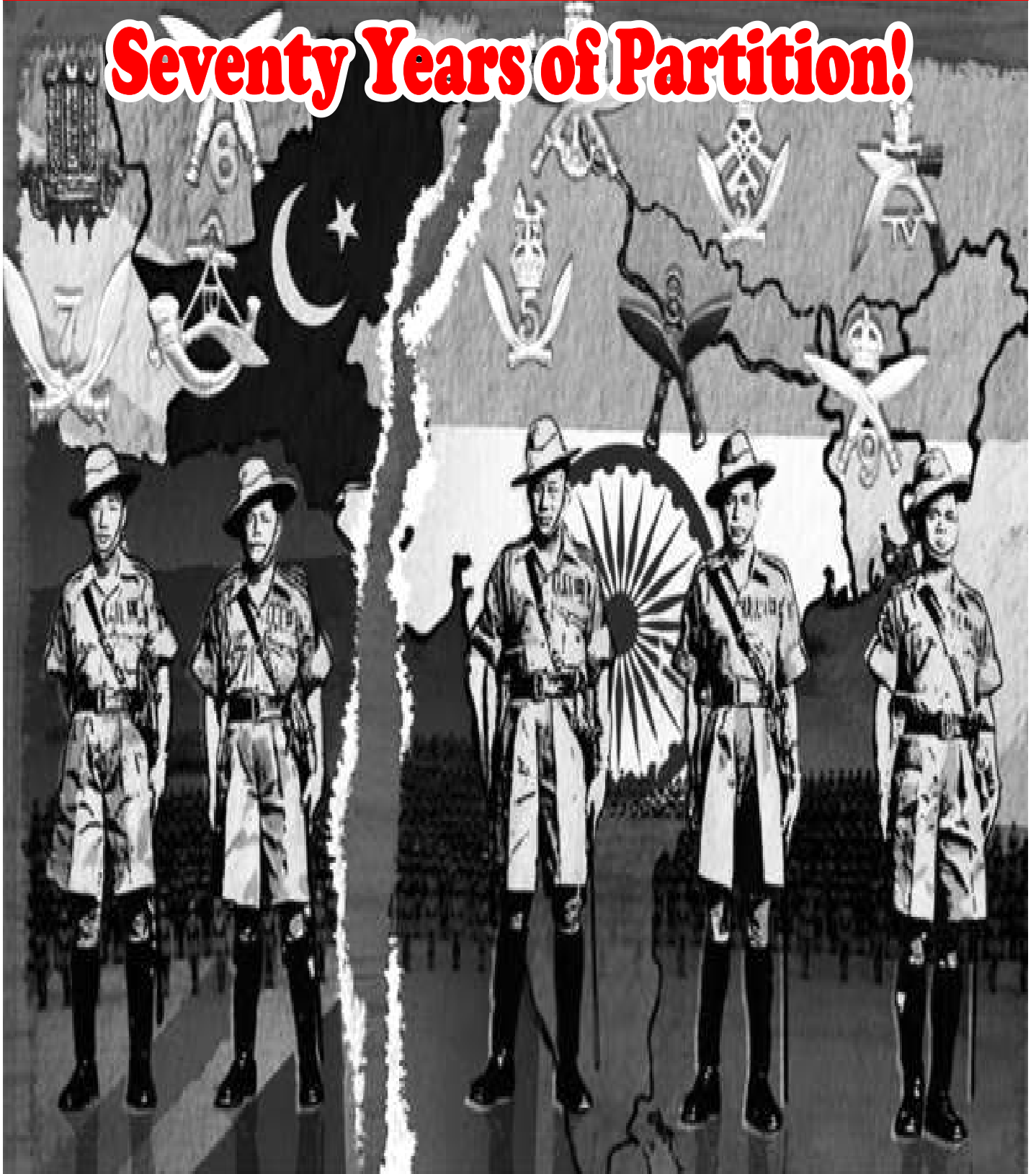


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Seventy Years of Partition!





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Editor's Note

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the ignominious withdrawal of British imperialism after centuries of rule over the entire Indian subcontinent, first through the East India Company and then by direct military occupation. This event was the culmination of a century of revolution in the form of strikes, hartals and uprisings, uniting crores of workers, peasants and intellectuals behind a common banner.

And yet victory was horribly tainted; the retreating enemy had left behind it a poisonous legacy of communal mayhem, manifested in a brutal partition of the Indian subcontinent, leaving behind it the bleeding fragments of a hitherto united movement. This was the darkest episode in modern history for the peoples of the world's oldest civilisation, especially for the peoples of Punjab and Bengal, which were torn asunder in the process. The bloodletting of this hot, humid and atrocious August of 1947 has lingered on. Seventy years on, the agony and pain and the horrors of partition still haunt one fifth of mankind. The living body of a society that had survived numerous invasions, wars, natural disasters and calamities and co-existed in relative harmony for much of the past millennia was ripped apart. The gory stories of mass rape, harrowing slaughters and spilling of innocent blood have become deeply entrenched in the social psychology of these societies.

The British had engineered this crime, but it was the Hindu and Muslim elitist politicians grafted by the colonisers that executed this gruesome act, uprooting whole peoples from their ancestral lands, and creating artificially contrived and unviable nations with combustible materials built into their foundations that were doomed to explode in future secessionist wars. The religious reaction was imposed in the wake of a revolution that could have gone beyond the stage of national liberation into a socialist transformation. This was the period when a revolutionary forest fire was sweeping across Asia and beyond, from China to the Middle East. With red China establishing itself across the Himalayas, if capitalism and landlordism had been overthrown in India too, then the imperialist stranglehold in Asia could have been broken forever.

On the eve of independence Nehru in his "tryst with destiny" speech had pledged: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." After seventy years his pledge has rotted. India with its self-proclaimed secular pretensions is in clutches of rabid Hindutva bestiality; while Pakistan is in the throes of Islamic terror and social asphyxiation. The socio-economic crisis is pulverising the masses. The ruling elites with their political, bureaucratic and military protégés in India and Pakistan have wreaked havoc with the inhabitants of these dismembered lands.

Reminiscences of the horrors of partition are abused by the elites to perpetuate their tyrannous rule, incessantly inciting renewed religious and communal hatreds. The socio-economic crisis is burgeoning, with no hope of any progress or prosperity under this decaying system. Nothing less than revolution can save the oppressed masses. Once they arise and stride on to the arena of history, no force can stand in the way of revolutionary change. It will obliterate reactionary rule, its brutal states and the system breeding wars, misery, disease, coercion, terrorism and bigotry. The divisive heritage of imperialism will be wiped off the face of the earth. The crime of partition will be undone, emancipating and uniting the toiling masses in a voluntary socialist federation of South Asia.



Partition

The Wounds Still Fester

Seventy years of South Asia's Partition

By Lal Khan



On August 14 and 15, this year, Pakistan and India's ruling classes will be organising extravagant mass celebrations for their 70th anniversaries of independence. However, what happened in August 1947 was one of the most atrocious genocides of the twentieth century. Some independent researchers put the figure at almost 2.7 million people slaughtered in the insane frenzy of religious hatreds unleashed by the partition of the South Asian subcontinent. There was an enforced migration of over twenty million souls, uprooted from the ancestral homes and hearths where they had been living for centuries if not millennia. They were compelled to venture on to perilous journeys to unknown destinations and destinies across the Radcliff line - the artificial line, drawn by a British bureaucrat who had never even visited India before, to cleave the subcontinent and spill innocent blood.

Lapierre and Collins have sketched the baseness of the communal bestiality of partition in their work *"Freedom at Midnight."* In one episode, they narrate the plight of women victims of this madness: *"If they were Sikh or Hindu, a woman's abduction was usually followed by a religious ceremony, a forced conversion to make a girl worthy of her Muslim captor's auctioned possession in his home or harem... The Sikhs' tenth Guru (Gobind Singh 1666-1675) had specifically enjoined his followers against sexual intercourse with Muslim women. The inevitable result was a legend among the Sikhs that Muslim women were capable of particular sexual prowess. Under the impact of events in the Punjab, the Sikhs forgot the Guru's admonishment and gave free reign to their fantasies. With morbid frenzy, they fell on Muslims everywhere, until a trade in kidnapped Muslim girls flourished in their parts of the Punjab."*

It was a criminal division perpetrated by the British imperialists in connivance with the native elite classes and politicians. Colonial rule in India by the British Raj had lasted for more than two hundred years. Once forced by their historical decline to withdraw, the British imperialists executed the policy of divide and rule, they had learned from the ancient Roman Caesars. The British imperialists were determined not to leave behind a united India. Churchill had described Hindu-Muslim antagonism as, *“a bulwark of British rule in India...Were it to be resolved, their concord would result in the united communities joining in showing us the door.”* The role of the Hindu and Muslim aristocracy and capitalist comprador elites grafted together as the 'national bourgeois' by their British masters was no less treacherous. Leon Trotsky brilliantly explained the real character of this native ruling class, whose most renowned leader abroad was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Trotsky wrote in 1939: *“The Indian bourgeoisie is incapable of leading a revolutionary struggle. They are closely bound up with and dependent upon British capitalism. They tremble for their own property. They stand in fear of the masses. They seek compromises with British imperialism no matter what the price. The leader and prophet of this bourgeoisie is Gandhi. A fake leader and a false prophet... Double chains of slavery — that will be the inevitable consequence of the war if the masses of India follow the politics of Gandhi, the Stalinists and their friends.”*

Gandhi gave an impetus to religious chauvinism. He cunningly brought spiritual prejudices to the centre of politics, stirring up chastising, divisive and belligerent passions. Hindu xenophobic organisations had rarely been present in the political mainstream before Gandhi. With his covert incitement, religiosity infiltrated politics, often under the guise of *“interfaith harmony”*. Organisations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang fomented the perception of a Hindu nation in that period. The retreat of class struggle, particularly after the defeat of the 1946 revolt and general strike, promoted religious jingoist tendencies in society.

The role of the Muslim political elite in the liberation movement was in no way less reactionary than Gandhi's. The ebbing of the tide of class upheaval led to religious domination in politics. In the second decade of the twentieth century, Jinnah had warned Gandhi of the danger of mixing religion with politics. It's an historical irony that he is hailed as the father of Pakistan, which, despite Jinnah's secularist rhetoric, was in its fundamental conception a theocratic state. On January 28, 1933, Jinnah had ridiculed the notion of Pakistan, calling it *“an impossible dream”*. A decade later, Jinnah presided over a party that exploited religious bias to win electoral contests.

The partition has obliterated the India that once was. What we have now are the bifurcated states of Pakistan, Bharat, Bangladesh and others

Such malicious fervour was whipped up that the arguments over the division of assets and the lust for possessions during partition became absurd and crazy. The Islamists wanted the Taj Mahal broken up and shipped to Pakistan, because a Moghul had built it. The Hindu chauvinists insisted that the Indus River flowing through Pakistan should somehow be theirs, because their sacred Vedas were supposedly written on its banks more than two millennia ago.

In the last analysis, independence was not won through a fight against imperialist rule but through agreements and rotten compromises within the native political elite in mortal fear of a socialist revolution from below. Partition, in reality, was a counter-revolution. A year before this gory separation, there was a revolutionary upheaval in the subcontinent against the British Empire. It was triggered by the revolt of the sailors of the Royal Indian Navy, generally known as the Great Indian Navy Mutiny 1946, when 1100 sailors on HMIS Talwar stopped work and declared an official strike at dawn of February the 18th.

The sailors unanimously elected as their representatives, signalman M.S Khan, petty officer telegraphist Madan Singh and signaller Bedi

Basant Singh - a Muslim, a Hindu and a Sikh, consciously rejecting the religious fervour being instigated by the British and their colonial toadies in that period. The strike that began at Bombay harbour spread like wildfire to military establishments in Karachi, Madras, Vishakhapatnam, Calcutta, Delhi, Cochin, Jamnagar, and the Andaman Islands, and on to Bahrain and Aden on the shores of the Middle East. Gandhi condemned this uprising outright, and Jinnah rejected it as unconstitutional. Congress and the Muslim League were afraid of the revolutionary character of the movement and the class struggle cutting across the religious divisions they were sowing in the independence movement. They overtly and covertly intrigued to crush the revolt.



At 06-00 hours on 24 February 1946, black flags were raised to announce surrender. In its last session, the strike committee passed a resolution that stated: *"Our uprising was an important historical event in the lives of our people. For the first time, the blood of uniformed and non-uniformed workers flowed in one current for the same collective cause. We, the workers in uniform shall never forget this. We also know that you, our proletarian brothers and sisters shall also never forget this. The coming generations, learning its lessons shall accomplish what we have not been able to achieve. Long live the working masses. Long live the Revolution."*

In fact, the British were forced to retreat from India by decades of strikes, mass demonstrations, and daring and heroic armed struggles like those of Bhagat Singh and his comrades of the HSRA (Hindustan Socialist Revolutionary Association). There were also increasing revolts within the police, air force and army, and mass insurrections from Calcutta to Karachi and Delhi to Colombo. Industrial strikes had rapidly spread across Bombay, Calcutta, Allahabad, Delhi, Madras, Karachi and several other major cities. The rebellion defied massive state oppression, arrests, tortures and even the use of live ammunition. India's virgin proletariat played a crucial role in the liberation struggle.

The vice president of the naval revolt's Central Strike Committee, Madan Singh, in an interview with the Tribune (a Chandigarh-based newspaper) many years later illustrated the revolutionary situation prevailing in the Indian subcontinent at the time: *"After the outbreak of the mutiny, the first thing that we did was to free B. C. Dutt (who was arrested during General Auchinleck's visit). Then we took possession of Butcher Island (the entire ammunition meant for Bombay Presidency was stocked) and Kirkee near Pune. Our quick actions ensured that all the 70 ships and all the 20 seashore establishments were in our control. We had secured control over the civilian telephone exchange, the cable network and, above all, over the transmission centre at Kirkee manned by the Navy, which was the channel of communication between the Indian Government and the British."*

P.V. Chakraborty wrote in March 1976: *"When I was acting as Governor of West Bengal in 1956, Lord Clement Attlee, who as the British Prime Minister in post war years stayed in Raj Bhavan, Calcutta. I put it straight to him like this: 'The Quit India Movement of Gandhi practically died out long before 1947 and there was nothing in the Indian situation at that time which made it necessary for the British to leave India in a hurry. Why then did they do so?' In reply, Attlee cited several revolts including the INA (DR. Subhash Chandra Bosh's rebel army) and the RIN mutiny, which made the*

British realise that the Indian armed forces could no longer be trusted. When asked about the extent to which the British decision to quit India was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's 1942 Quit India movement, Attlee's lips widened in a smile of disdain and he uttered, slowly, 'Minimal'."

However, it was the criminal role played by the Comintern under Stalinist domination from Moscow and the leadership of the CPI under its tutelage that ensured the failure to provide a revolutionary path, leadership and strategy to the mass revolutionary upsurge. They initially supported the British imperialists during the second half of the world war under the pretext of 'fighting fascism'; and later they pursued the disastrous policy of forming 'people's fronts' with what they termed the "progressive bourgeoisie" of both Congress and the Muslim League varieties, that aborted the revolution and led to the horrors of partition. They cannot be historically exonerated of their role in this tragedy of partition that has brought coercion, misery, poverty, devastation and harrowing sufferings for generations numbering more than one fifth of the human race ever since.

The South Asian subcontinent was the cradle of the Indus valley civilisation -the oldest in the world. This heritage and the subsequent relatively prosperous societies that followed have contributed immensely to the development of human knowledge in various fields of science, culture and the arts. The literary history encompasses some of the greatest works of poetry and prose. In ancient times, the South Asian subcontinent was known as the land "flowing with milk and honey" because of its advanced economy and agriculture. After the fall of Rome, whilst Europe languished in the dark ages, the subcontinent's economy, society, arts and culture flourished. Many invasions occurred in almost three millennia, but all the invading tribes and dynasties were absorbed by the rich culture and fertility of its land. The British were the first that did not.

However, due to the intrinsic conservatism and lethargy of the wealthy monarchical elites, India's growth, innovation and development had stagnated and fell behind Europe in the second half of the last millennium. After the industrial revolution, the West had developed superior scientific, militaristic and technological skills, products and instruments. This allowed the West to exert its superiority over the obsolete technological, state and social structures in India. British colonisation resulted in new forms of plunder, with the native industries, economies and cultures systematically destroyed and the region's wealth robbed for imperialist profits.



Almost 2.7 million people slaughtered in the insane frenzy of religious hatreds, There was an enforced migration of over 20 million souls.

On the seventieth anniversary of this elusive independence, the masses are still in chains. The sub-continent's reactionary ruling classes are still pursuing the policies of religious hatreds and nationalist jingoism that led to the bloody partition of 1947. The states' military and civilian bureaucracies are using this animosity to loot the meagre resources of these societies. The capitalists and the remnants of the landed aristocracies are inflicting rabid exploitation to amass wealth. The Islamic and Hindu fundamentalist barons are marketing their sectarian venom to linger this orgy of plunder. The bosses of black capital stuffing their coffers with criminal dough orchestrate terrorism and religious sectarian bloodshed.

The toiling masses have suffered for generations. According to a UNICEF report, the health conditions of the masses are far worse today than they were at the time of the 1857 Indian War of Independence. This region has almost twenty percent of the world's population, yet it hosts more than 40 percent of the planet's poverty. These are two nuclear-armed states, yet 44 percent of children suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition. The ruling classes in India and Pakistan have failed to carry out the tasks of creating modern industrialised nation-states. None of the tasks of the national democratic revolution has been completed. They are among the top ten buyers of weaponry, and amongst the lowest spenders in health and education

and others. Within the confines of these imposed imperialist enclosures, the great civilisations of Indus and the Ganges along with their tributaries are strangled and traumatised.

Vast sections of the populace have sunk into a bottomless pit of misery and poverty. A cursory look at the industrial infrastructure and the conditions of the masses negates and condemns the rulers' claims of development and growth. On the basis of partition, India and Pakistan developed as two separate countries, but to this day, the ruling class of neither country has not been able to solve any of the seething problems faced by the masses. The subcontinent is in a state of ferment.

In these seventy years, we have witnessed

To the north, the sub-continent is separated from Tibet and China by the McMahon line, in 1914. In the west, Afghanistan was bifurcated by the so-called Durand Line, in 1893. Similarly, Burma was severed from the sub-continent's territory in 1937 by the Indo-Burma barrier. The Radcliff line bifurcated Nepal, Punjab and Bengal, in 1947.

provisions. Hindutva chauvinists now rule the so-called 'largest democracy' in the world, India, while in Pakistan the ruling classes use religion to coerce the toiling masses with the terror of Islamicist black reaction. Its military establishment thrives on this religious chauvinism.

At the peak of Mughal rule in 1577, when Akbar was on the throne, the Indian subcontinent stretched from Kabul in the west to Rangoon in the East. These countries, now carved out as separate states from the Indian subcontinent, were created by imperialism to expedite imperialist coercion and robbery. To the north, the sub-continent is separated from Tibet and China by the McMahon line proposed by Henry McMahon in 1914. In the west, Afghanistan was bifurcated by the so-called Durand Line, drawn in 1893. Similarly, Burma was severed from the sub-continent's territory in 1937 by the Indo-Burma barrier. The Radcliff line bifurcated Nepal, Punjab and Bengal and sliced out new states. These partitions have obliterated the India that once was. What we have now are the bifurcated states of Pakistan, Bharat, Bangladesh

glorious struggles of the youth and the working classes against these tyrannical states and socio-economic systems. From the Afghanistan's Saur revolution of spring 1978 to the revolutionary movement of 1968-69 that challenged the existent property relations in Pakistan, there have been relentless struggles of the oppressed classes to transform society. Stormy events loom large on the horizon. A new mass revolt can lead to a victorious insurrection. A victory of the workers, youth and the poor peasants in any regional country shall inevitably spread the revolutionary wave throughout the South Asian subcontinent. Revolutions do not just transform the economies and the states; they also change the course of history and geographies of the decayed and reactionary capitalist states. A revolution in this region will smash the artificial frontiers propped up by the imperialists and their local bourgeois toadies. With the triumph of the revolutionary masses, this criminal partition shall be undone. Such a historical leap will unite more than one and a half billion oppressed human souls into a voluntary socialist federation of South Asia.



Partition and Kashmir!

By Javed Iqbal



We are once again witnessing a heroic struggle of Kashmiris particularly the youth who are daring to one of the largest armies of the world. Kashmir is a graphic illustration of the exploitation and oppression faced by the masses across the world, especially in the former colonial countries. Both India and Pakistan have not only fought three wars over Kashmiris but also have brutally exploited them over the last 70 years since the British were driven out by the fear of an evolving socialist revolution in the Indian subcontinent.

This August both India and Pakistan will celebrate their 70th anniversary of independence. This is also the 70th anniversary of India's bloody partitioning, a devastating event which forced a cleavage right through the middle of Punjab and

Bengal. This dramatic post war decolonization of South Asia unleashed an orgy of terror, bloodshed and mayhem that shook India from Kanyakumari to Karachi.

The partition of India was a huge mess as it uprooted people from their homes, resulting in the deaths of over 2 million and some 20 million Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, were forced cross the arbitrary border created by an obscure lawyer from the English Home Counties who never visited India before and had no idea of the reality on the ground. The refugees left in terror, travelled trembling, and arrived traumatised to ramshackle refugee camps.

Gandhi, Patel and Nehru proclaimed Hindustan is free, Jinnah saying the same about Pakistan. But they forgot to mention the harrowing scenes on the streets, fields, canals and rivers, etc. This was

left to the greatest short story writer in the Indian sub-continent 'Sadat Hussain Manto' to describe the reality on the ground. In his stories, he illustrates how partition had left dried tracks of blood. India during the 1940s was going through a revolutionary hurricane which was sweeping across Asia and the world. Months immediately after the surrender of the Japanese on 2nd September 1945, India went through a stormy resurgence of the working class movement. The workers in large numbers participated in the post war political upsurge. Industrial strikes in virtually all the major cities – Bombay, Calcutta, Allahabad, Delhi, Madras, and Karachi erupted with full force. The Indian working class courageously jumped into the fray ignoring massive state oppression, arrests, beatings and even bullets as the decisive force in the struggle of the Indian people for independence from the British bondage. Towards the end of 1945, the Bombay and Calcutta dockworkers refused to load ships going to Indonesia with supplies for troops meant to suppress the national liberation struggles there. Indian workers were the main force behind demonstrations protesting against the British imperialism's farcical Red Fort trials of members of the Indian National Army.

1946 was the year of revolution. It began with the trial of the Indian National Army veterans which brought a mass movement on the road that forced the British rulers to release the leaders of INA who were imprisoned in Indian jails facing charges of treason. This was followed up by a massive and heroic revolt of the Royal Indian Navy which spread like a wildfire from Bombay to Karachi, Calcutta, Madras, Colombo, Singapore etc.

On the 26th February 1946, 120 soldiers at Jabalpur rebelled against the British. The Jabalpur mutiny left a deep irreversible impact on the British. The then commander-in-chief of the British Indian army, Gen Sir Claude Auchinleck, sent several secret cables back to London,

discussing a quick transfer of power from British hands to the Indians. The mutiny at Jabalpur was the first major uprising in the Indian Army during or after the war. This set alarm bells ringing from Delhi to London, and doubts began to be expressed on the steadfastness of the Indian Army.

With the above scenario staring them in the face British, the most astute imperialist power of the day drew correct conclusions that they could not keep India under subjugation any longer and decided to negotiate a transfer of power to the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie of India. In June 1947, the British decided to partition India into two separate sovereign states.

As the British rushed to grant independence to their Indian colony, the fate of the 662 princely states was unclear. Only 28 of these princely states had populations of over 50,000 and others were no more than small landed estates. However, they all had one thing in common – a total dependence on the British who allowed them in return for loyalty to rule their inhabitants despotically. Some like Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad were increasingly drawn to the idea of an independent entity.

No army, no navy, no air force, no communications, no police, restless railways, docks and postal workers, all highly politicised and ready to jump into the fray. This was a scenario British never ever expected to be faced with.

Kashmir and Amritsar Treaty

The genesis of the Indian subjugation of the Kashmiris goes way back to the colonial days of the British Raj. In 1846 the British concluded the Anglo-Sikh War by forcing the Sikhs to sell them territory centred on the Kashmir Valley, extending into Ladakh, Gilgit and Chamba, and down towards the Punjab plains in the vicinity of Jammu. Therefore, the Jammu Kashmir as a state with a defined territory was created by the Imperial British Power by bundling together diverse land pieces and diverse peoples and nationalities, with multiple identities, in March 1846. This kingdom was then sold on to two local

feudal Hindu brothers, the elder known as Gulab Singh, who although a vassal of the former Sikh Empire, had betrayed the Sikhs and supported the British in the Anglo Sikh War.



For the notional sum of £750,000, the Dogra Rajputs consolidated their rule in a socially and religiously diverse area from the beautiful vale of Kashmir, with a predominately Sunni Muslim population but it also contained regions of significant Buddhist and Hindu settlement along with Shias other Muslim sects. This was not a state which was a natural unit from the point view of geographically, demographically, linguistically or economically. It basically was an agglomeration of territories which were brought together by force with the assistance of the British Raj and ruled repressively by the Dogra rulers.

The Dogra rule was nothing but repressive and iniquitous in virtually every facet of the lives of its inhabitants particularly those that were Muslims. There were huge disparities over the land ownership between Hindus and Muslims, the poor quality of Muslim education, and virtually no employment prospects. Popular disturbances against the Dogra rule took place from around the late 1920s onwards. Rent strikes and attempts to resist tenant eviction were particularly common in the area of Punch, where Muslims resisted Hindu landlords. Labour unrest and grinding poverty were evident throughout the Valley. Maharaja's unpopularity grew by the day.

A small group of students studying in Aligarh who were exposed to the social, political and cultural ferment present throughout India particularly during the Khilafat Movement began to organise in Srinagar and were later became to be known as the Reading Room Party. Sheikh Abdullah a young Kashmiri activist who recently returned from Aligarh College joined hands with the activists of the Reading Room Party and the spiritual leader Mirwais Mohammed Yousuf Shah and all played a leading role in creating All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The nationalist opposition to British and the Dogra Maharajah was being articulated by this group, associated in some cases with the all-India agitations of the 1920s.

In 1931 Maharajah's forces ended up killing over 31 Kashmiris in Srinagar. The Glancy Report of 1932 which was ordered to investigate Dogra repression against a Muslim strike in 1931 recommended reform within Jammu and Kashmir and compelled Maharaja Hari Singh to set up an elected assembly, known as the 'Prajya Sabha'. It was to consist of 37 members, 35 of whom were to be elected by communal constituencies on a very limited franchise, and to advise the prince on social and economic policy. Its views and proposals were not binding.

It was during early part of 20th century when a section of the population became conscious and began to organise itself politically that Jammu & Kashmir began the process of nation building. This process started gaining a proper shape during the late 1930s and having gone through the rites of passage, culminated into a national political movement, secular in character. The demands of this movement included setting up of a representative government with the transfer of state power from the hereditary autocratic Dogra ruler to the democratically elected representatives of the state populous. By 1938, Sheikh Abdullah rejected a narrow communal platform as counterproductive and embraced instead a secular political agenda that opened their political movements to non-Muslims. In doing so,

Sheikh Abdullah broke with the Muslim Conference and founded his own party, the National Conference (NC), in 1939, closely aligned with the Indian National Congress. The movement was becoming partially successful in gaining some reforms with support of the people. But the emergence of two-nation ideology, in the mainland India, had its effects in the state J&K, and the nation building process experienced fishers and divisions.

The National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah launched "Quit Kashmir" campaign and called for the abolition of Dogra rule and the implementation of a social reform program to modernise the Valley. In 1939, Abdullah's party won a majority in the Praja Sabha, only to suffer defections into a revived Muslim Conference in 1941, instigated in part by the Maharaja, who paid for defections from the National Conference. The Indian Congress leadership was convinced that Sheikh Abdullah was pro-Congress, and he had indeed made various statements supporting the Indian National Congress. Members of the Muslim Conference clearly opted for Pakistan. However, there is evidence that both Sheikh Abdullah and influential members of the Muslim Conference were also sympathetic to an independent Kashmir, although one in which the Maharaja was reduced to a constitutional monarch or removed altogether. This sentiment provided the only commonality between the disparate forces.

The commonality is significant from a contemporary standpoint because it highlights the degree to which the idea of an independent Kashmiri state, Islamic or secular, was very much present at the start of the crisis. Subsequent Indian and Pakistan historical interpretations have consistently downplayed this element, in fact, Indian support for Sheikh Abdullah was marked from the onset with anxiety over his desire to lead an independent state.

Kashmir on the Eve of Partition

The British left it to the princes to decide the

future of their territories but in effect pursued a policy of territorial contiguity. Where princely states were surrounded by territory that would become part of the Indian Republic, their rulers were pressured to join India. The princes decided their fate by signing two documents, a Standstill Agreement and an Instrument of Accession. The former enabled a princely state to maintain connections with the surrounding territories of British India during its transition to Dominion Status (be it India or Pakistan) in vital areas of supplies and communications. The latter was, in effect, a transfer of sovereignty from the prince to either India or Pakistan. The documents were deemed to work in tandem. Jammu and Kashmir, because of its unique geographical location, signed Standstill Agreements with both India and Pakistan on 12 August 1947. But it's Dogra ruler prevaricated on signing the Instrument of Accession.

The demarcation of the international border dividing India and Pakistan in the Punjab produced widespread communal violence in 1947 and a massive exchange of populations. It was against this background of widespread violence and administrative chaos that violence erupted in Kashmir in late September 1947.

Communal tensions were high in the Dogra Kingdom, especially the areas on the east of the Jhelum, which were most directly affected by the killings in the Punjab. These areas, centred on Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Punch, had long been witness to protests aimed at the Dogra court.

In the charged atmosphere of partition, and amid the horror stories reaching the hills of killings and murders across the plain, a rebellion took place within the Punch area against the Dogra Maharajah particularly against the increases in rents and land taxes. Leading members of the Muslim Conference were at the forefront of this insurrection. As a result of an armed revolt by the indigenous people in the Punch region of the state, a Provisional Government was set up, in the

liberated territory, under a declaration made, on 4th October 1947. Under a similar revolt in Gilgit Baltistan, the 'State Subjects' had also liberated these areas from the Raja's control. Subsequent Indian historians and intelligentsia have tended to misrepresent the nature of this rebellion as a mere law and order issue, involving indiscriminate looting and violence.

From August to September 1947, both the Congress and the Muslim League started to see Kashmir not so much as a peripheral issue to the partition process but as something fundamental to their emergent national identities. Both sides saw Kashmir ideologically as essential for legitimating wider political positions. As a party representing the Muslim demand for a separate state, the Muslim League believed that Kashmir had to be part of Pakistan because it was overwhelmingly Muslim.

Indian diplomatic pressure had secured the release of Sheikh Abdullah by late September 1947, at a time when Pakistan was accusing the Indians of manipulating the Maharaja. By early October, the Dogra ruler accused the Pakistani authorities of withholding essential supplies to his state (especially oil and grain) in contravention of the Standstill Agreement. More seriously, by early October, Pashtun tribal Lashkar from the vicinity of the Northwest Frontier were sent in the State (under the pretext of supporting the fellow Muslims) on 22nd of October 1947, who embarked on indiscriminate pillage, plunder and killing. The provisional government of 4th October was summarily removed by the Pakistani establishment on 24th October, and a new administration was established, not with the consent the 'State subjects', but rather, by appointment of handpicked individuals. The Dogra army had proved singularly ineffective, and indeed some of its Muslim troops had defected. The truth is if the tribal Lashkar had not indulged in looting in Baramola just 30 kilometres outside Srinagar they would have easily overtaken Srinagar particularly its airport and would have made virtually

impossible for Indian troops to reach the Vale.

India followed the suit, under the pretext of the call for help from the Dogra Maharaja, the Indian establishment sent its forces under the alleged 'Instrument of Accession', signed by the ruler, and appointed an administration of its own choice.

The Indian authorities began a military airlift to help repel the invading tribal forces. This led to protests from Pakistan, coupled with denials that it was orchestrating events. By March 1948, Pakistan military personnel had joined with the Pashtun tribals to fight the Indians directly. Heavy fighting took place in and around Punch, the town of Kargil, and over the Zoji-la pass into Ladakh.

The first Kashmir war ended in July 1949 as the parties agreed to a ceasefire that gave India control of the Valley and territories to the south and east, and Pakistan control of the hill areas, Gilgit and part of Baltistan.

The process of nation building in Jammu and Kashmir was disrupted once again in 1947 and the sovereign status of the Jammu and Kashmir state was dismembered by the newly created dominions of India and Pakistan. The state and its people were forcibly divided and an international case was constructed by the two occupiers as a geopolitical dispute between the two, each one having a "legitimate" claim over the entire state, albeit under fake pretensions of supporting the 'right to self-determination of the people'. Tragically, they have managed to get an endorsement of this charade from a majority of the people under their respective occupation.

Immediately after partition India and Pakistan tried unsuccessfully to occupy and control Kashmir resulting in an agonising and unfinished partition of Kashmir which has manifested itself in uninterrupted misery, unemployment and the worst form of occupation on the one hand and on the other it has been a source of constant tension,

including 3 wars between India and Pakistan.

Pakistani Occupied Kashmir – “Azad Kashmir”

The Pakistani state's loud proclamation of being supporter and liberator of Kashmiris runs hollow from the first day. Its control and actions cannot be described other than as a colonial power. Firstly, it sent armed invaders without any regards for Kashmir's inhabitants and then subsequently sent its own regular army to begin a process of forced occupation. Pakistan authorities moved very swiftly to depose the provisional government declared by an indigenous populous, and appointing an administration of its own choice; thereby diverting and subverting the course of democratic choice of a people to self-governance.

The territories of Gilgit and Baltistan were annexed, in 1948, by the Pakistani establishment under a so-called treaty signed by the then president of AJK, appointed by Pakistan without the consent of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. These parts of the State were then categorised and called as 'The Northern Area of Pakistan' until 2009 and were governed autocratically by Pakistan through its Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas.

From 1949, various formal and legal arrangements have prescribed the Azad Kashmir and Pakistan relationship. What these have done is tied Azad Kashmiris to Pakistan, ensured the nation's superior position and decreased Azad Kashmir's autonomy.

In 1974 Pakistan imposed 'The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act 1974'. This gave Azad Kashmir a prime ministerial system with a second chamber the Azad Kashmir Council, based in Islamabad. This is a superior body to the Kashmir Legislative body and is chaired by the Pakistani Prime Minister. The effective power lies with the Kashmir Council and its membership is largely selected by Islamabad. In addition to effective control of Azad Kashmir through the

Azad Kashmir Council, the 1974 Act also stipulates that Azad Kashmiris seeking office should support and swear to Jammu and Kashmir accession to Pakistan.

Indian Occupied Kashmir

The mass anger and hatred of the Kashmiris against Indian occupation found its expression in the revolt of 1987. The militant movement that started in 1987 took the form of an armed insurgency. The Indian army, in turn, unleashed a savage state terrorism and oppression. Seven hundred thousand regular and paramilitary troops ravaged the valley to quell the struggle. Over 100,000 lost their lives, thousands of women were raped. Hundreds of homes were burnt down and thousands more were forced to migrate. The Indian army, posted in Kashmir, has special unlimited powers under the Armed Forces Special Power Act and other laws allowing them to question people on the basis of suspicion, arrests without warrant, home searches at any time, and other draconian acts.

During the mid-1990s the armed insurgency lost



its momentum and declined considerably. But the number of armed personnel in Kashmir has increased rather than decreasing and the army still has the same draconian powers. In Srinagar, there is an army check-post every one or two miles where the pedestrians have to undergo humiliating body searches. Women are also mistreated at these check posts.

Protests against this military repression have become a daily routine of the Kashmiri masses. This military repression is more naked in the countryside where homes are searched at night and inmates humiliated. Men are tortured and women are raped and those who resist are shot.

While there is Indian military naked aggression against the people of Kashmir, the social, economic and industrial infrastructure of Kashmir has been completely shattered by two decades of violence. There is almost no industrial infrastructure. Unemployment is endemic. According to a Chatham House (a British foreign policy think-tank) report published in June 2010, 83% of people on both sides of the Line of Control think that Kashmir's biggest problem is unemployment. Since the death of Burhan Wani in July 2016, corridors of power in Srinagar, Delhi and Islamabad have been shaken by the uprising of Kashmiri youth. Over the last 12 months, we have witnessed major parts of the valley going through widespread protests, strikes and unrest which does not seem to end.

According to Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, a human rights group, Indian security forces have killed 150 civilians in 2016. Another 15,000 of them sustained injuries during protests, including over 1,000 blinded by pellets directed in the eyes by police and paramilitary forces. This violence is not restricted to the protests. According to the same Coalition, 138 rebels and 100 security officials were also killed last year. Young rebels are routinely seen in public. Carrying Kalashnikovs and offering gun salutes to people, they openly participate in public rallies. Often they stay overnight with villagers while moving from one area to another.

Even where the rebels' presence is known, Indian security forces find it difficult to launch siege and search operations to nab them. Protesters come out in large numbers to support the rebels, shouting slogans and hurling stones at soldiers. Instead of running away from gun battles, young

men and boys are thronging encounter sites to take on the heavily armed forces with taunts and stones. Young civilians develop an informal intelligence network to help rebels move around undetected. They know they can die in the process. 'We can sacrifice our lives to help our brothers,' is a sentiment shared by many among the youth. Large numbers of girls in headscarves and school uniforms have been joining male protesters for the first time in recent memory.

The genesis of this attitude amongst the Kashmiri youth can be traced back to the 2008 mass civilian uprising. It was unprecedented as for the first time, unarmed civilians, mostly young boys, took to the streets to protest against the Indian occupation. The state responded with overwhelming force; over 100 people were killed by the security forces and thousands left injured. Since then, Kashmir has witnessed two more such mass uprisings and the government has only responded with even more force.

According to a prominent Kashmiri historian 'Siddiq Wahid' based in Srinagar, the youth have taken charge of the political struggle in Kashmir. *"The youth believe that resistance by the earlier generations has been co-opted – in different ways and by varying degrees – by interests that are external to the state of Jammu and Kashmir."*



A recent tweet by the former Kashmiri Chief Minister Omar Abdullah shows another new development in the Kashmiri struggle. Omar Abdullah's tweet shows a photo of a girl in her

school uniform kicking the side of a police vehicle. Her left arm cradled a basketball while her left hand clutched a brick.

The Indian government has responded to the popular upheaval by increasing its use of force. Indian authorities have imposed strict curbs on communication and information dissemination. They have kept large areas under curfew for days and have often conducted mass arrests. The alienation from mainstream politics is quite evident on the ground. But the failure of the last civilian uprising led by the joint leadership of Hurriyat post-Burhan Wani's death has caused many to question their ways and methods. Hurriyat's one-track strategy of hartals and protest has become limited and outdated. Hurriyat is not able to resonate with the youth who feel a higher degree of alienation today, in the way the likes of Burhan Wani, seen as fighting from the front have.

For decades, India has pointed its fingers towards foreign and Pakistani involvement in the valley. Pakistani support for religious jihadist groups for decades is no secret. But what we are seeing now has never been seen before. Indian ruling elite and the state has never felt so threatened and vulnerable from foreign interventions as they do from this indigenous revolt of the youth. The mammoth military apparatus and might of the Indian bourgeois seem to be helpless and despairing in the face of these stone throwing girls and boys who have risen with a vengeance against the oppression and cruelties executed by this 'largest democracy in the world'.

Over the last 70 years, the people of the Jammu and Kashmir have been further divided and fragmented. However, the biggest tragedy is with regards to the divisions, fragmentations and confusions in the ranks of Kashmiri nationalists and so called progressives, who have no clear comprehension of these ground realities. The truth is that Kashmiri nationalists and progressives have miserably failed to construct a national identity and also tragically failed to form a united national

platform representative of the diversity existing in the individual components of Jammu and Kashmir.

The lessons of the last 70 years' struggle for Kashmiri emancipation are that this struggle must link up with the struggle for emancipation of the masses from economic, social and national exploitation and subjugation. The Kashmiri political classes over the last 70 years have always ended up being played and used by the Pakistani and the Indian states and have been active accomplices in the subjugation of the Kashmiri masses. Lenin was profound on this issue: *"The recognition of the right to self-determination does not exclude either propaganda or agitation against separation or exposure of bourgeois nationalism."* The UN and other international diplomatic forums dominated by imperialism and big powers failed to move even an inch in the resolution of the Kashmir's agony.

There can be no genuine and real liberation of the Kashmiri people on the basis of narrow nationalism. The real emancipation can only be achieved with the perspective of Socialist revolution in India and Pakistan leading to Socialist Confederation of the South Asia including the Autonomous Socialist Republic of Kashmir. This does not mean that people of Kashmir must lock themselves in their homes and wait for Pakistani and Indian workers to rise up and overthrow this belated, impotent capitalist system.

Kashmiri masses can only win freedom by their own sacrifice and efforts. This has been amply demonstrated by the people of Kashmir. Armed struggle failed to dislodge the imperial occupational states. When all options are closed then only the revolutionary way can put an end to the plight of the oppressed. This means Kashmiris not only will have to forge unity of the youth and working classes across all the different parts of the geographical entities of Kashmir but also that of the Indian and Pakistan for a mighty class struggle and a socialist transformation across the whole of South Asian.



Durand Line: Partition on the Western Front

By Hassan Jan



British imperialism throughout its history in the quest for its expansion and imperial designs had carved out many new states and statelets by drawing artificial and reactionary lines and frontiers thus splitting indigenous civilizations of thousands of years. Though the grandeur of British imperialism has been dumped into the dustbin of history but the cleavage lines it drew have subjected these regions to an eternal inferno of conflicts and wars. The Middle East was dissected through the notorious Sykes-Picot agreement between France and Britain. British Raj ripped up the South Asian Sub-continent through Radcliff and Durand lines. All these frontiers were drawn for plunder of the resources of these lands and to subjugate the populace under the ancient Roman dictum of Divide and Rule.

During the nineteenth century, Tsarist Russia and Britain were locked in a rivalry for influence in

Central Asia, Afghanistan and South Asian subcontinent commonly known as "The Great Game". Russia was slowly spreading its tentacles to Central Asia and had already annexed many Central Asian Khanates and Britain feared that Russia would expand its empire to include Afghanistan and reach the "warm waters" of Indian Ocean and from there would invade the British Indian subcontinent, the 'jewel in the crown' of British Empire. The Emir of Afghanistan Dost Mohammad had recently lost his winter capital Peshawar to the Sikh Empire in 1834. He tried to recapture it several times but failed miserably. In 1837, Jan Prosper Witkiewicz, Russian diplomat, was sent to Kabul to meet Emir Dost Mohammad. This was perceived in London as Dost Mohammad might be seeking help from Russians and to form a military alliance to recapture Peshawar. This fear prompted the British Raj to invade Afghanistan in 1839 to forestall Russian expansion to the country.

First Anglo-Afghan War 1839-1842

In 1838, British East India Company (which was granted the right to rule India by the British crown) amassed an army of 21,000, which comprised mainly upon Indian soldiers. This "Army of the Indus" started to march from Punjab in December 1838. After crossing the Bolan Pass, they reached Quetta in March 1839. They swiftly captured Quetta and Kandahar and in July of that year ousted Dost Mohammad Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan and installed Shah Shuja Durrani as the new puppet Emir. The great Marxist teacher Frederick Engels wrote, "The Bolan Pass was traversed in March; want of provisions and forage began to be felt; the camels dropped by hundreds, and a great part of the baggage was lost. April 7, the army entered the Khojak Pass, traversed it without resistance, and on April 25 entered Kandahar, which the Afghan princes, brothers of Dost Mohammed, had abandoned. After a rest of two months, Sir John Keane, the commander, advanced with the main body of the army toward the north, leaving a brigade, under Nott, in Kandahar. Ghazni, the impregnable stronghold of Afghanistan, was taken on July 22. A deserter having brought information that the Kabul gate was the only one that had not been walled up; it was accordingly blown down, and the place was then stormed. After this disaster, the army Dost Mohammed had collected, at once disbanded, and Kabul too opened its gates on August 6, 1839. Shah Shujah was installed but the real direction of government remained in the hands of McNaughton, who also paid all Shah Shujah's expenses out of the Indian treasury."

After this swift military victory, the British withdrew much of their troops and left behind 6,000 troops to prop up Shah Shujah's regime. Everything was going smoothly and calm as reported by the political agent William McNaughton to the governor-general of British India, Lord Auckland. Sporadic rebellions were raising heads throughout the country but were crushed. But beneath the surface, there was a

simmering revolt that was soon to erupt against the British occupation. Then came the fateful day when the Afghan rebels led by Wazir Akbar Khan, the son of the deposed Emir Dost Mohammad, stormed the cantonment in Kabul, housed by the British, killing Captain Alexander Burns and his aides. The British tried to soothe the rebels and end the siege of the cantonment by offering Wazir Akbar Khan the post of Wazir of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the British had hatched a conspiracy with other tribal chieftains to assassinate Wazir Akbar Khan. When he became aware of this double game, he called on William Macnaghten for negotiation and during the negotiation Wazir Akbar Khan killed him by shooting a pistol placed in his mouth. His bravado inspired other Afghans and the rebellion that erupted into a full-blown insurrection.



The British army entering the Bolān Pass during the First Anglo-Afghan War.

With no end to the siege of the cantonment in Kabul, the British negotiated with Wazir Akbar Khan to let them go and provide a safe passage to Jalalabad. Wazir agreed. The British forces along with their camp followers left Kabul for Jalalabad. But the Afghan tribesmen massacred the entire convoy of British troops led by William Elphinstone during this voyage.

Fredrick Engels would later describe in 1857, "the British marched out, 4,500 combatants and 12,000 camp-followers. One march sufficed to dissolve the last remnant of order, and to mix up soldiers and camp followers in hopeless confusion, rendering all resistance impossible. The cold and snow and the

want of provisions had similar impacts as in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow [in 1812]. But instead of Cossacks keeping a respectful distance, infuriated Afghan marksmen, armed with long-range matchlocks, occupying every height, harassed the British. The chiefs who signed the capitulation could not restrain the mountain tribes. The Koord-Kabul Pass became the grave of nearly the military force that has launched its campaign in Afghanistan. The small remnant with less than 200 Europeans, fell at the entrance of the Jugduluk Pass. Only one man, Dr. Brydon, reached Jalalabad to tell the tale. Many officers, however, had been seized by the Afghans and kept in captivity, Jalalabad was held by Sale's brigade. The capitulation was demanded of him, but he refused to evacuate the town, so did Nott at Kandahar. Ghazni had fallen; there was not a single man in the place that understood anything about artillery, and the Sepoys of the garrison had succumbed to the climate."



Only one man reached Jalalabad to tell the tale.

Shah Shuja was defenceless in Kabul without British troops, left on his own. The rebellious tribes killed him shortly. Dost Mohammad was released from captivity in India and reinstated as the Emir of Afghanistan. Thus ended the disastrous British adventure in Afghanistan.

Second Anglo-Afghan War 1878-1880

The defeat in the first Anglo-Afghan war continued to haunt the British Empire in the later decades. In 1878, a Russian diplomatic delegation

was received in Kabul, which alarmed the British. They also demanded from the then Emir of Afghanistan Sher Ali Khan to allow a British envoy to be permanently settled in Afghanistan. Sher Ali Khan turned down Britain's demand and refused to receive the delegation headed by Neville Bowles Chamberlain and vowed to stop them. In September 1878, Lord Lytton sent a diplomatic delegation to Kabul. When the mission reached Khyber Pass, they were stopped and returned. This proved to become a trigger for the second invasion of Afghanistan by the British.

This refusal to receive the British diplomatic mission infuriated the British Empire and also they perceived it as the increasing influence of the Russians on the regime in Kabul. The British amassed an army of about 40,000 troops, of which mostly were Indians. Bearing in mind the disastrous defeat at the hands of Afghans in the

first Anglo-Afghan war about four decades earlier in 1842, this time the invasion was planned meticulously. Afghanistan was invaded from three different points. Three columns of troops moved in to infiltrate the country. The first and the largest column Peshawar Field Force entered from the Khyber Pass. The second column the Kurram Valley Field Force captured the Peiwar Kotal. The third column invaded Kandahar. The much superior British Indian army defeated the Afghan forces. The desperate Emir Sher Ali

Khan went to Turkmenistan to appeal to the Russian Tsar for assistance but the Russians abstained due to their recent debacles in Europe. Sher Ali Khan died in February 1879. His son Yaqub Khan ascended to the throne.

The victorious British army grasped several geographical and political achievements through *Treaty of Gandamak* signed on 26 May 1879 between the Emir of Afghanistan Mohammad Yaqub Khan and Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British representative. Under the treaty, Afghanistan

ceded its control on foreign affairs to British Raj in India and allowed a permanent British mission to reside in Kabul. It lost several frontier areas including Kurram and Pishin Valleys, Sibi district and the Khyber and Michni Passes to the British. The British imperialists wanted to use these captured areas as a buffer against any future infringement of Russian Tsarist Empire on the British Indian subcontinent.

Durand Line

The treaty of Gandamak was a humiliating treaty to the Afghans. There was a rebellion in Kabul in September 1879. Enraged troops of Emir's army stormed the British mission in Kabul. Cavagnari and his aides were massacred. However, the uprising was ultimately crushed. The British forced Yaqub Khan to abdicate and install his cousin Abdur Rahman as the new puppet Emir of Afghanistan in 1880. Abdur Rahman ratified the Gandamak Treaty.

In 1893, Mortimer Durand, the then foreign secretary of British India was sent to Kabul. The purpose of this visit was to further solidify the gains made through the Treaty of Gandamak and to permanently deprive Afghanistan of the areas captured during the second Anglo-Afghan war. Mortimer Durand was assigned the task of delineating the borders between Afghanistan and the British India. Under the agreement, half of the Pashtun areas were included and made part of the British India while the other half of the Pashtun areas remained in Afghanistan's domain. The boundary thus cleaved through the mainly Pashtoon and Baloch tribes dividing them between Afghanistan and the British Indian subcontinent.

The British imperialists had executed their imperialist designs in a most cunning way. As Bijan Omrani has pointed out, *"There were advantages of the Line for the British. There was a strategic advantage in that they held positions on the frontier passes and controlled the heights, thus*

facilitating the policing of the passes. They also managed to achieve the tripartite border – a vision they had held for a long time. The first part of the border was the buffer state, Afghanistan. The second part was the tribal areas in the hills, which the British did not try to govern, but simply garrisoned. These areas were vassal states, on the Indian side of the line but not under the sovereignty of British India. The third part was further back, where the real government of India started. The depth of this frontier system certainly kept the Russians away, but the corollary was that the British faced the familiar internal policing problem." (The Durand Line: History and problems of the Afghan-Pakistan border, 2009)

By the time of third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919, Afghanistan got complete independence from Britain but the Durand Line agreement remained intact and was further ratified by King Amanullah Khan under the Treaty of Rawalpindi in 1919. The partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 along religious lines by drawing another bloody frontier called The Radcliff line further complicated the geopolitics of South Asian subcontinent and started an era of decades of unending wars and conflicts. The reactionary nature of these artificial boundaries started to unravel once the British ruler relinquished the South Asian subcontinent to the native rulers.

Durand Line divided the Pashtoon peoples into two countries. Contrary to the common perception, this reactionary line also divided and ripped up the Baloch. Thousands of years of common culture and civilizations were torn apart. This line is a constant source of conflict and instability in the region. The reactionary states of the region use these artificial borders for the perpetuation of their rule. As long as these borders persist, the region would continue to be in a state of continuous turmoil. Above all, the capitalist states of this region need these frontiers for their survival. Only through a revolutionary overthrow of these capitalist states, these artificial frontiers can be abolished.



Exclusive

How India Won Independence

By Roger Silverman



THE END of the Second World War inspired a global movement towards revolution, particularly in the colonies of the "victorious" imperial powers of Britain and France. The uprising that swept the Indian sub-continent in 1945-6 was a united mass movement mobilising millions of working people, democratic and secular, cutting across all cultural, ethnic, and communal barriers. It ended in British withdrawal, but the victory was tragically stained with the blood of communal massacres and partition.

THE DECAY of capitalism has plunged humanity into the most unstable epoch of its history. It is

This article, first published in 1985, explodes the myths that have surrounded the winning of India's independence. In the three decades since it was written, the grip of the global corporations has further tightened around the economies of both India and Pakistan, and the secular pretensions of both sides are long since abandoned as their hostile nuclear-equipped armies face each other.

hardly surprising then that the most populous country of capitalism, in which its failure to develop society is most spectacular—India—is

also at present probably the most volatile in the world. The last one year has witnessed enough cataclysms to last a "normal" society decades: communal and caste massacres, coups, general strikes, assassinations, mutinies, untold social upheavals in every state.



The British Raj withdraw, but the victory was tragically stained with the blood of communal massacres and partition.

The prospect opens up of the very disintegration of India, after four decades of independence. In particular, the Punjab crisis could start a chain reaction leading to the creation of a dozen statelets, each with its own national questions. What would be left would be, not a "Greater India", but a Lesser Hindustan, encompassing the poorest and most wretched Northern states of the "Hindi belt", a Hindu theocratic state in which Muslims, Sikhs and other religious minorities would be plunged into an inferno of pogroms, counter-terror and repression. If capitalism is not overthrown, India will explode into bleeding fragments. If the workers and peasants take power and thus avert this catastrophe, it will be in unity with those of the neighbouring countries, to create the Socialist United States of the Indian Sub-Continent.

These tortured convulsions are a direct result of the failure of the bourgeoisie to solve a single one of its tasks. The theory of Permanent Revolution explains that in the modern epoch the bourgeoisie

in the underdeveloped countries is incapable of repeating the pioneering and revolutionary role played at the dawn of capitalism by the bourgeoisie of the West: that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, national unification, industrialisation, division of the landed estates, etc... can only be solved along with the tasks of the socialist revolution: nationalisation of the means of production, state monopoly of foreign trade, etc.

The emergence of a national consciousness, the vision of a united, secular, democratic Indian nation, was one of the products of the elemental movement for national liberation that was to transform the face of the planet. Some have misunderstood the fact

that Congress assumed power in 1947 as a refutation of the Permanent Revolution, or at least as a sign that the Indian bourgeoisie was in some way an exception: that it was fit at least to begin tackling the tasks of establishing a modern capitalist nation. But the Indian bourgeoisie never led a national-liberation struggle. Congress did not win the power; it dropped into its lap due to the exhaustion and senility of imperialism, amid the revolutionary ferment that gripped the world following the end of the world war.

Gandhi's Role

The mantle of revolutionary democrats lies especially uneasily on the shoulders of Congress. As befitted a weak and dependent bourgeoisie, its whimpering plea for greater political responsibilities was slavish and cowardly and it huddled with imperialism at every turn in fear of the masses. The crafty lawyer Gandhi with his messianic delusions went a little further than his

urbane colleagues in transcending the cramped barriers of local particularism, caste, superstition, and communal bigotry, an indispensable condition if concessions were to be wrested from imperialism. But at all costs the downtrodden hordes must be kept in a subordinate and passive role: they must be pacified, hence quite literally the "pacifism" of Congress—which once in power proved to be among the most bloodthirsty of capitalist regimes in repressing the workers and peasants. The Indian National Congress was paralysed from the beginning by fear of the masses and squirmed a tortuous middle path between the needs of imperialism, to which it swore loyalty, and the aspirations of the masses for freedom, in the interests of leveraging a more favourable bargaining position for itself. It devised the tactics of "non-violence"—the hunger strike, civil disobedience and passive resistance—as a means of syphoning off the fury of the masses while exploiting them as a bargaining counter.

Churchill mocked the "naked fakir" Gandhi, but the obese, rapacious and parasitical Indian bourgeoisie needed as its mascot the caricatured saint with his sackcloth, his fasting and his pacifism. The writings of Gandhi, once the prisoner of the British imperialists and now their darling, express with breath-taking frankness the striving of the Indian bourgeoisie to subdue the storm of mass revolt.

"I think the growing generation will not be satisfied with petitions, etc..." he advised. *"We must give them something effective. Satyagraha (passive resistance) is the only way, it seems to me, to stop terrorism"* (i.e. direct action including mass uprisings). Gandhi's first priority was to safeguard the rights of private property. He expressed horror at finding in his native state of Gujarat *"utter lawlessness bordering on Bolshevism"*.

"I shall be no party to dispossessing the propertied classes of their private property without just cause,"

he assured the landlords and capitalists. "You may be sure that I shall throw the whole weight of my influence in preventing a class war. Supposing there is an attempt unjustly to deprive you of your property, you will find me fighting on your side."



The leader and prophet of the bourgeoisie... Gandhi... A fake leader and a false prophet...

He understood all too clearly that once the masses were on the move, the struggle would inevitably go far beyond the formal political goal of independence, to sweep capitalism and landlordism aside: *"I hope I am not expected knowingly to undertake a fight that must end in anarchy and red ruin"*, he replied to the suggestion of a general strike. He consciously used the "socialist" wing of Congress to confuse them: *"It is all well as long as you hold the peasants in check. But Nehru's presence must now ease the situation. He has no difficulty in dealing with the peasants and restraining them."*

There were strict limits to his advocacy even of civil disobedience. *"I cannot ask officials and*



soldiers to disobey," he explained frankly (and prophetically), "for when I am in power I shall in all likelihood make use of these same officials and those same soldiers. If I taught them to disobey I shall be afraid that they might do the same when I am in power." Gandhi's servile posture towards the British Raj can be indicated, quite apart from his frequent and toadying protestations of loyalty and "love" for the British Empire, by the fact that two entire volumes of his collected works are devoted to his correspondence with the Viceroy! One or two extracts will be as much as our readers will be able to stomach...

“ It would be unwise on my part not to listen to the warning given by the Government... A civil resister never seeks to embarrass the Government. I feel that I shall better serve the country and the Government by the suspension of civil resistance for the time being.”

And again:

“ I confess that it is a delicate situation. I need hardly assure you that the whole of my weight will be thrown absolutely on the side of preserving internal peace. The Viceroy has the right to rely upon my doing nothing less.”

Dismayed that the dialectic of events had prompted a breach in relations, Gandhi did not hesitate to crawl back into favour by writing to the Viceroy: "I do not know whether... friendly relations between us are closed, or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising the Congress."

"I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers", he complained, "that Congress is capable of delivering the goods."

Trotsky summed up the delicate and complex task that faced the Indian bourgeoisie:

“

Millions of people have begun to stir. They demonstrated such spontaneous power that the national bourgeoisie was forced into action in order to blunt its revolutionary edge. Gandhi's passive resistance movement is the tactical knot that ties the naiveté and self-denying blindness of the dispersed petty-bourgeois masses to the treacherous manoeuvres of the liberal bourgeoisie... The Tolstoyan formulas of passive resistance were in a sense the first stage of the revolutionary awakening of the Russian peasant masses. Gandhism represents the same thing in regard to the masses of the Indian people. The more 'sincere' Gandhi is personally, the more useful he is to the masters as an instrument for the disciplining of the masses." (The Revolution in India, its Tasks and Dangers, 1930)

“We denounce before the colonial masses the treacherous aspects of Gandhism, whose mission is to retard the fight of the revolutionary masses and to exploit it in the interest of the 'national' bourgeoisie.” (1934).

The natural leadership of the independence struggle belonged to the party of the proletariat. But the Communist Party of India displayed an even greater degree of treachery than Congress.

“Communist Collaboration”

It was a historical betrayal by world Stalinism that led the CPI in 1942 to denounce as treason the

massive 'Quit India' campaign half-heartedly launched by Congress, which had an ambiguous and inconsistent attitude to the war. In accordance with its role as a puppet of the Kremlin bureaucracy and frontier-guard of the USSR, rather than the vanguard of the workers and peasants or even of the national-liberation movement, the CPI put Stalin's alliance with Churchill before the cause of India's freedom. The only sure defence of the Russian revolution was to advance the struggle against imperialism everywhere.

But CPI leaders entered into a prolonged and increasingly servile secret correspondence and even held secret meetings with the British authorities, volunteering their collaboration in fighting against the Congress "*fifth column*". In April 1942 the CPI submitted a memorandum to the government declaring: "*Today all the Indian Communists are burning with an ardent desire to co-operate with the existing war efforts, even under the present government*", and requesting official help to "*enable us to resist the Japs... We have no doubt that the government will find our organ the most effective war propaganda newspaper that has yet been introduced in India.*" The party offered "*our wholehearted cooperation*" in sending its released leaders on countrywide tours "*to rouse the patriotic instincts of the people in defence of our country*", "*undertake recruitment for all branches of the fighting forces*", "*do all we can to build fraternal relations between the army and the people*", "*work out schemes for speeding up production*", etc. The government "*will have no need to fear strikes as far as we Communists can help it*". The party continually bragged about its successes at breaking strikes, preventing food riots and discouraging desertions, gloating that even the pro-imperialist newspapers "*have not written so consistently and strongly against sabotage as our weekly organs*".

British bureaucrats overcame official scepticism with cynical arguments: "*When your house is on fire, the important thing is that someone is helping*

you put it out, not what he was doing previously, It is easy to give a dog a bad name and hang him. It is more difficult, but far more worthwhile, to recognise and seize the moment at which it may be possible to convert a rebel into a useful citizen. The change is in tactics only, but if they change their tactics, their ideology does not matter. We can accept these people as short-term allies, The Communists might provide something of a makeweight against the pernicious activities of Congress".

As a result, while Congress leaders were imprisoned between 1942 and 1945, and an estimated 10,000 youth, workers and peasants were killed fighting British imperialism and tens of thousands jailed or flogged, the CPI was legalised, its activists freed from the jails, and its newspapers subsidised by the British government! Such was the anger of the masses at this sickening treachery that CPI offices and print shops were bombed and CPI activists attacked. It took years for the CPI to recover any credibility and to this day Congress leaders demagogically exploit this criminal record at election hustings, etc.

The masses showed an unrelenting and growing determination to achieve freedom. Trotsky warned that under such a leadership their efforts were doomed. "*The Indian bourgeoisie is incapable of leading a revolutionary struggle. They are closely bound up with and dependent on British capitalism. They tremble for their own property. They stand in fear of the masses. They seek compromises with British imperialism no matter what the price, and lull the Indian masses with hopes of reforms from above. The leader and prophet of this bourgeoisie is Gandhi. A fake leader and a false prophet... Double chains of slavery—that will be the inevitable consequence of the war if the masses of India follow the politics of Gandhi, the Stalinists and their friends.*" (India; Faced with Imperialist War, 1939). It was inconceivable that an effete, snivelling party like Congress could wrest the power from the hands of imperialism. How then did the party of the "*fake leader and false prophet*" come to inherit the power?

The winning of Indian independence was due neither to the saintliness of Gandhi nor the benevolence of Mountbatten, but to the revolutionary wave that rocked the planet following the Second World War, a wave that also launched the global movement towards colonial revolution, swept to power workers' parties or Popular Fronts in Western Europe, and brought an end to landlordism and capitalism in China and a number of countries in Eastern Europe. In India, the masses tore control of the national liberation struggle out of the quavering hands of Congress.

Revolution

1946 was a year of revolution. It began with the mass movement, which forced the British to release from jail, the leaders of the Indian National Army (a decidedly non-pacifist nationalist movement which had taken up arms, in collaboration with the Japanese) who had been convicted of treason. On 19th February there began the great naval mutiny, in which the thousands of ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together—threw overboard their British officers, trained the guns of their battleships on the centre of Bombay (another very non-Gandhian gesture) and hoisted on their masts the red flag, together with those of Congress and the Muslim League. Immediate sympathy strikes were launched by Royal Indian Air Force men in Bombay and Madras in their thousands. General strikes broke out in several cities. On 1st March the sepoy (troops) in Jabalpur barracks mutinied. On 15th March, the imprisoned RIN mutineers began a hunger strike. On the 18th, Gurkha soldiers based in Dehra Dun mutinied. The following day, the movement spread from the navy, air force and army to the police force: in Allahabad, police staged a mutiny and hunger strike. By 22nd March the police of Delhi had also mutinied. On 3rd April, 10,000 Bihar police went on strike. Soon the workers had joined the movement. On 2 May, North-Western Railway workers struck, and on 11th July, there began the all-India strike of 100,000 postal

workers. On 23 July, 400,000 industrial workers came out in their support.



On 19th February there began the great naval mutiny, in which the thousands of ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay threw overboard their British officers

What was the attitude to this magnificent movement of the Congress so-called "leaders" of the independence campaign? One of consternation, Sardar Patel successfully urged the Bombay naval ratings to surrender, promising to use his influence to avoid victimisation — following which they were jailed. Gandhi and Nehru denounced the strikes, and Congress President Maulana Azad said, "*Strikes, hartals and defiance of temporary authority are out of place.*" India was ablaze with strikes, mutinies, and uprisings. The Empire was without an Army. Lord Mountbatten was rushed out to organise a hurried withdrawal from India, working in the classic 'divide and rule' method of imperialism. Partitioning the living body of the country by giving power to Congress in India and the Muslim League in Pakistan, they thought they would dominate by playing one section against the other. Later he explained: "*India in March 1947 was a ship on fire in mid-ocean with ammunition in the hold... It seemed that the only possible alternative to a quick transfer of power was... to bring in a large number of British Army divisions to hold down the country.*"

But how many divisions would it need to hold down an angry population of over 500 million? It would take an army of occupation and conquest

bigger than the entire British Army to saturate India... And then? In Napoleon's famous epigram, you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. And where, in the conditions of that post-war dawn of hope, where the forces for such an army to be found? War-weary, radicalised and determined to go home and build a new world, the British troops were in no mood to play the role of an imperialist occupation army, fighting a dirty war and a lost cause.

If US imperialism had to stand by gritting its teeth while China, the biggest nation on earth, abolished landlordism and capitalism, then how much less could the mangy toothless British lion prevent the political transfer of power to the Indian bourgeoisie? In fact, the radical temper of the British soldiers had already compelled the British Government to demobilise them in haste and take the guns out of their hands. No wonder that General Auchinleck, faced with this forest fire of revolt, cabled back to Whitehall that unless independence were conceded, India could not be held for three days!

In the whole history of British rule, imperialism had never needed a full-scale occupation army in India. Britain conquered India with Indian troops, cunningly intriguing and playing off the rival Maharajahs of the feuding principalities. Even the rebellion of 1857 was localised in character. It took the tidal wave of national consciousness that engulfed India in 1945-7 to sweep the raj away.

Compare the situation in 1853, the heyday of British imperialism, when Marx wrote: *"While all were struggling against all, the Briton rushed in and was enabled to subdue them all... A country not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste, a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest? If we knew nothing of the past history of Hindustan,*

would there not be the one great and incontestable fact, that even at this moment India is held in English thralldom by an Indian army maintained at the cost of India?"

India gained its political freedom thanks neither to Congress nor the CPI, but to the revolutionary mood of both the Indian masses and the British troops, and the pressure on the new Labour Government by the British working class. By 1947, the police, army, navy and air force had melted away, and there was no prospect of finding a new occupation army. The cynical right-wing Congress leader Rajagopalachari commented: *"If Mountbatten had not transferred power when he did, there might have been no power to transfer."*



Communal Partition

Despite recent attempts to build up a cult of Mountbatten, his role was one not of *"brilliant diplomacy"* but of rat panic. He negotiated a rapid withdrawal in collusion with the British stooge Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, which exploited the fears of the Muslim minority of persecution at the hands of a Hindu-dominated Congress government by insisting that Hindus and Muslims constituted "two nations" and demanding partition. British imperialism, with Congress connivance, was responsible for the bloody dismemberment and communal vivisection of India, the slaughter of millions of Hindu and Muslim hostages and the transmigration of tens of millions into refugee camps.

The legacy of British imperialism in India, as in

Ireland, the Middle East, Cyprus, etc... was a festering communal poison, which can never be eradicated while capitalism remains. Having done their utmost to damp down the masses' struggle, the Congress leaders—like their Irish counterparts 25 years previously—meekly accepted communal partition as the price for the trappings of power.

If the bourgeoisie had been capable of playing even the feeblest role in developing society, here was the ideal test of its potential. It could not have dreamed of more favourable conditions. It took hold of the destiny of the most populous capitalist country on Earth, commanding a gigantic potential home market (its population is now as great as those of the USA, the EEC countries and the USSR put together), at the outset of the biggest world economic upswing in the history of

Failure of Capitalism

It is ironic that apologists for capitalism blame India's poverty on one of the very factors that fuelled the economic "miracles" in Germany, Japan, Italy, Brazil, etc... at the very time that Indian capitalism was hardly hobbling along: "*overpopulation*", the availability of surplus manpower, which allowed an influx of fresh reserves of labour into industry in those countries. America's wealth was founded upon successive waves of immigration, which provided a rare combination of both cheap labour and a booming market. Conversely, the declining populations of Ireland in the 19th century, or India's neighbour Nepal today, bled by mass emigration, have hardly been beneficial to their economies! Socialism could proudly harness the energies and creative talent of humanity.



Not a single task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been fulfilled. The law of permanent revolution has been brilliantly vindicated in reverse by the negative history of Indian capitalism.

capitalism! India is rich in untapped mineral and agricultural reserves, and above all in the most precious and productive resource of all: human labour power. If the Indian bourgeoisie could have arrived on the scene and come to power two or three centuries earlier, India could have been the USA. It's pitiful condition today proves graphically the historical redundancy of capitalism.

The law of permanent revolution has been brilliantly vindicated in reverse by the negative history of Indian capitalism. Not a single task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been fulfilled. Capitalism has failed to develop a home market—on the contrary, the already appallingly impoverished masses have been utterly pauperised since independence. The percentage of Indians eking out a brutish existence below starvation level has grown to 60 per cent. This is the material basis for the constant eruptions of rioting, blind despair and communal slaughter in all the cities, and conditions nearing civil war in large areas of the countryside.

Indian capitalism's unseemly scramble to cash in on foreign booms instead has ended in disaster; with the Indian share of world trade steadily declining throughout the post-war Western boom from its highest point, achieved in 1938! Even in absolute terms, it has now lost its earlier toehold on world markets, and is now, at the insistence of the IMF, demolishing its tariff walls and opening up its limited internal market to

a flood of cheap imports threatening the destruction of the bulk of Indian industry. After a feeble flutter, Indian capitalism is now decisively beaten by the monopolies of the West and Japan, which use India as a dumping-ground.

A tiny class of vulgar parvenus has India by the throat, a parasitic bourgeoisie that straddles a shadowy borderline with gangsterism and feeds its gross appetites by sordid speculation, black-marketeering, usury, bribery, smuggling, above all by downright cheating. A huge volume of "*black money*" is swilling and lurching throughout the economy making a mockery of bureaucratic regulation and "*controls*".

If there has been a marginal growth in the industrial proletariat in India since 1947, there is no question that the social class, which has swollen into monstrous proportions during the same period, due to land hunger and unemployment, is the lumpenproletariat of the teeming shantytowns. In terms of land reform, Congress only broke the stranglehold of the feudal landowners in a few areas, notably Punjab (hardly a paragon of stability today!). Landlessness has swollen to half the rural population and five per cent of landlords own 45 per cent of the land.

Congress has failed to wipe out the surviving antiquated and even pre-capitalist forms of production. In fact, there survive primitive communist tribal societies (the 'Adivasis' of Madhya Pradesh, the North-East, etc...) a widespread system of slavery ('bonded labour' in the stone quarries, plantations, etc...) feudal serfdom, sharecropping and absentee landlordism over the majority of the land; large-scale primitive cottage-industry manufacture; and the economically dominant capitalist monopolies. India thus resembles a huge living museum of historical materialism. This is the clearest token of capitalism's impotence to decisively put its own imprint on society. Another is the fact that capitalism can only totter along on the crutches of the state; hence two-thirds of labour in the

'organised sector' is employed by the state.

Congress has failed to shake off the horrible medieval legacy of the Dark Ages—caste and untouchability, communal bigotry, ignorance and superstition. The economic collapse has led to a resurgence of all that is most vile and barbarous in India's cultural heritage: communal and caste massacres, witchcraft, astrology, ritual child slaughter, dowry murders, widows' self-immolation, etc. Rajiv Gandhi boasts of leading India into the 21st century. Most of the country would grateful to be dragged into the 17th century!



Mountbatten negotiated a rapid withdrawal in collusion with the British stooge Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League.

Balkanisation

Above all, by betraying the hopes of the independence movement Congress has allowed the flame of national consciousness, which set India alight in 1947 to flicker and dim almost to extinction. This represents its most shameful humiliation, its ultimate historical failure.

The Indian bourgeoisie needs a united India which can provide it both with at least some home market (if in practical terms this amounts to only five per cent of the population, this still means nearly 40 million people) and especially with the lavish public funds of which it milks the state exchequer. The Balkanisation of India would mark its final demise as a class. But it has utterly

discredited itself. It can no more hold India together than it can solve any other of its tasks. It has lost all faith in its own future. Thus, just as Indian businessmen will cheat their way around their own laws to make a fast buck out of smuggling and black-money transactions, making a mockery of their own tariff and tax systems, so too their political agents will freely spit upon the sacred cows of Gandhism and nationalism and indulge instead in unscrupulous conspiracies with the dark forces of communal gangsterism for the sake of their personal careers.

Congress has finally, and inevitably, turned a full circle into the party of Northern Hindu communal chauvinism and bigotry. All the more reason, for it to cling desperately to the Nehru/Gandhi family dynasty, a monarchy in all but name, to resuscitate the flagging myth of Congress' role in 1947. At every time of political crisis when it was faced with a choice—in 1966, 1969-71, 1975, 1979-80, 1982 and again in 1984—it had no alternative but to entrust its fate to succeeding generations of the Nehru family—to his daughter Indira and grandsons Sanjay and Rajiv. History has thus played a cruel joke on Congress. A mass movement for Indian national unity overthrew an Emperor and swept an unwilling Congress into power; one generation later, Congress needs a new Royal dynasty to try in vain to keep India from crumbling to pieces.

The Indian bourgeoisie aped the imperialists by



adopting a bullying posture towards the weaker

nations of the sub-continent, especially in its national oppression of the Nagas and Mizos in the Northeast, its refusal of a plebiscite in Kashmir, its annexation of Sikkim, etc. It periodically stages local coups by dismissing elected state governments (recently in Kashmir, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Punjab, etc....) and imposing direct rule. But disillusion and disgust at the antics of the ruling class has soiled the vision of a united India and led to a resurgence of regional and secessionist movements. Most dangerous of all are the complex tensions that have arisen between the overlapping communities, especially within the urban lumpenproletariat, leading to an ugly eruption of communal pogroms against Muslims, Sikhs, etc. But a national consciousness does not drop from the sky; it is founded on a material base. The fragmentation and eclipse of an Indian national consciousness today is rooted in the actual material failure of the bourgeoisie to fulfil its historic mission, and the criminal refusal of the proletarian parties to assume even that responsibility, let alone that of the socialist revolution. The only class that can "save India" is the Indian proletariat, which by its magnificent record of struggle, especially over the last decade, has staked an irrefutable claim to be literally the most militant and combative in the world, and whose proven heroism, tenacity and internationalism testify to the decisive revolutionary role it can play once it finds a worthy political expression.

The decadence of capitalism is nowhere better illustrated than in the countries of the Indian sub-continent. The workers, peasants, youth and unemployed face ever more excruciating agonies in terms of economic hardship and national oppression alike. But Marxists can have no illusions about it: there is no section of the bourgeoisie in any country, rich or poor that can solve these problems. More than ever, the task of historical progress falls on the shoulders of the proletariat with the overthrow of capitalism on a world scale.

Women and the Bloody Partition

By Ismat Parveen



The bloody and arbitrary drawing of lines through the heart of Punjab and Bengal in 1947 by Radcliffe and Mountbatten aided and abetted by Winston Churchill acted like pouring petrol over burning fire. The artificial divisions created by the British Raj between Hindus and Muslims to perpetuate their oppressive Company rule in India came once again to the rescue of Raj and the emerging Indian Hindu and Muslim bourgeois. These religious divisions became dangerous tools in the hands of Muslim and Hindu capitalist and feudal elements during the stormy periods leading to partition and provided the basis for religious fundamentalism to rise under the flag of Hindutva and Islamic fascism.

The dawn of August 1947 was covered by clouds of darkness. This land of the ancient civilisation of Indus and Jumna witnessed despair and despondency that was never seen before. This

could have easily been avoided if the revolutionary wave of 1946 had succeeded in uprooting the Raj and their colonial oppression along with their rotten capitalist system.

The working class and especially women paid a big price for this partition. Communities that long lived together for generations ended up participating in the mutual genocide of each other and the reason behind all these events was bigotry that was injected by the local ruling elite. Men were killed, children were burned and women were raped, whole of the subcontinent started to bleed particularly in Punjab and Bengal. It is difficult to mention the exact number of women and girls that were abducted and raped during the partition but according to some sources an estimated figure is round about 80,000 to 90,000. But these figures probably are very conservation and the truth is these rapes and oppression of women affected a whole generation in both India and Pakistan. The so called "Recovery Operation"

started by the Indian and Pakistan Government to recover abducted women and girls soon turned into formal orders by authorities. It is reported that shelters that were operated for the rehabilitation of women were turned into torture cells, they were treated as criminals and by taking advantage of this situation the officials raped women in those rehabilitation camps. The "Recovery Operation" proved to be a second trauma for women as their "own state" turned into their enemies. The states of India and Pakistan then tried to control women's sexuality through so called abstract morality of religion. Their role in the development of society was suppressed. They were given the role to look after their families and especially their children. Women were given no choice to decide their future.

In India, women are treated subordinate due to the traditional patriarchal structure of the Indian society. In the last decade, more than eight million female fetuses have been aborted. It's an alarming figure and explains the status of women as it reflects the overall contamination of society. Rapes are on the rise and are used as a tool not only for the oppression of women but also of lower stratum of the society such as the working class and peasantry or to be more precise the Dalits and other oppressed sections of the Indian society. Conservative estimates by various reputable sources put the figures for rapes to be around 24,000 reported cases in 2011. But many victims observe silence in order to protect the respect of their families. Mostly women are targeted-victims, on average 100,000 women die due to fire related incidents. The life of Indian women is always at stake, as they face malnutrition, social inequality, and inadequate health care.

The theocratic state of Pakistan from the day first incepted the idea of religious morality in the consciousness of masses. But with coming to power of the vicious and brutal dictatorship of General Zia-Ul-Haq the discrimination against women took a leap unseen and unheard in the

annals of the country. Women were directly subjected to Hudood and Zina Ordinances, the very barbaric and repressive pieces of legislation which not relegated women as second class citizens but it also institutionalised and legitimised discrimination against women by incorporating it in the state's so called constitution. Women were forced to go back to their homes, remain within their four walls and a roof and obeinterpreted Islamy. Religion has always provided the moral arguments to depict women as sex object and nothing more than that, but ultimately this suppression and discrimination belongs to the relations of private property. Capitalism is the most repressive stage of class based society that fetter the development of productive forces and due to its uneven nature, all the bigotry and discrimination of past remerged. So, the role of women is undermined in third world countries as compared to advanced countries.

We believe that working class women have always been the real vanguard of revolution and this was nowhere truer than during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In the recent period, we also witnessed women playing leading role in the Arab Revolution. Coming to more closer to home, women also played their historical revolutionary role in combating oppression and exploitation in Pakistan as well. During 1968-69 Revolution the working class women were in the forefront in the fight against General Ayub's dictatorship and the rotten Pakistani capitalist establishment. Working women of different industrial units in Faisalabad, Karachi and Lahore joined general strikes. They were not ready to bear the oppression anymore. They choose to move forward for the emancipation of their class. Class consciousness rejects all the discrimination and if the class contradictions exist, the class struggle is inevitable. Working class is the real vanguard of Proletariat Socialist Revolution. Socialist Revolution is the only way forward to achieve an egalitarian society based on the principles of dictatorships of the proletariat.

Pre-Partition Revolutionary Movements in Punjab

Translated from Urdu
By Babar Patras

By Umer |Rasheed



The struggle of working class is of paramount importance for Marxists. The unity of the proletariat of any country, nation, colour, race, religion, and region is vital in the revolutionary struggle. To promote narrow nationalism, the ruling classes of different nationalities try to present their nationality as superior creating biases and to divide the solidarity and struggle of Working class.

The fundamental contradiction in the society is class conflict and oppression. To suppress and eliminate this difference all the bourgeois remain busy in action and false prejudices are fabricated. Similarly, in Pakistan, the orthodox and liberal nationalist leaders believing in Capitalism consider Punjabis responsible for the entire problem. In this way, the class distinction among Punjabis and exploitation of common Punjabi toilers at the hands of feudal lords and capitalists are undermined. The working class of the

oppressors and oppressed are made to confront under these nationalistic bias. Divide and rule has been the main policy of the rulers of every age.

In Pakistan national oppression and along with class exploitation is a reality. Undoubtedly, in Pakistani state and ruling elite, there is a dominant role of Punjabi capitalists, feudals and bureaucracy. However, the ruling elites of the oppressed nationalities are always in cohorts with the Punjabi ruling classes in the heat of class struggles. Workers neither have a country nor a nation because in a class system they are being exploited by the ruling class of every place and colour.

What have been kept in oblivion are Punjab's revolutionary traditions of youth and workers movements. But the ruling class has tried its level best to keep them away from these traditions. The history of resistance of the oppressed class is as old as of foreign dominance. Abdullah Bhatti alias 'Dullah Bhatti' had been a great fighter and a threat

for Mughal Empire of South Asia. Shah Jahan had come to Lahore for 12 years to crush down his activities. Dullah Bhatti was representative of the oppressed masses. Finally, Abdullah was sentenced to death in 1599. Britain occupied Punjab in 1848. Contrary to the general impression, the large sections of Punjabi soldiers fought at the front line in the War of Independence 1857. It is ironic that the children in Punjab know Robin Hood while most are ignorant of Dullah Bhatti.

Between 1900 and 1905, the laws made by British Raj with reference to the exchange of agricultural land, division and the right of profit were with the purpose of spreading religious hatred and getting the favour of Muslim farmers. On October 16, the partition of Bengal was done due to the fear of a revolutionary uprising. The rise of national freedom was due to rebellious literature coming from Bengal. Lala Lajpat Rai and Sri Devi were popular leaders of farmers.

In the beginning, these movements were limited to Lahore, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and Lyallpur. However, the British government suggested the proposal of change in the administrative affairs of canal area and increased the water rates. With these actions, the rural areas of Punjab also become part of these movements. The farmers were forcefully expelled from their fertile areas of Punjab and were asked to cultivate the barren lands of west Punjab. These measures provoked hatred against the British Raj amongst tillers. In 1907, when Charles Rivaz was attending a farewell party in Amritsar, the students of Khalsa College greeted him with protest procession. During the same period, a series of violent protest started in Rawalpindi. On April 21, 1907 Ajeet Singh criticized the government severely for increasing the rate of taxes on land. He said, "These tillers are the real owner of not only this land but also of this country. Deputy Commissioner and Police are their servants. The farmers in Punjab refused to plough the fields until the government take back the decision of raise in land tax. Due to this speech,

Lala Lajpat and Ajeet Singh were arrested and persecuted. On May 10th, 1907, on the anniversary of War of Independence 1857, some Ex Sikh soldiers also participated in a procession in Lyallpur. Similarly, in Ferozepur, thousands of young men participated in protests and paid homage to the martyrs of Freedom.



The newspaper "*Hindustan*" which was published from Gujranwala, its editor, Lala Pindi Das, published a pamphlet on behalf of the masses of Hindustan and Afghanistan for the soldiers of British Army, who had migrated to America. The pamphlet asked, "*For how long you would be silent on the plunders of the British Raj?*" Lala Pindi Das was sentenced to prison for five years with hard labour. In the years of 1907 and 1909 revolutionary literature was written and distributed on large scale. These books included, how do Nations remain alive? Rebel Christ, Noble Thieves, End of Czarist Empire and Divide and Rule.

This movement of peasants' won and British regime took back Canal Bill and taxes were reduced. Later this the movement went underground. The British government used to consider Punjab as its sword's arm but also trembled with the fear of this sword in revolt. The violence and persecution by imperialist state machinery against revolutionaries were ferocious. Thousands of revolutionaries were

exiled to America, Canada and other countries. But their hearts kept beating for revolution.

Ghadar Party

From 1906 to the beginning of 1908 the Indian immigrants to Canada and America were 5000 to 6313 respectively. Most of them were retired Punjabi soldiers. The number of Punjabi soldiers in British Army was very high. The government kept them backwards and illiterate intentionally because the government wanted to see a uniform on their bodies and sword in their hands given by the British Raj. The English government wanted to make this youth as the fuel their war. Rich families were bribed with huge and large lands. The chains of slavery got stronger with the treason of these very people.

Ignited by the killing of Indians, a young man Madhan Lal Dhingra of Amritsar shot William Curzon on July 01, 1909 while he was attending annual Ceremony of National Independence Association in Imperial Institute of London. Just minutes before his hanging, Madhan Lal Dhingra courageously said: "This will continue until we get freedom, until humanity gets real freedom."

Ghadar Party was established on March 25th, 1913. Weekly "Ghadar Gazette" was published from San Francisco. The aims and slogans of Ghadar were published in its first issue;

- (1) The people of India should raise the banner of rebellion against British Raj and uproot it.
- (2) Our cause is Ghadar! (Revolt).
- (3) Solidarity and Unity... Power and Freedom
- (4) The result of discord... Weakness and Slavery
- (5) The foundation of unity... Socialism.
- (6) The foundation of discord... Imperialism.
- (7) Energetic and vibrant youth and brave soldiers are needed who organize the task of Ghadar.
- (8) The wage of this task.... Death.
- (9) Its reward... Martyrdom.
- (10) Pension... Freedom.
- (11) Scope...the Whole of India.

Sikh monasteries (Gurdwaras) soon became centres of revolutionary politics. The purpose of militant activities was to reach army camps in Punjab through Kashmir. The time span of ten years was set. With the eruption of the First World War, all the plans were postponed. After it started, the party held a five-day procession in Yoga Ashram and policy was discussed. However, the revolutionaries of Ghadar Party misconceived that with the call of a rebellious War, all the India would support them. The conditions were not supportive anywhere except in Bengal.

On August 5th, 1914, the announcement of war against British Raj was published in Ghadar "Now it is time to stand against European dominance. You are soldiers, set your rows against the enemy, be organized and united, fight such a battle that uproots the British Raj and lay the foundations of democratic society." It was decided that all the Indians who were exiled, should come back in India by November 1914. In a report from



Weekly newspaper of Ghadar Party, 24 March 1914

Portland sent to British Raj had only one slogan: "Every Indian must fight a war for revolution." The exiles were filled with the passion of Freedom. This movement became a golden chapter in the history of resistance and revolution a hallmark of the Ghadar Party. Many of these Indians came back to India and decided to sacrifice their lives for their homeland. When these revolutionaries reached Calcutta, weapons were provided to them. But as soon as they reached Punjab, the authorities started arresting them.



It was decided that all the Indians who were exiled, should come back in India by November 1914.

The second group, under the leadership of Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, set off from Japan to Philippine and reached India passing through Shanghai and Hong Kong. When a Japanese ship filled with more than three hundred revolutionaries anchored at Samaro Seaport near Calcutta, the British army and police encircled them. However eight thousand workers of Ghadar Party reached India within two years. Twenty-five hundred were arrested, four hundred were sent to imprisonment, seventy-six were hanged and others set free with harsh warnings. Due to this brutal crackdown and arrests, the plans of the Party were dashed to the ground. Sir Michael Edgware wrote in his diary, "These people were extremely dangerous... I tremble on mere

thinking that what would have happened in the province if they had not been arrested."

The movement of Ghadar failed not only due to state oppression but also despite all the courage and sacrifice, the basic error was in strategy that was based on impatience and individual terrorism. The objective conditions of Punjab were not ready for this kind of rebellion. The survivors of the revolution tried to organize the task all over again. Kartar Singh Sarabha took several rounds in Amritsar and Ludhiana and conveyed the message of revolution. Bhai Prem Singh was doing the same work in the Main Mir cantonment of Lahore. The party deployed Vishnu Purtagle at Meerut camp. Kartar Singh Sarabha was in contact with volunteers in army camps of Ambala, Kanpur, Agra, Allahabad, Banaras, Dunyapur and Lucknow.

A Singapore infantry unit of 800 soldiers sieged British cantonment with under the strategy of Ghadar Party on February 15, 1915. They divided their unit into three groups. Two groups of them took the position near the German soldiers' prisons. The Germans refused to be released despite the opportunity. They were not ready to become a party in this rebellion. The third group soldiers surrounded the fort of Singapore. Siege continued for two days. They kept shooting at British soldiers. In this clash, 44 Indians and 8 English soldiers were killed. The Indian soldiers were defeated when the new army reinforcement reached the fort. 126 of them, were arrested, 37 were sentenced to death and 41 were sentenced to life imprisonment. These were hanged on Singapore's streets so that the British imperialism could instil terror in the hearts of ordinary people.

Ghadar Party declared an independent interim Indian government in Kabul on December 01, 1915. The same government demanded Indians to join the armed struggle. Raja Mahindra Partab was the president of this interim government, and Barkat Ullah was elected as the Prime Minister. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was given the

department of interior affairs. Obaidullah Sindhi wrote letters to his friends in India on the Reshmi Rumal (silk handkerchief), appealing them to join the rebellion. Reshmi Rumal movement was also broken up initially. After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Interim Government of Kabul requested to the Soviet government to recognize Reshmi Rumal movement. Raja Mahindra Partab visited Moscow and Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution welcomed them. Lenin promised all possible cooperation with Kabul's independent government, but when Mahindra Partab came back to Kabul, Germany and Turkey were defeated in the First World War. Afghanistan signed a peace agreement with Britain. With this, India's independent interim government also ended.

On April 7, 1917 when the United States joined the First World War, all the rebels arrested including Santo Singh, Ram Singh, Bushan Singh, Gopal Singh, Andhan Singh, C. K. Chakravarty and Tarknath Das showing its loyalty to its ally Britain. They were prosecuted in San Francisco on August 1917. The United States spent \$ 30 million on this judicial process of prosecution. Judicial members had to come to India to collect testimony of "San Francisco Trials". Many Witnesses were dispatched to the United States. All accused were found guilty and were sentenced to imprisonment. During the imprisonment, many Ghadar Party leaders met with American Communists and after seeing them, they found many drawbacks in their movement. They realized that the party workers were ready to sacrifice everything for freedom by putting their lives in danger; the only deficiency was that the party was not organized for a real revolutionary movement nor was there an ideological unity in the party's ranks. Bolshevik revolution in Russia had many lessons for the leaders of Ghadar party.

Bhai Santo Singh studied Marxist ideology and Bolshevism in prison. For this, he also received help from American communists who had been imprisoned with him. During his imprisonment

Santo Singh and his comrades became communists. After their release from the prison, Ghadar Party leaders started working on organizing the party under Communist ideology. For this, they made contacts with progressive organizations and started organizing factory workers. These very leaders of Ghadar Party introduced communist ideas in India.

In 1915, when the Ghadar party had dispersed in Punjab, those leaders were set free started building a small left wing group. Among them, the Kirti Kishan Party and Nojawan Bharat Sabha were prominent organizations. A Punjab Police report titled "Kirti Wave" said, "*The Ghadar Party was crushed in the USA, but still no one can say that its activities have ended. Even today its clandestine activities are going on, in one form or the other. In particular, the Punjabi people who came back from other countries have deep ideological adherence with this Party. Some of them are trained from Moscow. All these people are filled with a revolutionary spirit. These are extremists. Their hearts are full of hatred against British Raj. Whenever they got an opportunity to spread a rebellion, they will definitely participate.*"

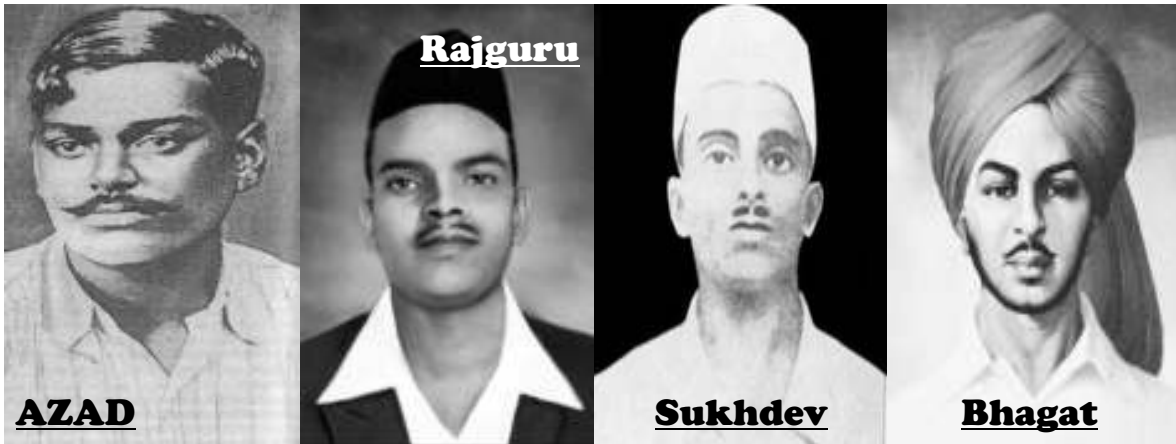
On the basis of this report, it can only be concluded that in spite of being crushed in Punjab, the party created a consciousness of revolution in the hearts and minds of the youth. As far as the head office of the party in San Francisco is concerned, it continued to work with its literature spreading revolutionary ideology, which continued till 1947 and its office was closed after Partition. Later, the revolutionary legacy of the Ghadar Party adopted the youth like Bhagat Singh, who had a keen interest in the scientific ideology of Marxism and laid the foundation of 'Hindustan Socialist Revolutionary Association'.

The revolution is a constant process. It cannot remain stagnant at one place. Due to the changes of circumstances the process sometimes ebbs and sometimes gets sharp, but unlike evolution, the revolution is always vigorous and fighting.

Nojawan Sabha

The massacre of the Jallianwala Bagh had a deep shocking impact on the consciousness of Punjabi people and gave birth to militant trends against the British government. On August 1922, Babbar Akali Party was formally established and its working committee was also elected. This movement was a radical phenomenon separated from the non-violence movement of Akali Movement. Kishan Singh was elected leader, Dilip Singh Goca was elected as secretary and Babu Santa Singh became treasurer. Their newspaper 'Babbar Akali Do-Aaba' began publishing from September. Surprisingly, the print line was also published to complete legal requirements, in the name of Travel press. On the front page, the quote written was, *"The real brave is the one who protects his thoughts, even if he loses all organs of his body one by one, he does not leave the battlefield."* Literally published as a pamphlet the economic policies of the government and the resulting misery of the masses were especially highlighted. An

The people of this group travelled place to place and tried to arm the people. Citing examples of sacrifices of Sikh Gurus and Bolshevik revolution in Russia, they tried to convince Sikhs that there is no freedom without sacrifices and armed struggle. Kishan Singh was a sergeant in the 35th Sikh battalion and was outraged at the brutal violence of the government during martial law. His anti-British campaign in his unit led to his arrest after a court marshal and later expelled from the British Indian Army. This group killed 5 agents of government in a month. This spread fear in the district Jallander and Hoshiarpur with several British informers and agents fleeing from the area. The government was desperate when most of the agents refused to continue working. The government acted with vengeance arresting 82 workers Sikh soldiers, twenty-five of whom had killed British officers. Remaining soldiers and workers of the rebel movement went underground or fled. A Large majority of them climbed on the Shawalik hills near the city of Hoshiarpur.



article said that *"violence was not just that police tortured people in the police station, rather snatching the bread from the people was more violent form of repression."*

Kishan Singh was the main leader of Babbar Akali Group, and this whole group was against Gandhi's non-violence philosophy because they were of the opinion that the English Courts and law could never do justice.

Later events suggested that the militants of Babbar Akali carried out shock attacks on state installations from the Hills and retreated back to their hideouts. Apart from the CID special investigation staff, a special core comprising hundreds of policeman was set up to assault the hills with horse mounted police. The 250th infantry regiment was deployed for the operation with armoured vehicles supported by the British Indian Royal Air Force fighter planes bombing the hills. The rebels resisted everywhere and fought

bravely. But after organized British security forces operation, the chance of escape was minimal. Most of the rebels were killed and 91 arrested. The famous 'Trial of Babbar Alkalis' began while 3 young men killed in jail through police torture. Others were imprisoned or deported. Banta Singh, Kishan Singh, Dilip Adhaniya, Dharam Singh, Dilip Singh Goyal were sentenced to death and hanged on February 27, 1926. Those who were sentenced to prison continued to struggle within the jail. Babbar Akali movement emerged as a sharp, Valliant and a militant movement from 1921 to 1926. Especially, Banta Singh became the protagonist in folklore and songs about his bravery were written.

After the end of Babbar Akali movement, revolutionary struggle re-emerged in the form the Nojawan Sabha with Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagwati Charan, Jatin Das, Master Mata Singh and others emerged as its leaders. Bhagat Singh established a new Sabha in Punjab in 1926 and aimed to promote revolutionary thinking among the youth of Punjab striving to fight against imperialism.

Nojawan Sabha expressed its goals as follows: Establishing a free state of farmers and workers across India. Secondly, to support India's economic, industrial and social movements for the creation of independent and autonomous Indian state without religious prejudices and sectarianism. Thirdly, in order to achieve these goals, to organize peasants, youth and industrial workers to secure an India of the working class rule. Nojawan Sabha launched campaigns at grass root level with emphasis on ideological, moral and social aspects. Every member had to pledge to accept that the interests of motherland would come first then personal interests. Personal interests and religious discrimination were pronounced as intolerable. The real cause of Nojawan Sabha was to revolutionize the political struggle. Nojawan Sabha rapidly gained support and popularity far and wide. Others who pledged their support were Kidar Nath Sagal, Suroil Singh Kausher, Mahta

Anand Kishore, Teens, Soody Pandey Vas and comrade Ram Chandra. These people regularly joined Nojawan Sabha. With its strengthened organization the Nojawan Sabha organised a number of public conventions in 1926.

A meeting in Amritsar on April 1928 decided to set up branches of the Sabha in every district and the Kirti Peasant Group would also be included in its activities. Amritsar became the headquarters of these organizations with a new outfit called Nojawan Bharat Sabha. Heightened enthusiasm and feeling of strength spread in the ranks. To check the strength and efficiency of the organization, it was decided to support the movement of peasants that was started for the exemption of taxes in Punjab after the loss of wheat crop in 1928. Nojawan Bharat Sabha established many organizational units among them. Innovative methods were devised for spreading revolutionary ideas amongst the oppressed masses. These included processions in the light of lanterns and puppet shows etc. Student unions in Lahore and other cities got affiliated with the Sabha. On July 1928, Kedarnath Sagal provincial president of Sabha announced the establishing of its branches in all villages, cities and the districts of the province. He spoke to the youth to prepare them for protest against Simmons commission and said that when the members of the commission would come to Punjab each of them should protest with black flags. The Sabha district branches were established in Lahore, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Montgomery, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura and others.

The Sabha assisted Kirti Kissan Party leader Sohan Singh Jokhak to be elected as district president in the election of Amritsar in July. In August 1928, both organizations jointly celebrated the week of friendship with the Soviet Union and were also supported by the radical elements of the congress. During this meeting, a resolution was passed announcing that British government should not be given any support by the Indian people in any future war. The political

struggle for the formation of workers and peasants government and the destruction of the imperialism and capitalism was reiterated. The Simon Commission arrived on October 20, 1928 where a large gathering shouted the slogans of 'Black Goats' and 'Go Back, Simon'. Lala Lajpat Rai led this protest demonstration. This protest was brutally attacked and baton charged by the Police. Lala Lajpat Roy was fatally injured. On November 17, 1928 he died due to the severe injuries on his head and chest. The Sabha announced British government as being responsible for his murder.

Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Kailash Paiti, Raj Guru, Yashpal and other revolutionaries decided to take revenge. Police Superintendent Scott was shot on December 17, 1928. After the attack, all the rebels were able to escape. Earlier, Nojawan Sabha celebrated the Cakori day in Lahore and Amritsar on December 16, pledging to continue its militant activities. They contacted the revolutionaries of Bengal, UP, Rajasthan and Bihar. A youth named Sanyal established another similar rebellious organization in northern India, "Swujandnak" in 1920. Sachindra Nath Sanyal, along with Jogesh Chandra and Mukherjee, started to arm this organization in UP. In 1924 giving the name "Indian Republican Association" to this organization formed a new party. The Indian Republican Association expressed interest in the failure of the Congress' Satyagraha (non-violence-movement) and appealed to the people of India to take up arms to the change of system. Their slogan was that only a revolution that would overthrow the capitalistic system and the interests of bourgeoisie's, its political power and motives could be defeated. This organization was converted into 'Indian Socialist Republican Army' in 1928. On September 8 and 9, 1928 a meeting took place at Kotla Feroze Shah (Delhi), Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukh Dev and Bhagat Singh were also present. It was decided that all revolutionary parties will be invited and socialism will be the foundation of the new country's system.

Meanwhile, the government introduced two laws

"Public Safety Bill" and "Traders Disputes Act". When the government refused to withdraw these ordinances, Bhagat Singh and Bitu Kishwer Dutt threw a firecracker type bomb at central assembly hall that didn't cause any causality. It was hurled only to record their protest. However they did not escape, but chanting slogans, 'Long Live the revolution', 'down with imperialism' and 'workers of the world unite', they gave themselves for arrest and accepted the responsibility of the attack.

They declared to the press:

*** The purpose of these bombs was not to harm anyone but to make it clear to the world that how much the people of India are exploited and oppressed.**
*** Our goal was to give the British Government a warning.**
*** Our goal was to expose the futility of non-violence theory to people so that they realize that such kind of policies cannot achieve independence.**
*** We believe that despite the oppression, the Russian revolution could not be overwhelmed, so rules like Safety Bills cannot suppress the wave of independence in India.**

Bhagat Singh and BK Dutt were sentenced to life imprisonment. Along with, many other activists of the party were arrested. The Lahore Conspiracy Case was registered in 1929. Bhagat Singh and BK Dutt, Sikh Dev and Kechori Lal Vera were the accused of its plotting. On these political prisoners were subjective to torture in the jail, against which Bhagat Singh and BK Dutt started a hunger strike. They demanded political prisoners to get better classes and better food in the jail. They demanded that newspapers and other reading materials should be provided and all their comrades should be placed in one barrack. In this hunger strike, almost all imprisoned revolutionaries participated, which continued for almost 63 days. A revolutionary Jatin Das's condition worsened and the prisoners in other Indian jails also started the hunger strike. In the meantime, when Jatin Das

died in jail, the government realized that the situation had turned explosive. The trail of the Lahore Conspiracy Case lasted for nine months. The Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance was released in 1930, under which the revolutionaries did not have any legal rights nor could they present any witnesses in their defence.

Finally, in October 1930, Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Raj Guru were sentenced to death. Thereafter, a central appeal committee was formed which held meetings in various cities and submitted a memorandum containing 60 thousand signatures to the Viceroy. It pleaded the execution sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment. Bhagat Singh Day was celebrated throughout the Punjab on 11 February 1931. But on February 17, 1931, mercy petition was rejected and all the three revolutionaries were hanged on March 23, 1931. These revolutionaries may have made many errors in their strategy, such as methods of individual acts of terrorism etc. but apart from these facts, it is not possible to deny their dedication, commitment and sacrifices for the cause of a genuine freedom and changing the system.

Post Partition Period

The Communist Party of India has its own history in Sub Continent, but the degeneration of the Russian revolution under Stalinism in the Soviet Union and conversion of Third International as a foreign policy ploy by the Russian bureaucracy the subservient leadership of the CPI committed many ideological and political blunders that became historical crimes. In particular, the support for British imperialism in the Second World War isolated the Communist Party from movement. After the revolutionary movement of the Sailors Revolt in 1946, was defeated by the treachery of the native politicians at the behest of the British imperialism the revolutionary movement faced a massive set back. The partition on the basis of engineered religious hatreds by

leaders of Congress and All India Muslim League destroyed Punjab and Bengal as historical civilisations. According to some estimates, 2.7 million people perished during Partition, a majority of them were Punjabis. The wounds of Partition are still bleeding. The social and cultural impacts left by this bloody partition on Punjabi society still foster reactionary religious and sectarian hatreds and violence. After partition, the rulers of the Punjab made all possible efforts to impose national chauvinism and Pakistani nationalism on the people of Punjab. But the delayed and dysfunctional capitalism and semi-feudal economic structure have been unable to provide healthy, united and sustainable economic and social development in any way.

The wounds of Partition are still bleeding. A new mass revolt can erupt.

After partition, the biggest revolutionary movement in the region was the Movement of 1968-69 started after the killing of a student (Abdul Hameed) in Rawalpindi. One of the epicentres of this revolutionary storm was Lyallpur later named Faisalabad. The 'Pakistan People's Party' with a founding programme of revolutionary socialism was formed in November 1967 founding convention in Lahore. The PPP got its popularity in Punjab due to its socialist manifesto and announced the policy of class struggle. The recent rise of religious trends, sectarianism and the state-sponsored reaction was due to the ebbing of the movements and betrayals of the leadership of traditional parties and trade unions. The class contradictions are sharpening again. A new mass revolt can erupt. The workers and people's folklore of Punjab have brilliant traditions of revolutionary struggles. These shall erupt again. But this class struggle will now have to be fought to the finish. It can only be victorious in unity with the toilers of the South Asian subcontinent. A victory in any part will inevitably lead to the creation of the voluntary Socialist Federation of the region.



Pakistan's Judicial Coup!

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A ruling class that failed to create a modern industrial society and healthy productive capitalism inevitably rely on corruption and plunder, hence its greater dependence on the state and subservience to the imperialist powers. When the state rises as an arbiter to that level then it calls the shots. Its indulgence in business entrepreneurship, it further propels it to wield greater and wider powers far beyond its sanction.

The BBC commenting on Nawaz Sharif's disqualification said, "Supreme Court took the unusual step of instituting its own investigation into the case, with a dominant role for the military intelligence services...the military establishment has alternatively used constitutional manipulation and direct takeovers to keep the civilian leaders in line...it has invariably been supported by the top judiciary... the military has developed a huge business and industrial empire which it runs from within, with little or no interference from the state authority... military is able to control some crucial domestic and foreign policy areas or the political narrative and propagation of a particular type of patriotism at home."

There have been speculations of a sharp involvement of the regional and world imperialist states with their hegemonic designs and vested interests. The Sino- US economic rivalry in Pakistan and the proxy wars between Iran and Saudi Arabia and now the upstart regional hegemon Qatar has intensified in the region. The allegiances of ruling regimes in strategically vital Pakistan are crucial for these hegemonic powers and their role in regime changes has increased with the exacerbating crisis and conflicts. This has been one of the reasons of the non-completion of the tenures of the elected prime ministers of

Pakistan. The reliance and relations of Sharifs with the Saudi and Gulf monarchies previously their benefactors has now dialectically turned into its opposite. Their situation has become more vulnerable due to these internecine conflicts between the different GCC countries that have surged into diplomatic rows and military threats.



Along with the state and imperialist indulgence in controlling and instructing the political elite for their strategic and financial interests is not new. Nawaz was not Gillani but he was no Zulfikar Ali Bhutto either. Gillani and Nawaz were both protégés of Zia ul Haq and with perhaps different versions of Zia's vicious social and economic legacy. But Nawaz had achieved a certain populist authority in a period of society's inertia based on despair rather than hope and a surging movement of the masses. The collapse of Pakistan's pro - Moscow and pro -Chinese left and betrayals of the PPP's post-Bhutto leaderships paved the way for Nawaz to rise initially with the backing of the so-called establishment. Gillani was a mere stooge of Zardari.

Nawaz made the mistake of taking himself seriously the all-powerful and sovereign prime minister in this democratic setup. He was perhaps naively unaware of the harsh reality that the necessary economic and social infrastructural foundations for the embedding of a western style democracy were never built by his redundant ruling class. He should have known that how desperately it needs the patronage of the state and imperialists for its social and economic existence as a ruling elite. In this system of the survival of the fittest and a cutthroat competition, a politician of this crooked bourgeois cannot dictate the state institutions that are necessary for the rulership of these robber barons.

The fall of Nawaz Sharif has opened up a Pandora's box in Pakistan's already skewed political scenario. What The Economist calls "perilous uncertainty" is, in reality, a unravelling economic, social and political crisis that was already aggravating under Nawaz's government. The Abbasi prime ministership will find it hard to rule over such turmoil. If Shahbaz becomes the Prime Minister he will find ruling



Pakistan a much more unruly task than the relatively less cataclysmic Punjab. Even the much-hyped 'good governance' of Shahbaz Sharif would fail to solve any of the unravelling crises. Relentless conflicts will unravel in a country where from the National question to the Islamicist sectarian conflicts and violence are flaring up rigorously.

Imran Khan is facing his disqualification trial and is now under the assaults of a scurrilous sexual scandal. He might have been used to the extent of removing Sharif. His erraticism might be felt as a liability to the forces that be. Such conspiracy theories of a fragile and unreliability between Imran's relationship with the deep state are rampant. The military seems to be in consensus on their policy of holding the reigns of the crucial economic, strategic, foreign policy and security policies behind the façade of so-called democratic setups. Sharif's removal looks like the state's urge for a more compliant political disposition. The imperialists of the East and West prefer to deal directly with their patronised factions of the establishment and the bureaucracy rather than the fragile political governments.

This period of a relative lull has politics sans ideologies and dominant parties have abandoned the masses. The ruling elites are dependent on the state, drug barons, black moneyed tycoons and the imperialists to come in power. With this new crisis of the regime change by vested interests or the proxy conflicts of foreign powers, new 'surprises' can spring up. Certain heroes without heroic deeds from outside the political arena have been projected in the last few years. The PPP leaders are desperately striving to get the nepotisms of the state's bosses and imperialist masters. In Pakistan's fragile and convoluted politics anything can happen.

However, one crucial factor in this convoluted social and political realm ignored by the mainstream press and political pageant is the role of the working classes and the oppressed in the stormy events that impend. For a long time, the vast majority of the toiling classes and the destitute that comprise almost ninety percent of the population have been extricated from the political process. Their come back can transform the whole scenario. A mass movement of the oppressed classes will not only sweep this odious political framework but will challenge the socio-economic system as a whole. They are the ones who have been deprived and coerced by this system of exploitation and plunder. Their entrance into the arena of history and victory of the class struggle shall not only transform society but is the only way-out for the peoples' emancipation.

ASIAN MARXIST REVIEW

Pakistan's Judicial Coup!

By Awais Qarni

The unceremonious ouster of Nawaz Sharif was not much of a surprise for most people. Although The PML (N) leaders and supporters were hoping against hope but the writing was there to see on the wall. The symptoms were too many and the odds against the Sharif mounting with the frenetic crusades by sections of the state and most channels of corporate media. The jubilations of the PTI were hollow and with joy synthetic. The shock of the Sharif's supporters didn't burst into any enthusiastic retaliation. The Supreme Court asserted that "This historic decision that would be remembered for centuries" however, it could not even stir the alienated masses. It failed to reassert the fading credibility of politics or the state institutions amongst the population at large. Above all this 'judicial coup' lays bare the burgeoning crisis of the state and politics of an already fragile economy.

The hyperactivity of the judiciary for more than a decade is symptomatic of a vulnerable state that is desperately forced to rely upon and exhaust the methodically fostered reverence and contrived sanctity of these supreme temples of justice. When such institutions are engaged in such controversial political conflicts it exposes the susceptibility of the state and political structures. If the highest

court in the land can stoop to take suo-moto actions on two bottles of whisky or stopping construction of projects where the previous infrastructures are dismantled and the inhabitants of these areas forced to survive in the misery of these ruins it shows the interference in the pettiest of the executive's tasks by the top court. Such acts are depleting the last reserves of their integrity in society.



While the western imperialists have tacitly backed Nawaz's deposition but they are extremely worried about the future prospects of their vested interests and their capitalist system in Pakistan. The Economist wrote on Tuesday 01 August, "Nevertheless the bench has set a frighteningly wide precedent...disqualification on Article 62 of the Constitution, a baggy, mostly ignored law that requires politicians to be "honest" and "righteous". Such qualities are hard to codify... All this combines to leave Paktstan in a state of perilous uncertainty...

Pakistan's weak democracy has taken another blow... Instead of casting a vote on Mr Sharif in a year's time, Pakistanis have been forced to watch, once again, as the state makes the decision for them. It may be a fresh start. But Pakistan has had too many of those already."

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