NRI activists/propagandists that is in important factor for the unending sufferings of the minorities in Bangladesh/Pakistan and pushing them towards extinction and with worst possible sufferings. It is this insensitivity that emboldens the perpetrators of horrendous genocide to carry on with greater zeal and ferocity. It is time, an earnest appeal was made to intellectuals like them to desist from saying the absurd if they can't do anything for the survival of these victims of history.<sup>57</sup>

It needs to be reiterated that if the political class of West Bengal remains apathetic, if not hostile to the plight of the Hindus on the other side of the border, where many of them had once they belonged, why and how would the GOI, which is also dependent on a communal Muslim vote-bank would show the urgency to do something for these hapless people ? One may end this sad story about the decimation of a community with another example –how the so-called Bhadraklok Buddhijibis of West Bengal turn a blind eye to the gory happenings across the border when we look at the widely circulated fortnightly “elitist” magazine Desh. It writes well about the movement in Dhaka, but does not mention a word on the atrocities on the Hindus in two articles it carried- “E Ek Notun Ekushe February” and “Joy Bangla. Shahbage



Gonojagoran”<sup>58</sup>? Like so many in India, they want to remain on the good books of the Pan-Islamists. That's Nehruvian secularism at its best !

Hence, those who still argue that Jinnah was a secularist even in the 1930s / 1940s, have done a great disservice to both the study of the past as a historical discipline, and the fate of all the

Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians still left in Pakistan and Bangladesh, besides undermining the very foundation of India as a nation state. After all, Jinnah happens to be “one of the greatest mass murders in history.”<sup>59</sup>

Since the political class in India is wedded to a distorted version of secularism, and remains dependent on communal vote-bank politics, wherein support to the cause of the Palestinians is a must,<sup>60</sup> but support for the Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh is a taboo, the latter are deprived of the support which legally and morally they were entitled to from India and the world outside. And incidentally, many of those refugees who were mercilessly thrown out from both the wings of Pakistan, and escaped death and conversion to Islam, are the leading advocates in India in defending Pakistan, even blatantly justifying the merciless torture/killing of our soldiers, smothering its role as a terrorist./rogue nation and promoting divisive politics on a blatantly communal basis so that it was partitioned once again-and all in the interest of the Islamic ummah. With all such visionaries flourishing in India, the future really looks ominous.

Pakistan, naturally evolved as what Sir Vidya Naipaul aptly calls a “criminal enterprise” because the primordial forces far from being restrained or neutralized were continuously encouraged there. In Bangladesh also a similar pattern developed, as noted earlier, but there has also emerged some rays of hope. This author had noted earlier “The emergence of a small section of enlightened people in Bangladesh as matter of “great hope”. After all, the litmus test of any culture is the sanctity of human life and dignity embodied in its world-view”, and “there has been going on a 'cultural tug-of-war between the “Islamic and Bengali identity” among the Muslims of Bangladesh.”<sup>61</sup> One must bear in mind the fact that violence against the religious minorities in Pakistan/Bangladesh has been state-sponsored most of the time. The fate of the Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh depends on the ultimate outcome of the bloody confrontation between the Pan Islamists and the secular civil society who are rooted in the indigenous and accommodative Bengali identity dating back from its pre-Islamic times . Chairman of the Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission, Mizanur Rahman mentioned the “inadequate steps taken by the authorities to protect the Hindus who were “living in insecurity”.”<sup>62</sup>

As it had happened in the 1971 war of liberation, once again, both the people and the government of India, and more particularly the people of West Bengal have a crucial role to play in the survival of whatever is left of the Hindu, Buddhist and other minorities of Bangladesh, as also in its long-term viability as a civilized, democratic, secular nation.

Moreover, if the people and political class in India continue to ignore this human tragedy any longer for their short-term petty gains, they are only making themselves easy prey to such primordial forces in the near future.

It is high time that something meaningful was done for this endangered community which had once led India in its national resurgence and anti-colonial movement. But for partition, they remain as much our people as any one else's. It is a humanitarian issue of utmost importance and a solemn duty for India to save them.<sup>63</sup> Apart from this, their safety, honor and dignity is a must for peace, stability and communal amity in the entire region of South Asia.

## Footnotes & Bibliography

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3. British High Commissioner to Dominion Office, London, 5 May 1948. File. No. D0/142/345. (Public Record Office, London) [ This is from author's personal collection of original source materials.] There has been no end to their suffering till today.

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19. Sisir Bose , et al, *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta Oxford, Delhi, 1998), p.268

20. Broomfield, op.cit. p.218.

Nirad Chandra Choudhury, *Thy Hand Great Anarch. India 1921-1952*, London, 1987. provides a socio-political flavour of the time. Choudhury who originally belonged to eastern Bengal(Mymansingh) says that “Ever since the Twenties I had been advising the elder sisters to leave East Bengal because I did not want them to live under the social and cultural domination of Muslims, and in 1945 I asked the younger sister, whose husband was much more wealthy than my other brother-in-law---to come away to Calcutta realizing all their assets in time”. His two sisters, however, refused to come saying 'there was perfect harmony and friendliness between the Hindus and Muslims” pp.825-826. As events subsequently showed that Chaudhury's assessment of the emerging scenario was correct and his sisters were wrong. C.H. Philips, Wainwright, *The Partition of India. Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1970). Various articles in this collection captures the political and social ambience of time all over India. Hereafter Philips

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33. Saradindu Mukherji, "Blame the Pakistan Apologists" June 26 1992. "Subservience to Pan-Islamism Must End: Sept 18 1992. all in The Pioneer.

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42. Hiranmay Karlekar, “Brutes and Savages deserve death”, The Pioneer 23 March 2013

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46. Press Release dt 6 March 2013 Downloaded on 22 March 2012: Wave of violent attacks against Hindu minority in Bangladesh Amnesty International

Subject: Story published by Al-Zazira relating to continuous Repression against Bangladesh Minorities <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/03/201332472510585942.html> This also includes the report sent by Sumi Khan from Dhaka.

47. Amardesh 10th March, 2013: "Sangbad" 11.03.2013 Dainik Samaya Prasanga 29 March 2013( On the net)

48. Syed Badrul Ahsan, March 15 2013 The Indian Express

49. Manas Ghosh, Behind BNP-Jamaat's Onslaughts on the Shahbag Movement' Mainstream 22-28 March 2013

50. Ibid.

51. Manas Ghosh, The Statesman 22 May 2013 , “Bengali ethos and the battle of Secularism”.

52. Saradindu Mukherji, “ There is more to Dhaka than Water”, The Indian Express, 11 Dec 1996

53. Marcus Franda, cited in Marginal, p.25 Radical politics in West Bengal p.38

54. Amartya Sen-Biography. . hereafter nobelprize.org.

I acknowledge and remember with sadness a lively discussion with late Abhas Kumar Chatterjee(IAS, Bihar cadre, 1966 batch), who took a premature retirement from the service about this absurd, illogical and politically motivated stance of Sen. Chatterjee incidentally was a student of Sen at the Delhi School of Economics in the early 1960s. For more on Sen's queer and partial understanding of history see, Saradindu Mukherji, “Sita Ram Goel taught his people their history”. pp.130-142 in Koenraad Elst, India's only Communalist. In Commemoration of Sita Ram Goel (Delhi 2005)

55. Fortnightly Report for the 2nd half of August 1946 for the province of Bengal. Home Political F. 18/ 8/46. Pol.(1) (National Archives of India, New Delhi). At personal level, I have spoken to many people who lived in Dhaka at that time.

56. www. nobelprize.org. op.cit.



57. Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian. Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (Allen Lane, Penguin, Delhi, 2005). p.43, p. xvii, 43, 55-5, 321, 328, 332, 249,

Similarly on Pakistan, Sen avoids mentioning the plight of the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and other matters which would expose the real character of the Pakistani state. P.42-4, 300, 302, 260-64. Hence Sen's description on the Kargil attack by Pakistan, "--the two countries did undergo a major military confrontation in the Kargil district of Kashmir" p.260, thus Sen avoids telling that Pakistan was the aggressor. Similar is his effort to smother the nature of the Pakistani state in its treatment of the Hindus, Sikhs and Christians there. pp.42-4, 260-64,

300-302, 256-269.

58. *Desh*(In Bengali) 17 March 2013. Another typical example of smothering the plight of the Hindus of Bangladesh, and then mischievously comparing them to the politically dominant, ever-growing Muslim population of West Bengal has been done, by writers such as Abhijit Dasgupta and Sekhar Bandopadaya in *Minorities and the State. Changing Social and Political Landscape of Bengal*, ed. Abhijit Dasgupta, Togawa and Barkat (Delhi, 2011). Falsity of such an absurd juxtaposition looks politically motivated, and is perhaps best proved by the fact that in the Bangladesh parliament out of 330 members, Hindus and Buddhists have just 17 seats. In the West Bengal Assembly, out of 294 members, Muslims accounted for 59 seats. Moreover, in many parts of West Bengal, including Calcutta, Hindus are being intimidated (as in Deganga/Canning) and are leaving for safer, a synonym for Hindu majority areas. Hence such false views actually inflict incalculable harm on the hapless Hindus of Bangladesh. See its review Saradindu Mukherji, "No country for Hindu Minorities' in *The Sunday Pioneer* 8 April 2012.

59. See the book review by Saradindu Mukherji of Kaushik Roy, ed, *Partition of India: Why 1947*(Delhi, 2012) in *The Pioneer* 8 July 2012 Op.cit

60. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography : With Musings on Recent Events in India*. Bombay, 1966 edition, p163 . Nehru records the interesting fact that Albert Einstein left the "League Against Imperialism" when he found it was pro-Arab in the Arab-Jewish quarrels in Palestine. Nehru, unlike Einstein remained pro- Arab and anti-Israel through out, even when the Jews and Israel had never done any harm to India or its people directly or indirectly. In contemporary India, any such deviation from pro-Arab stance would be considered sacrilegious and funnily enough "anti-secular", irrespective of what it means in reality. Nehru not only maintained diplomatic relations with Pakistan, and happily gave away the Indus water to Pakistan but also kept quiet in the massive ethno-religious cleansing of the Hindus, Sikhs in West Pakistan and Hindus and Buddhists in East Pakistan, and in the process built up a "secular" image and also that of an internationalist.

61. Saradindu Mukherji, "Potentialities of Cultural Cooperation between Neighbouring Countries : A Case Study of Indo-Bangladesh Relations" pp. 92-106, in Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Jayantya Kumar Ray ,ed. *Indo-Bangladesh Cooperation Broadening Measures* , Calcutta, 1997 p.104.

62. *The Statesman*(New Delhi ed.) 1 April 2013,Chairman of Bangladesh Human Rights Commission reiterated as to how badly the minorities in Bangladesh were being treated..

63. Susanta Kumar Sur, "The Bangla Minorities", *The Statesman* (Delhi ed) 5 Aug 2013. (article enclosed) pp.24

## Annexure-I

# **Agreement Between the Governments of India and Pakistan regarding the Security and Rights of Minorities (Nehru-Liaquat Agreement)**

*New Delhi,*

*8 April 1950*

A. The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure, to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality. Members of the minorities shall have equal opportunity with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country's civil and armed forces.

Both Governments declare these rights to be fundamental and undertake to enforce them effectively. The Prime Minister of India has drawn attention to the fact that these rights are guaranteed to all minorities in India by its Constitution. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has pointed out that similar provision exists in the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It is the policy of both Governments that the enjoyment of these democratic rights shall be assured to all their nationals without distinction. Both Governments wish to emphasise that the allegiance and loyalty of the minorities is to the State of which they are citizens, and that it is to the Government of their own State that they should look for the redress of their grievances.

B. In respect of migrants from East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, where communal disturbances have recently occurred, it is agreed between the two Governments:

(i) That there shall be freedom of movement and protection in transit;

(ii) That there shall be freedom to remove as much of his moveable personal effects and household goods as migrant may wish to take with him. Moveable property shall include personal jewellery. The maximum cash allowed to each adult migrant will be Rs. 150 and to each migrant child Rs. 75;

(iii) That a migrant may deposit such of his personal jewellery or cash as he does not wish to take with him with a bank. A proper receipt shall be furnished to him by the bank for cash or jewellery thus deposited and facilities shall be provided, as and when required for their transfer to him, subject as regards cash to the exchange regulations of the Government concerned;

(iv) That there shall be no harassment by the Customs authorities. At each customs post agreed upon by the Governments concerned, liaison officers of the other Government shall be posted to ensure this in practice;

(v) Rights of ownership in or occupancy of the immoveable property of a migrant shall not be disturbed.

If, during his absence, such property is occupied by another person, it shall be returned to him provided that he comes back by the 31st December, 1950. Where the migrant was a cultivating owner or tenant, the land shall be restored to him provided that he returns not later than the 31st December, 1950. In exceptional cases, if a Government considers that a migrant's immoveable property cannot be returned to him, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate Minority Commission for advice. Where restoration of immoveable property to the migrant who returns within the specified period is found not possible, the Government concerned shall take steps to rehabilitate him.

(vi) That in the case of a migrant who decides not to return, ownership of all his immoveable property shall continue to vest in him and he shall have unrestricted right to dispose of it by sale, by exchange with an evacuee in the other country, or otherwise. A committee consisting of three representatives of minority and presided over by a representative of Government shall act as trustees of the owner. The Committee shall be empowered to recover rent for such immoveable property according to law. The Governments of East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura shall enact the necessary legislation to set up these Committees. The Provincial or State Government, as the case may be, will instruct the District or other appropriate authority to give all possible assistance for the discharge of the Committee's functions. The Provisions of this sub-paragraph shall also apply to migrants who may have left East Bengal for any part of India, or West Bengal, Assam or Tripura for any part of Pakistan, prior to the recent disturbances but after the 15th August, 1947. The arrangement in this sub-paragraph will apply also to migrants who have left Bihar for East Bengal owing to communal disturbances or fear thereof.

C. As regards the Province of East Bengal and each of the States of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura respectively the two Governments further agree that they shall:

(1) Continue their efforts to restore normal conditions and shall take suitable measures to prevent recurrence of disorder.

(2) Punish all those who are found guilty of offences against persons and property and of other criminal offences In view of their deterrent effect, collective fines shall be imposed, where necessary. Special Courts will, where necessary, be appointed to ensure that wrong doers are promptly punished.

(3) Make every possible effort to recover looted property.

(4) Set up immediately an agency, with which representatives of the minority shall be associated, to assist in the recovery of abducted women. 53 NOT recognise forced conversions. Any conversion effected during a period of communal disturbance shall be deemed to be forced conversion. Those found guilty of converting people forcibly shall be punished.

(6) Set up a Commission of Enquiry at once to enquire into and report on the causes and extent of the recent disturbances and to make recommendations with a view to preventing recrudescence of similar trouble in future. The personnel of the Commission, which shall be presided over by a Judge of the High Court, shall be such as to inspire confidence among the minority.

(7) Take prompt and effective steps to prevent the dissemination of news and mischievous opinion calculated to rouse communal passion by press or radio or by any individual or organisation. Those guilty of such activity shall be rigorously dealt with.

(8) Not permit propaganda in either country directed against the territorial integrity of the other or purporting to incite war between them and shall take prompt and effective action against any individual or organisation guilty of such propaganda.

D. Sub-paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (7) and (8) of C of the Agreement are of General scope and

applicable according to exigency to any part of India or Pakistan.

E. In order to help restore confidence, so that refugees may return to their homes, the two Governments have decided

(i) to depute two Ministers, one from each Government, to remain in the affected areas for such period as may be necessary;

(ii) to include in the Cabinets of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam a representative of the minority community. In Assam the minority community is already represented in the Cabinet. Appointments to the Cabinets of East Bengal and West Bengal shall be made immediately.

F. In order to assist in the implementation of this Agreement, the two Governments have decided, apart from the deputation of their Ministers referred to in E, to set up Minority

Commissions, one for East Bengal, one for West Bengal and one for Assam. These Commissions will be constituted and will have the functions described below:

- (i) Each Commission will consist of one Minister of the Provincial or State Government concerned, who will be Chairman, and one representative each of the majority and minority communities from East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam, chosen by and from among their respective representatives in the Provincial or State Legislatures, as the case may be.
- (ii) The two Ministers of the Governments of India and Pakistan may attend and participate in any meeting of any Commission. A Minority Commission or any two Minority Commissions jointly shall meet when so required by either Central Minister for the satisfactory implementation of this Agreement.
- (iii) Each Commission shall appoint such staff as it deems necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and shall determine its own procedure.
- (iv) Each Commission shall maintain contact with the minorities in Districts and small administrative headquarters through Minority Boards formed in accordance with the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1948.
- (v) The Minority Commissions in East Bengal and West Bengal shall replace the Provincial Minorities Boards set up under the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1948.
- (vi) The two Ministers of the Central Governments will from time to time consult such persons or organisations as they may consider necessary.
- (vii) The functions of the Minority Commission shall be:
  - (a) to observe and to report on the implementation of this Agreement and, for this purpose, to take cognizance of breaches or neglect;
  - (b) to advise an action to be taken on their recommendations.
- (viii) Each Commission shall submit reports, as and when necessary, to the Provincial and State Governments concerned. Copies of such reports will be submitted simultaneously to the two Central Ministers during the period referred to in E.
- (ix) The Governments of India and Pakistan and the State and Provincial Governments will normally give effect to recommendations that concern them when such recommendations are supported by both the Central Ministers. In the event of disagreement between the two Central Ministers, the matter shall be referred to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan who shall either resolve it themselves or determine the agency and procedure by which it will be resolved.

(x) In respect of Tripura, the two Central Ministers shall constitute a Commission and shall discharge the functions that are assigned under the Agreement to the Minority Commissions for East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam. Before the expiration of the period referred to in E, the two Central Ministers shall make recommendations for the establishment in Tripura of appropriate machinery to discharge the functions of the Minority Commissions envisaged in respect of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam.

G. Except where modified by this Agreement, the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1948 shall remain in force.

India Bilateral

**Ministry of External Affairs, India**

## **Protesting Dalit Hindu Persecution: Pakistan's First Law & Labour Minister, J. N. Mandal's Resignation Letter**

Mr. J.N. Mandal,  
Minister for Law and Labour,  
Government of Pakistan  
On 8th October, 1950

My Dear Prime Minister,

It is with a heavy heart and a sense of utter frustration at the failure of my life-long mission to uplift the backward Hindu masses of East Bengal that I feel compelled to tender resignation of my membership of your Cabinet. It is proper that I should set forth in detail the reasons, which have prompted me to take this decision in this important juncture of the history of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent.

(1) Before I narrate the remote and immediate causes of my resignation, it may be useful to give a short background of important events that have taken place during the period of my co-operation with the League. Having been approached by a few prominent League leaders of Bengal in February 1943, I agreed to work with them in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. After the fall of the Fazlul Haque Ministry in March 1943, with a party of 21 Scheduled Caste M.L.As, I agreed to co-operate with Khwaja Nazimuddin, the then leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary party who formed the Cabinet in April 1943. Our co-operation was conditional on some specific terms in the such as the inclusion of three Scheduled Caste Ministers in the Cabinet, sanctioning of a sum of Rupees five lakhs (Rs. 500,000) as annual recurring grant for the education of the Scheduled Castes, and unqualified implementation of the communal ratio rules in the matter of appointment to Government services.

(2) Apart from those terms, the principal objectives that prompted me to work in co-operation with Muslim League was, first that the economic interests of the Muslim in Bengal generally were identical with those of the Scheduled Castes. Muslims were mostly cultivators and labourers, so were members of the Scheduled Castes. One section of Muslims was fishermen, so was a section of Scheduled Castes as well and, secondly, that the Scheduled Castes and Muslims were both educationally backward. I was persuaded that my co-operation with the League and its Ministry would lead to the undertaking on a wide scale of legislative and administrative measures which, while promoting the mutual welfare of the vast bulk of Bengal's population and undermining the foundations of vested interest and privilege, would

Namasudras. The fact was that Namasudras in those areas had made preparations for retaliation. I addressed about a dozen of largely attended meetings. The result was that Namasudras gave up the idea of retaliation. Thus an inevitable dangerous communal disturbance was averted.

(6) After a few months, the British Government made their June 3 Statement (1947) embodying certain proposals for the partition of India. The whole country, especially the entire non-Muslim India, was startled. For the sake of truth I must admit that I had always considered the demand of Pakistan by the Muslim League as a bargaining counter. Although I honestly felt that in the context India as a whole Muslims had legitimate cause for grievance against upper class Hindu chauvinism, I held the view very strongly indeed that the creation of Pakistan would never solve the communal problem. On the contrary, it would aggravate communal hatred and bitterness. Besides, I maintained that it would not ameliorate the condition of Muslims in Pakistan. The inevitable result of the partition of the country would be to prolong, if not perpetuate, the poverty, illiteracy and miserable condition of the toiling masses of both the States. I further apprehended that Pakistan might turn to be one of the most backward and undeveloped countries of the South East Asia region.

### **The Lahore Resolution**

(7) I must make it clear that I have thought that an attempt would be made, as is being done at present, to develop Pakistan as a purely 'Islamic' State based on the Shariat and the injunctions and formularies of Islam. I presumed that it would be set up in all essentials after the pattern contemplated in the Muslim League resolution adopted at Lahore on March 23, 1940. That resolution stated inter alia that (1) "geographically contiguous areas are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the north- Western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the Constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign " and (2) "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for minorities in these units and in these regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them." Implicit in this formula were (a) that North western and eastern Muslim zones should be constituted into two Independent States, (b) that the constituent units of these States should be autonomous and sovereign, (c) that minorities guarantee should be in respect of rights as well as of interest and extend to every sphere of their lives, and (d) that Constitutional provisions should be made in these regards in consultation with the minorities themselves. I was fortified in my faith in this resolution and the professions of the League Leadership by the statement Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah was pleased to make on the 11th August 1947 as the President of the Constituent Assembly giving solemn assurance of equal treatment for Hindus



further the cause of communal peace and harmony. It may be mentioned here that Khwaja Nazimuddin took three Scheduled Caste Ministers in this Cabinet and appointed three Parliamentary Secretaries from amongst the members of my community.

### **Suhrawardy Ministry**

(3) After the general election held in March 1946, Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy became the leader of the League Parliamentary Party and formed the League Ministry in April 1946. I was the only Scheduled Caste member returned to the Federation ticket. I was included in Mr. Suhrawardy's cabinet. The 16th day of August of that year was observed as "The Direct Action Day" by the Muslim League. It resulted, in a holocaust.. Hindus demanded my resignation from the League ministry. My life was in peril. I began to receive threatening letters almost every day. But I remained steadfast to my policy. Moreover, I issued an appeal through our journal "Jagaran" to the Scheduled Caste people to keep themselves aloof from the bloody feud between the Congress and the Muslim League even at the risk of my life. I cannot but gratefully acknowledge the fact that I was saved from the wrath of infuriated Hindu mobs by my Caste Hindu neighbours. The "Noakhali Riot" followed the Calcutta carnage in October 1946. There, Hindus including Scheduled Castes were killed and hundreds were converted to Islam. Hindu women were raped and abducted. Members of my community also suffered loss of life and property. Immediately after these happenings, I visited Tipperah and Feni and saw some riot-affected areas. The terrible sufferings of Hindus overwhelmed me with grief, but still I continued the policy of co-operation with the Muslim League. Immediately after the massive Calcutta Killing, a no-confidence motion was moved against the Suhrawardy Ministry. It was only due to my efforts that the support of four Anglo-Indian Members and four Scheduled Caste members of the Assembly who had hitherto been with the Congress could be secured, but for which the Ministry would have been defeated.

(4) In October 1946, most unexpectedly came to me through Mr. Suhrawardy the offer of a seat in the Interim Government of India. After a good deal of hesitation and being given only one hour's time to take my final decision, I consented to accept the offer subject to the condition only that I should be permitted to resign if my leader, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar disapproved of my action. Fortunately, however, I received his approval in a telegram sent from London. Before I left for Delhi to take over as Law Member, I persuaded Mr. Suhrawardy, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, to agree to take two Ministers in his Cabinet in my place and to appoint two Parliamentary Secretaries from the Scheduled Caste Federation Group.

(5) I joined the Interim Government on November 1, 1946. After about a month when I paid a visit to Calcutta, Mr. Suhrawardy apprised me of the communal tension in some parts of East Bengal, especially in Gopalganj Sub-division, where the Namasudras were in majority, being very high. He requested me to visit those areas and address meetings of Muslims and

& Muslims alike and calling upon them to remember that they were all Pakistanis. There was then no question of dividing the people on the basis of religion into full-fledged Muslim citizens and gummies being under the perpetual custody of the Islamic State and its Muslim citizens. Every one of these pledges is being flagrantly violated apparently to your knowledge and with your approval in complete disregard of the Quaid-e-Azam's wishes and sentiments and to the detriment and humiliation of the minorities.

## **The Partition of Bengal**

(8) It may also be mentioned in this connection that I was opposed to the partition of Bengal. In launching a campaign in this regard I had to face not only tremendous resistance from all quarters but also unspeakable abuse, insult and dishonour. With great regret, I recollect those days when 32 crores of Hinduism opposed my cations, but I remained undaunted and unmoved in my loyalty to Pakistan. It is a matter of gratitude that my appeal to 7 million Scheduled Caste people of Pakistan evoked a ready and enthusiastic response from them. They lent me their unstinted support sympathy and encouragement.

(9) After the establishment of Pakistan on August 14, 1947 you formed the Cabinet, in which I was included and Khwaja Nazimuddin formed a provisional Cabinet for East Bengal. On August 10, I had spoken to Khwaja Nazimuddin at Karachi and requested him to take 2 Scheduled Caste Ministers in the East Bengal Cabinet. He promised to do the same sometime later.

What happened subsequently in this regard was a record of unpleasant and disappointing negotiations with you, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Nurul Amin, the present Chief Minister of East Bengal. When I realised that Khwaja Nazimuddin was avoiding the issue on this or that excuse, I became almost impatient and exasperated, I further discussed the matter with the Presidents of the Pakistan Muslim League and its East Bengal Branch. Ultimately, I brought the matter to your notice. You were pleased to discuss the subject with Khwaja Nazimuddin in my presence at your residence. Khwaja Nazimuddin agreed to take one Scheduled Caste Minister on his return to Dacca. As I had already become skeptic about the assurance of Khwaja Nazimuddin, I wanted to be definite about the time limit. I insisted that he must act in this regard within a month, failing which I should be at liberty to resign. Both you and Khwaja Nazimuddin agreed to the condition. But, alas! You did not perhaps mean what you said. Khwaja Nazimuddin did not keep his promise. After Mr. Nurul Amin had become the Chief Minister of East Bengal, I again took up the matter with him. He also followed the same old familiar tactics of evasion. When I again called your attention to his matter prior to your visit to Dacca in 1949, you were pleased to assure me that a Minority Minister would be appointed in East Bengal, and you asked 2-3 names from me for consideration. In deference to your wish, I sent you a note stating the Federation Group in the East Bengal Assembly and suggesting three names. When I made enquiries as to what had happened on your return from

Dacca, you appeared to be very cold and only remarked: “Let Nurul Amin return from Delhi”. After a few days I again pressed the matter.

### **Anti-Hindu Policy**

(10) When the question of partition of Bengal arose, the Scheduled Caste people were alarmed at the anticipated dangerous result of partition. Representation on their behalf were made to Mr. Suhrawardy, the then Chief Minister of Bengal who was pleased to issue a statement to the press declaring that none of the rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Scheduled Caste people would be curtailed after partition and that they would not only continue to enjoy the existing rights and privileges but also receive additional advantages. This assurance was given by Mr. Suhrawardy not only in his personal capacity but also in his capacity as a Chief Minister of the League Ministry. To my utter regret it is to be stated that after partition, particularly after the death of Quaid-e-Azam, the Scheduled Castes have not received a fair deal in any matter. You will recollect that from time to time I brought the grievances of the Scheduled Castes to your notice. I explained to you on several occasions the nature of inefficient administration in East Bengal. I made serious charges against the police administration. I brought to your notice incidents of barbarous atrocities perpetrated by the police on frivolous grounds. I did not hesitate to bring to your notice the anti-Hindu policy pursued by the East Bengal government especially the police administration and a section of Muslim League leaders.

### **Some Incidents**

(11) The first incident that shocked me took place at a village called Digharkul near Gopalganj where on the false complaint of a Muslim, brutal atrocities were committed on the local Namasudras. The fact was that a Muslim who was going in a boat attempted to throw his net to catch fish. A Namasudra who was already there for the same purpose opposed to throwing of the net in his front. This was followed by some altercations and the Muslim got annoyed who went to a nearby Muslim village and made a false complaint that he and a woman in his boat had been assaulted by the Namasudras. At the time, the S.D.O. of Gopalganj was passing in a boat through the canal who without making any enquiry accepted the complaint as true and sent armed police to the spot to punish the Namasudra. The armed police came and the local Muslims also joined them. They not only raided some houses of the Namasudras but mercilessly beat both men and women, destroyed their properties and took away valuables. The merciless beating of a pregnant woman resulted in abortion on the spot. This brutal action on the part of the local authority created panic over a large area.

(12) The second incident of police repression took place in early part of 1949 under P.S. Gournadi in the district of Barisal. Here a quarrel took place between two groups of members of a Union Board. One Group which was in the good book of the Police conspired to punish the

opponents on the plea of attack on the Police Station, the O.C., Gournadi requisitioned armed forces from headquarters. The Police, helped by the armed forces, then raided a large number of houses in the area, took away valuable properties, even from the houses of absentee-owners who were never in politics, far less in the Communist Party. A large number of students of many High English Schools were Communist suspects and unnecessarily harassed. This area being very near to my native village, I was informed of the incident. I wrote to the District Magistrate and the S.P. for an enquiry. A section of the local people also prayed for an enquiry by the S.D.O. But no enquiry was held. Even my letters to the District authorities were not acknowledged. I then brought this matter to the notice of the highest Authority in Pakistan, including yourself but to no avail.

### **Women for Military**

(13) The atrocities perpetrated by the police and military on the innocent Hindus, especially the Scheduled Caste of Harbinger in the Dist. of Sleet deserve description. Innocent men and women were brutally tortured, some women ravished, their houses raided and properties looted by the police and the local Muslims. Military pickets were posted in the area. The military not only oppressed these people and took away stuffs forcibly from Hindus houses, but also forced Hindus to send their women-folk at night to the camp to satisfy the carnal desire of the military. This fact also I brought to your notice. You assured me of a report on the matter, but unfortunately no report was forthcoming.

(14) Then occurred the incident at Nachole in the District of Rajshahi where in the name of suppression of Communists not only the police but also the local Muslims in collaboration with the police oppressed the Hindus and looted their properties. The Santhals then crossed the border and came over to West Bengal. They narrated the stories of atrocities wantonly committed by the Muslims and the police.

(15) An instance of callous and cold-blooded brutality is furnished by the incident that took place on December 20, 1949 in Kalshira under P.S. Mollarhat in the District of Khulna. What happened was that late at night four constables raided the house of one Joydev Brahma in village Kalshira in search of some alleged Communists. At the scent of the police, half a dozen of young men, some of whom might have been Communists, escaped from the house. The police constable entered into the house and assaulted the wife of Joydev Brahma whose cry attracted her husband and a few companions who escaped from the house. They became desperate, re-entered the house, found 4 constables with one gun only. That perhaps might have encouraged the young men who struck a blow on an armed constable who died on the spot. The young men then attacked another constable when the other two ran away and raised alarm which attracted some neighbouring people who came to their rescue. As the incident took place before sunrise when it was dark, the assailants fled with dead body before the villagers could come. The S.P. of Khulna with a contingent of military and armed police

appeared on the scene in the afternoon of the following day. In the meantime, the assailants fled and the intelligent neighbours also fled away. But the bulk of the villagers remained in their houses, as they were absolutely innocent and failed to realise the consequence of the happening. Subsequently the innocents of the entire village encouraged the neighbouring Muslims to take away their properties. A number of persons were killed and men and women were forcibly converted. House- hold deities were broken and places of worship desecrated and destroyed. Several women were raped by the police, military and local Muslims. Thus a veritable hell was let loose not only in the village of Kalshira which is half miles in length with a large population, but also in a number of neighbouring Namasudra villages. The village Kalshira was never suspected by the authority to be a place of Communist activities. Another village called Jhalardanga, which was at a distance of 3 miles from Kalshira, was known to be a centre of Communist activities. This village was raided by a large contingent of police on that day for hunt of the alleged Communists, a number of whom fled away and took shelter in the aforesaid house of village Kalshira which was considered to be a safe place for them.

(16) I visited Kalashira and one or two neighboring villages on the 28th February 1950. The S.P., Khulna and some of the prominent League leaders of the district were with me. When I came to the village Kalshira, I found the place desolate and in ruins. I was told in the presence of S.P. that there were 350 homesteads in this village; of these, only three had been spared and the rest had been demolished. Country boats and heads of cattle belonging to the Namasudras had been all taken away. I reported these facts to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police of East Bengal and to you.

(17) It may be mentioned in this connection that the news of this incident was published in West Bengal Press and this created some unrest among the Hindus there. A number of sufferers of Kalshira, both men and women, homeless and destitute had also come to Calcutta and narrated the stories of their sufferings which resulted in some communal disturbances in West Bengal in the last part of January.

### **Causes of the February Disturbance**

(18) It must be noted that stories of a few incidents of communal disturbance that took place in West Bengal as a sort of repercussion of the incidents at Kalshira were published in exaggerated form in the east Bengal press. In the second week of February 1950 when the Budget Session of the East Bengal Assembly commenced, the Congress Members sought permission to move two-adjourment motion to discuss the situation created at Kalshira and Nachole. But the motions were disallowed. The congress Member walked out of the Assembly in protest. This action of the Hindu Members of the Assembly annoyed and enraged not only the Ministers but also the Muslim leaders and officials of the Province. This was perhaps one of the principal reasons for Dacca and East Bengal riots in February 1950.

(19) It is significant that on February 10, 1950 at about 10 O'clock in the morning a woman was painted with red to show that her breast was cut off in Calcutta riot, and was taken round that East Bengal Secretariat at Dacca. Immediately, the Government servants of the Secretariat struck work and came out in procession raising slogans of revenge against the Hindus. The procession began to swell as it passed over a distance of more than a mile. It ended in a meeting at Victoria Park at about 12 O'clock in the noon where violent speeches against the Hindus were delivered by several speakers, including officials. The fun of the whole show was that while the employees of the Secretariat went out in procession, the chief Secretary of the East Bengal Government was holding a conference with his West Bengal counterpart in the same building to find out ways and means to stop communal disturbances in the two Bengals.

### **Officials Helped Looters**

(20) The riot started at about 1 p.m. simultaneously all over the city. Arson, looting of Hindu shops and houses and killing of Hindus, wherever they were found, commenced in full swing in all parts of the city. I got evidence even from the Muslims that arson and looting were committed even in the presence of high police officials. Jewellery shops belonging to the Hindus were looted in the presence of police officers. They not only did not attempt to stop loot, but also helped the looters with advice and direction. Unfortunately for me, I reached Dacca at 5 O'clock in the afternoon on the same day, in Feb. 10, 1950. To my utter dismay, I had occasion to see and know things from close quarters. What I saw and learnt from first hand information was simply staggering and heart-rending.

### **Background of the Riot**

(21) The reasons for the Dacca riot were mainly five:

(i) To punish the Hindus for the daring action of their representatives in the Assembly in their expression of protest by walking out of the Assembly when two adjournment motions on Kashira and Nachole affairs were disallowed;

(ii) Dissensions and difference between the Suhrawardy Group and the Nazimuddin in the Parliamentary Party were becoming acute;

(iii) Apprehension of launching of a movement for re-union of East and West Bengal by both Hindu and Muslim leaders made the East Bengal Ministry and the Muslim League nervous. They wanted to prevent such a move. They thought that any large scale communal riot in East Bengal was sure to produce reactions in West Bengal where Muslims might be killed. The result of such riot in both East and West Bengal, it was believed, would prevent any movement for re-union of Bengals.

(iv) Feeling of Antagonism between the Bengalee Muslim and non-Bengalee Muslim in East Bengal was gaining ground. This could only be prevented by creating hatred



between Hindus and Muslims of East Bengal. The language question was also connected with it and

(v) The consequences of non-devaluation and Indo-Pakistan trade deadlock to the economy of East Bengal were being felt most acutely first in urban and rural areas and the Muslim League members and officials wanted to divert the attention of the Muslim masses from the impending economic breakdown by some sort of jihad against Hindus.

### **Staggering Details - Nearly 10,000 Killed**

(22) During my nine days' stay at Dacca, I visited most of the riot-affected areas of the city and suburbs. I visited Mirpur also under P.S. Tejgaon. The news of the killing of hundreds of innocent Hindus in trains, on railway lines between Dacca and Narayanganj, and Dacca and Chittagong gave me the rudest shock. On the second day of Dacca riot, I met the Chief Minister of East Bengal and requested him to issue immediate instructions to the District authorities to take all precautionary measures to prevent spreading of the riot in district towns and rural areas. On the 20th February 1950, I reached Barisal town and was astounded to know of the happenings in Barisal. In the District of Hindus killed. I visited almost all riot-affected areas in the District. I was simply puzzled to find the havoc wrought by the Muslim rioters even at places like Kasipur, Madhabpasha and Lakutia, which were within a radius of six miles from the District town and were connected with motorable roads. At the Madhabpasha Zaminder's house, about 200 people were killed and 40 injured. A Place, called Muladi, witnessed a dreadful hell. At Muladi Bandar alone, the number killed would total more than three hundred, as was reported to me by the local Muslims including some officers. I visited Muladi village also, where I found skeletons of dead bodies at some places. I found dogs and vultures eating corpses on the riverside. I got the information there that after the whole-scale killing of all adult males, all the young girls were distributed among the ringleaders of the miscreants. At a place told Kaibartakhali under P.S. Rajapur, 63 persons were killed. Hindu houses within a stone's throw distance from the said Thana office were looted, burnt and inmates killed. All Hindu shops of Babuganj Bazar were looted and then burnt and a large number of Hindus were killed. From detailed information received, the conservative estimate of casualties was placed at 2,500 killed in the District of Barisal alone. Total casualties of Dacca and East Bengal riot were estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 10,000 killed. I was really overwhelmed with grief. The lamentation of women and children who had lost their all including near and dear ones melted my hearts. I only asked myself. "What was coming to Pakistan in the name of Islam".

### **No Earnest Desire to Implement the Delhi Pact**

(23) The large-scale exodus of Hindus from Bengal commenced in the latter part of March. It appeared that within a short time all the Hindus would migrate to India. Awar cry was raised



in India. The situation became extremely critical. A national calamity appeared to be inevitable. The apprehended disaster, however, was avoided by the Delhi Agreement of April 8. With a view to reviving the already lost morale of the panicky Hindus, I undertook an extensive tour of East Bengal. I visited a number of places in the districts of Dacca, Barisal, Faridpur, Khulna and Jessore. I addressed dozens of largely attended meeting and asked the Hindus to take courage and not to leave their ancestral hearths and homes. I had this expectation that the East Bengal Govt. and Muslim League leaders would implement the terms of the Delhi Agreement. But with the lapse of time, I began to realise that neither the East Bengal Govt. nor the Muslim League leaders were really earnest in the matter of implementation of the Delhi Agreement. The East Bengal Govt. was not only much to set up a machinery as envisaged in the Delhi Agreement, but also was not willing it take effective steps for the purpose. A number of Hindus who returned to native village immediately after the Delhi Agreement were not given possession of their homes and lands, which were occupied in the meantime by the Muslims.

### **Moulana Akram Khan's Incitations**

(24) My suspicion about the intention of League leaders was confirmed when I read editorial comments by Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Provincial Muslim League in the “Baisak” issue of a monthly journal called Mahammadi. In commenting on the first radio-broadcast of Dr. A.M. Malik, Minister for Minority Affairs of Pakistan, from Dacca Radio Station, wherein he said, “Even Prophet Mahammed had given religious freedom to the Jews in Arabia”, Moulana Akram Khan said, “Dr. Malik would have done well had he not made any reference in his speech to the Jews of Arabia. It is true that Jews in Arabia had been given religious freedom by Prophet Mahammed; but it was the first chapter of the history. The last chapter contains the definite direction of prophet Mahammed which runs as follows :-”Drive away all the Jews out of Arabia”. Even despite this editorial comment of a person who held a very high position in the political, social and spiritual life of the Muslim community, I entertained some expectation that the Nurul Amin Ministry might not be so insincere. But that expectation of mine was totally shattered when Mr. Nurul Amin selected D.N. Barari as a Minister to represent the minorities in terms of the Delhi Agreement which clearly states that to restore confidence in the mind of the minorities one of their representatives will be taken in the Ministry of East Bengal and West Bengal Govt.

### **Nurul Amin Govt's. Insincerity**

(25) In one of my public statement, I expressed the view that appointment of D.N. Barari as a Minister representing the minorities not only did not help restore any confidence, but, on the contrary, destroyed all expectations or illusion, if there was any in the minds of the minorities about the sincerity of Mr. Nurul Amin Govt. my own reaction was that Mr. Nurul Amin's Govt. was not only insincere but also wanted to defeat the principal objectives of the Delhi

Agreement. I again repeat that D.N. Barari does not represent anybody except himself. He was returned to the Bengal Legislative Assembly on the Congress ticket with the money and organisation of the Congress. He opposed the Scheduled Caste Federation candidates. Some time after his election, he betrayed the Congress and joined the Federation. When he was appointed a Minister he had ceased to be a member of the Federation too. I know that East Bengal Hindus agree with me that by antecedents, character and intellectual attainments Barari is not qualified to hold the position of a Minister as envisaged in the Delhi Agreement.

(26) I recommended three names to Mr. Nurul Amin for this office. One of the persons I recommended was an M.A., LL.B., Advocate, Dacca High Court. He was Minister for more than 4 years in the first Fazlul Huq Ministry in Bengal. He was chairman of the Coal Mines Stowing Board, Calcutta, for about 6 years. He was the senior Vice-President of the Scheduled Caste Federation. My second nominee was a B.A., LL.B. He was a member of the Legislative Council for 7 years in the pre-reform regime. I would like to know what earthly reasons there might be for Mr. Nurul Amin in not selecting any of these two gentlemen and appointing instead a person whose appointment as Minister I strongly objected to for very rightly considerations. Without any fear of contradiction I can say that this action of Mr. Nurul Amin in selecting Barari as a Minister in terms of the Delhi Agreement is conclusive proof that East Bengal Govt. was neither serious nor sincere in its profession about the terms of the Delhi Agreement whose main purpose is to create such conditions as would enable the Hindus to continue to live in East Bengal with a sense of security to their life, property, honour and religion.

### **Govt. Plan to Soueeze out Hindus**

(27) I would like to reiterate in this connection my firm conviction that East Bengal Govt. is still following the well-planned policy of squeezing Hindus out of the Province. In my discussion with you on more than one occasion, I gave expression to this view of mine. I must say that this policy of driving out Hindus from Pakistan has succeeded completely in West Pakistan and is nearing completion in East Pakistan too. The appointment of D.N. Barari as a Minister and the East Bengal Government's unceremonious objection to my recommendation in this regard strictly conform to name of what they call an Islamic State. Pakistan has not given the Hindus entire satisfaction and a full sense of security. They now want to get rid of the Hindu intelligentsia so that the political, economic and social life of Pakistan may not in any way be influenced by them.

### **Evasive Tactics to Shelve Joint Electorate**

(28) I have failed to understand why the question of electorate has not yet been decided. It is now three years that the minority Sub-Committee has been appointed. It sat on three occasions. The question of having joint or separate electorate came up for consideration at a

meeting of the Committee held in December last when all the representatives of recognised minorities in Pakistan expressed their view in support of joint Electorate with reservation of seats for backward minorities. We, on behalf of the Scheduled Castes think this matter again came up for consideration at a meeting called in August last. But without any discussion whatsoever on this point, the meeting was adjourned sine die. It is not difficult to understand what the motive is behind this kind of evasive tactics in regard to such a vital matter on the part of Pakistan's rulers.

## **Dismal Future for Hindus**

(29) Coming now to the present condition and the future of Hindus in East Bengal as a result of the Delhi Agreement, I should say that the present condition is not only unsatisfactory but absolutely hopeless and that the future completely dark and dismal Confidence of Hindus in East Bengal has not been restored in the least. The Agreement is treated as a mere scrap of paper alike by the East Bengal Government and the Muslim League.

That a pretty large number of Hindu migrants, mostly Scheduled Caste cultivators are returning to East Bengal is no indication that confidence has been restored. It only indicates that their stay and rehabilitation in West Bengal or elsewhere in the Indian Union have not been possible. The sufferings of refugee life are compelling them to go back to their homes. Besides, many of them are going back to bring movable articles and settle or dispose of immovable properties. That no serious communal disturbance has recently taken place in East Bengal is not to be attributed to the Delhi Agreement. It could not simply continue even if there were no Agreement or Pact.

(30) It must be admitted that the Delhi Pact was not an end in itself. It was intended that such conditions would be created as might effectively help resolve so many disputes and conflict existing between India and Pakistan. But during this period of six months after the Agreement, no dispute or conflict has readily been resolved. On the contrary, communal propaganda and anti-India propaganda by Pakistan both at home and abroad are continuing in full swing. The observance of Kashmir Day by the Muslim League all over Pakistan is an eloquent proof of communal anti-India propaganda by Pakistan. The recent speech of the Governor of Punjab (Pak) saying that Pakistan needed a strong Army for the security of Indian Muslims has betrayed the real attitude of Pakistan towards India. It will only increase the tensions between the two countries.

## **What is Happening in East Bengal Today**

(31) What is to the condition in East Bengal? About fifty lakhs of Hindus have left since the partition of the country. Apart from the East Bengal riot of last February, the reasons for such a large-scale exodus of Hindus are many. The boycott by the Muslims of Hindu lawyers, medical practitioners, shopkeepers, traders and merchants has compelled Hindus to migrate to

West Bengal in search of their means of livelihood. Wholesale requisition of Hindu houses even without following due process of law in many and non-payment of any rent whatsoever to the owners have compelled them to seek for Indian Shelter, Payments rent to Hindu landlords was stopped long before. Beside, the Ansars against whom I received complaints all over are a standing menace to the safety and security of Hindus. Interference in matters of education and methods adopted by the Educational Authority for Islamisation frightened the teaching staff of Secondary Schools and Colleges out of their old familiar moorings. They have left East Bengal. As a result, most of the educational institutions ago the Educational Authority issued circular to Secondary Schools enjoining compulsory participation of teachers and student of all communities in recitation from the Holy Koran before the school work commenced, Another circular requires Headmasters of schools to name the different blocks of the premises after 12 distinguished Muslims, such as, Jinnah, Iqbal, Liaquat Ali, Nazimuddin, etc. Only very recently in an educational conference held at Dacca, the President disclosed that out of 1,500 High English Schools in East Bengal, only 500 were working. Owing to the migration of medical practitioners there is hardly any means of proper treatment of patients. Almost all the priests who used to worship the household deities at Hindu houses have left. Important places of worship have been abandoned. The result is that the Hindus of East Bengal have got now hardly any means to follow religious pursuits and perform social ceremonies like marriage where the services of a priest are essential. Artisans who made images of goddesses have also left. Muslims have replaced Hindu Presidents of Union Boards by coercive measures with the active help and connivance of the police and Circle Officers. Muslims have replaced Hindu Headmasters and Secretaries of Schools. The life of the few Hindu Govt. servants has been made extremely miserable as many of them have either been superseded by junior Muslims or dismissed without sufficient or any cause. Only very recently a Hindu Public Prosecutor of Chittagong was arbitrarily removed from service as has been made clear in a statement made by Srijukta Nellie Sengupta against whom at least no charge of anti-Muslim bias prejudice or malice can be leveled.

## **Hindus Virtually Outlawed**

(32) Commission of thefts and dacoities even with murder is going on as before. Thana office seldom record half the complaints made by the Hindus. That the abduction and rape of Hindu girls have been reduced to a certain extent is due only to the fact that there is no Caste Hindu girl between the ages of 12 and 30 living in East Bengal at present. The few depressed class girls who live in rural areas with their parents are not even spared by Muslim goondas. I have received information about a number of incidents of rape of Scheduled Castes Girls by Muslims.

Full payment is seldom made by Muslim buyers for the price of jute and other agricultural commodities sold by Hindus in market places. As a matter of fact, there is no operation of law,

justice or fair play in Pakistan, so far as Hindus are concerned.

### **Forced Conversions in West Pakistan**

(33) Leaving aside the question of East Pakistan, let me now refer to west Pakistan, especially Sind. The West Punjab had after partition about a lakh of Scheduled Castes people. It may be noted that a large number of them were converted to Islam. Only 4 out of a dozen Scheduled Castes girls abducted by Muslims have yet been recovered in spite of repeated petitions to the Authority. Names of those girls with names of their abductors were supplied to the government. The last reply recently given by the office-in-Charge of recovery of abducted girls said that “his function was to recover Hindu girls and stat “Achuts” (Scheduled Castes) were not Hindus”. The condition of the small number of Hindus that are still living in Sind and Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, is simply deplorable. I have got a list of 363 Hindu temples and gurudwaras of Karachi and Sind (which is by no means an exhaustive list) which are still in possession of Muslims. Some of the temples have been converted into cobbler's shops, slaughterhouses and hotels. None of the Hindus has got back.

Possession of their landed properties were taken away from them without any notice and disturbed amongst refugees and local Muslims. I personally know that the Custodian declared 200 to 300 Hindus non-evacuees a pretty long time ago. But up till now properties have not been restored to any one of them. Even the possession of Karachi Pinjra Pole has not been restored to the trustees, although it was declared non-evacuee property some time ago. In Karachi I had received petitions from many unfortunate fathers and husbands of abducted Hindu girls, mostly Scheduled Castes. I Drew the attention of the 2nd Provisional Government to this fact. There was little or no effect. To my extreme regret I received information that a large number of Scheduled Castes who are still living in Sind have been forcibly converted to Islam.

### **Pakistan 'Accursed' for Hindus**

(34) Now this being in brief the overall picture of Pakistan so far as the Hindus are concerned, I shall not be unjustified in stating that Hindus of Pakistan have to all intents and purposes been rendered “Stateless” in their own houses. They have no other fault than that they profess Hindu religion. Muslim League leaders that Pakistan is and shall be an Islamic State are repeatedly making declarations. Islam is being offered as the sovereign remedy for all earthly evils. In the matchless dialectics of capitalism and socialism you present the exhilarating democratic synthesis of Islamic equality and fraternity. In that grand setting of the Shariat Muslims alone are rulers while Hindus and other minorities are jimmies who are entitled to protection at a price, and you know more than anybody else Mr. Prime Minister, what that price is. After anxious and prolonged struggle I have come to the conclusion that Pakistan is no place for Hindus to live in and that their future is darkened by the ominous

shadow of conversion or liquidation. The bulk of the upper class Hindus and politically conscious scheduled castes have left East Bengal. Those Hindus who will continue to stay accursed promise and for that matter in Pakistan will, I am afraid, by gradual stages and in a planned manner be either converted to Islam or completely exterminated. It is really amazing that a man of your education, culture and experience should be an exponent of a doctrine fraught with so great a danger to humanity and subversive of all principles of equality and good sense. I may tell you and your fellow workers that Hindus will allow themselves, whatever the threat or temptation, to be treated as Jimmies in the land of their birth. Today they may, as indeed many of them have already done, abandon their hearths and home in sorrow but in panic. Tomorrow they strive for their rightful place in the economy of life. Who knows what is in the womb of the future? When I am convinced that my continuance in office in the Pakistan Central Government is not of any help to Hindus I should not with a clear conscience, create the false impression in the minds of the Hindus of Pakistan and peoples abroad that Hindus can live there with honour and with a sense of security in respect of their life, property and religion. This is about Hindus.

### **No Civil Liberty even for Muslims**

(35) And what about the Muslims who are outside the charmed circle of the League rulers and their corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy? There is hardly anything called civil liberty in Pakistan. Witness for example, the fate of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan then whom a more devout Muslim had not walked this earth for many years and of his gallant patriotic brother Dr. Khan Sahib. A large number of erstwhile League leaders of the Northwest and also of the Eastern belt of Pakistan are in detention without trial. Mr. Suhrawardy to whom is due in a large measure the League's triumph in Bengal is for practical purposes a Pakistan prisoner who has to move under permit and can't open his lips under orders. Mr. Fazzul Huq, that dearly loved grand old man of Bengal, who was the author of that now famous Lahore resolution, is ploughing his lonely furrow in the precincts of the Dacca High Court of Judicature, and the so called Islamic planning is as ruthless as it is complete. About the East Bengal Muslims generally, the less said the better. They were promised at Lahore of an independent State. They were promised of autonomous and sovereign units of the independent State. What have they got instead? East Bengal has been transformed into a colony of the western belt of Pakistan, although it contained a population, which is larger than that of all the units of Pakistan put together. It is a pale ineffective adjunct of Karachi doing the latte's bidding and carrying out its orders. East Bengal Muslims in their enthusiasm wanted bread and they have by the mysterious working of the Islamic state and the Shariat got stone instead from the arid deserts of Sind and the Punjab.

### **My Own Sad and Bitter Experience**

(36) Leaving aside the overall picture of Pakistan and the callous and cruel injustice done to others, my own personal experience is no less sad, bitter and revealing. You used your position

as the Prime Minister and leader of the Parliamentary Party to ask me to issue a statement, which I did on the 8th September last. You know that I was not willing to make a statement containing untruths and half-truths, which were worse than untruths. It was not possible for me to reject your request so long as I was there working as a Minister with you and under your leadership. But I can no longer afford to carry this load of false pretensions and untruth on my conscience and I have decided to offer my resignation as your Minister, which I am hereby placing in your hands and which, I hope, you will accept without delay. You are of course at liberty to dispense with that office or dispose of it in such a manner as may suit adequately and effectively the objectives of your Islamic State.

**8th Oct. 1950**  
**Yours Sincerely,**  
**J. N. Mandal**



### **About the Author**

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I held the view very strongly indeed that the creation of Pakistan would never solve the communal problem. On the contrary, it would aggravate communal hatred and bitterness. Besides, I maintained that it would not ameliorate the condition of Muslims in Pakistan. The inevitable result of the partition of the country would be to prolong, if not perpetuate, the poverty, illiteracy and miserable condition of the toiling masses of both the States. I further apprehended that Pakistan might turn to be one of the most backward and undeveloped countries of the South East Asia region.

**Excerpts from the letter of J N Mandal  
written to Liaquat Ali Khan, then Prime  
Minister of Pakistan**



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