

Extracts from the Jinnah Papers, ed. Zaidi

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers: Volume I: Prelude to Pakistan

20 February – 2 June 1947 (Part I and Part II) (Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah Papers)

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Report by Edwina Mountbatten on a Tour of the NWFP and the Punjab, 2 May 1947

...At the Refugee Centres, I spoke with some hundreds of the refugees, and in hospitals I met Hindu, Sikh and Muslim patients who had been victims of the riots and were still undergoing treatment. I heard harrowing descriptions of atrocities that had been committed and of damage to property. In the areas visited, the larger proportion of the victims were Hindus and Sikhs, but Muslims and Muslim property had also suffered in the mad disturbances...

[Policy of trying to get victims to return to their homes if still habitable or to stay with their community] ... there are obvious difficulties involved:

- (1) the great fear by which the refugees are obsessed, which is infectious and may give rise to further trouble;
- (2) the damage to property, both partial and complete, which will take a long time to repair; and
- (3) the question of what compensation will be given was constantly raised by refugees with whom I talked and this uncertainty of the future, combined with fear and hatred, is a bad factor for morale...

This four-day tour, during which I covered 1,500 miles by air and long distances by car and jeep, as well as on foot, has given me some idea of the magnitude of the devastation caused by recent riots and the appalling loss of life and property, as well as the ghastly injuries sustained. No words can describe the moral and physical suffering of the unfortunate victims and the present seeming hopelessness of their future.

Zaidi i. pt i. 699-701.

Situation of Muslims in Delhi in September 1947 (H. L. Ismay, 5 Oct. 1947):

Muslims were being systematically hunted down and butchered. Thousands of them were herded into camps, where the conditions defied description... The dead lay rotting in the streets, because there was no one to collect and bury them. The hospitals were choked with dying and wounded, and in imminent danger of attack because of the presence of Muslim staff and Muslim patients. Arson and looting were widespread. Food supplies both wholesale and retail were disrupted, the first because consignments arriving by train could not be unloaded and distributed for lack of labour: the second because all markets and food shops were closed in terror. The Muslim members of the Delhi police had either deserted or were disarmed: the Hindu members had either been suborned or were afraid to do their duty.

Zaidi, v. 459.

Master Tara Singh and Udham Singh Nagoke, in a public statement on 24 September 1947:

We do not hesitate to admit that our brethren Sikhs and Hindus have also been guilty of most shameful attacks upon [Muslim] women and children in the communal warfare. Human nature shudders to think of these atrocities and we do not like to repeat these and thus give a shock to the world. We know that Sikhs stooped to these low depths only in retaliation for what was done by the Muslims. But this is no justification for the Sikhs who have falsified tradition.

We tried our best and we are trying our best to prevent our brethren from falling to these low depths. **But it appears that most of the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs have gone mad. Crime, then retaliation; and then retaliation continued and there is no end to it.** We therefore appeal to our brethren, Hindus and Sikhs, to halt and stop all retaliation. We do not desire friendship of the Muslims and we may never befriend them. We may have to fight again but shall fight a clean fight – man killing man. This killing of women and children and of those who seek asylum must cease at once. It would mean that there should be no attacks on refugee trains, convoys and caravans. We ask you to do so chiefly in the interests of your own community's reputation, character and tradition, and not to save the Muslims. We are sure that the Muslim religion does not permit these fiendish deeds. It is for them to think what is right from the Muslim point of view. We only desire that they may also stop this devilish warfare on their part at once, lest the devil of retaliation should overpower the human nature of our brethren, the Sikhs and Hindus.

Zaidi, v. 517 citing IOR Mountbatten papers F. 129.

US Ambassador to India Henry Grady to George Marshall, US Secretary of State, Telegram, 1 Sept. 1947.

New Delhi.

Following information furnished to Donovan by Stimson, BBC correspondent, just returned from Punjab:

General view all correspondents that Sikhs are more responsible for disturbances than Muslims or Hindus. Sikhs are well-organized and many bands are equipped with sten guns, mortars and hand grenades. It is opinion of all foreign press correspondents that Sikh rulers Faridkot, Habha, Kapurthala and Patiala have furnished arms to Sikhs in Punjab. Muslims in general were poorly armed. Stimson confirms story. Embassy has heard from various sources that 1,200 Muslim police in Amritsar were disarmed by orders from G[overnment] o[f] I[ndia] (who issued these orders is mystery but the police were disarmed). This left Muslims at mercy of Sikh and Hindu mobs. Amritsar is practically destroyed.

There are numerous well-established cases of police and soldiers refusing to extend protection to other than co-religionists, and in some instances, police and soldiers have attacked refugees.

Train crews will not go nearer the frontier than 30 miles and there is a complete breakdown of transportation throughout northern India.

Zaidi, v. 464.

Joint Press Dispatch. GIGANTIC EXCHANGE OF TWO MILLION PEOPLE BEGINS IN THE PUNJAB. Lahore 2 Sept. [1947].

...60-MILE LONG CARAVAN

...This caravan was perhaps the longest in history. At one time 15,000 persons were on the road, spread over 60 miles. The majority of them passed over the Sulaimanki Bridge, which was crossed by the refugees in 36 hours.

The mass movement was chiefly undertaken by those who had bullock-carts or animals for transport. Those who are to be carried by train number about 40,000 and are chiefly in camps in Montgomery [=Sahiwal] and Okara. When these are moved within the next week or two, practically 90 per cent of the Sikh and Hindu population of Montgomery district will have moved into India... Zaidi v. 476,

[A peasant woman who did not recognize Nehru said to him]: 'if you wanted to partition the country, why did you not first arrange

for exchange of population[?] See what misery has come on us all.'
Pandit Nehru did not answer... Zaidi v. 477

Howard Donovan to George Marshall, US Secretary of State, 18
Sept. 1947. [Reflections on Nehru's press conference of 13 Sept.]

...there is good reason to believe that the mob warfare which flared up in East Punjab during the first week in August was started primarily by Sikhs, who felt frustrated by the partition of the Punjab; that for some days at least the West Punjab authorities succeeded in giving better protection to non-Muslims fleeing to East Punjab than was given to Muslims leaving the East Punjab for Pakistan. On the basis of reports now available, however, **it is perfectly obvious that both the Muslims in West Punjab and the Sikhs and other non-Muslims in East Punjab have indulged in savagery on a scale unprecedented in modern times...** I can testify on the basis of personal observation to the bestiality of murders committed by non-Muslims in Delhi...

Zaidi v. 514.