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978-0-521-85661-4 - The Partition of India
Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh
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The Partition of India

The British divided and quit India in 1947. The Partition of India and the creation of Pakistan uprooted entire communities and left unspeakable violence in its trail. This volume – by two highly regarded scholars in this field – tells the story of Partition through the events that led up to it and the terrors that accompanied it, to migration and resettlement. In a new shift in the understanding of this seminal moment, the book also explores the legacies of Partition which continue to resonate today in the fractured lives of individuals and communities, and more broadly in the relationship between India and Pakistan and the ongoing conflict over contested sites such as Jammu and Kashmir. In conclusion, the book reflects on the general implications of partition as a political solution to ethnic and religious conflict. The book, which is accompanied by photographs, maps and a chronology of major events, is intended for students as a portal into the history and politics of the Asian region.

Ian Talbot is Professor of History at the University of Southampton. His recent publications include *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002* (ed., 2007) and *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (2006).

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The Partition of India

Ian Talbot

University of Southampton

and

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521672566

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First published 2009

3rd printing 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-85661-4 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-67256-6 paperback

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Acknowledgements

Our major debt is to all those who, over the years, have nurtured and sustained our interest in the study of the Partition of India, first as research students, and then as colleagues within the Punjab Studies network. Foremost among these are Professor Judith Brown, Professor Paul R. Brass, Professor Francis Robinson and Professor Uday S. Mehta. No less significant have been our colleagues and friends, of whom the following deserve a special mention: Professor Mohammad Waseem, Dr Yunas Samad, Dr Sarah Ansari, Dr Joya Chatterji, Professor Iftikhar H. Malik, Professor Imran Ali, Professor Tan Tai Yong, Dr Gyanesh Kudaisya, Professor David Gilmartin and Dr Darshan S. Tatla. We have also drawn much encouragement from a younger generation of scholars whose work on partition we have seen develop over the past decade. They include Dr Yasmin Khan, Dr Pippa Virdee and Dr Ravinder Kaur.

We would like to record our thanks to all those who participated in the 'Partition Conference' to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the independence of India and Pakistan, held at the University of Southampton between 17 and 20 July 2007. The ideas that flowed from that gathering have fed into this publication in a number of ways. The sterling organisation of Professor Chris Woolgar, Head of the Special Collections, should be acknowledged, as should the financial contribution of the Hansard Trust to making the occasion such a memorable event.

Marigold Acland deserves special praise for her encouragement during all stages of the work. We thank her for persevering with us even when, at times, it appeared that the book would not see the light of day. The task of writing on such a sensitive area with its contested and complex scholarship was both immensely challenging and infinitely rewarding.

We also record here our thanks to our respective institutions, University of Southampton and the University of Birmingham, for making research leave available to complete this work.

Finally, our major debt is to our families. This work has been long in the making and they have suffered inordinately as a result. We dedicate this work

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x Acknowledgements

to Lois and Martin, and Raghu, Sukhmani and Harman for their patience and good humour during the years of commuting and incessant change.

March 2009
Ian Talbot University of Southampton
Gurharpal Singh University of Birmingham

Glossary

<i>akhara</i>	wrestling pit
<i>anjuman</i>	association
<i>ansars</i>	helpers; refers back to the inhabitants of Medina who assisted the Prophet and his followers after their flight from Medina
<i>antahpur</i>	inner household rooms
<i>bait-ul-maal</i>	Islamic treasury
<i>Bangaals</i>	Bengali refugees from East Bengal
<i>bania</i>	Hindu trading caste; the term was often used pejoratively to mean moneylender
<i>batai</i>	rent in kind
<i>bhadralok</i>	gentlefolk, respectable folk
<i>bhadramahila</i>	gentlewoman
<i>biraderi</i>	brotherhood, patrilineal kinship group
<i>chak</i>	village
<i>chowk</i>	crossroads, junction
<i>crore</i>	ten million
<i>dacoit</i>	criminal; <i>dacoities</i> : criminal actions, robberies
<i>dargah</i>	tomb, shrine of a Sufi saint
<i>desh</i>	native place; could refer to nation, province or village
<i>doab</i>	region lying between two rivers
<i>dupatta</i>	long scarf
<i>ghallughara</i>	massacre
<i>goondas</i>	thugs
<i>gurdwara</i>	Sikh temple
<i>hakim</i>	practitioner of Unani medicine
<i>Harijan</i>	member of Untouchable caste
<i>hartal</i>	strike, political protest
<i>izzat</i>	prestige, honour, reputation
<i>jatha</i>	band, armed group
<i>jathedar</i>	Sikh leader

xii Glossary

<i>jihad</i>	striving, collective war against unbelief, or individual moral endeavour
<i>jotedar</i>	peasant farmer, usually one with large holdings
<i>kafla</i>	caravan, convoy of people
<i>kanal</i>	measurement of land, one twentieth of an acre
<i>katra</i>	originally fortified market, a residential locality
<i>kothi</i>	residential plot
<i>kotwali</i>	headquarters of city police
<i>kucha</i>	neighbourhood, residential quarters
<i>lakh</i>	one hundred thousand
<i>langar</i>	public kitchen in which free food is served at a Sufi shrine or gurdwara
<i>lathi</i>	wooden club
<i>mali</i>	gardener
<i>mandir</i>	Hindu temple
<i>maulvi</i>	learned Muslim
<i>mela</i>	a fair
<i>mirasi</i>	musician
<i>misl</i>	Sikh territorial unit; <i>misdar</i> : military chief
<i>mohajir</i>	refugee, Muslim who has fled for religious reasons
<i>mohalla</i>	neighbourhood
<i>pir</i>	Sufi spiritual guide
<i>pukka</i>	superior, often referring to a brick- or stone-built dwelling
<i>pursharti</i>	term used for Hindu refugee
<i>qurbani</i>	sacrifice
<i>rais</i>	an important, or honourable man
<i>roti</i>	bread, food
<i>sahukar</i>	moneylender
<i>samadh</i>	tomb associated with Sikh and Hindu holy men
<i>Sant</i>	saint or holy man; one who realises Truth (<i>sat</i>)
<i>sardar</i>	leader, chief
<i>satyagraha</i>	truth force, often referring to Gandhian non-violent struggle
<i>sewa</i>	Sikh community service, religious service
<i>shuddhi</i>	Hindu re-purification right, adopted by the Arya Samaj for conversion purposes
<i>Sufi</i>	Muslim mystic
<i>svadeshi</i>	home-produced goods
<i>tehsil</i>	major administrative sub-division of a district
<i>udvastu</i>	uprooted out of place, out of home

Glossary

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<i>ulama</i>	(pl. of <i>alim</i>) Muslims learned in Islamic religion
<i>unani</i>	medical system practised in some parts of the subcontinent
<i>Zamindar</i>	landholder
<i>zila</i>	revenue sub-division, district

Chronology

Main events leading to Independence and Partition, 1937–1947

- | | | |
|------|-----------|---|
| 1937 | February | Provincial elections held under the terms of the 1935 Government of India Act. Congress wins 716 out of the 1,161 seats it contested. Muslim League, with the exception of Bengal, fares dismally in the Muslim-majority provinces. |
| | July | Congress forms ministries in seven Indian provinces. Failure to create coalition ministry with Muslim League in United Provinces (UP). |
| | October | Reorganisation of Muslim League at its Lucknow session. Muslim prime ministers of Assam, Bengal and Punjab advise their followers to join All-India Muslim League. |
| 1938 | December | Jinnah at Patna League session raises the spectre of 'Congress Fascism'. Pirpur Report published into Muslim grievances in Congress-ruled provinces. |
| 1939 | March | Shareef Report into the grievances of Muslims in Bihar. |
| | September | Outbreak of Second World War. |
| | October | Tenancy Act passed in UP. Sind Muslim League Conference calls for examination of future constitutional proposals designed to safeguard the Muslim national interest. Resignation of Congress Provincial Ministries. |
| | December | Muslim League celebrates 'Deliverance Day' from Congress rule. |
| 1940 | March | Lahore Resolution for a Pakistan state raised at Muslim League Annual Session. |
| | August | Viceroy Lord Linlithgow sets out in his 'August Offer' plans for an expanded Executive Council and new War Advisory Council. Assurance given |

- that power will not be transferred to any government whose authority is denied by important elements in India.
- 1941 October Congress launches individual civil disobedience.
- 1941 May By this date over 25,000 *satyagrahis* had been convicted for offering individual civil disobedience.
- July Viceroy enlarges his Executive Council and creates National Defence Council. Jinnah successfully gets Muslim prime ministers of Assam, Punjab and Bengal to resign from the latter body in a demonstration of his authority in All-India Muslim politics.
- December USA enters the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7th.
- 1942 February Fall of Singapore to the Japanese on 15th.
- March Mission of Sir Stafford Cripps to India. Key promise of Dominion Status at the end of the war, with the proviso that provinces would have the right to opt out. Cripps Mission widens gulf between British and Congress.
- April Congress launches Quit India movement. This becomes the gravest challenge to British authority since 1857. Congress is declared an unlawful organisation and most of its leaders spend the remainder of the war years in jail.
- 1943 October Wavell replaces Linlithgow as Viceroy. One of his first acts is to fly to Calcutta to see the effects of the devastating famine in Bengal.
- 1944 April Gandhi is released from custody on medical grounds.
- September Gandhi–Jinnah talks fail but Jinnah’s prestige is further enhanced.
- 1945 March–June Wavell in London for discussions over India’s future.
- June Simla Conference to discuss the formation of a new Executive Council convenes on 25th.
- July Clement Attlee becomes prime minister after Labour Party general election victory. Simla Conference fails over Jinnah’s insistence that all

xvi	Chronology	
		Muslim members of the Executive Council must be Muslim League nominees.
	August	Surrender of Japan on 14th ends Second World War.
1946	January	Provincial elections in India see a Muslim League triumph in the Majority 'Pakistan' provinces.
	March–June	Cabinet Mission to India. Proposal for a three-tiered Indian Union initially accepted by Congress and Muslim League, but then rejected when Nehru questions the grouping arrangements of the provinces.
	August	Muslim League observes 'Direct Action Day' on 16th. The 'Great Calcutta Killing' on 16th–18th. Around 4,000 victims and 100,000 people made homeless.
	October	Communal killing spreads to Noakhali in East Bengal. Gandhi undertakes foot-pilgrimage for peace. Muslim League joins the Interim Government, but is accused by Congress of attempting to wreck it.
	November	Muslims massacred in Bihar. Wavell estimates the death toll at between 5,000 and 10,000. Over 120,000 Muslims made homeless.
	December	Failed meeting of Jinnah, Nehru and Baldev Singh in London. Constituent Assembly meets on 9th without Muslim League members. Attlee offers the Viceroyalty to Mountbatten.
1947	February	Attlee announces on 20th that the British will leave India by June 1948, and that Mountbatten is to succeed Wavell as Viceroy.
	March	Resignation of Khizr Tiwana Coalition Government in Punjab sparks off widespread communal violence. Mountbatten arrives in India on 22nd.
	April	Mountbatten has meetings with Indian political leaders to the backdrop of endemic violence in the Punjab which is now under direct Governor's rule.
	May	Work begins on the plan for Partition. When Nehru is confidentially made aware of it, he sees it as a threat of Balkanisation and the plan has to be

Chronology

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- redrafted. Dominion Status enables the plan to be accelerated.
- June The Indian leaders accept the 3 June Partition plan. The machinery for Partition is established including a Partition Council and Boundary Commission. Mountbatten announces that the date for Independence is to be brought forward from June 1948 to 15 August 1947. The States Department is created to oversee relations between the States and the successor governments.
- July Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions, arrives in India on 8th. Draft Standstill Agreement and Draft Instrument of Accession created for the States between 26 and 31 July.
- August Jinnah and Mountbatten attend the Independence celebrations in Karachi on 14 August and address the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.
Celebration of Indian Independence in New Delhi on 15th. Massacres and migrations on a large scale in Punjab. The Boundary Awards are announced on 17th August.