SYNOPSIS OF THE ISPaD PARTITION CENTER’S 2019 CONFERENCE
Shuvo G. Dastidar**

Partition Center Project Coordinator

2019 Partition Center Journal Release: From Left, Mr. Shuvo Roy, Dr. Shefali S. Dastidar, Dr. Dilip Nath, Mr. Khourshedul Islam, NYC Councilman Barry Gordonchick, Dr. Alireza Ebrahimi and Dr. Partha Das

The 72nd anniversary of the partition of British India, as well as the 72nd anniversary of the independence of India and Pakistan, and 48th Anniversary of Bangladesh independence and Pakistan's partition's was held at the Indian Partition Center Office in New York City’s Jamaica neighborhood of Queens borough on Saturday, October 19th. Like every year, the much-anticipated 2019 ISPaD Partition Center Journal, ISSN 2377-7567, was released on that day.

After breakfast, ISPaD Chair Dr. Sachi G. Dastidar opened the event by welcoming all to the conference. New York City Councilman Honorable Barry Gordonchick addressed the opening ceremony. Mr. Gordenchik, of Jewish descent, referred to his family's departure from Europe and individuals lost during Holocaust, saying that "leaving one’s ancestral country is never desirable to anyone." Appreciating the work of Partition Center, he wished “Dastidar for continued success at the Partition Center, and assured of cooperation.”

Immediately after his presentation 2019 Partition Center Journal was released by ISPaD Board Members Dr. Sachi G. Dastidar, Dr. Dilip Nath and Dr. Shefali S. Dastidar and by Mr. Gordonchik, to the conference presenters Mr. Khourshedul Islam, Dr. Partha Das, Dr. Alireza Ebrahimi and Mr. Shuvo Roy. The authors of papers published in the 2019 journal are, respectively, Prof. Atanu Sarkar, Journalist Arijit Aditya, Prof. Mahindra Singh Seehra, Prof. Sachi G. Dastidar, Author Mr. Sudeepta Das, Prof. Pervaiz Hoodbhoy, and Dr. YoungSoo Cong. Included in the Journal is a report by this writer on the 2018 Conference held at the State University of New York campus at Old Westbury.

Councilman Gordonchick, right, with Ispad Board Members Dr. Dastidar, left, and Dr. Nath
Members of the Journal Editorial Committee are: Dr. Sachi G. Dastidar, Editor, of New York; Dr. Alireza Ebrahimi, Long Island; Dr. Edislav Manetovic, New Jersey; Dr. Saradindu Mukherji, India; Dr. Mohsin Siddique, Maryland, and Dr. Caroline Sawyer, Wisconsin.

The first presenter of Season 1, was Mr. Khourshe-dul Islam, the Convenor of Progressive Forum of the United States, a Bangladeshi-American political activist, delivered an illuminating paper on colonial Divide-and-Rule, "The Policy of Dividing the Masses: the Colonial Era and the 21st Century" in Bengali that was simultaneously and elegantly translated by Dr. Dipip Nath. Participated in the discussion, moderated by Dr. Nath were, Dr. Shefali Dastidar, Dr. Alireza Ebrahim, and Prof. Sabyasachi Dastidar.

The 2nd session of the conference was presented by New York City School Teacher, Convener of Secular Bangladesh Movement in the U.S., Community Activist, Cultural Organizer, Mr. Shuvo Roy on “The Eastern Tale of Tears", and indirect results of British-created political-religious divisions. The other presenter on this session was Professor of Economics of St. John's University, New York, Dr. Partha Das who gave a thoughtful presentation on “Partition of India". Dr. Das highlighted the religious divisions created by the colonial rulers in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), all over India from Assam to Punjab to Bengal to Jammu-Kashmir and more. He also highlighted the effects of Radcliffe drawing a line in India's map creating a holocaust.
tion Center Newsletter and Probini Digest where he writes columns on a regular basis, and writes in social media.

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A PROPOSED INITIATIVE TO OPPOSE THE FORCED EVICTION OF HINDU’S BY SPREADING POISON GAS OF COMMUNALISM

Khurshidul Islam**

Mosques and Madrasa’s (Islamic schools) were founded all through Bangladesh villages. Governments of several Middle East countries, N.G.O’s and Foundations with Islamic names funded this spread of Mosques and Madrasa’s. With this came a fanatical Islam faith – the Wahhabi doctrine – who declare “Islam is world’s only true religion.” It is the duty of all Muslims of faith to declare Jihad to establish Allah’s reign all over the world. They look at the followers of other faiths as second class citizens. To bring these people to Islam, that is the sacred duty of practicing Muslims.

Now, looking back from 2020, we see the Zia-Ershad reign did not stop just at erasing the secularism and socialism of the 1972 Constitution; they went on to make Islam the State Religion and Islamized the Constitution. Legitimizing the use of religion in politics, they invited back the war-criminals who had opposed the 1971 freedom movement, and shared power with them. The sectarian, fanatical Wahhabi politicians spread their message using the Mosques and Madrasa’s that had been founded all over Bangladesh districts and villages. As in Saudi, they declared that the current rule-of-law was a lapse of Islamic principles through sermons at the “waaz” meetings, thus making it easy to subject the followers of other faiths to abject mal-treatment. Today, hardly ten percent of Muslim ladies in Bangladesh, whether in villages or cities, wear saris. They wear Hijabs. Even highly educated professional women wear fashionable Hijabs. In winter, the villages celebrated the
harvesting with entertainments like Jari-Sari-Pala-Kavi songs, Baul songs, yatra-plays. This tradition is almost gone. After harvest, the “Waaz Mahfil religious meetings” are initiated.

The practitioners of Baul, Baishnab and Sahajia paths are publicly tortured there, their hair shorn, and forced to wear garlands of shoes. They are taunted to butcher cows ritually. The Baul sculptures in front of the Airport, and the High Court had been destroyed. Are there any plays being staged after the annual final examination at schools and colleges like in old days? In light of these adverse social and political circumstances, the non-Muslims have been marginalized, and have lost their honor and social standing. In this environment, many are leaving Bangladesh permanently for these various reasons on a regular basis. As they self-exile, the heritages born of the “baro mashe tero parban” (constant thirteen festive occasions in twelve months) tradition - the cultures, the traditions, the songs, dances, their history – all are lost. Apart from the various reasons resulting in lack of security in the familial, social and financial affairs, the anti-social elements, aided and abated by the local administration, instigate social unrest and take over the land, the businesses of the minority and adibashis (indigenous tribal natives).

The Imperialist and Royalist Wahhabi’s united with the goal of stopping the Soviets and Socialism. That the divisions of race and religion were being consciously festered by the Imperialists and the Middle East-ern Wahabi Royalist countries, was published by The Washington Post in an interview article on 22nd. March, 2018 (Or, see Kantha, 29 March, 2018). The powerful Prince Md. Bin Salman, while touring USA, said ‘His country has funded various Mosques and Madrasas in foreign countries to propagate the spread of Wahhabism. But, this was done during the cold-war between USA and the Soviet Union. Saudi Arabia and its’ friendly countries aided to stop the influence of the Soviet Union in those days.’ This article also said, Salman added furthermore, ‘During the cold-war, USA and Saudi Arabia were on very friendly terms.’ In Saudi Arabia, the followers of Wahhabism form the majority. Many unbiased analysts assert that the spread of fundamentalism and terrorism is largely due the influence of the Wahabi doctrines. Salman was questioned by the Washington Post journalists about the use of State funds to spread Wahabi doctrines. In answer, Prince Salman, heir to the Saudi throne, said ‘Saudi Arabia funded Mosques and Madrasas in foreign countries during the cold-war, but it was in response to the request of the countries friendly to Saudis. Mainly, this was done to make sure that the Soviet Union could not influence Muslim countries. The Saudi Government has stopped this practice now. At this time the funding of these efforts are mainly undertaken by various Foundations.’ In other words, the funding of foreign Mosques and Madrasas did not stop, it only shifted from direct Saudi Government treasury to Saudi Foundations. The Saudi Prince’s statements made clear, that
along with the Saudi’s, USA, Britain, France and NATO members are all responsible for the global emergence of the various armed, fundamentalist Muslim groups. They are destroying the heritage of hundreds of years of our united Hindu-Muslim society and cultures through “waaz Mahfil – extremist sermons in meetings” with diatribes against non-Muslims.

The path for redemption lies in being aware of the non-sectarian nature of the country and by organizing. The united front of the Hindu-Buddhist-Christians must join Muslims and the non-sectarian politicians, professionals and lawyers, and with their help form a Trust like organization, and establish branches at the District/ Thana (Police Station)/ sub-divisions to oppose the miscreants. Then, even if the results cannot be seen all over the country, the areas where the population is aware of race-religion divide, can come together and create opportunities for real results. Those who encourage communal division to take over the possessions, houses and land properties of the weak, if they see a sign of a Trust in front of the house of a minority member, they will think twice; knowing that they will face social, political and legal obstacles or will face lawsuits. This Trust organization will work continuously to maintain communal harmony, and apart from celebrating the non-communal occasions of National and State importance, will also encourage the revival of the seasonal and traditional festivities of hundreds of years, and arrange the yatra, songs, plays, Baul-Baishnab songs in different areas where they were performed previously. Instead of the inclusive Sufi Islam beliefs, as prevalent in India, the Wahabi tenet believers preach the superiority of Islam denigrating other religions and their followers creating an atmosphere of conflict and clashes. The propagation of this ideology has destroyed the communal amity in 40/50 Muslim Countries, fostering hatred and conflict amongst the followers of other religions and the Adibashis (native tribes), disturbing social fellow-feeling and peace. Not only in Muslim states, in Hindu-Buddhist countries, Christian countries of the West, European and American countries also, the religious fundamentalism and claims of superiority has seeded divisiveness amongst Immigrant communities. So, a new, true secular Bangladesh has to be ushered in uniting all religions, races and adibashis are in harmony. On the eve of the 50th Anniversary of our freedom, and the centenary of the birth of Bangabandhu, let us aim for a country of religious and financial equity, a harmonious society based on the ideology of freedom for all.

Based on your thought and experiences, what initiatives would you suggest to stop this horrible scourge of exodus?

Only on the basis of thoughtful opinion of all, actions can be taken on difficult and grave National and Historical issues. Initiatives by informed citizens, when they gain widespread support over time, gradually get the status of ‘issues meriting consideration’ by the Government. Also, initiatives or thoughts are considered ‘meriting discussion’ only when they
are backed by an organized body who believe them as right and just cause, especially by the affected people (in this case Hindus and tribes mainly). If they, the affected minority, think that the initiatives can be accepted and are practical steps, only then they will come forward to make it a movement. Only then, the liberal majority or professionals will possibly consider giving their support. The minority activist group Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian United Council must focus on this approach with all their reasoning and might. Digests of the books written by Advocates Mridul Rakhsit and Rana Dasgupta and others on the black Laws like the Enemy Property Act and others can be used as ammunition in our cause.

**Islam is a political activist of the secular Left, and is head of the Bangladesh Progressive Forum in the U.S.

++ Translated from original Bengali by Mr. Prabal Mukherji, P.E.

DESHBANDHU MIGHT HAVE HELD INDIA TOGETHER

Syed Badrul Ahsan**

This was written in June in honor of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das who passed away in Darjeeling on 16 June, 1925. He was only fifty five when the end came, Deshbandhu means Friend of the Nation.

Ninety five years after his passing, Chittaranjan Das remains a significant point of reference in South Asian history. There are all the questions which arise with every remembrance of the man known as Deshbandhu to people across what are today the independent republics of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and once were a wholesome, united India.

What if he had not died in 1925? Would India be partitioned had C.R. Das been alive in the tumultuous 1940s? Would Bengal go for a fresh new renaissance with Deshbandhu around?

In these rather banal times we inhabit across the landscape vivisected into political tribalism, figuratively as well as literally, through the happenings of 1947, it is the electrifying, idealistic nature of Das' beliefs that is recalled, to jolt us into an awareness of the transcendental calling of politics as it used to be, as it ought to be.

Deshbandhu belonged to a generation of political figures that produced the likes of Surendranath Banerjea, Bepin Chandra Pal, Motilal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Aurobindo Ghosh. In Das came together the best that education under British colonialism could offer, which was fundamentally an acknowledgement that India would need to catch up with the rest of world, that such a catching up en-
tailed a calling forth of nationalism based on sophisticated patriotism among its leadership and its citizens across the varied parameters of thought.

When you speak of Deshbandhu, you recall the man who abandoned a lucrative legal practice to place his politics at the service of his people. That was how he scaled the heights of grandeur, through being honoured as the friend of the country by a grateful people.

In C.R. Das, the urge for national freedom came not through a demonstration of bitterness toward the colonial administration but through the belief that constructive engagement with the British in the administration of India would lead to self-rule, to be followed in due course by full independence.

That was his reasoning behind the formation of the Swarajya Party, despite his continuing association with the Indian National Congress, in 1923.

He spelt out his dreams at the conference of the All-India Swarajya Party in Calcutta in 1924:

'I have said elsewhere and repeat it today that Swaraj --- the right Swaraj --- is not to be confused with any particular system of government. . .

What I want today is a clear declaration by the people of this country that we have got the right to establish our own system of government according to the temper and genius of our people . . . We must be true judges of what system of government is good for us and what system of government will not suit us. It is not for other people to constitute themselves as our judges.'

C.R. Das was a renaissance man. It was a reputation which came to him as a result of his wide experience across the landscape of existence. He appeared at the examinations of the Indian Civil Service, before veering off into law.

He read profusely, was an enthusiast for poetry and indeed composed verses of his own. Literature was his passion. Beyond and above all that, he was a man steeped in constitutional politics, conscious of the political realities, often coated in complexities, that underlined India.

That Hindus and Muslims needed to find common ground was a thought he put into clear outline through the Lucknow Pact of 1916. He was one of the earliest of Indian politicians to realize that if Indians meant to have absolute liberty for themselves, they would first need to come together as a nation that defied communal differences, that considered India as a homeland for all.

It was Gandhi who spoke for all after Deshbandhu's death:

'Deshbandhu was one of the greatest of men... He dreamed... His heart knew no difference between Hindus and Mussulmans'.

And earlier, nearly two years before Deshbandhu's death, Evelyn Thomas, writing in Britain's Labour Monthly in September 1923, eulogized C.R. Das thus:

'Mr. C.R. Das, late President of the All-Indian National Congress and
founder of the Swaraj Party, is the acknowledged successor of Mr. Gandhi as an all-India leader. He has snatched the falling standard and is carrying it forward in the struggle between Indian bourgeois nationalism and British imperialism --- a struggle which is destined to be a long one.'

In Deshbandhu, passion was what came into a practice of politics. And passion too was what defined his legal career, as his defence of Aurobindo Ghosh in the Alipore bomb case in 1908 was to demonstrate all so well. In a trial that was to last 126 days with over two hundred witnesses examined, Deshbandhu's eloquence came alive in his closing arguments in court:

'... My appeal to you is this: that a man like this, who is being charged with the offence with which he has been charged, stands not only before the Bar of this court, but before the Bar of the High Court of history. My appeal to you is this: that long after this controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation, will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and a lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands.'

All these years, long after Chittaranjan Das' life came to a rather sudden end, his words are recalled, his patriotism remains our pride. He would have made a difference had he lived longer. He might and could have held India together, in rainbow colours.

(Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, born on 5 November 1870, died on 16 June 1925)

** Syed Badrul Ahsan is a journalist in the U.K. and Bangladesh. He was an award recipient at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India. A similar article was first written for a paper in Bangladesh.

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** OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT NIXON **

by

André Malraux

(Le Figaro, Paris, 18th/19th December 1971)

Translated by

Prof. Dr. Dileep Karanth**

So, Mister President, at a time when millions of refugees from Bengal are probably going to return home, you end your letter to India, so your agencies say, calling to mind the fact that an alliance binds Pakistan to the greatest power in the world; the same agencies announce that American warships are heading towards the...
Bay of Bengal.

If you are so closely bound to the Marshal Yahya Khan, why had you not given him any advice earlier? I know a little of your country. America does not like it when winners of elections are sent to prison, nor for that matter, when losers of elections are. America absolutely does not like the fact that its allies have driven ten million refugees to a poor, neighboring country. The charity makes no difference. What is the use of giving alms to corpses?

Even if your aircraft carriers threaten Calcutta, the United States could not possibly accept the prospect of fighting against these crowds of suffering people, could it? When the most powerful army in the world – your own – could not overcome the barefoot people of Vietnam, do you believe that Islamabad’s army (which, by the way, no longer exists) could retake a country which is fired with the cause of independence, and which is fighting 1,800 kilometers away?

It is a great pity that the news agencies speak of these things as if it was a matter of pushing both sets of these combatants back. What lay at the back of the fighters of Bengal was death. All one has to do is wait, and soon no one will understand the causes of a war.

You probably know that before India entered the war – and may I remind you in passing that India entered the war after her airports were bombed – some of us had planned to deliver India’s military aid to Free Bengal. A hundred and fifty high-ranking officers – that would not have been bad: by the Cantonese method, it would have been a thousand in one year. We were supposed to leave on the 15th, but we received no news. Now I think we are no longer needed. We understand of course that there is no comparison between a foreign Legion and an army of a million men. However, when Pakistan had not yet forced India into the war, the aid we could have brought to Free Bengal would have mattered. For, other than us, who else was ready to bring her any help?

My comrades-at-arms did not think that the unending streams of refugees from (what cannot be called Free) Bengal were in the same boat as their executioners. Since you talk of your alliance with Pakistan, let us talk about it, while there is still time. Let us discuss, in plain language, what happened before China and the Soviet Union, and even your country, jumped into the fray.

Elections had been held in Bengal. Pakistan hoped for a victory. It was defeated: its opponents captured 167 seats out of 169. (Awami League got 162 of 300 seats in all of Pakistan, and 169 of 313 with women’s seat.—editor.) Thereupon, Pakistan incarcerated the chief of the opposition, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who, for his part, waited patiently at home for the Pakistanis to come and give him a lesson in democracy.

Would you not agree that this state of affairs is as if a candidate for the American Presidency were to have his victorious rival imprisoned? During this period, which is still very recent, what have you done with your alliance? Your alliance has remained
a mute witness to this imprisonment, and if I am not mistaken, still continues to remain so. It has been a very patient alliance indeed.

Patient even when ten million refugees racked by hunger and ravaged by despair have fled to India. So, the Pakistanis slit the throats of the leaders of their opposition. From this stems the terror, the desperate emigration from Bengal of the crowds of Hindus, and even of a certain number of Muslims. “It is war”, people are beginning to say. However, the fact remains that it is still not war. The fact remains that India has just received ten millions of refugees driven out of Pakistan, whereas Pakistan has received not a single Muslim driven out of India, not even from Kashmir. Mr. President, I wish that every American would ask you: “What are we fighting for?” If all was well in Pakistani Bengal, what is this horror that has driven a population greater than that of Belgium into India? We are told that Mrs. Gandhi does not have a good reason to complain. At least, her camps are filled with genuine martyrs. And it is not in her prisons that you can find Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? And would you consider advising your ally to release him?

You may remember our conversation in the presence of General de Gaulle. You had just come to power, and you had done me the honour of talking to me about American politics. I had observed: “The United States is the first country that has become the most powerful in the world without trying to do so. Alexander wanted to be Alexander, and Caesar wanted to be Caesar. You have not wanted to be masters of the world. But you do not have the luxury of being masters absent-mindedly.” To send aircraft-carriers to the Bay of Bengal at a time when the fate of the world hangs in the balance is not politics; it is a foreign policy relic. You are going to try to establish a dialogue with China that the United States has postponed for twenty years. That will be a dialogue between the richest country in the world and the poorest. As for Free Bengal, you can always wait twenty years before remembering that it is not appropriate for the country that announced the Declaration of Independence to crush a desperate people that is fighting for its own independence. I do not believe that your illustrious figure can watch the sight of shell-shocked crowds passing on your television screens, remembering what was once called liberty, with contentment. For it should not have been me saying what I say today; it should have been you.

Mr. President, please accept my best regards.

André Malraux

Translator’s Acknowledgments:
I thank M. Claude Pillet, web manager of the site <www.malraux.org>, and also the editor of Présence d’André Malraux sur la Toile, its academic and literary electronic journal, for permission to translate this letter, and for his encouragement. These thanks are in addition to what was already owed to the site <www.malraux.org>, for making the writings of André Malraux available to a world-wide readership. I am also grateful to the publishers, Edition Gallimard, who
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Dr. Koenraad Elst, Michel Danino, and Dr. Chitra Krishnan kindly helped me reword some infelicitous translations. Of course, I am responsible for any errors that remain

The original French letter:

Intellectuals murdered. Source Wikipedia

Lettre ouverte à M. Nixon

Donc, Monsieur le Président, lorsque les millions de réfugiés du Bengale vont peut-être rentrer chez eux, vous terminez votre lettre à l'Inde, disent vos agences, en rappelant qu'une alliance lie au Pakistan la plus grande puissance du monde – et les mêmes agences annoncent que des bateaux de guerre américains se dirigent vers le golfe du Bengale. Si vous êtes lié à ce point au maréchal Yahya Khan, pourquoi ne lui avez-vous pas donné naguère quelques conseils ? Je connais un peu votre pays. Il n'aime pas du tout que l'on envoie en prison les vainqueurs des élections (ni même les vaincus). Il n'aime pas du tout que ses alliés balayent vers un pays voisin et pauvre, dix millions de réfugiés. La charité n'y change rien : on peut faire l'aumône aux cadavres.

Même si votre porte-avions menaçait Calcutta, les Etats-Unis n'accepteraient pas de se battre contre ces foules d'agonisants. Alors ? Quand la plus puissante armée du monde, la vôtre, n'est pas venue à bout des va-nu-pieds du Vietnam, croyez-vous que l'armée d'Islamabad (qui n'est plus rien, d'ailleurs) rependra un pays enragé par son indépendance, et qui se bat à 1.800 kilomètres ?

Il est grand dommage que les agences nous parlent de ces choses comme s'il s'agissait de renvoyer les combattants dos à dos. Le dos des combattants du Bengale, c'était la mort. Mais pour que nul ne comprenne plus rien aux causes d'une guerre, il suffit d'attendre.

Vous savez peut-être qu'avant l'entrée en jeu de l'Inde (je vous rappelle au passage qu'elle est entrée en jeu après le bombardement de ses aérodromes) quelques-uns d'entre nous avaient l'intention d'apporter leur aide militaire au Bengale libre. Cent cinquante officiers supérieurs, ce n'était pas si mal : en employant la méthode cantonaise, mille en un an. Nous devions partir le 15, et ne recevons aucune nouvelle. Je pense donc que l'on n'a plus besoin de nous. Et nous n'avons pas l'outrecuidance de comparer une Légion étrangère à une armée d'un million d'hommes. Mais, enfin, quand le Pakistan n'avait
pas encore contraint l'Inde à la guerre, l'aide que nous pouvions apporter au Bengale libre comptait. Car à part nous, qui donc était prêt à la lui apporter ?

Mes camarades de combat ne pensaient pas que les interminables files des agonisants du Bengale (dirai-je libre ?) étaient logés à la même enseigne que leurs bourreaux. Puisque vous parlez de votre alliance, parlons-en, pendant qu'il en est encore temps. Que s'est-il passé, noir sur blanc, bien avant l'entrée en jeu de la Chine et de l'Union soviétique, voire avant la vôtre ?

Des élections avaient eu lieu au Bengale. Le Pakistan attendait un succès. Il fut battu : ses adversaires conquirent 167 sièges sur 169. Là-dessus, il fit incarcérer le chef de l'opposition. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – lequel, attendant avec patience chez lui que les Pakistanais vinssent l'arrêter, pour lui enseigner la démocratie. Oui ou non ? C'est exactement comme si un candidat à la présidence de la République américaine battu faisait emprisonner son rival vainqueur. En ce temps, qui n'est pas loin, qu'avez-vous fait de votre alliance? Elle a constaté l'emprisonnement de ce malheureux – et, si je ne m'abuse, elle le constate encore. En somme, c'était une alliance patiente. Patiente jusqu'à la fuite hagarde de dix millions d'êtres ravagés par la faim et par le désespoir.

Donc, les Pakistanais égorgent les chefs de l'opposition. D'où la terreur, d'où la fuite éperdue des foules hindoues du Bengale – et même d'un certain nombre de musulmans. « C'est la guerre », commence-t-on à dire. Il reste que ce n'était pas encore la guerre : il reste que l'Inde venait d'accueillir dix millions de réfugiés terrifiés par le Pakistan, alors que le Pakistan n'avait pas accueilli un seul musulman terrifié par l'Inde, vint-il du Cachemire. Monsieur le Président, je souhaite que chaque Américain vous demande : « Au nom de quoi combattrions-nous ? » Si tout allait bien au Bengale pakistanais, pourquoi cette épouvante qui a chassé vers l'Inde une population plus nombreuse que celle de la Belgique ? On nous dit que Madame Gandhi n'a pas de bonnes raisons : du moins ses camps ont-ils d'assez bons martyrs. Et ce n'est pas dans ses prisons que se trouve Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (à propos, si vous conseilliez à votre allié de le libérer ?)

Vous vous souvenez de notre conversation avec le Général de Gaulle. Vous veniez d'atteindre le pouvoir, et vous m'aviez fait l'honneur de me parler de la politique américaine. Je vous avais dit : « Les États-Unis sont le premier pays devenu le plus puissant du monde sans l'avoir cherché. Alexandre voulait être Alexandre, César voulait être César ; vous n'avez pas du tout voulu être les maîtres du monde. Mais vous ne pouvez pas vous payer le luxe de l'être disgrâce. »

Envoyer des porte-avions dans le golfe du Bengale lorsque le destin du monde est en jeu, ce n'est pas une politique, c'est une survivance. Vous allez essayer d'établir avec la Chine un dialogue que les États-Unis ont différé pendant vingt ans : l'ancien dialogue du pays le plus riche du monde avec le pays le plus pauvre.
Pour le Bengale libre, puissiez-vous ne pas attendre vingt ans avant de vous souvenir qu'il ne convient pas que le pays de la Déclaration de l'Indépendance écrase la misère en train de lutter pour sa propre indépendance. Je ne crois pas que votre illustre statue voie passer avec joie, sur les écrans de télévision, ces foules hallucinées qui se souviennent parfois de ce qui s'appela jadis la liberté. Car ce que je dis aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas moi qui devrais le dire : c'est vous. Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Président, aux assurances de ma haute considération.

André Malraux

*** Dr. Dilip Karanth is an American Math Professor by profession. He is a linguist and historian by passion, Karanth reads and writes over a dozen languages.

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EID OF BENGALI MUSLIMS

Prof. Dr. Shamsuzzaman Khan**

(Professor Khan highlights the changing identity in the Bengali community, some of which has been influenced by partition.)

Bahari horse races were organized by the Nawabs of Dhaka. Eid was still not celebrated by the general public. Photo: Collected

In the late 1930s, the Bengali Muslim middle class began to develop. The contribution of the then Prime Minister of Bengal A K Fazlul Huq in this regard is important. But there is also a background to the beginning of everything. From that point of view, two significant events of a decade or so ago make possible the trend of integrated development of the thirties. The first was the resolution of the mother tongue problem of Bengali Muslims in 1917. Before that, the debate on whether Bengali was the mother tongue of Bengali Muslims or not, came to an end with a reasonably remarkable speech by Abdul Karim. In that speech, he said in a convincing voice, 'Bengali is the mother tongue of Bengali Muslims.'

The second incident was the signing of the Bengal Pact in 1923 with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, A K Fazlul Huq, Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy and other Muslim leaders. The main condition of this agreement was that Muslims would be represented in the elections of all the institutions of the Legislative Assembly in proportion to their numbers; And Muslims will continue to be employed in government and other agencies until equality is achieved. The first incident laid the foundation for the self-reliance, nationalism and national awakening of Bengali Muslims. A well-organized educated middle class society is needed to build that foundation or infrastructure. Because the middle class is an
active part of the socio-cultural movement.

Mr. Fazlul Haque formed the cabinet after winning the Bengal Pact and later the 1937 elections. This opened a new door for the self-development and self-expression of the Bengali Muslim community. Mr. Fazlul Haque became the Premier of Bengal and kept the education department in his hands. As a result, it has a positive impact on the social and cultural progress of Bengali Muslims. A circulating new society is being formed. This society is looking for new media in the pursuit of self-discovery and social awakening. Forms various meetings, associations and organizations. Deepra broke the old circle with new insanity and innovation and became the hope of a new direction. As a result, the 1930s became a period of creative thinking for Bengali Muslims.

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Fazlul Haque and Suhrawardy's non-communal Bengali nationalism, which began in the 1920s through their historic initiative, was embodied in a new ideology in the field of culture. In this context, the beginning of the Eid festival of Bengali Muslims was also at that extraordinary time. Festivals can make the little ones outstanding, while keeping the fundamental essence at the center of religious matters, but also enlivening the beauty-consciousness of social cohesion and enjoyment in new forms and expressions. The Eid festival, which was invented in the 1930s in the then capital city of Bengal, Kolkata, in recognition of the renaissance of Bengali Muslims, is an extraordinary creation. I say extraordinary creation because the Eid that used to be celebrated in different parts of East Bengal and undivided Bengal, the history we find in the details of it, I see a Sufi-Auliya-Darvesh from abroad and his hujrakhana, khanka or dargachilla Eid like them used to. Later, during the Mughal period, the celebration of Eid was accompanied by a colorful Eid procession of Amirs and Umrahs, a procession to the Eidgah and food and drink and almsgiving for the poor and needy. It did not have social significance as it did not have the participation of common people. The Nawabs of Dhaka used to organize Qasidars on the occasion of Eid, there were also processions of Eid processions, but not the whole country.

Eid festival in Calcutta in the thirties of the last century was a completely exceptional social festival. The contribution of writers, journalists, singers and intellectuals under the patronage of Mr. A K Fazlul Haque in the re-creation of this festival was also unique. And in this case the contribution of the poet Nazrul was revolutionary. Singing was forbidden in Bengali Muslim society. Against the backdrop of this reality, Nazrul composed Islamic songs. One was a very popular Eid song. The barrier wall collapsed. Legendary singer Abbasuddin Ahmed joined him in this new journey. Then the record company released all the popular records of Nazrul's Islamic songs. The Eid festival of Bengali Muslims not only gained social significance, but also became a universal celebration of a new cultural awaken-
It cannot be said that the connection of trade and commerce with that Calcutta-centric festival was very large. Because even then there were some small and medium employees, lawyers and small businessmen on the surface of the agrarian society of Bengal. They did not have much money. So their shopping on Eid was not so glamorous. However, during the Eid season, the sale of Washel Mollah's shop used to be quite lively. Until then, men used to write Sri and women used to write Srimati before Bengali Muslim names. Muslim middle-class men wore dhoti; He used to open his prayers. And at that time the clothes of Bengali Muslims on Eid were dhoti and shirt. Punjabi has not yet become popular. Mr. Fazlul Haque, of course, occasionally wore white Punjabi. Men's favorite clothing was Sengupta dhoti.

In the agrarian society of East Bengal at that time, those who were a little bit accomplished, used to cook date molasses paise (rice-pudding), khichuri (cooked spiced rice and lentil mix), sometimes beef at home. Eid prayers were performed at Eid Khola or Eidgah; Or a bamboo fence in a mosque made of tin. In the old days, men wore lungi, dhoti and genji for Eid. Sometimes shirt or Punjabi. Women wore loom sari. Needless to say, the lack of cash did not make Eid as glamorous as it is now.

Happiness on the day of Eid means playing hadudu in the afternoon, bull-fighting, bull running or football, and boating in the rainy season. This is how the old Eid was celebrated.

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++ Translated from Bengali by Mr. Shuvo Roy.
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THE LATE PARUL BALA GUHA

BRINGING MY DEAREST TO SAFETY!

Sitangshu Guha**

I guess it was hidden in my brain for a long time. Nobody ever asked me, nor did I know that it was so painful or important. But when ISPaD interviewed me, I suddenly became so emotional that, I could not talk for a few moments and my eyes became watery. Initially it was just an interview, but soon I realized that, I became Emotional in some instances, especially when it became my family affairs. When I was talking about my
Mother and how I had brought her from Dhaka to Chandpur in 1971 (during Pakistan’s war against Bengali majority — editor), I became emotional and still now if I have to talk again about that, I know I will be emotional again.

Here, I will try to write what I had told in answer to a question about my mother and younger siblings during ISPaD (Indian Subcontinent Partition Documentation Project) interview on 28th January 2011 on Indian Subcontinent Partition Documentation by eminent professor Dr. Sabyasachi Ghosh Dastidar at SUNY, Old Westbury, Long Island, NY. It was a casual interview and I had no idea what shall I say and what will be asked by the moderator. This is just a segment of the whole interview and nothing in comparison of what others had faced during the partition of India and during the liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

The days of 1971 are not easy to forget. The price of a human life was no more than a Pakistani butcher’s dagger on anybody’s throat. With a quick Islamic chant, he could slaughter any non-Muslim without committing any sin, so he was brainwashed.

The main chore for the Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators was to find religious minority Hindus and progressive minded Muslims and slaughter them. The smell of death was always in the air and any good citizen could have been rounded up at any time and vanished with no trace and witness. While Bengali Muslims could spend their days with some fear and prayers, the Hindus were targeted and hunted down with no mercy when they were caught fleeing from the cities or villages. My journey to and from Chandpur to Dhaka is simply chilling and I do not think I will ever forget the trauma that I and my family had to suffer during those darkest days of our independence war.

In 1971, my parents and my siblings lived in two different places due to my father’s work at Chandpur while rest of my family members residing in Dhaka. My immediate elder brother, mother, two younger sisters and a younger brother lived in Dhaka, the capital city of the then East Pakistan. My father used to visit Dhaka very often to see the family and he was in Dhaka in mid-March of 1971. It was in the 3rd week of March 1971, when my elder brother came to Chandpur with a plan to go to India for a job interview. I was in Chandpur then. I helped him to travel to Agartala, Tripura State of India via Brahmanbaria and Comilla. On 24th March 1971 I came back to Chandpur and saw that my father also came back from Dhaka. I was supposed to go to Dhaka within one or two days but that was not to be. On 25th
March 1971, Pakistani military seized Dhaka and started to commit massacres on innocent civilian population.

Our Dhaka house was adjacent to Sadhana Ousadhanalya (An ayurvedic medicine manufacturing company) in Gandaria in Old Dhaka. My mother along with my two little sisters and a young brother were stuck in Dhaka. One of my sisters was sixteen at that time and had just finished her Secondary School Certificate examination and was waiting to get into any of the Dhaka City colleges. Other two siblings were ten (sister) and eight (brother). After Dhaka crackdown, people from all spheres of life were fleeing from the city because of the insecurity that was created by Pakistani military and its collaborators. My family (mother and siblings) was pretty much helpless with no adult male around in the house at that critical time. In addition they were Hindus and that was known in the neighborhood.

My father and I were also helpless in Chandpur and we could not do anything to rescue my mother and siblings from Dhaka. My father talked about them every day while I was busy with my friends and kept an open eye on what was going on in and around Dhaka. About a week passed, my father told me to inquire about Dhaka and wondered whether I could go to Dhaka and see our family. It was almost impossible to make the trip because the horrible atrocities that had been going on there at that time. March passed and April came with no news from our family members from Dhaka and people of all spheres of life were coming back from Dhaka in flocks by various means, even on foot or by break journey. I used to go to the river ghat (boat harbor) to see if any boat was leaving for Dhaka, but found none. On 4th April, I saw some engine propelled boats were going to Munshiganj, an area close to Narayanganj. And, Narayanganj is few miles away from Dhaka. I consulted my father and he advised me to go Dhaka.

I do not remember the exact date, it might be on 2nd or 3rd April of 1971, the owner of Sadhana Oushadhalaya, a prominent Hindu, Dr. Girish Ghosh, was brutally killed by Pakistani military. Because of our house was located next to Sadhana Oushadhalaya, the drug manufacturer, my father was almost sure that none of our family members would be alive in Dhaka. Almost every day, he used to tell me to go and bring the news to confirm what exactly were happened to our family. So, the time came to travel to Dhaka but all our kith and kins and friends advised us not to take that dangerous journey.

I failed to understand the gravity of the situation and decided to go to Dhaka at the first opportunity that I had. It was important to console my father with whatever news that was waiting for us to face. I was the only young male, who was capable of taking that trip. My mind was blank and I did not think that much about the danger. My father understood the gravity of the situation and perhaps, others told him about the deadly danger about taking the trip. But when time came, my father was reluctant to send me. I felt that I should go and bring the family back, if not other-
wise. I told my father on 5th April that I would be going to Dhaka the following morning. He did not say much but agreed with my decision.

Next morning, may be, around 5 am, I set out for Dhaka. My father gave me some money and told me to come back as soon as possible. I took an engine propelled boat and started my journey to Dhaka around 7 am. That time, everybody was friendly with each other and everybody was ready to extend their hands for each other. I was a good swimmer and considering the smaller size of the boat, I was not too scared of drowning in big rivers like Padma and Meghna. But, in retrospect, the journey was dangerous and I could have been killed if we had faced any Pakistani military patrol boat or a strong rain storm.

It took me almost 12 hours to reach Munshiganj and it was already evening. No military were there. I asked one shop keeper about whether I could spend the night somewhere around in that area. He advised me to spend the night in a college, which was open and ready to provide shelter to anybody whoever needed at that time. I bought some bread and banana and ate for the night and slept on a bare bench in a class room of Haraganga College. Yes, I slept well. Early in the next morning, I took a boat with others, mostly day laborers, who were heading for Narayanganj business center for daily work. It took over an hour to reach Fatullah (a place close to Narayanganj) and it was about 7 am.

The boat stopped in a place which was not a regular ghat (where passengers came on board or got off from the boat. I got off and in ten minutes, I arrived to the Fatullah Fruit Bazar (market). The market was burning. Amid the fire, I saw a baby’s leg. People told us that the previous night military came and set the whole market on fire and killing a few market vendors. Military left at about 4 am and then the local people came out and put out the fire by themselves. I did not stop there and took a tempo (open taxi that takes about 10 people) towards old Dhaka. It was about an hour ride and on the way I got off at Gandaria and walked half a mile to our Dhaka house. I saw a few Biharis (Urdu speaking refugees who were collaborating with Pakistani military Junta at that time) but nobody asked me any question. I finally reached our house.

I knocked the main door of our house and there was no response. I knocked the other doors and banged the windows and still there was no response. I was thinking about my next step. I knew some people around our house but was not brave enough to go around finding those people. After about ten minutes, I thought I should knock the upstairs door, where owners used to reside. I started knocking the door and nothing happened. To my desperation, I went to a side door of our house and knocked, and still nobody opened the door. This time, I really felt very sad and was thinking what would I tell my dear father? Suddenly, the side door opened and somebody just dragged me inside. Most of the doors were locked from outside except only few
that were locked from inside.

My teenage sister pulled me in and I saw my mother and two other siblings. The meeting was pretty shocking! Everybody was very excited to see me and probably sensed a glimmer of hope to get out of the hellish Dhaka house. I looked at my mother and I was truly surprised with her appearance. My Hindu mother was forced to dress like a Muslim widow to stay alive. She had neither vermillion nor any white conch sankha bangals (both signs for a married woman) in her hands, rather dressed white as a widow. She looked older than her age and the fear of being detected as a Hindu mother was noticeable on her face. A Hindu mother was forced to give up her precious tradition to save herself and her family from the Pak butchers’ daggers. My brother and sisters were very distressed from their traumatic situation and we could not speak for a while.

By this time, the landlord and his wife came to see me. The landlord told me that it was great that I came because he was about to send my mother and siblings with his family to his village home, where they should be far safer than staying in Dhaka. When he asked me about my plan, I told we, all should be going to Chandpur as soon as possible. He asked me whether there was any military there and I replied no. I looked at my mother, landlord’s wife and told them that we would be leaving within half an hour. I did not know where I found the voice, which sounded like a strong decision. Nobody argued against that quick decision. Landlord wanted to know how we would go about that journey. I replied saying a taxi would be better choice to get away since we were five. So, he went out to get a taxi for us.

The landlord was a Bengali Muslim, who had migrated from India and looked aged gentleman with a long beard. He was a religious man in both his looks and personal life, which was a great help for us. Landlord’s wife talked about the ordeal they had to suffer the following days of 25th March military crackdown. My mother told me to eat and I ate some rice, dal and boiled potato and was ready to start the risky journey. She said they had been eating that kind of food for last few days and they were tired of eating the same but it was not easy for them to get anything else better at that time.

Soon the taxi came. It could carry six/seven people at a time. So, it was perfect for all of us to travel together in one vehicle. I saw another gentleman came with the landlord, who was a friend of my elder brother and incidentally, he was a Muslim Leaguer (supporter of separatist Muslim League Party — editor.) My mother got ready with her worn sari dress with no baggage. Even her gold ornaments were left with the landlady. We, five sat in the rear seats of the taxi while our landlord and my brother’s friend sat by the side of taxi driver. The Good-Bye time was really worrisome because the journey was dangerous and we could have been stopped at any time by the military and we could have lost our lives if they could find out that we were Hindus.

The time was around 10 am and our
driver stopped at a gas-station to fill the gas tank. We were all very nervous and scared and that ten minutes’ stoppage felt like almost ten hours. One Urdu-speaking Bihari man came towards to us and asked the landlord where we were heading? Landlord politely answered that he was sending his family to the village for a short time. Bihari man asked him again whether we will be coming back soon. Landlord nodded to answer yes. The Bihari man left the place and our taxi driver started to drive again. We were finally relieved and felt very happy. There was no more problem on the road and we reached Fatullah before noon. We almost jumped out of the car and walked fast to a boat, which was heading towards Munshiganj.

On the road, we did not talk at all and I am sure that my mother was only praying. Our landlord took a heroic and humanitarian decision to provide us a safe passage to Fatullah risking his own life. The other friend also took a big risk to accompany us with that critical journey to the freedom. He knew that his company would provide us the safe passage and his presence would have helped us, had we have encountered any military checkpoint. Till today, after 49 years, I still salute the elderly gentleman and my brother’s friend for their kindness and bravery.

Later my mother told us that when I knocked the door of the house at ground floor, nobody could hear the knock because they were not living there. Our family was living in a room at the second floor with the landlord’s family and they treated them very well. When I knocked at the second Floor door, everybody got alerted and scared. Because at that time, any sudden knock on the door meant military men might be at the door. After second and third knocks on the door, someone from the landlord’s family tried to find out who would be knocking at that time of the day. One of landlord’s daughters saw me partially but could not recognize me. She called my mother and sister and they instantly figured out it was me, who was at the door.

Anyway, we started by a boat from Fatullah. The landlord and my brother’s friend waited there as long as we could see them. Soon our boat was in middle of the river and we were all felt relieved. The boatman told us that military did not raid in the river and we got more relaxed. I also knew there were no military men in Munshiganj. I was thinking that we should travel to Chandpur on the same day as soon as we reach Munshiganj. Otherwise, we may not have a place to spend the night. About a quarter of an hour or more, we saw a launch in the river heading to some destination. The launch was better and a bit bigger than the engine propelled boat that we used the day before. We started shouting from our boat with raising our shirts as to signal that we needed immediate help.

Some people in the launch saw us and luckily the launch stopped and picked us up from our smaller boat. Our boatman tried his best to reach to the launch. Finally, we reached the launch and with the help of some good people, we got into the launch for the next leg of our journey. Actu-
ally, other passengers just pulled us from the boat to the launch. That was an incredible moment and when everybody became brothers and sisters. People gave us the best cabin and my mother and other siblings just felt sleep soon, as if they did not sleep for a long time. I started gossiping and playing cards with passengers. They were asking a lot of questions, and I told them the story.

The captain told me that they will first go to Chandpur and there they will decide the next stop. We felt very lucky. Till today, when I think about that moment, I think how great were those people were, who waited for us to be picked up in the middle of the river and how helpful they were to take us to that launch boat. Till today, I thank those unknown people who helped us. That was a great moment indeed. We reached Chandpur in the evening and said ‘good-bye’ to the fellow passengers. We took rickshaws to reach home safely.

My father was surprised to see us all and felt like something incredible had happened at that moment of the time. Before I left for Dhaka, he told me several times that our family members might already be dead. My father went to the market for a quick grocery shopping and mother cooked some fish and rice. Till today, I would consider that dinner was one of best that I ever had in my life. I had no idea that this beautiful thing could happen to our family within only forty-eight hours’ time. We were all under one roof in Chandpur and we felt really great. A dream finally came true when we were expecting the worst.

The true story was part of my interview about the adverse effect on us for the 1947 partition of India. If this story makes you interested to see and listen to my interview, please visit the YouTube’s ispad1947 channel and write my name. You can also find that in this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YhCg1IesME

** Mr. Guha is a journalist who started his journalism career in Bangladesh, and now writes for Bangladeshi and the U.S. media.

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THE BLACK PEACOCK

Prof. Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia**

As a kid growing up in North India in the 1970s and 1980s, I was thrilled whenever both my parents went out – the reason is that I would have the full attention of my frail and aging
grandmother. She doted on me – I could do nothing wrong and my sister could do nothing right. I relished the freedom to do anything under my grandma’s watchful eyes. As I have grown up from being a kid to a man, what I fondly remember of her is not only her unconditional love for me but also the stories she told me. I share one such true story here – the day my grandparents left our ancestral village for good.

*Grandfather Ajit Singh Butalia with grandmother Narinder Kaur Butalia. 1930s photo*

Seven generations of Butalia family from 1837 to present

Then came August 15, 1947 – the partition of India and Pakistan. Despite Gandhi’s non-violent philosophy, it resulted in about 15 million people divided along religious identity lines crossing over to the other side with about half a million killed in revenge killings as Sikhs and Hindus moved from Pakistan to India and Muslims moved from India to Pakistan. The carnage was equally horrific on both sides – as my grandmother said, “the day we lost our humanity”.

With the partition of India and Pakistan looming, some of the family (especially my dad and two of his brothers) had already moved from Butala village to east Punjab, now Punjab, India. By early 1947, the local Muslims of our village had assured the family of safety and so my Sikh grandparents decided to stay put at the ancestral family home with the two younger boys. In September 1947, our ancestral house was set on fire by mobs but the local Muslims saved the house and their lives. The local Muslims were now no longer able to protect the family that had lived in their village for generations.
Finally, in late September, my grandparents decided to leave the village for Indian Punjab. The day they were to depart, a young Muslim man whose grandparents had worked for the family stepped up and demanded that they could not take anything with them except the clothes on their back. It was at that moment my grandparents, Narinder Kaur and Capt. Ajit Singh (retired), realized that they were never to return to their ancestral home where our family had lived for generations. My grandfather wore a round turban similar to a Muslim man, my grandmother a burqa, holding their 3 month old son Sarabjit Singh in her arms, put 2 year old Narinderjit Singh on a donkey and the Butala family stepped out of their ancestral haveli which had a black peacock painted at the front entrance. They left the ancestral village on foot for good - never to return again.

Ancestral haveli at Butala Sardar Jhanda Singh village

They walked several days towards a refugee camp, near Gujranwala. When they arrived, the British officer in charge discovered that Ajit Singh had served in the army and took it upon himself to facilitate his family across the border. On the way from the camp to the border, a mob of Muslims stopped the vehicle and demanded that the family be handed over to them. Ajit Singh recognized some of the men in the mob and they decided instead to take the family to Lahore and provided them with shelter. What a change of heart – from mobsters to shelter providers. For several weeks they lived in the home of a Muslim family in Lahore, which provided them with clothing and food (including non-halal meat). They were dropped off at the border around late October 1947.

Butalia family tree till 1940

I still recollect the terse tone in which my grandmother related this incident to me many times in vivid details, such as the black peacock painted on the haveli – sometimes pausing to think hard of what happened when. I once took the courage of asking her if she felt bitter by the betrayal of the young Muslim man who confronted them on the day they left the village. To my surprise, her
answer was that many at that time were not even that lucky. She was thankful that the young man let them go even though they had to leave all their possessions. She was particularly grateful to the Muslim family that hid them in their homes despite serious consequences if discovered. As a kid, I remember her telling me that we as human beings are capable of immense good and evil – both at the same time. Now I better understand what she meant.

Memorial of Sardar Ganda Singh Butalia - died Dec 22, 1845 in the Battle of Ferozeshah defending the Lahore Darbar against British attack

She never harbored ill-will towards the young man who dispossessed them as they left the ancestral village for good. She felt grateful that he let them go alive. This lesson of gratitude even among such tragedies has been an inspiration for me.

This story was repeated to me so many times by my aging grandma as I listened to every detail that sometimes I wonder if was there with them in this journey of hope and gratitude.

Front top view of havel

Life does go full circle. I settled in Columbus, Ohio, USA and began looking for my roots. With the help of Facebook slowly I became friends with many of the residents of our ancestral village of Butala in Pakistan. One of them shared with me that the ancestral home was now an Islamic school for girls. I hoped to return the ancestral home called haveli someday and walk back through the door that my grandparents left in 1947 to complete the circle of life that left my grandma with such hope and gratitude despite pain and suffering.

The opportunity of a lifetime came when I visited Pakistan in December 2019 for the first time for a conference. I decided to visit our ancestral village.

As we drove towards the village from Gujranwala, my heart raced. I felt as if I knew the place when I had never been here before. When I reached our village with a mix of emotions of joy and sadness at the same time, I was perplexed. There were 3 havelis of the family. I was keen to visit the one in which my
grandparents lived. And then I saw on the front wall of one of the havelis – a fading black peacock made of black bricks! My heart melted and reminded me of my grandmother’s stories and her warm touch. My grandparents had walked out through these very doors 72 years ago never to return.

Top view of havelis

I was here to complete the circle of life – so with tears in my eyes, prayers on my lips, I kissed the door floor beam and entered inside. The haveli is very well maintained and is now an Islamic school for girls – a place normally men are not allowed in. The Mullah of the village accompanied me in an interfaith spirit inside the building and gave me a guided tour. While there, I pledged to not let the hate of the partition eclipse the love of humanity. Hate is like taking a poison pill that kills you but not does nothing to the object of hate. I learned this lesson late in life but better late than never.

We all believe in stories – some good and some bad. We become the stories we believe in. If you believe in stories of hatred and revenge, that is who you will become. If you choose to believe in stories of love, forgiveness, compassion, and humility – that is who you will develop into. So let us be careful what stories we believe in.

Oldest pipal tree in village

Borders are manmade arbitrary lines that exist but matter only if you believe in them. Let Punjab be no more divided into Indian Punjab and Pakistani Punjab. The line between Chardha (rising sun) and Lehnda (setting sun) Punjab cannot break friendships and trust of thousands of years – and this is where our hope and future lies.

Author returns to his ancestral village home in Butala, Pakistan, 72 years after his ancestors left it, to find the black peacock patiently waiting for him to come home.
POGROMS AND RIOTS IN BANGLADESH AND WEST BENGAL, 1992-93, A FIRST HAND WITNESS ACCOUNT: Part 1(1)

Prof Dr. Sachi G. Dastidar**

In the aftermath of destruction of Babri Mosque and the pronouncements that came out or did not come out of our ruling Bengali elites - the politicians, "the intellectuals", the bureaucrats and even some journalists - I kept asking myself "what happened to our Sonar Bangia (Golden Bengal, i.e. West Bengal and Bangladesh)?". Have we become a nation of unconscientious, shameless people? As I traveled through (districts of) Calcutta and Howrah, from Medinipur to Birbhum, from Dhaka to Comilla, from Chittagong to Sylhet, and places in between, and witnessing the tragic plight of many families firsthand, I asked many of our elite friends why are they censoring facts from rest of us? Can Shonar Bangla (Golden Bengal, or Shonar [Golden] Bharat [India]) be built based of lies and deception? Are we holding Bangladeshi non-Muslim Hindu, Buddhist, Christian (including tribal) lives hostage to our petty interest? Or, West Bengal's minority Muslims and non-Bengalis (holding hostage)?

In (Hindu-majority) Calcutta, as I went to a neighborhood one affected Hindu group asked me if I was related to that "SOB (Leftist) politician" supposedly his name sounded like mine, whereas another Muslim group

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Remains of a Hindu Home near Chittagong City, Bangladesh, Pic: Author

(Note: From December of 1992 through January of 1993 I was Bangladesh and in the Indian State of West Bengal, and traveled extensively through the former United Bengal. In Calcutta I found that public opinion has polarized(2), and turning anti-Bangladeshi in the aftermath of large scale attack and loss suffered by non-Muslims. A section of Bangladeshi press continues to be anti-Indian and anti-Hindu (minority), and demolition of Babri Mosque in India has been agitating them. The major base of West Bengal Left's support has all along has been the Bangladeshi Hindu refugees (since 1947 partition), as is the West Bengal and Tripura ministries. With continued attack on Bangladeshi minorities, these refugees many of whose families still live in Bangladesh, who constitute about one-third of West Bengal's population of 70 million people is turning to the 'Right.' In my discussion in West Bengal and in Bangladesh with Hindus and Muslims I found a general sense of concern, and this article is written in that context. The is republished from South Asia Forum.)
whispered me with information asking "are you that (Muslim) journalist?", supposedly I looked like the journalist. In another neighborhood a Hindu Marwari family whose home and business was destroyed took me into confidence as my friend confided in perfect Hindi. But alas, no politician, no "intellectual" had visited them, they complained. Only one Congress leader, Ms. Mamata Banerjee, M.P., had the courage to visit affected areas whereas the ruling Leftists were driven away by riot affected peoples (3). Some relief was coming through, but that was also very communal, very racist, at least in my eye. Muslims were giving relief to Muslims, and Hindus to Hindus. In our Communist-run communalism such is the norm. In a bizarre twist a Communist union leader, Mr. Ram Tewari, who had gone to march with Muslims and Hindus to protest against the Babri Mosque destruction was burned alive and cut to pieces by a Muslim mob. The local (Muslim) councilor was supposed to have incited Muslims against Hindus, where over 10,000 Hindus were homeless. Some demanded an investigation of that councilor (4), but the ruling clique would not allow it. In the Muslim Camp neighborhood I visited there were posters "we want (CPM) Police Officer's head", but no one questioned that officer, whereas affected Hindus were all polarized, and complained that they are not receiving relief as compared to the Muslim victim (5) Calcutta newspapers and propaganda machines churned out stories of thousand-year old Bengali communal amity, not telling us that it was because of our Bengali-style Hindu-Muslim communalism (I prefer to call it racism since communalism is a form of racism, albeit religious) it was one of only two provinces that was partitioned, leaving aside Assam and Kashmir, and number of people killed and displaced since 1947, especially Bangladeshi Hindus, could surpass most well-known cases of "ethnic cleansing" of the world. Why this lie? Great speeches were made, poems were written, stories came out of the finest pens as to how communal "they" have become, compared to "us"- the secular, atheist, Marxists, socialists, Congressites. Most of these "secularists" are Hindu refugees (in India they are called Bangals), Bangladeshi-Indian Bhadraloks (gentlemen) who could not live in their Muslim-majority homeland to come to Hindu India. It is a well-kept Bengali secret in India, especially of the politically active Hindu "secularists", "Hinduites" and "atheists" as to how they leave their homeland in Bangladesh while simultaneously denouncing Hindu India. These are the people who write and speak about "hidden" communalism of others while making India more Hindu! Could Sonar Bangla afford to have room for these types of double standards? Visits to England, France, China, Russia and the U.S. is preferable than to their homeland, Reasons given can hardly be printed here. Some of these people are undoubtedly racist-Communists, anti-Gandhi Congressites, anti-social socialists, as many of my friends suggest, while others are now outright anti-Muslim
racist. While Gandhiji came to Bengal (in 1946 and 1947) to stop a genocide, these Congressites were first to desert their Hindu voters (under the separate electoral system), and of course their Muslim neighbors. This is equally true for our Bengali Hindu Communists and socialists. They have supported riots after riots by either keeping quiet, through censoring, or through false propaganda - just as they did in 1992-93, and now the ghost of these lies are haunting them. I will come to that soon.

Racism of our anti-Muslim Hindu groups or anti-Hindu Muslim groups is quite clear. Both are intolerant of the other, and it is easier to fight, than the covert racism of our so-called secularists. Islamism in Pakistan has succeeded in driving out practically all the non-Muslims - a fifth of the population - from their territory, as well as from Pakistani Azad Kashmir. Where have all these people vanished? Islamism in Bangladesh has driven her non-Muslims down from about one-third of the population to merely 13 in 1980 (6), in the world's sixth most populous nation. And now many in India want to follow this model. Bangladeshi ruling clique has successfully held Bangladeshi minorities hostage to any imaginary and real happenings in India, especially the bad ones. Through my travel and discussion in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh I have found a group of dedicated intelligentsia who are eager to talk about this. Are we? Openly Hindu communalists on the other hand had to come up with new definitions of being anti-Muslim while keeping our own form of racism, called caste-ism, alive. In the infinite toleration preached by Hinduism this new gospel has not been easy. Without that toleration (and fatalism) caste-ism could not exist. Thus came the demolition of the Mosque, and that too spear headed by a "world Hindu group" whose world is indeed microscopic. They would march to destroy a 400-year old mosque but not to rebuild the 1,200 old Ramna Kali Temple in Dhaka destroyed by the Pakistani and the (newly independent) Bangladeshi governments in 1971-72. They would march to Bangladesh border to stop a "Long March" but not start a "relief march" to Indian Muslims and Hindus, and for Bangladeshi Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, tribes who were affected by the December 1992 pogrom or to rebuild any of the thousands of homes, temples and churches, and businesses demolished in 1992. We would worship Goddess Lakhsmi and Saraswati but would not touch our sisters Lakhsmi and Saraswati who are being gang raped by the thousands just for their namesake. We are becoming pea-brain to pinhead, and humanity is the first casualty. I would have loved to join both the "Long March" and the "relief march", minus, of course, the racism. However, I am afraid, soon Indian Muslims could become hostage to politics of racism in Bangladesh and Pakistan, just as their minorities have been held hostage to politics of India with Indian secularists' acquiescence.

What was unique about our Calcutta riot of 1992 is that no one took any responsibility. no one resigned. No one visited the victims: no Prime
Minister, no Chief Minister, no M.P., no M.L.A., no Councilor, no (Police) Commissioner. My parent's generation wrote it was worst riot since 1946. I do not know about 1946 riot, but I was a young adult during the 1964 Hazarat Bal (Hindu) Killing in Bangladesh, followed by the Calcutta riot (7). I thought it was pretty bad then. In Bangladesh it was mentioned that over ten thousand Hindus were killed in cold blood. Washington Post and London Times mentioned that over 1,000 were murdered in the first days, as did Anandabazar Patrika (8). Dhaka Bengali daily Ittefaq (9) while observing strict Pakistani censorship mentioned "even Muslims are getting killed while trying to save their (Hindu) neighbors." Two years ago in 1990 after another anti-Hindu pogrom, M. Rahman wrote in Dhaka that 1990 riot reminded him of 1964 pogrom when he "saw Hindu dead bodies all over paddy fields and floating down rivers". And 1992 riot was many times more severe than 1964 riot, except (possibly) fewer deaths. In 1964, (daily) Anandabazar, Jugantar, Statesman all wrote about the plight of minorities there. But not this time though! In 1964 Chief Minister P.C. Sen admitted that 25 Muslims and another 25 Hindus were killed in the rioting (in West Bengal) (10). What happened to our administration this time? In 1964 some in our opposition wanted resignation of some ministers (11). Some of those parties in opposition are now Communist rulers of Bengal. Why nobody admitted anything? Why nobody resigned? Why nobody asked for any resignation? Where is our democratic value?

At the height of 1964 rioting then Congress Chief Minister (12), and Governor Padmaja Naidu visited riot affected areas (13). What happened to our (Bangladeshi-Indian) Chief Minister or to our Governor in 1992? Even one Bangladeshi-Indian Chief Minister, Mr. P.C. Ghosh (14), who had deserted his homeland in 1947 had courage to attempt to visit the oppressed in Bangladesh (East Pakistan) in 1964. And in 1992? We have two Bangladeshi-Indian Chief Ministers now in West Bengal and Tripura. In 1964 many in the Left, Right and Center felt enough pain to raise the issue of "population exchange" (15). Where is our pain in 1992, either for our West Bengali minorities or majorities, or for our Bangladeshi minorities? Saddest part of my Sonar Bangla experience has been how so many now feel that the only solution to minority problems in Bangladesh (and now in India) is population exchange, as had happened with Pakistan in partitioned Punjab. If anti-Muslim racism is rising in West Bengal, it is not enough to blame Hindu or Muslim communalism, a large part of the "blame" lies with the actions, not the deeds, of our covert racism of the Left and secularists.

This time around in Calcutta, in typical Hindu Bengali style we all looked for scapegoats for our deeds: The Promoters, gangs named Emperors and Bears. These are new code words for new forms of communalism. Then there were Urdu-speaking Bangladeshis (16) who were settled by the politicians "without proper secular education", wrote one paper (17) and who were supposedly active
against Hindus in certain neighborhoods. Why could the politicians not arrest those Promoters, and Hindu and Muslim gang leaders named Emperor or Bear? Why did they settle some of the Urdu-speaking Bangladeshis when many of their leaders had openly murdered Hindu Bengalis and secular Muslims during Bangladeshi Liberation War in 1971, and when many of whom wanted to go to Islamic Pakistan? Now the Right is asking this question: Why the leaders are rewarding murder of our relatives? What kind of secularism is that? Would such acts have gone unpunished in Communist Soviet Union or China? Or in democratic Europe or in the U.S.?

A hopeful sign amidst one of the most serious tragedies of the world has been that a dedicated group of true secularists without any specific political affiliation, are coming forward to look beyond their narrow nationalism and work together across the partitioned border to come to a humane solution.
already postponed village panchayat election in West Bengal twice, while Congressites have postponed Tripura election once. Both the Chief Ministers Jyoti Basu (West Bengal) and Samir Barman (Tripura) are from Bangladesh, so are many of the Indian elites including many ministers and ambassadors.

After initial Government and Islamic intimidation several Bangladeshi papers printed some of the atrocities committed on their minorities (Hindus). Prime Minister Mrs. Khaleda Zia on the other hand not only completely denied everything about the anti-minority pogrom but also went further and thanked her supporters for "maintaining communal peace" (20), as did the anti-minority Islamists. The situation was so desperate that all the eleven Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Members of Parliament, including tribal, (out of a total of 330 M.P.s) - government supporters as well as those in opposition, wrote on January 4, 1993 in a statement to the nation and the world:

"Today we meet with you with a devastating and broken heart. We are angry, stunned... The way in which religious minorities in our country are subjected to repeated oppression-repression in the pretext of happenings in another country, there is no parallel in the history of the world...

"...According to reports received so far thousands upon thousands of temples, churches, places of worship, businesses, & homes have been looted, destroyed, or set on fire. Villages after villages have been destroyed. 43 (of the 64) districts have witnessed destruction (pogrom) including Dhaka, Chittagong, Bholo, Manikganj, Coxbazar, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Pabna, Dinajpur, Khulna, Barisal, Pirojpur, Narayanganj, Kushtia, Maulavi Bazar, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Comilla, Feni, Noakhali. It is even continuing to this day.

"Over 200,000 individuals have lost everything and are spending helpless nights in (only in eight districts of) Bholo, Manikganj, Chittagong's Sitakunda and Mirersarai, Gopalganj, Noakhali, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Coxbazar, and Kutubdia alone. Government has not taken any step to protect them. No relief has been provided to them. Not only Government is not sending any relief, but also they are not giving permission to provide any relief by other organizations...

"...Thousands of families are spending winter nights under open sky. They have no clothing, no food, and no place to hide. Thousands of our mothers and sisters have lost their voice after being violated. ...They are being forced to give up their property. Attempts are being made to forcefully convert these hapless people. Criminals are freely moving around. Nothing is being done against them, (police) is not taking their complaints. "We are really at pains to mention that our Prime Minister has not shown slightest remorse, and she has even completely denied the reality......

"According to the data that we have gathered so far 28,000 homes have been destroyed, including 9,500 which have been completely destroyed and 2,700 businesses have been destroyed, and 3,600 temples
and places of worship .... have been
damaged or completely destroyed. In
this pogrom 12 individuals have been
killed, and another 2,000 individuals
have been wounded. Over 2,600
women have been oppressed. In this
attack Buddhist and Hindu monks
have not been spared either. Initial
estimate of loss is over 2 billion ta-
kas...."

In Bangladesh there has never been
any incident when the minority at-
tacked or showed any disrespect to
any majority institution, as it fre-
quently in other countries like Bos-
nia, Croatia, India, Iraq, Northern
Ireland, Palestine-Israel, South Afri-
ca, Sind, etc., thus it is less of a "riot"
than a "pogrom".

Even before 1992 attack several
writers in Bangladesh have written
about this in newspapers and jour-
nals.

"In the context of present-day reali-
ty" the parliamentarians demanded
immediate relief for the riot victims;
reconstruction of homes, businesses,
properties and temples; arrest and
conviction of murders, rapists and
other criminals, banning of commu-
nal politics; prosecution of people for
administrative and police inaction;
and permanent solution of minority
problems (21). In my travel through
the villages and towns of Bangladesh,
from her capital Dhaka to the remot-
est corners, I found villages after vil-
lages completely razed, people home-
less, temples completely gutted, crops
burned, and families forced to sleep
under winter open sky. This is several
weeks after the pogrom. Since the
Government completely denied the
facts, her Administration discouraged
and sometimes opposed distribution
of relief, even when given by minori-
ties themselves or by secular groups
(22).

The situation is so critical that on
April 10, 1993, at the opening of
South Asian nations' (SAARC) gath-
ering in Dhaka the minorities decided
to go on fast as a protest of govern-
ment's inaction. Apart from local
groups it is the Bangladesh (Hindu)
Ramkrishna Mission who has been
providing large scale relief, in spite
of their limited resources. Scores of
Ramakrishna Missions and minority
student dormitories were set on fire,
and several smasans (cremation
grounds) have been destroyed. Islam-
ists have been attacking, destroying,
and confiscating smasans for quite
some time, and in many areas it is
becoming difficult to provide last
rites to Hindus and Buddhists. Sever-
al of these destroyed smasans I have
visited myself. Christian cemeteries
are being desecrated as well. Gandhi-
an Abhoy Ashram of Nonviolence (in
Comilla) was also gutted.

Thousands of Hindu girls were
raped and tens of thousands of Hin-
dus were kept naked in the cold win-
ter, especially in the district of Bhola,
as mentioned by the M.P.s. This was
reported not only by newspapers but
also by the local Member of Parlia-
ment Mr. Tofail Ahmed (23), a Mus-
lim. For months he has also been de-
manding that government provide
some relief, without much success. In
Bangladesh hardly any minority has
been helped in repairing their homes,
businesses and places of worship.
Some were forced to spent nights
under the winter open sky. No rapist
or murderer has been arrested, although the present administration enacted such a law in 1992 to prosecute criminals. Minorities are being asked to leave the country and go to India. Incidentally, minorities also blamed the established opposition, leaving aside the leftist parties, for attack on them.

Communist Party headquarter in Dhaka, the Indian Library and the Indian Airlines' offices were set on fire. As there are true secularists in Bangladesh, howsoever microscopic they might have become, similar individuals from Calcutta came forward to write an open letter "To the Intellectuals and Creative People of Bangladesh from Their Indian Brothers and Sisters", realizing the gravity of the Bangladeshi minority situation is having on the Communist-run West Bengal. Parts of the appeal reads:

"...But let us not forget that neither secularism nor democracy can survive unless plurality is welcomed and encouraged (by allowing minorities to live) ...

"... (In the aftermath of Ayodhya [Islamic mosque] demolition) the Government and most political parties and the people [of India] have combined to resist this onslaught of obscurantism. Should this message fail to evoke a warm fraternal response from our neighbors, we shudder to think of the consequences. Therefore, with all the strength and goodwill at our command, we appeal to you all on this auspicious day to stand by the minorities of your country and help us in our battle. We, in India are sworn to stand by the minorities of this country and help you in your battle..." The appeal was signed by thirteen eminent Hindu and Muslim scholars, including five ex-Vice Chancellors. Many of the Bangladeshi intelligentsia under the banner of Sammilito Sanskritik Jote (United Cultural Front) appealed to Bangladeshis in December 1992 to fight against the Bangladeshi riot. However, attack against the minorities continued unabated from 7th through 20th December 1992, and continued at a smaller scale in 1993 throughout the length and breadth of the world's sixth most populous nation! The riot covered 43 of the 64 districts of that country while its police, army, paramilitary forces, and the administration looked on. In the other 21 riot-free districts, except for the three tribal districts in the Chittagong Hills, non-Muslims have practically been wiped out since the 1947 partition of
Bengal.

Even several weeks after the plunder and attack I did not find any village or neighborhood that was receiving relief, that was being rebuilt. No temple, ashram, dormitory, business, home was being rebuilt. From Calcutta's Communist Party Ganasakti and "reactionary" Anandabazar daily to "capitalist" New York Times to the Islamic newspapers in Bangladesh all have joined together in hiding the facts. I am not sure if censorship helps this situation at all, since people often overstate the reality. People in turn lose faith with the intelligentsia as is happening with the secular intelligentsia in Calcutta. As Bengali-Indian public opinion polarized Ganasakti and India's largest circulation Anandabazar printed stories about Bangladesh (as it always does from remote corners of India and the world). In the days of mobile telephone, fax, palm-coders, and live TV it is difficult to hide the truth. A group of leading Calcutta Muslims, including the former Calcutta High Court Chief Justice, also sent an appeal to all Bengalis to secularize themselves.

Large scale attack on (Bangladesh) minorities continued after several days of that Indian letter and the Bangladeshi appeal, and with no relief, hundreds of thousands of minorities were barely surviving under the winter open sky. Only hope for survival for many of the 25 million-plus minorities there was to be refugee and go to India. Bangladeshi minorities have come down from 30 of the population in 1947 to about one-tenth in 1990. If rest of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, tribal Bangladeshis go to India, as has happened in Pakistan, would that be good for South Asia or for Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal)?

Endnotes:
1. This article was written in April, 1993.
2. *Bartaman* (daily, Kolkata), December 19, 28, 30 and 31, 1992
3. *Anandabazar* (daily), December 15, 1992
5. *Anandabazar*, December 14, 1992
7. Over 1.1 million Hindu refugees registered with the Government of India. Dandakamya Forests in central India were opened for them; others went to the Andaman Islands.
16. For Urdu Speaking Bangladeshis
in Calcutta, see Dr. Amalendu De, Bangladesher Janabinyas 0 Sankhaloghu Samassya (Population Growth in Bangladesh and Her Minority Problem), Ratna, Calcutta, 1992.

17. Statesman, December 16, 1992
18. This article was written in April, 1993.
22. ibid
23. ibid

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++ Pictures are a small representation from author’s folder.

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ABROGAATION OF ARTICLE 370 GIVES RISE TO THE REBIRTH OF KASHMIR

Rudra P Banerjee **

As an Indian, it is my pride that my country never invaded anyone’s land, instead always supported people from other countries in their struggle. But when dealing with Pakistan, it is hard for us to sacrifice Indian lives at the cost of having peace talk. Time and again India has exposed their involvement in directly and indirectly sponsoring terrorism to cause heinous attack on our soil. Now, Pakistan is trying to gain sympathy from the world as India takes a strong action of revoking the Article 370 (1) (that temporarily provided special status only to Kashmir, of all states and ethnicities) for maintaining territorial integrity and bringing the vast nation under one constitution (Map 1). It has been established in the United Nations (UN) since 1948 that Kashmir was integrated with India and it was Pakistan who illegally tried to capture that land and occupied (POK) by ignoring United Nation Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) (2). It is important for people to know the political history of Kashmir and how it had integrated with India after the transfer of power (Reference 1, 2).

unified form came into political existence in 1846. The state was under Hindu and Buddhist dynasties before Mughal emperor Akbar conquered it. In 1752, Ahmad Shah Abdul of Afghanistan conquered Kashmir from the Mughals. In the year of 1819, the great Sikh emperor Maharaja Ranjit Singh regained Kashmir from Afghans and the state remained under the control of Sikhs until 1846. After the first Sikh war, Sikh Maharaja was unable to pay the compensatory amount to British East India Company, and handed over his territory. Under this circumstance, Gulab Singh, great grand nephew of former ruler of J&K Ranjit Deora, accepted the supremacy of British and signed Amritsar Treaty on 16th March 1846. Until the time of transfer of power in 1947, his descendants ruled J&K.

Standstill Agreement: Though the ruler of the state was Hindu, Muslims were in numerical majority in the state. As most of the posts in Government and in Army were held by Hindus, the local popular Muslim leader Sheikh Abdullah formed All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to create divide among the religious communities. In 1939 this Muslim body changed their name to National Conference. To become the supreme authority of the state Sheikh Abdullah started “Quit Kashmir” (4) campaign against Raja Hari Singh in 1946. During the transfer of power on 15th Aug 1947, the king of Kashmir preferred to stay independent, joining neither with India nor Pakistan. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir announced a standstill agreement with both India and Pakistan to take more time to think about inclusion with either of the one.

Violation of Standstill agreement by Pakistan: Pakistan was born out of two-nation theory where it was claimed Hindus and Muslims could not live as equals in one country. Therefore, owing to Muslim majority in the region, Pakistan was eager to include Kashmir. Pakistan authorities cut off food, petrol and other essential commodities to Kashmir to create pressure. This forced the Jammu and Kashmir Government to ask for 5000 gallons of petrol in order to meet the immediate necessity, which India govt considered. The train service between Sialkot (in Pakistan) to Jammu was stopped by Pakistan unilaterally. Military pressure was also applied by Pakistan at this point of time. Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Mehr Chand Mahajan wrote letter to British Prime Minister on 15th October to inform that Pakistan broke standstill agreement, but no reply was received. On 18th October, he sent a letter (5) protesting the aggression to the Governor General and Prime Minister of Pakistan. In reply to that Jinnah described disturbances in East Punjab and shortage of coal as an excuse.

Pakistan’s invasion of Kashmir: The full-fledged invasion of Kashmir started on 22nd October 1947. The Raiders with around three hundred lorries which consisted of five thousand tribemen including Afridis, Wazirs, Mahsudas, Swathis and soldiers of Pakistan Army “on leave” led by some regular officers attacked Kashmir (6). After capturing Garhi and Domel, they marched towards
Muzaffarabad. All Muslims in Muzaffarabad battalion joined with tribal and killed the commanding officer (7) of the state battalion. Tribal forces marched towards their prime destination Srinagar through Baramulla and Uri. By this time, all the Muslims in state forces joined with tribal invaders. Brigadier Rajinder Singh gathered 150 men and moved towards Uri to stop them. He was able to stop the invaders for two days until he, with all his men, was overpowered and cut into pieces. The second highest Military decoration in India “Maha Vir Chakra” was given posthumously to this Heroic soldier.

Maharaja’s appeal for Military help to India: On the evening of 24th October the Government of India received a desperate appeal from Raja Hari Singh to help them with Indian Military and arms (8). On the 25th October morning, a Defence committee meeting was held and the secretary of the ministry of the states V.P. Menon was sent to Kashmir to observe the situation.

Instrument of Accession: On the Morning of 26th October, Menon left with Mahajan, Prime Minister of Kashmir and upon reaching Delhi immediately met with the Defence Committee to point out the supreme necessity to save Kashmir from the raiders. As Kashmir was not integrated with India at that time Lord Mountbatten (9) expressed his concerns to send Indian forces in Kashmir. He advised to send Indian troops to Kashmir only if Jammu and Kashmir would become the part of Indian territory and he was of the strong opinion that accession to the Indian state should be conditional on the will of the population involved; it must be decided by a plebiscite after all the raiders are driven out of the valley. Prime Minister of India Pandit Nehru agreed to this. Menon with Mahajan flew back to Jammu where Maharaja Hari Singh reached Jammu from Srinagar after overnight driving. Following long discussion with Menon, Raja Hari Singh accepted the proposal of accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India with the above-mentioned condition of plebiscite would be held in the state when the law and order situation was restored.

India’s strategic move against Pakistan: After Kashmir became part of India, Prime Minister Nehru was afraid to send Indian army to Srinagar as he was concerned regarding the loss of civilian life (10). There was absolutely no plan with Indian Government to send troops before 25th October. Within three days after gathering some information, Sikh battalion near Delhi under command of Lt. Colonel Dewan Ranjit Rai was sent to Kashmir. All of them were martyred near Baramulla. Lt. Colonel was awarded with posthumous “Maha Vir Chakra” (11).

Jinnah’s offer to discuss Kashmir: By this time, Jinnah came to know India accepted the accession of Jammu and Kashmir, he ordered the Pakistan army to invade. On 28th October, field Marshal Auchinleck flew to Lahore to inform Jinnah that if Pakistan troops entered Kashmir, which is now a legal part of India, all British officer serving in Pakistan army would immediately be withdrawn (12). Jinnah cancelled that
order and invited Nehru and Mountbatten in Lahore through Auchinleck to discuss Kashmir.

Though Mountbatten and Nehru were ready to visit Lahore, Sardar Patel was not, as Pakistan was aggressor in this case. Patel wanted Jinnah to come to Delhi to discuss. Due to difference in opinion between Sardar Patel and Nehru, the case was referred to Gandhiji. Nehru finally was not able to visit Lahore for serious illness. As Lord Mountbatten was prepared to visit Lahore, on 30th October, Pakistan issued a statement as intrusion of Kashmir “based on fraud and violence and as such can not be recognized”. In the meantime, Sheikh Abdullah had been invited by the Maharajah to form an interim emergency government. Though Gilgit was handed over to Maharaja but with the provocation of tribes, Gilgit established their own government on 1st November in 1947 and 4th November 1947 they hosted Pakistan flag in that region (13). On November 1, Mountbatten had a long conference with Jinnah in Lahore. When Mountbatten proposed to Jinnah that both sides withdraw at once, Jinnah disagreed. Jinnah also denied the proposal of plebiscite with Sheikh Abdullah in power, but he preferred plebiscite under the joint control of supervision of both Governor generals of India and Pakistan. Being the president of Muslim league in Pakistan, Jinnah had some special power to offer but as a strictly constitutional Governor general holding a ceremorial position, Lord Mountbatten was unable to accept that. With an inconclusive meeting, Mountbatten returned to Delhi. On 2nd November in 1947, Nehru addressed the nation that all measures were taken after considering Kashmiris struggle under popular leadership against the invaders and to prevent the genocide. In response, on 4th November, Pakistan Prime Minister Liaqat Ali khan from Lahore emphasized on “immoral and illegal” ownership of Kashmir from the Amritsar Treaty of 1846 and put the blame on Indian Government inclusion of Kashmir with India. The invaders started blaming the saviours of forceful, immoral and illegal occupation.

**Fight of India against atrocities and genocide by Pakistan in valley:**

After discussion with Brigadier L.P. Sen. and defense minister Baldev Singh, Sardar Patel allowed Indian Army to reclaim Baramulla. On 8th November 1947, Indian force secured Baramulla and saved the remaining population from the genocide. In the short period of occupation by tribal invaders aided by Pakistan, the native population of Baramulla consisting of mostly Hindu and Buddhists suffered untold atrocities. The population decreased from 14000 to 1000 and women of all ages were violated and scarred for life. Sheikh Abdullah admitted this incident to the United Nations in 1948 (Reference 3).

Indian Army decided to go ahead to reclaim Uri and on 11th November they reached Uri. Out of fear, tribal invaders withdrew and left without firing a shot. On 21st November, Nehru reiterated in Parliament that Kashmir would be given the chance
to decide their future under the supervision of neutral tribunal such as United Nations Organization (14). **India’s appeal to the UN:** In the first week of December, Liaqat Ali Khan came to Delhi to attend a meeting of the Joint Defense Council. After discussion a draft was prepared to propose Pakistan Government to withdraw invaders and troops from Kashmir as quickly as possible and Government of India to withdraw forces as soon as fighting had stopped. Then both governments would request the UN to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. Sardar Petel and Baldev Singh visited Kashmir again and they were informed that large numbers of tribesmen were concentrated in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or POK.

After returning to Karachi from Delhi, Liqat Ali Khan encouraged more raiders to enter into Kashmir and made speeches that Pakistan would never give up Kashmir and also encouraged raiders to make most ghastly atrocities including wanton murder, pillage, lynching and rape of non-Muslims. Young non-Muslim Kashmiri girls were abducted and auctioned to the highest bidder. Such medieval atrocities on women were recently carried out by ISIS against innocent Yezidi women and children.

Just like any other civilized and cultured nation would be, India was thoroughly disturbed by these medieval atrocities by Pakistani invaders and wanted a solution to the humanitarian crisis. On 8th December 1947, third meeting of the Joint Defence Council was held at Lahore. After a very long discussion, Nehru firmed on the point that the Pakistan Government had to withdraw all invaders from Kashmir. Pakistan never agreed to do so, instead they asked Indian Government to withdraw forces. It was naturally impossible India to withdraw forces from Kashmir as it would simply allow the invaders to cause massive genocide, rape and more atrocities of non-Muslim residents of the state. Also, the then ruler of Kashmir came to Indian Union for help, therefore leaving Kashmir to its fate was out of question. Soon it became quite clear that settlement between two countries in Kashmir was practically impossible. Mountbatten pushed both Gandhi and Nehru to appeal to the United Nations, which was ultimately accepted by Nehru. As a preliminary action an official letter was handed over to Liaqat Ali Khan on 22nd December. It was clearly stated that Pakistan aided invaders directly to occupy Kashmir. As no reply came from Pakistan, on 31st December 1947, the Government of India formally appealed to the United Nations Organization (UNO). Later on, the same day, a reply from Pakistan was received which ridiculously stated India’s aggression to destroy Pakistan and wanted intervention of the UNO. When it came out in the open, and after taking a heavy beating, the invaders started playing victim.

**The Battle of Jawans:** As the invaders continued their operation with direct aid from Pakistan, it became necessary for Indian forces to save its own people from the invaders. The Kashmir operation is known as “The
Battle of Jawans' where many unrecorded acts of heroism were done by Indian army for every inch of ground.

Major-general Thimmayya led Indian forces to free Leh and Ladakh valley from invaders and major-General Atma Singh led the forces to reclaim Poonch (15). Indian Air force under Vice-Marshel S. Mukherji performed their duties with extreme perfection in those operations. Air commodore Mehar Singh took Major general Thimmayya to laded him at Leh (16) through a route which was above 23,000 feet above sea level, a very rare feat back in the day.

Birth of Pakistan occupied Kashmir: In the last week of December 1948, the members of United Nations Commission visited New Delhi and Karachi and proposed certain points to hold plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir (Reference 4). As Pakistan did not withdraw their army from the occupied region, a ceasefire was ordered by both Army chiefs to take effect from midnight of January 1, 1949. By this time, Indian Army reclaimed most of the part which was previously occupied by tribal invaders. As the cease fire continued, on January 5th in 1949, UN resolutions of 13th August 1948 were adopted by the UN which required Pakistan to withdraw forces and allowed India to maintain minimum strength of its forces to maintain law and order in the state. At that point of time, Indian forces reclaimed two thirds of Kashmir including Kashmir valley, Jammu and Ladakh. On completion of those conditions a plebiscite was supposed to happen to determine the fate of Jammu and Kashmir. There is no need to say that Indian Army was in a much better position to defend and reclaim the remaining part from the Pakistan army at that time. But Pandit Nehru was hopeful about UN interference to allow Pakistan to withdraw their forces and to hold a plebiscite. With this hope Nehru ignored the advice of Sardar Patel and many ministers of Indian Government and decided not to continue the war. Since then, Pakistan cowardly continued to occupy the remaining portion of Kashmir, and so it is absolutely justified to call Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Discussion: It is extremely difficult to understand the aggression of Jinnah and Muslim league without knowing their attempts to integrate many different states at the time of transfer of Power.

Jinnah’s unsuccessful attempts to include predominantly Hindu states (17) Jodhpur and Jaisalmeer with Pakistan did not stand for two-nation theory. When accepting the accession of Hindu dominated, Muslim ruled Junagarh (18) Pakistan advocated for the absolute right of the ruler to accede to either dominion, but they disagreed with their own claim when Hindu ruler of Kashmir decided to accede with India. It was expected that both Nations take care of their minorities. In reality, the whole world knows by this time, the decline of Hindu population in Pakistan and their ruthless violence and genocide to suppress the people of East Pakistan until 1971 when India acted against the horrible genocide and supported the people of East Pakistan to become an independent nation,
Bangladesh. After the war in 1971, India and Pakistan signed the Shimla agreement and India returned around ninety thousand Pakistani soldiers who had surrendered during the liberation war of Bangladesh. Is it not the highest level of peace gesture shown in the history of war?

The tribal invasion in Kashmir was a preplanned and well-organized attempt to finish the non-Muslim group from the state and it was directly supported by Pakistan. The leader of that tribal invasion was known as “General Tariq” who was none other than major general Akbar Khan of Pakistan Army (19). They were also assisted by some reputable officers like Mahomed Zaman Kiani, Buhannuddin of Indian National Army. By this time, we can understand that horrible planning of Holocaust to completely wipe out non-Muslim group from the valley.

It is also important to remember the statement of Lord Mountbatten on his return to England. He publicly stated the Government of India informed the Maharaja of Kashmir that he was free to accede with Pakistan if he chose to do so. So, the theory of forceful inclusion of Kashmir to Indian state does not stand up to scrutiny.

As Kashmir came into limelight for the recent decision of revoking Article 370 from Indian Constitution, it is important to remind people of the status of Article 370. In 1949 Article 370 was adopted into the Indian Constitution as a temporary provision, which allowed internal autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir while India’s complete control on the defence, foreign affairs and communications. It is to be noted that this Article 370 was adopted after two years of Kashmir’s accession to Indian Union therefore contrary to perception; it was not one of the conditions of accession. When it was included into the constitution, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from Nehru’s cabinet ministry in protest (20) and founded his own party Bharatiya Jana Sangh which is present day’s Bharatiya Janata Party. His death in police custody within Kashmir still raises eyebrows. Many questions regarding his death remain unanswered. It may be considered as first political murder of independent India.

In 1990, Pakistani terrorist group Hizb-ul-Mujahideen carried out rampant genocides in the Kashmir valley in which around sixty thousand Hindu families became refugees in their own country (Reference 5). The process of rehabilitation is still underway. Due to the existence of Article 370, Indian Government was not able to deliver justice to the victims (Reference 6).

Through that occupied Kashmir region Pakistan relentlessly try to provoke the Muslim in that region to jeopardize the peace. In 1999, Pakistani terrorists with the help of Pakistani army invaded Indian posts in Kargil. Indian army demonstrated their extreme level of professionalism to reclaim our land and defeat Pakistani invaders, again. It was the temporary provision Article 370 which acted as a barrier for Indian government to take full control in their own land. Misusing the special status provided by Article 370, some corrupt political leaders poisoned the minds...
of gullible youth, promoting disruptive activities while sending their own children off to foreign educational institutes. All political parties were aware of the misuse of Article 370 but due to short sightedness and vote bank politics, no one dared to interfere. No government so far had the courage or political will to break the barrier of “special status” of a Muslim majority state lest be termed bigot, Islamophobic, fascist etc. by the liberal news agencies and observers. Due to the special status under Article 370, Kashmir had her own set of rules and decisions of even the Supreme Court of India’s decisions were not implemented there. Now with the barrier no more, all of India comes under one flag, one constitution, one set of rules. The progressive ideas prevalent in the rest of India will finally reach the valleys of Kashmir and a new era of prosperity will be unleashed. It must be added here that the day Article 370 and 35A was abrogated, Ladakh was also declared as an union territory. This triggered a spontaneous and organic celebration of first independence in Ladakh as it had suffered under these oppressive and discriminatory policies for seven decades (Figure 2). The region is witnessing unprecedented infrastructure development projects and rightfully got the first central university and centre of Buddhist study for the first time in its history.

In the end, I would like to conclude by quoting V.P. Menon “India’s stand with regard to Kashmir will not be understood by those who are determined not to understand it.” It is equally applicable to liberal, socialists or communists who question the way the government of India abrogated Article 370.

**Acknowledgements:**
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**References:**
1. *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* by V.P. MENON.

**Endnotes:**
1. Article 370 of the Indian constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir that was administered by India as a state from 1954 to 31 October 2019. After abrogation of Article 370, the Parliament of India passed
the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, that dissolved the state and reorganised it into two union territories – Jammu and Kashmir in the west and Ladakh in the east, with effect from 31 October 2019.

2. The UNCIP (Members: Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Czechoslovakia and U.S.A.) unanimously adopted this Resolution on 13-8-1948 that the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from that State.

3. Under Article 1 of the treaty, Gulab Singh acquired all the hilly or mountainous situated to the eastern part of the River Indus and the western of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, and Under Article 3, Gulab Singh was to pay 75 lakhs of Nanak Shahi rupees (the currency of the Sikh Empire) to the British Government along with other annual tributes.

4. Sheikh Abdullah started the Quit Kashmir movement on 15th May 1946 and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru personally led a campaign in support of that.

5. In his first letter Mehr Chand Mahajn requested British PM to advise the Dominion of Pakistan to follow the ethical policies of the Commonwealth to fairly deal with Jammu and Kashmir. As no reply was received from British PM, he sent a letter to the Pakistan General Governor and PM. Jinnah replied on 20th October protesting against the tone of the letter.

6. The all-out invasion of Kashmir began on this day.

7. The State battalion, consisting of Muslims and Dogras stationed at Muzaffarabad, was commanded by Lt.- Colonel Narain Singh. All the Muslims in the battalion joined the raiders to act as advance-guard to them and shot the Commanding Officer and his adjutant.

8. During the partition, all the wings of the erstwhile British Indian Army was divided mainly based on religion. The last commander in chief of undivided India, Field Marshal Auchinleck was appointed as the supreme commander of the armed forces. He was in touch with all the military intelligence and dutifully passed the information to the respective dominions. He informed the then Indian govt about the advancement of the raiders that he got to know from Pakistan army headquarters.

9. First Governor-General of independent India and he held that position till 21st June 1948. Chakravarty Rajagopalachari took that charge after him. As India became a Republic on 26th January in 1950, this post was dissolved.

10. The airlift of Indian troops to Srinagar on the 27 oct was an unprecedented event in the history of warfare. With limited or no planning, within a very short timespan such a huge step was undertaken in order to save the lives of innocent populace.

11. Baramulla is a bottleneck that opens into the Srinagar valley and is therefore of huge strategic significance. Lt. Col Rai decided to choke the enemy at the bottleneck lest they advance into the valley. Ghulam Muhammad of NC provided the necessary transportations. Lt Rai came to know that the raiders were of military background and highly organised carrying advanced weapons. Yet he confront-
ed the Islamic invaders with his limited resources and blocked their advance into the valley. He fought tooth and nail till his last breath, his battalion fought to the last man and they saved Srinagar.

12. As mentioned in footnotes 8, Auchinleck was the supreme commander of the armed forces and as Kashmir was officially included to India, he warned Jinnah to withdraw all British officers from Pakistan army as per norms.

13. Except 6 J&K Infantry battalion (half Sikhs and half Muslims), all other forces in Gilgit were joined with Pakistani army. The Governor was arrested on the morning of 1st November and a provisional government was established. The non-Muslim in the force were killed and some escaped to join State force.

14. On 2nd November, Nehru in a broadcast speech referred to the struggle of Kashmir as the struggle of the people of Kashmir against the invader. After three weeks, Nehru firmly stated that Indian Government will fulfil the promise of plebiscite as per the agreement with Maharaja Hari Singh.

15. It is bounded by the Line of Control on three sides, hence this region is geographically very important to protect the territory.

16. It was difficult to take control of Ladakh as it is the highest plateau in India.

17. It is needless to say that most of the states in Indian side consist majority of Muslim. Jinnah desperately wanted them to be included with Pakistan due to his “thrust dagger into India’s heart” policy as described by Sardar Patel. As per transfer of power, ruler of any state could take decision of joining with either of the countries.

18. Junagarh was the state with Hindu majority under Muslim King. So, Jinnah managed to convince the King to join Pakistan with Hindu majority population but when the Hindu King of Kashmir joined India, he started opposing. This reveals the double standard of Jinnah.

19. Major General Akbar Khan was a highly trained officer in British Indian Army and later the Pakistan Army. With the pseudo name ‘General Tariq’, he commanded the raiders to cause rampant genocide on Kashmiri Hindus and Buddhists. Later he served as the Chief of National Security of Pakistan under Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

20. Kashmir being granted a special status was unacceptable to Minister of Commerce and Industry Syama Prasad Mookerjee who termed it as an attempt to balkanize the nation. The special status allowed the state to have its own prime minister, constitution and flag. Mookerjee famously roared that one nation cannot have 2 PMs, 2 constitutions and 2 flags. Kashmir was under a permit system that prohibited non-Kashmiri Indians from settling within the state and mandated them to carry ID cards always. In protest of this discriminatory policy Hindu Mahasabha, Jana Sangh and Jammu Praja Samiti organised a massive Satyagraha. He wanted to visit Kashmir without permit and was arrested at Lakhanpur while trying to enter Kashmir. Atal Bihari Vajpayee (later he became PM in 1996 and...
1998-2004) was with him. Atalji was sent back by Mukherjee and he proudly got arrested for his faith in “one nation one flag” of India. He was taken into police custody where he died of mysterious circumstances. It is alleged to be one of the earliest political murders of independent India.

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WHY WE SUCCUMBED TO BRITISH PLUNDERS?

Prof. Dr, Nazarul Islam**
(An excerpt from an article first appeared in Daily Observer, Dhaka, April 1, 2020)

There is a general consensus among historians that Britain drained a total of nearly $45 trillion from India, during the period 1765 to 1938. It's a staggering sum. For perspective sake, $45 trillion is 17 times more than the total annual gross domestic product of the entire UK today. How did all this come about?

Here's how it worked. The East India Company began collecting taxes in India, and then cleverly used a portion of those revenues (about a third) to fund the purchase of Indian goods for British use. In other words, instead of paying for Indian goods out of their own pocket, British traders acquired them for free, "buying" from peasants and weavers using money that had just been taken from them.

It was a scam - theft on a scale. Yet most Indians were unaware of what was going on because the agent who collected the taxes was not the same as the one who showed up to buy their goods. Had it been the same person, they surely would have smelled a rat.

Some of the stolen goods were consumed in Britain, and the rest were re-exported elsewhere. The re-export system allowed Britain to finance a flow of imports from Europe, including strategic materials like iron, tar and timber, which were essential to Britain's industrialisation. Indeed, the Industrial Revolution depended in large part, on this systematic theft from India.

On top of this, the British were able to sell the stolen goods to other countries for much more than they "bought" them for in the first place, pocketing not only 100 percent of the original value of the goods, but also the mark-up.

And, to answer how did this have worked: Essentially, anyone who wanted to buy goods from India would do so using special Council Bills - a unique paper currency issued only by the British Crown. And the only way to get those bills was to buy them from London with gold or silver. So traders would pay London in gold to get the bills, and then use the bills to pay Indian producers.

When Indians cashed the bills in at the local colonial office, they were "paid" in rupees out of tax revenues - money that had just been collected from them. So, once again, they were
not in fact paid at all; they were de-
frauded. Meanwhile, London ended
up with all of the gold and silver that
should have gone directly to the Indi-
ans in exchange for their exports.
This corrupt system meant that
even while India was running an im-
pressive trade surplus with the rest of
the world - a surplus that lasted for
three decades in the early 20th centu-
ry-it showed up as a deficit in the
national accounts because the real
income from India's exports was ap-
propriated in its entirety by Britain.
Today, when confronted with a
question why our subcontinent has
been so poor, we have the same re-
response regardless of where we live,
in the countries of the Indian peninsu-
la : the three centuries of British sub-
jugation! This impression has been
more deeply ingrained in recent
times, thanks to Dr Shashi Tharoor's
eloquent arguments against colonial
rule in popular media.
It's undeniable that India had lost
its position as one of the great trading
areas of the world, and was poorer
after colonial rule, than before it was
annexed. However, to put the blame
squarely on the shoulders of the Brit-
ish is to give the small minority in
charge of a minimal state- a little too
much credit. The real culprit, I argue,
was market forces tilted to favour the
West - a beast, that we continue to
struggle with, even today.
After the rule of the last Great
Mughal, Aurangzeb-Mughal Empire,
overextended and fiscally strained,
began a slow decline. Its vassals and
rivals tore it apart. As the Indian sub-
continent entered a period of protract-
ed political strife, this led to changes
in the structure of the economy as
well. For starters, bankers and mer-
chants began to rely more on loans to
local warlords than investing in mer-
chants and trade for income.
But did globalization really do any-
thing for India?
The fundamental problem with say-
ing "India became poor" is that it ap-
plies the term "India" to an extremely
large and diverse subcontinent. While
the stagnation of agriculture was a
massive issue in the hinterland, urban
centers industrialized to a considera-
ble extent, with Bombay's cotton ind-
ustries selling more in the subconti-
nent than Lancashire did by the turn
of the 20th century.
Furthermore, unified currencies,
language, and legal codes proved to
have considerable positive externali-
ties for some classes, such as the Par-
sees and other merchant communi-
ties.
What does this require of Britain
today? An apology? Absolutely. Rep-
arations? Perhaps - although there is
not enough money in all of Britain to
cover the sums that Patnaik identifies.
In the meantime, we can start by set-
ting the story straight. We need to
recognise that Britain retained control
of India not out of benevolence but
for the sake of plunder and that Brit-
ain's industrial rise didn't 'sui generis'
from the steam engine and strong
institutions, as our schoolbooks like
to reflect, but had depended on vio-
lent theft from occupied lands and
conquered peoples.

** Islam is a Former educator, Chica-
go, U.S. **
Indian Subcontinent Partition Documentation Project Inc.

ISPaD Needs Help from YOU

Several Bengali-Americans in New York, individuals whose families were victims of partition of the Indian Subcontinent – especially of former British-Indian Bengal – formed a partition documentation project called ISPaD or Indian Subcontinent Partition Documentation Project Inc. to save the history and experiences of lost and displaced individuals and families, their villages, their life, and of survivors and that of protectors.

The Project has received not-for-profit status from the Departments of Education and State of New York State and a 503-C tax-exempt status from the I.R.S. (of the U.S. Government). ISPaD is open to all.

The purposes of the project are:

a) Document information from the people affected by the partition;
b) Collect historical records;
c) Study and document demographic and social changes caused by the partition;
d) Create a center to disseminate and share the information with the public and civic groups and rights organizations engaged globally in such activities;
e) Interact with the concerned governments and international bodies to raise awareness about the plight of the victims of ethnic cleansing and support the needy;
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g) Solicit funds to support the above activities.

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