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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES**

**Centre for Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies**

**Partition and Its Aftermath: Violence, Migration and the  
Role of Refugees in the Socio-Economic Development of  
Gujranwala and Sialkot Cities, 1947-1961**

by

**Ilyas Ahmad Chattha**

**Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2009**

I would like to dedicate this work to my family who gave me the confidence to try

and

Professor Ian Talbot my supervisor who guided me to a conclusion

## **Abstract**

The partition of India in August 1947 was marked by the greatest migration in the Twentieth Century and the death of an estimated one million persons. Yet until recently (Ansari 2005; Talbot 2006) little was written about the longer term socio-economic consequences of this massive dislocation, especially for Pakistan. Even when the ‘human dimension’ of refugee experience rather than the ‘high politics’ of partition was addressed, it was not specifically tied to local case studies (Butalia, 1998). A comparative dimension was also missing, even in the ‘new history’ of partition.

The thesis through case studies of the Pakistan Punjab cities of Gujranwala and Sialkot examines partition related episodes of violence, migration and resettlement. It draws on hitherto unexplored original sources to explain the nature, motivation and purpose of violence at the local level. It argues that the violence in both cities was clearly politically rather than culturally and religiously rooted.

The problems of finding accommodation and employment as well as patterns of urban resettlement are also explored. The thesis shows how the massive shifts in population influenced and transformed the socio-economic landscape of the two cities. It also addresses wider issues regarding the relative roles of refugees and locally skilled craftsmen in rebuilding the cities’ economies following the migration of the Hindu and Sikh trading and commercial class. This analysis reveals that while partition represented a major disruption, continuities persisted from the colonial era. Indeed, Sialkot’s post-independence development owed more to the skill base it inherited than to the refugee influx.



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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, **ILYAS AHMAD CHATTHA** declare that the thesis entitled:

**‘Partition and Its Aftermath: Violence, Migration and the Role of Refugees in the Socio-economic Development of Gujranwala and Sialkot Cities, 1947-1961’**

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission

**Signed:** ...Ilyas Chattha.....

**Date:**

## **Preface and Acknowledgements**

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Any errors, over-generalization, omissions, peculiarities, foibles or styles are unintended, but mine alone. I am entirely responsible for the contents of this thesis.

Ilyas Chattha

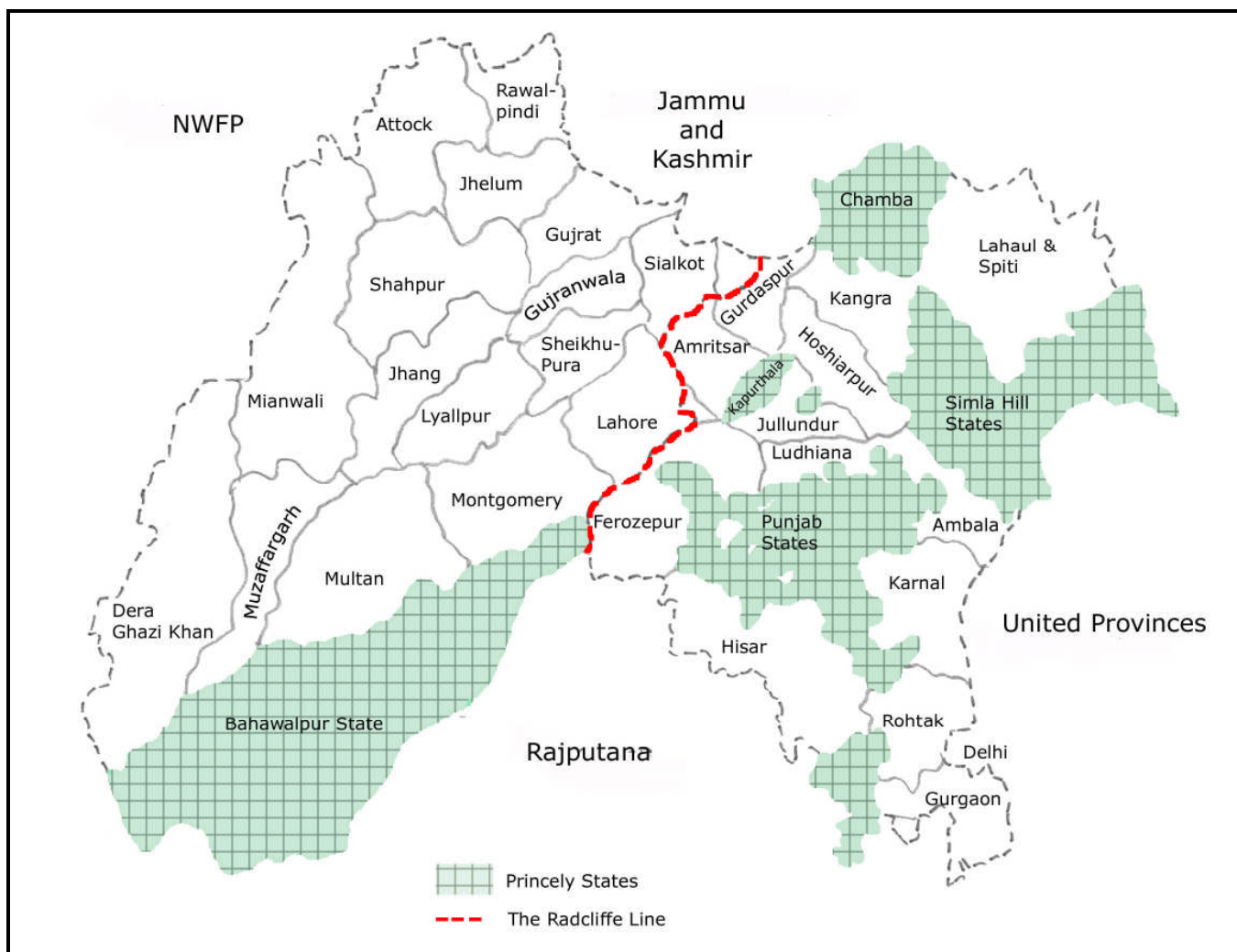
Southampton University  
2009

## **List of Abbreviations**

A.I.M.L	All India Muslim League
C.I.D	Central Investigation Department
C.L.O	Chief Liaison Officer
D.C.	Deputy Commissioner
D.S.P	Deputy Superintend Police of Police
D.L.O	District Liaison Officer
F.I.R	First Information Report
P.L.A	Punjab Legislative Assembly
M.L.A	Member of Legislative Assembly
M.L.N.G	Muslim League National Guards
M.E.O	Military Evacuation Organization
N.W.F.P	North West Frontier Province
N.D.C	National Document Centre
O.I.O.C	Oriental and India Office Collection
P.F.F	Punjab Boundary Force
P.P.W.D	Punjab Public Work Department
S.S.P	Senior Superintend Police
S.H.O	Station House Officer Police
S. I	Sub-Inspector (police)
S.T.C	Student Teacher Cafeteria
SGPG	Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandkak Committee
R.S.S	Rashtriya Swayyan Sewak Sangh
T.O.P	Transfer of Power
U.P	United Province

## **Translations/ Transliterations**

The oral testimonies were chiefly conducted in Urdu, and I have retained the original Urdu in the quoted excerpts to retain some of the emotional tenor of the spoken language. In the case of quotations from Urdu newspapers and FIRs, I have retained the Urdu original in some places where the wording in Urdu captured a particular nuance. All translations from Urdu are my own. I have followed the English rules of capitalisation for sentences, proper names and titles. With respect to place names such as Jullundur and Lyallpur, I have given the British name and spelling variant for the colonial era.



**Map 1: Radcliffe Boundary Line**  
(Courtesy of Dr Pippa Virdee)

## **Introduction**

The partition of India in August 1947 was the most important event in the subcontinent's modern history. The event was marked by one of the largest migrations of the twentieth century, and around eighteen million people were displaced by partition. Estimates of the death toll vary from between 200,000 up to 1,000,000. More than ten million Punjabies were uprooted alone at the time of the division. The Pakistan Punjab cities of Gujranwala and Sialkot shared the brunt of the 1947 upheaval. They suffered widespread riot-destruction, demographic shift and economic transformation at the division of the Punjab. Their industrial concerns were abandoned or closed because of the almost total migration of the Hindu and Sikh trading and business class to India.

At the same time, both cities received a large number of Muslim refugees. Sialkot received more than double the number of refugees that left, chiefly from the neighbouring Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. Half of post-partition Gujranwala's population comprised Muslim refugees from different parts of East Punjab and elsewhere in India. The cities thus provide good case studies for an examination of the dislocation brought by partition and for an understanding of how rehabilitation and industrial recovery took place. The problems of finding both accommodation and employment as well as addressing skills gaps in the cities were immense. The post-partition development of both Gujranwala and Sialkot is particularly significant as both cities play a dominating role in the regional, national and to a lesser extent international economy. They remain however greatly under-researched. The focus is however not only on migration and resettlement, but on the

violence that caused the profound socio-economic dislocation in these localities as elsewhere in the Punjab. Despite the recent advances of historical understanding regarding the 1947 violence, especially in terms of its organisation, its exact perpetrators are usually hazy. This thesis will represent an important contribution to knowledge by uncovering for the first time actual perpetrators of the violence in the region.

In addition to its findings on violence the research will contribute to the existing literature on the aftermath of partition in two ways. Firstly, it will switch the academic focus from the generalized first-hand accounts of refugees to that of a local grounding to the history of partition. Secondly, it will help redress the imbalance in studies of partition. Until recently, most works concentrate on developments in the Indian Punjab to the detriment of its Pakistan neighbour. The study will not only add to empirical understanding of the Pakistan Punjab post-partition experience, but will also however through addressing major themes arising from the study of urban resettlement, represent a useful contribution to understanding of the Indian refugee experience. Before an examination of some of the theoretical and definitional problems inherent in the study, we shall turn first to its place in the existing literature on the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

## **The Historiography of Partition**

### **‘High Politics’ Approach**

The current Partition historiographical trend is towards concern with the human dimension of its aftermath. The thesis continues this approach by examining the aftermath of the 1947 at locality level. For a long time the historiography of partition was dominated by accounts of the high level decision making in the 1940s. Historians

took August 1947 as a ‘natural’ end of an era without looking beyond this period. Understandings of why the British both divided and quit India covered a range of explanations from the ‘great man’ approach of history, to arguments concerning the British policy of ‘divide and rule’. For many British participants it was seen as a regrettable necessity.<sup>1</sup> For Indians, in the classic nationalist interpretation, the partition was the logical outcome of the British policy of divide and rule.<sup>2</sup> For Pakistanis it tended to be seen as a fulfillment of the ‘two- nation theory’ which understood the Indian Muslim and Hindu communities as being totally separated from each other by religion and cultural practice.<sup>3</sup> Official histories see a linear progression from the foundation of the Muslim League in 1906 to the creation of Pakistan, or in many cases, to the separatist politics of Syed Ahmad Khan in the late nineteenth century. Success in achieving the Indian Muslims’ ‘inevitable separatist destiny’ is attributed to the role played by the Muslim League leader, the invincible Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.<sup>4</sup> The revisionist school, with its main exponent Ayesha Jalal, repudiates these conventional assumptions. Jalal has argued that the Congress leadership’s close-minded attitude towards Jinnah and the Muslim League caused the partition of India. She perceives the March 1940 Lahore Resolution as a bargaining

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten* (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1951); ‘Mountbatten and the Transfer of Power’, *History Today*, Vol. 47: 9 (September 1997): pp. 38-9; H.V. Hodson, *Great Divide* ((London: Hutchinson, 1969)); C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainright (eds.), *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India* (Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957); M. J. Akbar, *India: The Siege Within* (Marmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985); *Riot After Riot* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1988); Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India’s Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization* ((Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. IV, (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1970); K. B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* (Karachi: Oxford University press, 1968); Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Struggle for Pakistan* (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1965); S. S. Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents, 1906-1947* (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1969-1970), Vol. 11.

<sup>4</sup> For an orthodox and official representation of Jinnah, see Riaz Ahmad, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Second Phase of his Freedom Struggle 1924-1934* (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, 1994); Sharif-Al-Mujahid, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy. 1981); Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (London: Allied Book Corporation, 1954).

card to gain the right to equal treatment at India's political centre rather than a separatist demand. It was also a stick to bludgeon the Muslims of the majority provinces into supporting the Muslim League.<sup>5</sup>

With the availability of new archival sources in the 1970s, the Cambridge School of Indian historiography identified elite contests for political power and patronage rather than British divide and rule policies as driving Muslim separatism.<sup>6</sup> The earliest works on the study of Muslim separatism focused on the United Provinces (UP) where the Muslim League traditionally had its strongest support. Later attention was turned to the Muslim majority provinces which formed the future heartland of Pakistan. In particular, such scholars as Ian Talbot and David Gilmartin focused on the Punjab. If the Punjabi Muslims had not supported the Muslim League's separatist demand, Pakistan could never have come into existence.<sup>7</sup> According to Talbot, the 'decisive shift' happened in the vital 1946 provincial elections, when landlords switched support from the ruling Unionist party to the Muslim League.<sup>8</sup> Gilmartin, is also aware of the factional realignment, but also emphasizes the role of the Sufi *pirs* in popularizing the League's appeal. He also brings out the tensions between the vision of Islamic community and local tribal allegiances around which colonial Muslim politics had revolved.<sup>9</sup> Such regional studies brought important insights to understanding the mechanics of Pakistan's

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<sup>5</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *Jinnah: The Sole Spokesman: The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> Various works of the Cambridge School include John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (eds.), *Locality, Province, and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of United Province Muslims 1860-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); C. A. Bayly, 'The Pre-History of Communalism? Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 19, 2, (1985), pp. 177-203.

<sup>7</sup> Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988): p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).



creation, but largely overlooked the human dimension of the division of India and its post-partition consequences.

These themes have been addressed by a growing number of studies in the past twenty or so years. Ideological debate on India's partition and independence has generated bitter controversies. Lamentably most texts reflect prejudices more than analysis. In the words of Ayesha Jalal, the argument of historians on the partition historiography rarely escapes being labelled 'made in India' or 'made in Pakistan'.<sup>10</sup> Conflicting arguments rather than interpretations and analysis, have also characterized the historiography of partition. As Gurharpal Singh rightly says, 'historians are ideological animals as far as Partition is concerned'.<sup>11</sup>

### **'New history' of Partition**

With the fiftieth anniversary of Independence in 1997, literature dealing with Partition became noticeably more sensitive to its human aftermath. Oral sources and literary representations rather than conventional histories provided an important key to understanding the emotional and physical personal experiences of 1947, providing evidence of the impact of partition on every day lives. The greatest initial achievements resulted from the work of feminist writers. Their concern with 'history from beneath' coincided with the outlook of the Subaltern group of historians, led by Ranajit Guha.<sup>12</sup> Recent years have witnessed the publication of a number of anthologies of partition narrations, mostly based on first hand accounts, in an attempt

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<sup>10</sup> Ayesha Jalal, 'Secularists, Subalterns, and the Stigma of Communalism. Partition Historiography Revisited', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30, 3 (July 1996), p. 681.

<sup>11</sup> Gurharpal Singh, 'The Partition of India in a Comparative Perspective. A Long Term View', in Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (eds.), *Region and Partition. Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 96.

<sup>12</sup> David Arnold and David Hardiman (eds.), *Subaltern Studies*, VIII (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994). Also see Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997).

to unlock the human emotion of the 1947 upheavals. Feminist writers such as Butalia, Bhasin and Menon were at the forefront of this trend.<sup>13</sup> Ian Talbot sees the novels and short stories of partition as providing such insights into the ‘human impact’ of partition related migration as the sense of hopelessness and ‘sense of uprootedness’.<sup>14</sup>

This new emphasis reflects the reality articulated by Gyanendra Pandey that for ordinary people, the partition was experienced as suffering and violence, although this has largely remained unacknowledged in official histories. Where it does feature in these and in community histories, it is included not out of a sense of social justice, but to enable the construction of stereotypical identities.<sup>15</sup> Pandey identifies several different ‘techniques’ that writers have employed to silence the history of partition-related violence. One is to declare such violence ‘non-narratable: the ‘limit case’ of history’, and therefore ‘unhistorical and inexplicable’. Another distancing technique historians have used is to focus entirely on issues of causation. A third historiographical device is to localize it in time ‘as a freak occurrence, like a natural calamity, which requires no historical explanation’.<sup>16</sup>

One of the striking features of the new historiography of Partition is the consideration of the variety of ways in which refugees were assimilated into local communities,<sup>17</sup> and the contrasting ways in which migrants collectively emerged as a

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<sup>13</sup> Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998); R. Menon and K. Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi, 1998); Andrew Major, “‘The Chief Sufferers’: Abduction of Women during the Partition of India’, in D. A. Low and Howard Brasted (eds.), *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities. Northern India and Independence* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 57-71.

<sup>14</sup> Ian Talbot, *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, ‘The Prose of Otherness’, in David Arnold and David Hardiman, *Subaltern Studies*, p. 194.

<sup>16</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 45-6.

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Waseem, ‘Muslim Migration from East Punjab: Patterns of Settlement and Assimilation’, in Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi (eds.), *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial and Post-Colonial Migration* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 63-77.

distinct 'political group or community'.<sup>18</sup> Such new studies have brought important insights to understanding the impact of partition. Most are concerned with the relationship between refugees and the state, both in terms of state policies toward the migrants, and the material roots of socio-economic tension between refugees and the host community. A second strand in this scholarship evaluates the effects that refugees had on the economy in the places where they settled and brings out the voices/identities of the refugees, with their often traumatic and nostalgic memories of a lost homeland on the other side of the border. This new historiography enhances our understanding of the ways refugee populations resettled and either assimilated or emerged as a distinct group within a wide array of physical, social and regional environments. As new vistas of enquiry open up, they take us beyond the stereotypical portrayal and make it increasingly clear that there is no undifferentiated narrative of Partition. Yet, most of the existing literature on the impact of partition tends to focus in general terms or at best has a provincial angle with respect to patterns of violence, resettlement and rehabilitation.

More recently, in the 'new history' of partition, there is an increasing awareness towards exploring differential issues of partition-related violence, migration and refugee resettlement by means of a comparative localised case studies approach.<sup>19</sup> The most recent work of Ian Talbot on the impact of partition on the cities of Lahore and Amritsar is pioneering this trend.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless Talbot's seminal work

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<sup>18</sup> Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh 1947-1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 211.

<sup>19</sup> Pippa Virdee, 'Partition in Transition: Comparative Analysis of Migration in Ludhiana and Lyallpur', in Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia (eds.), *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement and Resettlement* (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2008), pp. 156-71; Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives Among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Vazira F.Y. Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

aside, research has largely focused on the Indian rather than Pakistan Punjab.<sup>21</sup> The new history approach with its emphasis on ‘lived experience’ and the ‘locality’ as a site to explore gendered and subaltern dimensions of partition, has ignored Gujranwala and Sialkot. Moreover, existing scholarship has solely focused on the consequences of partition within the context of the ‘refugee experience’. However, this research considers the refugee experience alongside that of the local established populations and will argue that partition could have as profound impact on them as on refugees. It reflects some of the themes of the ‘new history’ of partition both in its subject matter and locality based focus. Moreover, while the focus of work is upon the Pakistan Punjab, it has relevance in understanding developments across the border.

### **Explanations of the Violence**

Standard accounts of the 1947 communal violence in the Punjab term this violence as ‘bloodshed’, ‘slaughter’, ‘mass killings’, ‘massacres’ and the like.<sup>22</sup> Some observers such as the Governor of the Punjab, Sir Evan Jenkins remarked on 14 August that the ‘urban slaughter was without precedent’ even in the first phase of violence in the Punjab and that ‘the rural massacres were new’.<sup>23</sup> General Rees the commander of the Punjab Boundary Force described the 1947 horrors as a ‘fratricidal war of extermination’.<sup>24</sup> Contemporary explanations of the violence both in India and

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<sup>21</sup> Mohinder Singh Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes: An Account of the Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan in Rural Areas of East Punjab* (Chandigarh: Public Relations Department, 1954); V. V. S. Tyagi, ‘Economic Impact of Partition on Indian Agriculture and Related Industries’, (Ph.D. thesis, American University, Washington, 1958). Tyagi’s thesis has heavily drawn on the work of C. N. Vakil, *The Economic Consequences of the Division of India* (Bombay: Vora and Co; 1950); Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition* (Delhi: Durga Publications, 1986). Rai draws mainly on the work of A. K. Luthra, *Impact of Partition on Industries in Border Town Districts of East Punjab* (Ludhiana, the Board of Economic Inquiry, East Punjab, Publication No. 1, 1949).

<sup>22</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, 10 July 1947, Vol. XII, Document No. 56, p. 74; Mansergh Nicholas and Penderel Moon (eds.), *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-1947*, henceforth *TOP* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1970-84).

<sup>23</sup> *TOP*, Vol. XII, Document No. 337, p. 516.

<sup>24</sup> Pete Rees Collections, PBF, Mss Eur D 807/2, O.I.O.C.

Pakistan always portrayed the killing as erratic and spontaneous, many with the aim of 'blame displacement'. Each country explained violence as retaliatory and in many cases termed it as 'self-defence'. Both sides, immediately after partition, made available Partition accounts of the horrors of 1947. A good example is the accounts of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) made available in form of Gurbachan Singh Talib's book: *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*.<sup>25</sup> Polemically, Talib argues the leadership of Muslim League planned the expulsion of non-Muslims from the Punjab because they wanted the entire Punjab to join the future Pakistan. As early as March in Rawalpindi division, they started eliminating and clearing Hindus and Sikhs. The SGPC report explains the Sikh reprisals against Muslims in the East Punjab merely as reaction which assumed alarming proportions only after the creation of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. Another Indian version of the violence is the work of Justice G. D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*.<sup>26</sup> Khosla affirms that the Muslim League leaders and cadres initiated the massacres that continued as a one-sided affair until mid-August 1947. Again, the attacks in Eastern Punjab against the Muslim population were seen merely as retributive attacks to the preceding actions in the West Punjab.

The Pakistani side sought to make a macabre conspiracy out of the happenings of 1947 in the Punjab with as claims that there was a 'Sikh Plan' to eliminate Muslims from East Punjab. The accounts asserted how the Sikhs were preparing militarily to remove the Muslims from East Punjab in order to create a Sikh State in the Punjab after the partition. In this specific aim, the Sikh Princely States such as Patiala and Faridkot were involved in assisting and harbouring the perpetrators in the hope of

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<sup>25</sup> S. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947* (New Delhi: Voice of India, first published in 1950, reprinted New Delhi, 1991).

<sup>26</sup> G. D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events of Leading Up to and Following the Partition of India* (First Published in 1949, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).

their 'dream of sovereign state'.<sup>27</sup> The scale of the casualties in 1947 has always been a source of dispute. Recently a number of works have challenged the casualty figures for partition-related massacres as set out by some British and Indian participants, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 and have pointed to a dead toll of over 1 million.<sup>28</sup>

A number of different explanations and interpretations have been put forward to account for the onset of communal violence. Communalism is used in the subcontinent to refer to political identity focused solely on religious lines. There is a lively debate as to whether it emerged with colonial rule, or possessed a pre-colonial history. The Indian nationalist historians explain communalism as an aspect of pathological politics distinct from 'normal' politics. They believe that communalism was essentially the product of colonial rule. Owing to the scarcity of employment within administrative services such as the Indian Civil Service, and competition for seats in government councils and assemblies, Bipan Chandra posits that Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, turned on one another by focusing on the artificial division of religion. He contends, along with several other writers, that the growth of ethnic conflict was more a matter of economic jealousy rather than a consequence of socio-religious distance between Hindus and Muslims, emerging from narrow tendencies

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<sup>27</sup> Mudie Papers, The Sikhs in Action, Mss Eur F164/23, pp. 50-1, O.I.O.C.

<sup>28</sup> Estimations regarding the killings arising from the partition violence have varied considerably, usually varying from 200,000 to 3 million. Moon estimates the number of casualties around 200,000, based on his experience of working in the Punjab region at the time. Hodson, following Moon, opts for a figure of 200,000 deaths. Khosla and Robin Moore suggest some 500,000 casualties. Mosley puts forward the figure 'over 600,000'. Others such as French, Roberts and Mayaram are of the opinion that deaths numbered closer to 1 million. Ziring estimates 'perhaps as many as three million'. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eye Witness Account of the Partition of India* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960); H.V. Hodson, *Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan* (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p. 418; Gopal Khosla, *Stern Reckoning. A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 299; Robin Moore, *Escape from Empire. The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 327; Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), p. 279; Patrick French, *Liberty or Death: Indian's Journey to Independence and Division* (London: Harper Collins, 1997); Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), p. 131; Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 69.

within society itself.<sup>29</sup> Some authors, on the other hand, hold the view that there was a fundamental fault line in Hindu-Muslim relations in Indian society and understand communal identity in what may be seen as primordial terms. Francis Robinson points to the importance of religion, kinship and language in the construction of Muslim identity and argues that the Hindu and Muslim divide has always been well entrenched in India. He then takes issue with Paul Brass's contention that the communalization of Muslim identity was an outcome of elite politics, which manipulated a following through the selection of divisive symbols.<sup>30</sup>

Horowitz sees the 1947 violence as evidence of the 'spontaneous quality of riot behaviour', though with respect to attacks on refugee trains, he acknowledges that they possess features of organized genocide. He also points out that social justification and approval motives violence.<sup>31</sup> Varshney highlights that cities and areas with strong civic engagement and organizations limit the communal violence.<sup>32</sup> V.V. Singh argues the importance of strong economic competition in the presence of communal violence.<sup>33</sup> The work of Paul Brass has, however, shifted attention away from such interpretations and has seen violence mainly as politically motivated. A common theme is the involvement of unscrupulous politicians and policemen in the production of violence, usually in order to further political interests.<sup>34</sup> Such understandings of contemporary violence have utility with respect to the events of 1947. Brass's concept of an 'institutionalized riot system' in post-independence

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<sup>29</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984); M. Hasan, Gopal, K. N. Panikkar. Ashgar Ali Engineer and Moin Shakir, *Communalism in India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1980); M. J. Akbar, *Riot after Riot: On Caste and Communal Violence in India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> Francis Robinson, 'Nation Formation: The Brass Thesis and Muslim Separatism', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 15 (1977), pp. 215-34; Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

<sup>31</sup> Donald Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001), p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: 2002), p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> V. V. Singh, *Communal Violence* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1993), pp.102-3.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press: 2003), pp. 377-9.

Indian cities such as Aligarh and Meerut parallels characteristics of the 1947 violence in which, for example, the involvement of politicians, police and gangs was widely reported.

The extent to which the violence was in fact spontaneous has been recently questioned. A great deal of research has revealed that attacks were not only carefully planned but possessed a class dimension and were gender specific. Swarna Aiyar makes it clear that in many cases the aggressors operated in organized groups under 'military style' leadership. Her work considers the role played by the demobilized soldiers in determining the nature and brutality of the violence. 'Their participation meant that the violence took on for a time the characteristics of civil war. Ordinary crowd violence usually involves actual physical confrontation, generally rude weapons, if any, but professional techniques such as ambush and modern sophisticated weapons that the ex-soldiers used made for quite a different kind of impact, carrying the violence to an altogether new and different plan', she has argued.<sup>35</sup> Ian Talbot argues that the first phase of organized violence started during the 1947 March massacres of Sikhs in the Rawalpindi district, which was far from being 'a spontaneous and a temporary aberration'. He marks this episode of the violence as exhibiting 'cold blooded planning and execution'. The Sikhs sought revenge for the massacres of their co-religionists.<sup>36</sup> The works of Ian Copland and Shail Mayaram make clear the involvement of the various Princely States in the Punjab. Copland maintains that 'Muslims were not only butchered in East Punjab, but systematically expelled. We would now term this process 'ethnic cleansing''. He reveals clearly that some leaders of the States were the perpetrators of this 'ethnic

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<sup>35</sup> Swarna Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab 1947', *South Asia*, Vol. XVIII, Special issue, (1995): pp. 13-36 and p. 28.

<sup>36</sup> Ian Talbot, 'The 1947 Violence in the Punjab', paper presented at Workshop on Religion, Violence and the State in South Asia, Balliol College, Oxford, 26 March 2004, and also see his recent work *Divided Cities*, p. 190.



cleansing project'.<sup>37</sup> Shail Mayaram's account of violence in Mewat on the contrary challenges the notions of political parties and their association with violence. Some Muslim Meos in the Princely States of Bharatpur and Alwar had not even heard of Jinnah and the Muslim League, but they had been caught up in 'the state-sponsored campaign of *safaya*, epitomizing the ideology of cleansing'.<sup>38</sup>

While Paul Brass discusses organization in the killings, he terms the partition violence as 'retributive genocide'. He considers 'the genocidal massacres' in the Punjab to have been organized and planned, but their 'special character is that they were not ordered by a state'.<sup>39</sup> In contrast to this, Anders Bjorn Hansen has argued the partition violence shows that the state need not be the only actor in a 'genocidal situation'. He suggests that the genocidal violence can also occur when the state is either unwilling or incapable of countering the violence, while the actual power is usurped by various communal groups. Instead of focusing on state involvement per se, the attention should be on processes leading to the genocidal situation.<sup>40</sup>

## Definitions

Can the partition violence fall in the broader applicability of the concepts of ethnic cleansing and genocide? There are a number of inherited problems associated with the study of Partition related violence. These concern the extent to which this was spontaneous or calculated, the degree to which a focus on localised violence can form part of a broader historical narrative, and the extent to which it differs from

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<sup>37</sup> Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, 36: 3 (2002), p. 660 and p. 698.

<sup>38</sup> Shail Mayaram, 'Speech, Silence and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat', in Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds.), *Subaltern Studies IX* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 132 and p. 162.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946-1947: Means, Methods, and Purposes', in *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5:1 (2003), pp. 71-101.

<sup>40</sup> Anders Bjorn Hansen, *Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab 1937-1947* (New Delhi, India Research Press, 2002), pp. 195-7.

‘traditional’ communal violence. The UN Convention of 1948 defines genocide as ‘...acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...’<sup>41</sup> Some authors are critical of the Convention’s definition, in particular because of its exclusion of political and social groups and the connection between state and terror.<sup>42</sup> Genocide gains its moral force, and conceptual horror, precisely because of the nature of the Holocaust.<sup>43</sup> The term ethnic cleansing seems to have originated with the wars in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>44</sup> This involves removals rather than extermination and is not exceptional but rather common in particular circumstances. The UN Commission of Experts itself defined ‘ethnic cleansing’ quite specifically as ‘rendering an area ethnically homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons of another ethnic or religious group’. Robert Hayden argues that ethnic cleansing may be sponsored by the very powers that profess horror at genocide.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, for many writers, ethnic cleansing has become conterminous with genocide and the two terms are almost interchangeable.

Regardless of whether the conceptual terms ‘genocide’ or ‘ethnic cleansing’ are deployed, a debate still rages over the issue ranging the ‘spontaneity’ or ‘planning’ of the mass violence. The role of the state and local authority is imperative here. The findings of several scholars have pointed out that there were a host of culpable individuals and group actors involved, ranging from religious extremists on both sides, to unscrupulous politicians, officials, policemen and soldiers. This debate

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<sup>41</sup> Robert M. Hayden, ‘Schindler’s Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers’, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4, (winter, 1996), p. 731.

<sup>42</sup> George J. Andreopoulos (eds.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

<sup>43</sup> Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems, Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Oxford University Press, 4<sup>TH</sup> Addition, 2000). Particularly see chapter 5, pp. 93-133.

<sup>44</sup> Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing* (College Station Texas: Texas University Press, 1995).

<sup>45</sup> Robert M. Hayden, ‘Schindler’s Fate’, pp. 732-4.

continues and has been fuelled by such developments as the 1984 Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and the 2002 Gujarat riots.<sup>46</sup> For some writers such as Ian Talbot similarities are being revealed between the partition and post-independence communal violence in India.<sup>47</sup> This study sees the partition violence as variegated and complex and will illustrate the existence of organization and ‘genocidal’ element in it alongside spontaneity.

A number of terms were used in both administrative and popular discourses for partition related migrants. These included evacuees, displaced persons, migrants and refugees. The Urdu, Punjab and Hindi words for refugees are *muhajir*, *panahgeer* and *sharnarhi*. In general, these covered the categories of both anticipatory and acute migrants, as well as the people who migrated after the 1947 March riot in Rawalpindi Division when the Punjab was still undivided. In narrow legal administrative terms, Pakistan’s official discourse of evacuation and rehabilitation categorized the migrants from India as ‘agreed-area’ refugees- Partition refugees hailing from ‘disturbed areas’ of Punjab- who were involuntarily evacuated through the coordinated efforts of the Indian and Pakistan government. By contrast, ‘non-agreed’ areas Partition refugees from elsewhere in India such as from northern and central India, Jammu and Kashmir region as well as the divided province of Bengal were not designated as subjects hailing from ‘disturbed areas’. They were considered less vulnerable to communal attack than their counterparts in the agreed-areas. This crucial distinction qualified the agreed-areas refugees for official rehabilitation entitlements such as the right to till the abandoned non-Muslim evacuee property. Although the ‘non-agreed’ inhabitants were actually discouraged from migrating by their potential ‘host’ states, they were

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<sup>46</sup>For the analysis of post-independence communal violence in Gujarat see Asghar Ali Engineer (ed.), *The Gujarat Carnage* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003). Angela Harlock, ‘The 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots in Delhi’, in Ian Talbot (ed.), *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947-2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 108-131.

<sup>47</sup>Ian Talbot, ‘The 1947 Violence in the Punjab’, in Ian Talbot, *The Deadly Embrace*, pp. 1-15.

not turned away from the specific right to rehabilitation or denied citizenship if they managed to succeed in making the passage. On 7 February 1955, the Pakistan Constituent Assembly abolished the distinction between agreed and non-agreed areas refugees in respect of allotment of evacuee property on a permanent basis. It thus redefined the refugee 'who left India or any part occupied by it between 1 March, 1947 and 30 June, 1953 can claim rehabilitation under new scheme'.<sup>48</sup>

The terms 'West Punjab' and 'East Punjab' refer to geographical regions of the undivided province. Also, the terms 'non-Muslim'(s) and 'minorities' in the thesis refer only to describe Hindus and Sikhs.

### **The Study Sites, Sources and Methodology**

The case studies of Gujranwala and Sialkot have been carefully chosen: firstly because of their intensity of partition-related violence and resulting mass migration of outgoing Hindus and Sikhs; secondly because they, in turn, received large numbers of Muslim refugees; thirdly because they managed to overcome the disruption of 1947 to achieve rapid post-independence economic development; and fourthly they were primarily chosen for their contrasting regional contexts and differing industrial profiles. Gujranwala is a central Punjab city, while Sialkot is a city on the border: they thus invite a unique comparative case study for examining the changes and challenges arising from partition in the Pakistan context. The time frame of the thesis covers the vital period between 1947 and 1961. This period was crucial not only for the rehabilitation of refugees and urban regeneration but also for the cities to overcome the partition depression after the 1947 destruction and dislocation. The justification of taking 1961 as the cut-off point is that in this year the Punjab

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<sup>48</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 8 February 1955, p. 1.

authorities not only completed the census survey but also declared it to be ‘the most important year in the history of the settlement of refugees in Pakistan’ because all temporarily transferred properties- houses, shops, buildings sites, factories and industrial concerns- were given in ‘complete ownership’ to the refugees.<sup>49</sup>

The thesis relies heavily on unexplored documentary primary sources, drawn from census data, budget reports, revenue record reports and refugee rehabilitation reports. These are drawn from both provincial and district levels of records. The research utilises hitherto unexploited original sources of Sialkot and Gujranwala District Police First Information Reports (FIRs). The materials are based at the district record offices in Gujranwala and Sialkot, the National Documentation Centre, National Archives (Islamabad) as well as in the Punjab Archives and Settlement Record Office in Lahore. The Governor’s Fortnightly Reports along with key documents from *The Transfer of Power* series are also deployed with respect to political developments in 1946-47. These archival sources are supported by newspaper accounts, both English and Urdu, and private papers drawn from the Mountbatten collections, the Rees collections and the Mudie papers. Primary written sources will be supported by a wide range of secondary works on the partition produced both by historians and contemporaries. In addition a number of interviews provide oral sources for the study.

There are difficulties exploring the local level sources on the impact of partition. At the time of my fieldwork in 2007, the dilapidated ‘settlement record room’ in the Farid Kot House at Lahore’s Mozaing Road preserved thousand of uncatalogued personal files of refugees concerning their compensation ‘claims’ in the Punjab. At the time I visited, the premises had eight staff under the subordination of a

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<sup>49</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1961, E1 (12) 1961, Punjab Archives Lahore, p. 99.

settlement secretary. A number of files were burned and dilapidated. I was told that the records were still in daily use because many cases of compensation were still in the different courts due to litigation, or still needed to be addressed. However, I attended, with the permission of the settlement officer, some 'daily hearings' of those persons whose 1947 settlement claims and disputes were still in the process of being settled. Technically, this was one of the justifications why the records had not been declassified.

There are much more intricate problems related to the retrieval of the record at district and *tahsil* level. Archival resources in Sialkot and Gujranwala are scattered and have kept moving. I was told in Sialkot that the district record had been shifted to Rathian-Jhelum in 1956 due to the need to combine all records of Kashmiri refugees of the region at one place. Similarly, Gujranwala's urban settlement record after many dislocations over the years was housed in 2007 in a rented office of the Housing Department in Model Town area. The police record was also spread all over several individual *thanas* and there was, in many cases, only one *muharar* (reader) at the police station who was aware of the way in which FIRs were kept and retrieved. Such scattered records had never made it to the national archive and thus had not been utilised by researchers. In one way, my personal local connection was an important factor to retrieve some of the 1947 police records.

There are also problems concerning the biases in the source material for the study of the 1947 communal violence. Official sources may be written with a view to 'blame displacement'. Vernacular press reporting was partisan. Equally, both the British colonial accounts of communal violence and the local FIRs, which frequently attribute it to spontaneous and furious 'mobs', are open to question. Similarly, there are also problems with the government reports of refugee resettlement. Despite

providing valuable data, they exaggerated the ‘official’ version of speedy ‘rehabilitation’ of refugee populations. A comprehensive analysis then could only be achieved by supplementing such source material with oral history.

The contribution of first hand accounts to historical reconstruction is widely acknowledged.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless the use of personal testimonies as historical evidence has been severely criticized. In response to fierce criticism from positivist social scientists and traditional documentary historians, some interview handbooks sought to legitimize oral history by advancing a ‘scientific’ model for the research interview. Scholars such as Alistair Thomson suggest that the interview should use a consistent and carefully structured questionnaire to facilitate comparative analysis; he or she should control the focus and flow of the interview yet maintain a neutral and objective presence to avoid adversely affecting the stories told.<sup>51</sup> By acknowledging the primacy of traditional sources over oral testimony, Grele argues that ‘an oral history must be used with a critical eye’ and it ‘must be evaluated with care’. He aptly remarks that when oral histories are used with care and modestly they increase our understanding of our past and reveal hidden levels of discourse.<sup>52</sup>

Oral history has made an immense contribution to the construction of the ‘history from beneath’ of partition. Shail Mayaram has adequately brought the experiences of the Meos of Mewat to the fore by utilizing oral testimonies, which she feels have been so strongly ‘grounded in the construction, transmission and perseveration of historical memory’. Their silence is matched by the ‘forgetting’ of the state, by the complicitous silence of the media, and by the mob and victimizer’s

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<sup>50</sup> Alistair Thomson, ‘Fifty Years On: An International Perspective on Oral History’, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, 2 (September 1998), pp. 581-95.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>52</sup> Ronald J. Grele, ‘On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction’, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 74, 2 (September 1987), pp. 570-1 and p. 578.

memory’.<sup>53</sup> The overwhelming memory of 1947 for people across the whole of north India remains that of Partition, rather than of independence. Mayaram concludes that ‘Memory bridges myth and history, helps us explore different forms of the historical imagination in the past, and may be useful in furthering the vision of an alternative history’.<sup>54</sup> Urvashi Butalia has brought the experiences of women to the fore and has exposed the harsh realities of abduction, rape and violence against women in a patriarchal society. ‘No historical document can approximate [their] pain and anguish, none can reflect [their] trauma or even begin to understand his confusion and ambivalence’, she writes. Oral history can help individuals and societies remember and make better sense of traumatic pasts. It shows how this memory shapes the consciousness of the present. ‘The facts of any event are important’, recognizes Butalia, ‘but equally important is how people remember those facts, and how they represent them’.<sup>55</sup>

For this study, interviews were conducted not only with the perpetrators and victims of the 1947 violence but also with the migrant entrepreneurs of hosiery and jewellery trades of Gujranwala to assess their roles in the economic development of the post-partition city. A similar research procedure was carried out to collect the histories of families of local artisan *Lohars*. For the Sialkot case study, interviews were conducted not only with some eye-witnesses of the violence but also with the proprietors of sporting goods industry in the city. The fieldwork in this study primarily took place in the first half of 2007. The collected accounts provide a general profile of the migrants, their experiences of migration, resettlement and setting up businesses. The interviews primarily focused on those who had lived through the

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<sup>53</sup> Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 33.

<sup>54</sup> Shail Mayaram, *Against History, Against State: Counterperspectives from the Margins* (New Delhi: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 235.

<sup>55</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 9 and pp. 93-4.



partition and its aftermath. But in some cases there was no option but to select testimonies from the post-partition generation.

This study draws on the interview techniques pioneered in the ‘history from beneath’ of partition. It adopts a semi-structured approach, rather than the use of formal questionnaires. Like such writers as Ian Talbot, it cross-checks memories which may suffer from faulty recall with documentary sources. It is also aware of the fact that first hand testimonies are as important for uncovering ‘perceptions’ of the past as for ‘new facts’ about it. The accounts challenge some of the received views on partition history.

### **Organization of Chapters**

This thesis is divided into three parts, excluding the introduction and conclusion: (i) the colonial period and its impact on the urban development of Gujranwala and Sialkot and the wider issues of partition violence, migration and refugee settlement in the Punjab context; (ii) the local episodes of violence and migration in the two cities from March 1947 onwards; (iii) the post-1947 demographic changes and economic challenges in the two cities.

In part I, the opening chapter begins by introducing the reader to the socio-economic and political development of Gujranwala and Sialkot in the late colonial period. It examines the ways in which the cities’ strategic location boosted by railway development assisted their rise, along with the ways in which new industries supplanted existing ones, but relied similarly on a skilled population. It highlights the key role of the Hindu and Sikh minorities in the development of the two cities. It also examines the impact on religious harmony of the growth of reformist organizations and revivalists. It asks the question whether the sharpened religious identities of the

colonial era paved the way for the violence and mass migration of 1947. Chapter two provides a Punjab-wide assessment of the patterns of violence and resulting mass migration. It also considers the West Punjab's responses to the refugee influx, issues of accommodations and economic recovery in the province. Part 1 thus provides a background to the thesis by explaining life before partition in the both cities and the general impact of partition for the Punjab.

Part II focuses on the communal violence in the cities of Gujranwala and Sialkot and reflects on the circumstances which led to the widespread riot-destruction in both localities from March 1947 onwards. Using previously unexploited local police records, the findings help to understand the scope of the violence in a comparative localized framework. Chapter three seeks to understand these issues in Gujranwala case study and the first time reveals the identification of prime perpetrators of violence in the district. It explores not only the district authorities' partisan attitude towards the minority population, but also exposes the direct participation of local policemen in the attacks and looting. It also exposes the connivance of local railway staff with the *Lohar* perpetrators who were at the forefront in attacking refugee trains in Gujranwala.

Chapter four provides a similar detailed local study of violence in Sialkot. It reveals the role of individual constables and workers of the city's Muslim League in the wanton destruction and looting in the wake of administrative collapse. The chapter also considers the relationship between violence and the state, by examining the Hindu Dogra state's complicity in the organised violence against the Muslims of Jammu, who flooded into Sialkot as refugees. It also examines the impact of post-partition Sialkot's precarious border existence not only on the local population but also on the non-Muslim untouchable *Chamar* community.

While partition brought sufferings for many and disrupted old social, commercial and kin networks, at the same time it created new opportunities for the migrants as well as the local population to exploit the economic vacuum arising from the migration of Hindu and Sikh business classes. This aspect of partition has been neglected in the literature. In the third and final part, chapters 5 and 6 consider the ways in which the departure of Hindu and Sikh trading and capital classes handicapped the economic activities of Gujranwala and Sialkot, and how the cities responded to such consequences. It assesses the post-partition refugee rehabilitation and economic recovery, alongside the government assistance in industrial development. It provides the key to understanding how the cities, despite their initial partition disruption, recovered to emerge at the forefront of industrial development in the region. Chapter five on Gujranwala considers the extent to which the input of local and refugee capital and labour were locally significant in the city's post-partition urban economic development. Chapter six enquires how Sialkot's new border situation affected its development not only with respect to security concerns but with the loss of traditional markets and raw materials. The focus is upon post-independence Sialkot's industrial recovery and new economic opportunities for Muslims. It reveals how local skilled Muslim artisans seized the new opportunity to start new economic activities following the departure of the Hindu traders and assesses the extent to which the Muslim artisans' success depended on government assistance.

This study aims to shed fresh light on the impact of partition and its aftermath on the Pakistan Punjab. It will provide new insights into the patterns of violence, refugee resettlement and economic development by means of a detailed study of the cities of Gujranwala and Sialkot.

## **Part 1**

### **Contexts: Historical and Provincial**

Specimens of a trade in cutlery which seems to have been established for a long time in Gujranwala, Wazirabad and Nizamabad, where also guns, pistols, swords, razors, spears, horse-bits, bullet-moulds and other steel articles are made... Their exhibits of cutlery were awarded a silver medal at the Franco-British exhibition in London, which were sold on the spot.

- John Lockwood Kipling 1881

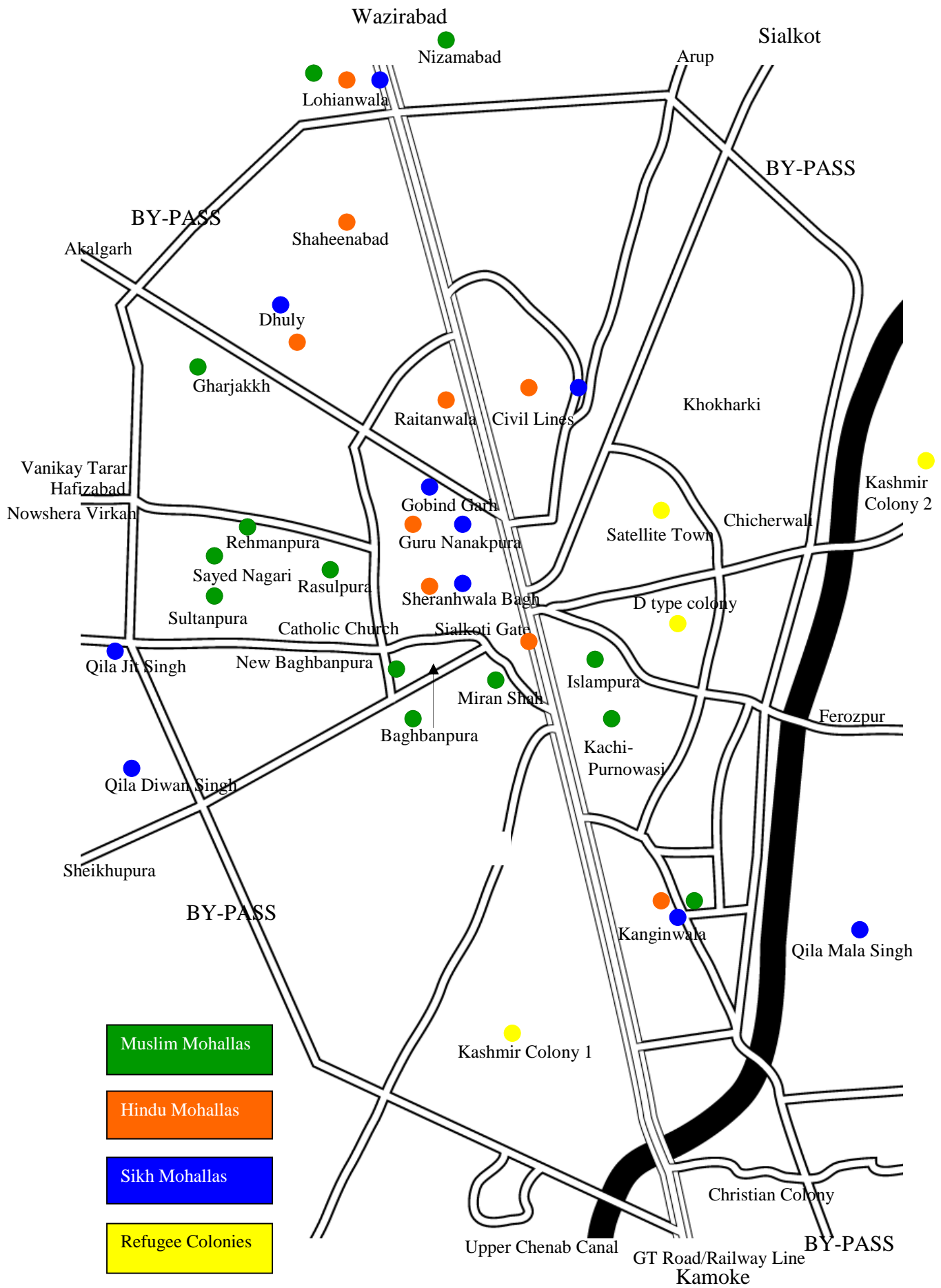
The industries which Sialkot has a reputation in Punjab bazars are work of the brass work of Daska and Pasrur, the *koft* or damascened work of Kotli Luharan, and the paper of Sialkot. Among Europeans Sialkot racquets and badminton bats with silver-mounted riding canes, represent the manufactures of district.

- John Lockwood Kipling 1881

### **Colonial Inheritance: Life before Partition in Gujranwala and Sialkot**

Gujranwala city is situated in West Punjab and lies in what might be termed its northern central region. Sialkot in contrast is a northern border city adjacent to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. On the eve of the partition of India, Sialkot district was divided into four sub-divisions of Daska, Pasrur, Narowal and Sambrial. Gujranwala district was divided into three sub-divisions of Hafizabad, Wazirabad and Mandi Bahauddin. The population of Gujranwala city in 1941 was about 196,000 compared with Sialkot's figure of 139,000. While Muslims constituted the majority of the population, Hindus and Sikhs chiefly controlled the pre-partition economic activities of the two cities.

Both Gujranwala and Sialkot were immensely affected by the colonial impact in Punjab. Sialkot had become one of the most important industrial centres in the province by the end of British rule. It was surpassed only by Amritsar in a province which was dominated by agriculture rather than industry. Gujranwala, on the other hand, had neither a strong urban civic cultural nor an obvious industrial background. While Gujranwala's growth lagged behind that of Sialkot, its strategic road and railway connections ensured a prominent commercial position for the city in the Punjab. This chapter examines the cities' colonial growth. It examines the ways in which their urbanization was stimulated by the development of civil lines, cantonment areas and migration, along with the ways in which the cities' strategic location boosted by railway development assisted their rise. It will also assess the communal



**Map 2: Gujranwala City in 1947**

composition of the population and the communities' relations in the localities. Finally, it will outline the role Hindus and Sikhs played in the cities' social and economic life. Without this background, it would be difficult to fully understand the changes and challenges which arose in the cities as a result of the division of Punjab in 1947. Firstly, we address such themes through the case study of Gujranwala. Before examining the city's considerable urban and economic growth during the colonial rule, we shall briefly turn to its much earlier socio-economic and political history.

### **Gujranwala's Pre-Colonial Development**

Gujranwala, the 'abode to Gujars', was originally known as Khanpur Shansi after an individual of the Jat caste called Khan Shansi who founded eleven villages in the region. In the mid-seventeenth century, the cattle-breeding tribe of Gujars occupied the region and gave it its name. Gujars still form a considerable proportion of the population of the city of Gujranwala. Knowledge of Gujranwala's early history is sketchy. The first recorded reference is found in the journals of the Chinese traveller Hieuen Tsang in AD 630. At that time, the principal places in the district were Eminabad, Hafizabad and Khangah Dogran rather than Gujranwala. During the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1556-1605), both Sialkot and Gujranwala formed part of the Rechnabad *sirkar* (district) of the Lahore *suba* (province). A large area from Eminabad to Sialkot was held by the one (or some times two separate) *faujdar*, who ensured the collection of revenue and maintained law and order.<sup>1</sup> The revenue of

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<sup>1</sup> David Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh* (London: Crystal Palace Press, 1883), p. 137. For socio-economic conditions in the Punjab during the seventeenth century see, Chetan Singh, 'Centre and Periphery in the Mughal State: The Case of Seventeenth-Century Punjab', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 22, 2 (1988), pp. 299-318.

Eminabad was given as Rs. 621,325 in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.<sup>2</sup> The period between the decline of the Mughal Empire on the death of Aurangzeb (1707) and the rise of the Sikh confederacies (roughly by the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) till the dominance of Sikh rule, was one of 'anarchy and misrule'. This period saw internecine quarrels and successive waves of invasion. There was no strong authority to maintain peace and order in this or other parts of Punjab which were frequently devastated by the invading armies of Nadir Shah (1739) and Ahmad Shah (1761). The places fell to the Pathans, the Sikh Rajput chiefs and the Bhangi tribes.<sup>3</sup>

What makes Gujranwala different from other places of the Punjab is that it was the first place in the region where Sikh domination was established in the late eighteenth century. Therefore the place had many associations with the Sikh community and witnessed some intimate connections with the fortunes of the Sikh royal family. It was the birth-place of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1779-1839). Charat Singh, grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, seized Gujranwala in 1765 which henceforth remained his headquarters till his death in 1773. In 1810, Ranjit Singh established the Sikh monarchy, although the work was begun by Charat Singh and continued by Mahan Singh, the father of Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh faced many opponents in Gujranwala before he consolidated his power. The decaying power of the Mughals, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had given the opportunity to Gujranwala's Muslim tribes to maintain their independence. The most prominent were the Bhattis, Tarars and Chathas who carried on 'an unceasing and bitter struggle' against the Sikh ascendancy till their final overthrow by Ranjit Singh in 1799. To mark the overthrow of Muslim chiefs and the triumph of the Sikhs, the names of

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<sup>2</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 15, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>3</sup> The events in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Punjab are adequately covered by Andrew J. Major, *Return to Empire: Punjab under the Sikhs and British in the mid-Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1996).

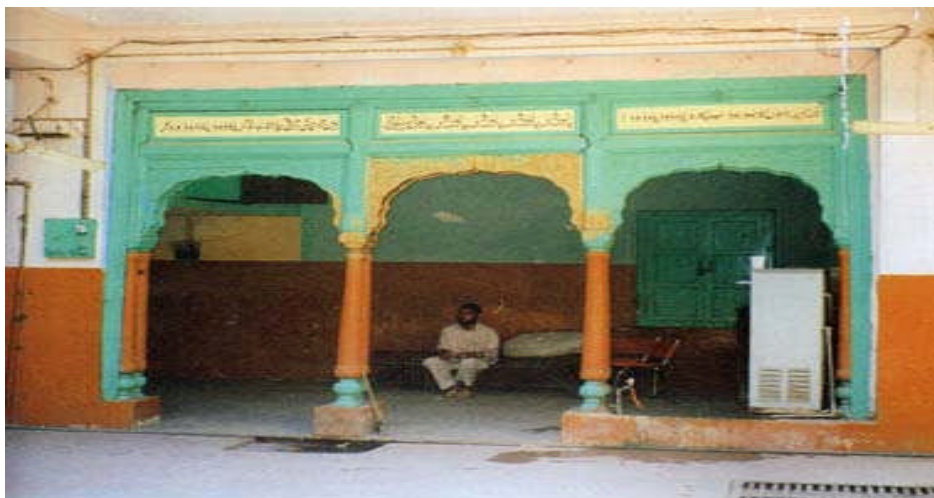




Ranjit Singh's Birth Place in Gujranwala



Tomb of Mahan Singh, father of Ranjit Singh, in Gujranwala



Residence of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, (a well-known army general of Ranjit Singh), in Gujranwala this residence in 1947 was allotted to a migrant Hafiz Ghulam Rasool from Ludhiana

prominent Muslim stronghold localities were changed.<sup>4</sup> For example, the names of Rasul Nagar and Alipur Chatha were altered to Ram Nagar and Akalgarh respectively, though the old names were still being used by the Muslims of the region. Strikingly, the names of these localities were to revert to their older Muslim names after the departure of Hindus and Sikhs at the 1947 partition.

During the Sikh ascendancy in Gujranwala several leading figures of the Muslim tribes were killed and their possessions were looted and confiscated. Many Muslim families took refuge in the nearby jungles and *Bellas* (forests). For years they offered a 'guerrilla resistance' to the Sikh regime. When the power of the Sikh Kingdom was broken in the Second Sikh War, and the Punjab was annexed in 1849 by the British, they returned and were restored to most of their old possessions.

An immediate impact of Sikh rule was the substitution of law and order for insecurity and anarchy. The regime ushered in an era of comparative order and security by setting up a barrier against invasions from outside and stamping out tribal feuds and the private wars of rival chieftains. Indeed the regime accommodated all communities and appointed Hindus in the public affairs and the Muslims as judicial officers in the city of Lahore.<sup>5</sup> Ranjit Singh's dominance of the region had provided opportunities to the Sikh community to control the whole district of Gujranwala, like elsewhere Punjab. The regime hugely blessed with privilege the Jat Sikh *jagirdars* (landlords) whose discretion was practically unbounded as long as they furnished their contingent of troops to the Sikh royal army, or their quota of revenue to the royal treasury. The most noticeable *jagirdars* of Gujranwala were enumerated by a British

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<sup>4</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 29, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>5</sup> C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 16.

settlement officer Morris in his Settlement Report of 1856.<sup>6</sup> Overall, about one-half part of the district was administered directly by the Sikh regime, with the remaining being granted in *jagir* tenure, either to members of families planted by Ranjit Singh, or to court officials and favourites from Lahore. Upon the fall of the Sikh kingdom to the British in the Second Sikh War of 1848-49 at Chillianwala (known as house of slaughter), the *jagirs* of these chiefs were confiscated, albeit temporarily. Thus the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 involved the complete downfall or temporary eclipse of many of the leading Sikh families. The leading Muslim tribes played a crucial part in the victory of the British in the battles of Ram Nagar, Chilianwala and Gujrat against the Sikhs who had crushed them earlier in the century. They rallied to the British, furnished supplies and brought information of the movements of the enemy. For example, the Muslim Pathans of Jandiala Sher Khan provided timely information to the British authorities to avert 'a plot to stir up the Sikh population' by the agency of a religious leader who was 'fomenting rebellion in the guise of a religious mendicant'. Similarly, the well-known Sikh General Maharaja Singh, who had been able to escape safely to Jhang, was captured with the aid of Muslim Bhatti chiefs.<sup>7</sup> As a reward for such services, Muslims were restored to many of their estates from which they had been ejected by the Sikhs, and the nominees of the latter were expelled by force of arms where necessary.

Indeed the British occupation of the Punjab was a shattering blow for the Sikh community. The disbanding of the Sikh armies after the battles of Chilianwala and Gujrat had thrown out of employment thousands of 'sturdy Sikh soldiers' who lost

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<sup>6</sup> These included from Parganah Gujranwala: Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardar Fateh Singh, Sardar Dal Singh, Diwan Sawan Mal, Raja Gulab Singh from Parganah Hafizabad and Sardar Desh Singh, Sardar Jawahir Singh, Sardar Sawan Mal from Parganah Ramnagar and Gurbakhsh Singh, The Rani Nakayan Raj Kauran (second wife of Ranjit Singh) from Parganah Sheikhpura. Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 29, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibids.*

their honours and emoluments. Nevertheless, the cataclysmic events of the 1857 army revolt brought the Sikh population whose attitude since the annexation of the Punjab had been one of 'sullen acquiescence', into closer co-operation with the British. As a whole the direct effects of the rebellion were less in Gujranwala because of the absence of a cantonment in the area. Sialkot, unlike Gujranwala, was heavily affected during the army revolt mainly because of large native army presence in the cantonment, where the mutineers took over the town and remained 'masters of the district for some time'.<sup>8</sup> The Sikh community's loyalty during the revolt not only opened up service in the British India Army, but also provided the opportunity to restore their fortunes and emoluments. Moreover, the Punjab after the revolt was regarded as a model province and emerged as the 'Sword Arm of India' as well as the 'Home Front'.<sup>9</sup> The Sikh community being a 'martial race', along with the Muslims, formed a major component of the British army down to 1947. Some of the army deserters, with the end of British Raj in August 1947, were to take part in the partition-related violence to clear out the opposite community.

### **Gujranwala's Colonial Development**

It is important to understand Gujranwala's development in the wider context of the impact of British rule on the Punjab. This will reveal both its unique features and also the ways in which it was typical of other localities. We will thus briefly refer to the overall impact of British rule on Punjabi urban life. Under British rule, some cities

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<sup>8</sup> Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh*, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> During the First World War, the Indian Army constituted a quarter of a million Punjabis in its ranks, while in Second World War, a million Punjabis served in Army, see Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, p. 41 and pp. 45-6. Also see, Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Saga, 2005).

lost their importance, and often their city status along with it.<sup>10</sup> Others either came into being, such as Lyallpur, Montgomery and Sargodha in the canal colony development, or underwent considerable change. At the same time, many modern cities and markets arose as the result of the opening up of land, which was tied in with the commercialisation of agricultural production. The cities in the western part of Punjab, the so-called 'colony cities' or 'colony market towns', were of this type.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, new garrisons and civil lines sprang up in the major centres of the Punjab. Quarters for the British civil administration (civil lines) appeared in them; military cantonments were built at a certain distance from the 'old city' or the 'walled city'. Thus within the limits of a single area, two cities would seemingly spring up, the old and the new.

Pre-colonial Gujranwala was a walled city. This fortification dated from Ranjit Singh's reign, when eleven gates were built around the city. The densely-populated inner city was entered by these ancient gates that often took their name from the surrounding areas. Eminabad, Sialkoti and Sheikhpura gates guarded the city's main entrance from that direction. Lohari gate took its name after the iron workers who worked in its vicinity. Soon after the Punjab's annexation, the British deputy commissioner of Gujranwala refurbished the Sheikhpura gate, Sialkoti gate, Lohari gate and Khiyaaly gate. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Gujranwala rapidly expanded. In 1861, a modern Gujranwala 'civil station' for the small population of Europeans was built about a half mile to the north-west of the old city.

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<sup>10</sup> C. A. Bayly, 'Town Building in North India, 1790-1830', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, 4 (1975), pp. 485-86 and p. 488.

<sup>11</sup> In 1907, the population of the colonies had surged to more than two millions. For year-wise increase of population in the colonies see B. H. Dobson, *Final Report on the Chenab Colony Settlement 1915*, p. 34, I.S.PU.20/53, Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library (O.I.O.C). For the development of colonies see David Gilmartin, 'Migration and Modernity: The State, the Punjab Village, and the Settling of the Canal Colonies', in Talbot and Shinder, *People on the Move*, pp. 7-8; Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988).

This was then followed by a mixture of residential and commercial housing of 'Civil Lines'. With the arrival of Christian missionaries, educational institutions, medical missions and churches were built along with the new civil lines buildings. They were soon joined by a number of new civil public buildings of district courts, treasury, jail and police lines. These 'civil lines' were built at a certain distance from the 'old city' separated by the Gujranwala railway line. They were constructed with all modern facilities and sophistication. 'There was very effecting [sic] road-watering with motor sprinklers, and the road lighting with electric lights was excellent'.<sup>12</sup> Other civic services such as medical, education and drainage system were well maintained.

The Gujranwala Public Works Department was responsible for maintaining government buildings in the district. It also built various governmental offices and the principal officials' residence headquarters. The Private Electric Supply Company supplied electricity to the civil lines areas. The Gujranwala Municipal Committee had a large number of shares in the electric company and was receiving 'a good dividend'.<sup>13</sup> The Gujranwala District Board was established in 1892. The Board worked as an advisory body to the district administration. Apart from the imposition of different taxes and issuing various licenses to the citizens, the activities of the Board were extended to education, medical and public work. During the period between 1934 and 1935, the Board's income by the means of various taxes was about Rs 536,190, while the expenditure was Rs 528,216.<sup>14</sup>

With the settlement of a small European population, the urban population experienced enormous social and urban change. The upper classes, specifically upper caste Hindus and Sikhs of the inner city, became the beneficiaries of the new amenities. Their wealth and similar pattern of life to the Europeans saw them shift

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<sup>12</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 296, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 308.





Sialkoti Gate in Gujranwala which was founded in 1869 (Courtesy British Library)



Sialkoti Gate in Gujranwala in 2007



Gujranwala Church Founded in 1865, Courtesy British Library



Gujranwala Railway Station, which was built in 1861





Charan Singh's former residence in Gujranwala until recently, it was used as the district's passport office



Banarasi Shah's former residence in Gujranwala, which was allotted to a migrant Kazim Shah in 1947

into the new civil lines areas. Banarsi Shah and Charan Singh were among the first who exchanged their inner city dwellings for spacious residences in the civil lines area. The former's splendid mansion in Gujranwala Civil Lines still illustrates the glory of that period. It is now occupied by a wealthy Muslim migrant family from Delhi. The bigger mansion of Charan Singh was taken over by the district authorities and until recently was used as the local passport office.

Gujranwala's commercial importance greatly increased with the colonial state's communication revolution from 1871 onwards. The main line of the Punjab North-Western Railway at Wazirabad Junction was constructed in 1871-1874, passing through Gujranwala town. This connected Gujranwala from Peshawar to Lahore-Karachi and added immensely to its commercial importance. The railway network linked up the principal marts of Wazirabad, Hafizabad, Akalgarh, Kaleke, Sukheki, Kamoki and Eminabad with Gujranwala town. These towns and cities had their own railway stations, where surplus crops were transported to the Gujranwala town grain market. The construction of the railway revolutionised long distance transportation. Local traders and manufactures occasionally visited Lahore and Amritsar for raw material and economic needs. Some of them were even importing hardware directly from Karachi, Bombay and Jamshedpore. The spread of metalled roads and bullock carts improved short-distance haulage. By the early 1930s, motor vehicles were used and were being assembled in the city. Lorry traffic had become 'almost universal' within the district by replacing bullock-carts.<sup>15</sup> The 'efficient' Gujranwala's Nishat and Sialkot's Nanda Bus services provided a regular service from Sialkot- via Gujranwala- to Lahore. Such private services affected the regular railway business in the region because of cheaper fares and good service. By the mid thirties, Gujranwala

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<sup>15</sup>Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, pp. 195-96, Punjab Archives Lahore.

with a considerable motor lorry traffic and regular railway service had ‘almost become a suburb of Lahore’.<sup>16</sup>

### **Pre-Partition Commercial Activity of Gujranwala**

Prior to partition, however, there was little industry in Gujranwala to really distinguish it from other small provincial towns. Most manufacturing involved the processing of agricultural products. There were cotton ginning, rice husking and oil milling factories. They were owned mainly by the Hindus and Sikhs. The most important were the Guru Nanak Cotton Ginning, Punjab Rice Husking Factory and the Chawla Oil Extracting Factory. Wood working also flourished in the district as wood was easily available from the depot of Wazirabad, where it was floated down from Kashmir state. There were both furniture making and match factories in the city.

The communication network decisively altered the patterns of trade in Gujranwala. This not only connected the city more closely with other urban centres but enabled the rapid transportation of raw materials from the surrounding areas. Local iron works developed, utilising unwrought iron which was transported from the railway junctions of Wazirabad and Gujranwala. Small scale iron manufacturing predated the colonial era. The *Lohars* (ironsmiths) of the region had developed a long established reputation making agricultural implements and household items. Historically Gujranwala was on the invasion route from central Asia. As a result, the region developed a specialised expertise in manufacturing metal-based weapons. *Lohars* modified their skills by making swords and daggers for the Mughal emperors. A large chunk of the industry was situated within Gujranwala and its satellite towns of

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

Wazirabad and Nizamabad. The region because of the strong concentration of iron-works is sometimes called the 'Sheffield of India'.

Artisan *Lohars* made all kinds of articles for use and ornament, such as shields and arms, betel-nut, cutters, knives, boxes, plates and inkstands. Besides these, some of the artisans made walking sticks and tube wells. The most important manufacturing was cutlery and knives. This became a speciality of Nizamabad where around two hundred families of blacksmiths plied their craft in about twenty five workshops.<sup>17</sup> The production made here was found all over India. John Lockwood Kipling, then the Principal of Lahore School of Art, described the blacksmiths of the town as 'the better class of artisans'. He wrote that a large proportion of the brass vessels of 'sound workmanship' manufactured in Gujranwala and Nizamabad were shown at the 1881 Punjab Exhibition and some of these were sent to the Calcutta Exhibition of 1883-84. There was also a large export of cutlery and walking sticks to Bombay, Calcutta and other places in India. The town was a regular supplier of the familiar office knife to the Stationary Office Calcutta.<sup>18</sup>

Gujranwala's iron manufacturing greatly benefited from the arrival of railway. The main depots of unwrought iron of the Punjab North-Western Railway were situated at Wazirabad and Gujranwala railway junctions because of their central location in the Punjab. From there unwrought iron was supplied all over the northern Punjab and North West Frontier Province. In 1908-9, for example, overall about 64,000 *maunds* of unwrought iron arrived by railway in the Punjab. The railway stations of Gujranwala and Wazirabad received more iron materials than any other cities of the province. Gujranwala railway station dealt with 24,308 (outwards) and 34,961 (inwards) *maunds* of unwrought iron. Wazirabad railway station managed

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<sup>17</sup> A. Latifi, *The Industrial Punjab: A Survey of Facts, Conditions and Possibilities* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911), p. 232.

<sup>18</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 188 and p.190, Punjab Archives Lahore.

about 1,363 (outward) and 2,747 (inward) *maunds* of unwrought iron in years of 1908-9.<sup>19</sup> This easy access of unwrought iron boosted manufacturing in Gujranwala. It was just a small-scale iron industry at the outset of colonial rule, but bigger items such as iron-safes, door-chains, axe-heads, hinges, nails, frying-pans and *almirahs* and charcoal-stoves were manufactured usually in zinc sheets by the early twentieth century. In 1908, there were some twenty-six workshops manufacturing iron-safes, chest and *almirahs*, employing about a hundred people. Dagahwala bazaar of Gujranwala became the centre of such iron-work manufacturers. The products were mainly manufactured by the artisan *Lohars*.

The colonial period was especially important in increasing the mobility, technical skills and capital of the local artisan communities of the region. They were largely drawn to the city during the colonial period because of employment opportunities in the extended construction of the civil lines, railway networks and the canal headwork at Marala. Those most benefited by these colonial developments were the Muslim artisan castes of *Lohars* and *Tarkhans* (carpenters) along with Sikh *Ramgarhias* who possessed similar metalworking and carpentry skills. The demands from the British army during the First World War further boosted manufacturing and increased their income. They produced a large variety of *kukris*, spear-heads, pen-knives and swagger canes with regimental crest. Many obtained jobs in the Army as 'shoe-smiths', 'regiment-smiths' and 'armours-makers'. Many others were employed in the railway and canal headwork at Marala as 'railway-smiths', 'railway-masons' and 'railway-drivers'. At the beginning of the war, *Lohar and Tarkhans* employed in Gujranwala numbered together over 5000.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Latifi, *The Industrial Punjab*, p. 230.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

After the war economic uncertainties compelled the *Lohars* to specialise in products in particular locales. Many switched to making brass, copper and bronze utensils, while many others shifted their skills to the making of sanitary fitting wares. By the time of the Second World War, a substantial proportion of these skilled workers had set up their own workshops and started out by working on large defence orders from the colonial state during the war. The *Lohars* located in Gujranwala traditionally worked on a type of cottage industry basis. The owners of these industrial enterprises and units tended to be drawn from the Hindu commercial castes, while the craftsmen were Muslims.

The bulk of the iron and steel manufactured in Gujranwala was for local consumption as opposed to the Sialkot's surgical instruments which, as we will see later, were produced for export. The district authorities encouraged Gujranwala's iron manufacturing industry by setting up a training industrial school to compete with the standard imported products. In 1926, the Punjab government under the control of the Director of Industries established the Tool Makers' Trade School in Gujranwala. The school was run and maintained under the supervision of the Inspector of Industrial School Punjab and was fully equipped with a modern plant and the requisite tools and appliances, for both iron-works and carpentry. Apart from the state school, the American Christian Mission also set up the Gujranwala Industrial School which possessed an 'up-to-date Motor Garage', that claimed the ability to meet competition from imported brands.<sup>21</sup> The development of these industrial institutions gave a stimulus to industrialization and subsequently played an important role in the making of Gujranwala's modern small and medium engineering and mechanical industry.

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<sup>21</sup>Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 328, Punjab Archives Lahore.

Industrial growth was one factor behind Gujranwala's increasing population. Jobs were also to be had in construction work and in the provision of goods and equipment for the civil lines. Finally, there were employment opportunities as unskilled labourers and hauliers. The population of the city rose more than 20,000 in a decade between 1921 and 1931, making the total in all about 58,000. The increase in 1932-3 alone was about 12,000 when there were plenty of job opportunities in the construction project of the headwork of the Marala Canal.<sup>22</sup>

The growing industrial activity of Gujranwala led to a mushrooming of commercial and banking development. Some leading banking companies and societies opened offices in the city. On the eve of partition, it possessed four branches or agencies of leading banks of India. Initially the Central Bank of India and Imperial Bank of India opened their city branches in the civil lines area. The Punjab National Bank opened in a building by the city's railway station, while the Lloyds Bank Limited set up a Pay Office in the city's Kutcheri Bazaar. The Gujranwala Central Co-operative Bank Limited was at the forefront of providing loans to the industrial class of the city. The Gujranwala Mortgage Bank Limited considerably affected the business of traditional Hindu *banias* (money-lenders) in the district. The bank offered discounted interest rates.<sup>23</sup> Though the modern banking system affected the business of the *banias*, it was however the Hindu commercial castes that largely owned and controlled most of the banking system of the city. When they migrated in 1947, banking was badly hit.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 209, Punjab Archives Lahore.

## **The Hindus of Gujranwala**

The Hindu community had established itself in the region during the period of Ranjit Singh and controlled most of the trade and business activity. By the end of the colonial era, important Hindu and Sikh communities had grown up in Gujranwala's Shaheenabad, Baghbanpura, Checherwali, Gobindgargh and Guru Nanakpura *mohallas*. They were exclusively Hindu and Sikh localities some two miles north-west of the newly developed civil lines areas. They were fairly densely packed and contained both residences and shops. After partition, they were to be occupied by the poorer Muslim refugees from East Punjab. The well-known Sarafa bazaar in the Sialkoti gate also contained many Hindu residences and jewellery and hosiery shops. These are today occupied largely by Muslim refugees from Jullundur, Ludhiana and Amritsar.

The Banias and Jains monopolised the banking services. Aroras were the most educated caste and dominated the city's educational and professional activities. They formed an important component of the district administration. Their district wide population was enumerated as 35,000 at the time of the 1931 Census. Dr Gokul Chand of this caste group represented Gujranwala in the Punjab Legislative Assembly as Minister for Local-Self Government, Punjab. Khattris were another most important and influential Hindu caste in the region, whose population was enumerated at just over 28,000 at the time of the 1931 Census.<sup>24</sup> They were not only traders, controlling the retail and wholesale trades in iron safes, brass and aluminium vessels, but also were big landowners. Overall they owned about forty estates in Gujranwala, six in Wazirabad and sixteen in Hafizabad.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 88.



**TABLE 1.1****Composition of Urban Population in the district Gujranwala's different Towns<sup>25</sup>**

<b>Name of Town</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1881</b>
Gujranwala	58,716	37,887	29,224	20,224	26,785	22,881
Wazirabad	20,707	18,645	17,146	18,069	15,786	16,462
Hafizabad	14,431	8,854	n/a	4,597		2,453
Eminabad	7,329	5,816	5,526	6,494	5,841	5,886
Akalgarh	5,483		3,943	4,961	4,262	4,312
Ram Nagar	4,768	4,632	5,256	7,121	6,592	6,830
Pindi Bhattian	4,478					3,528

**TABLE 1.2****Religious Composition of Population in Gujranwala District in 1941<sup>26</sup>**

<b>Communities</b>	<b>Gujranwala (dist)</b>	<b>Gujranwala (tahsil)</b>	<b>Wazirabad</b>	<b>Hafizabad</b>	<b>%</b>
Muslims	642,706	285,845	1,57,961	1,98,900	70.4
Hindus	100,887	58,242	22,355	27,290	17.1
Sikhs	99,139	76,035	13,543	9,561	10.4
Christian	62,274	44,614	11,979	4,236	6.5
Scheduled caste	7485	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.9
Total	9, 12,234	4, 66,248	2, 05,952	2, 40,034	

The most influential Khatri families of Gujranwala were Madhoks, Malhotras and Vigs. Their extensive agricultural land in and around the city enabled them to control its largest grain market. The wealthy Kapur and Chopra families dominated the trades and commercial activities of Akalgarh and Hafizabad respectively. They owned not only most of the shops and properties, but also a considerable amount of agricultural land which was granted them during the rule of Ranjit Singh. Muslim tenants cultivated their land. The affluent Bostani family controlled over half of the property of Ram Nagar town. Powerful Marwahas of Wazirabad and Khatri Dewans of Kamoke held similar possessions. The most influential was Dewan Lal Nath of

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Complication of Official Documents* (National Document Centre, Lahore, 1983), Vol. III, Table 9, p. 13 and p. 85.

Eminabad who had established the biggest flour and rice mills of the region on his landed estates. They also had brick kilns, cotton-ginning and rice-husking mills. He established his own educational institutions like Amar Nath High School which was maintained by the Nath estate.<sup>27</sup> Muslim tenants and labourers worked on his estate.

Banarsi Shah and Charan Singh emerged at the forefront in the manufacturing of iron-works and pipe fittings. With the rapid refurbishing of the civil lines and the other construction work, demands for their products received a stimulus. In a short span of time, they earned their fortunes and emerged as leading traders of the town. The main workforce in their factory established in the civil lines area was Muslim. Another leading light of the city was Ram Gopal Arora who in the early 1940s established the well-known firm called 'Prabhat Engineering Limited' in Gujranwala. It provided employment for both Muslims and Hindus down to 1947. The workers were to take over the industry when the Arora family left for India in 1947. Lala Kasturi Lal Jain was the leading jeweller of the city. He was not only the leading mortgage lender of the region but also had shares in the city's well-known Bullion Bank. At partition, he was to migrate to Jullundur and set up the well-known trade of jewellery in the city by the name of 'Gujranwala Jewellers'.<sup>28</sup>

The Hindu community of Gujranwala not only controlled trade and commercial activity, but swiftly took up educational and professional opportunities. They set up their own educational institutions. The distinguished King George Hindu College was an important educational establishment in Gujranwala. This premier institution for the Hindu community was established with the assistance of the government as it granted free land in the civil lines site along the Grand Trunk Road.

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<sup>27</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 87, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Abdul Saleem, Gujranwala, 5 March 2007.

Despite the fact that the institution largely served students from the Hindu community, its doors were open to all communities.

### **The Sikhs of Gujranwala**

As has been noted earlier, Gujranwala was the first place in the region where Sikh domination was established and Ranjit Singh hugely privileged Sikh community. By the end of the colonial era, while Sikhs only formed about eleven per cent of the total population of the district, they held more than a quarter of its agricultural land and paid about one-third of the land revenue. Although they were thinly spread all over the rural and urban localities, their main concentration was in the Gujranwala *tahsil* where they constituted more than sixteen per cent of the population. In some localities such as Karial, Naushehra Virka and Majhi Chak their concentration made them an overall majority.<sup>29</sup> They were largely landlords and many employed Muslim tenants on their land. Their colonial stereotype as ‘sturdy’ cultivators meant that they acquired large amounts of the land in the Canal Colonies. *Labanas* Sikhs formed the most dominant element of the Sikh population and owned a considerable number of agricultural properties in Gujranwala. They were also freely recruited into the Army.

In the city, Sikhs were concentrated largely in Guru Nanakpura, Gobindgargh Singh and Dulay *mohallas*. A small number of the *Ramgarhias* Sikhs were involved with the iron manufacturing industry of the city and specialised in manufacturing of musical instruments such as harmoniums. The Gujranwala Khalsa Council was the community’s main social organization. The imposing Khalsa High School, established in 1889, provided community education and was maintained by the Khalsa Educational Council. The school was upgraded to a college in 1917 thanks to

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<sup>29</sup>*The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, Vol. III, p. 43.

the efforts of its founder principal M. U. Moore. Other luminaries who served on its staff included Teja Singh and Professors Kirpal Singh Narang and Fauja Singh.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Muslims of Gujranwala**

The Muslims of Gujranwala formed more than seventy per cent of the city's population. The majority were artisans who had been drawn to the city in search of work during the colonial period. As pointed out earlier, many were employed for the maintenance of the railway lines as 'railway masons' and many others were appointed as 'regimental smiths'. Important Muslim concentrations were in the old city's Rasulpur, Islampura and Rahmanpura suburbs. There were few large scale Muslim businessmen. There were just a handful of Muslim mill owners. The most important Muslim run factory was the Allah Ditta utensils. Muslim businessmen were drawn from the Arain, Sheikh and Gujar communities. Sheikhs dominated the wool and hides trades and Arains and Gujars held a similar position with respect to marketing garden and dairy products respectively. The local wealthy landowning Jat and Rajput families such as Chatha, Cheema, Tarar and Bhatti also owned houses in the city because of its growing educational and health facilities.

Kashmiris were an important community within the city. A British observer described them as 'the finest race on the whole of the continent of India' because of their well made and robust features. They formed a significant proportion of the city's population. According to the 1931 census they numbered 23,311 in the district.<sup>31</sup> Over the years, they had been drawn to Gujranwala's employment opportunities from Kashmir. They dominated in *Pattis* and *pashmina* shawl-manufacturing and their markets stretched from Rawalpindi to Amritsar. Although the *pashmina* shawl

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<sup>30</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibids.*, p. 89.

industry declined with the contraction of the European market, the Kashmiris, alongside the Ansari turned to making sheets, *kheses*, *lungis* and cotton *durries*. The locality of Gakkhar on the GT Road became a centre for making *durries*. Kashmiris were by and large prosperous and therefore were able to play a role in the city's public life. They competed with Hindu Aroras to hold key positions in the different government offices. The retired district Judge Haji Rahim Bakhsh carved out an imposing role in city's public life. Ata Mohammad was a leading Kashmiri figure in the city's pre-partition politics. He became the president of Gujranwala Municipal Committee in 1932. His elder brother Khan Bahadur Sheikh Din Mohammad, a prominent lawyer of Gujranwala, was elected a member of Punjab Legislative Council, while the younger brother Mian Mohammad Afzal was appointed as an Extra Assistant Conservator in the Forest Department.<sup>32</sup> Many were also employed in the Northern Railway, while Kashmiris worked in Gujranwala's private transport services. Like Lahore and Sialkot which also had a significant pre-independence Kashmiri population, Gujranwala attracted a substantial number of Kashmir refugees from the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir and Amritsar at the division of the Punjab in 1947.

Overall the Muslims of Gujranwala lagged behind its Hindus in professional and educational fields. Despite the establishment of the Islamia High School, which was later upgraded to a college, by the Anjuman-i- Himayat-ul- Islamia, the new educational opportunities were monopolised by high caste Hindus. Significantly in 1935 over fifty non-Muslim lawyers were practising in the Gujranwala District Bar against only five Muslims.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-1.

The Muslims of Gujranwala as we have seen lagged behind the non-Muslims not only in terms of education but in trade and finance. Both Hindus and Sikhs owned more than two-thirds of the city's property and business activity. This is further evidenced starkly from the following figures: the urban immovable property tax paid by them amounted to Rs 65,000 as against only Rs. 13,000 paid by the Muslims. The sales tax paid by them amounted to Rs 201,765 as against about Rs. 12,500 paid by the Muslims. The income tax paid by the non-Muslims amounted to about Rs 700,000 as against about Rs 50,000 paid by the Muslims.<sup>34</sup> This meant, though the Hindus and Sikhs formed a little more than one-third of the city's population, they paid more than fifty-five per cent of its taxes and revenues.

Indeed it was this economic stake that led the Sikh representatives on the 1947 Radcliffe Boundary Commission to argue for the city and its surrounding districts to be awarded to India. Radcliffe drew his eventual line based on population rather than 'other factors.' This left Gujranwala in Pakistan. During the months of August to December 1947 almost all its Hindu and Sikh population, as throughout West Punjab, migrated to India. Amidst scenes of chaotic violence, Muslims made a reverse journey from East Punjab, some of whom were to settle as refugees in the city. Such experiences will be examined in later chapters. We shall turn now to an examination of Sialkot's historical colonial inheritances.

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<sup>34</sup> For details see, Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab, India and Pakistan, 1947* (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1991), pp. 223-24; The Muslim League's point of view over the claim of district see, *The Partition of the Punjab 1947*, p. 85, Vol. III, pp. 43-8.

## **Life before Partition in Sialkot City**

Sialkot contrasts sharply with Gujranwala in terms of its culture of enterprise and export activity. It was one of the wealthiest cities in the Punjab. Its three well-defined industrial clusters producing surgical instruments, leather garments and sporting goods had thrived during the British rule. They not only fulfilled the bulk of India's requirements but also were exported world-wide. On the eve of partition, the average annual export value of the city's sporting goods and surgical instruments stood at over Rs 35 million. The Hindu and Sikh commercial and trading class of Sialkot mainly controlled the pre-partition industry of the city, while the Muslims chiefly formed its artisans. Any territorial division of the Punjab was likely to be grim not only for community relations but for the city's continued prosperity. This section of the chapter raises questions such as how can we account for Sialkot's more rapid urban and industrial growth than Gujranwala? What role did Sialkot play in the economic life of the surrounding district? How did Hindu and Sikh populations contribute to Sialkot's industrial and commercial development? Finally, how did the rapid Christian convert community impact on community relations in Sialkot? Before examining such questions we shall turn to Sialkot's urban and economic growth before and during colonial rule.

## **Historical Development**

The town's origins were placed 'in the time frame of Harappan Civilization'.<sup>35</sup> Legend attributes Sialkot's founding to the times of Raja Salivahan, who built the fort and gave the place its present name. It is thought that the word Sialkot means 'the fort

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<sup>35</sup>Kenneth A. R. Kennedy, 'Prehistoric Skeletal Record of Man in South Asia', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 9 (1980), p. 400.

of Salivahan' which is a corruption of Sia. Sialkot's early history is interwoven with traditions of Raja Salivahan, his two sons Raja Risalu and Puran, and his foe, Raja Hondi, so famous in Punjab folk-lore. Puran was killed by a wicked step-mother, and thrown into a well, the resort of pilgrims near Sialkot, called 'Puran ka Kunwa', (the well of Puran).<sup>36</sup> A *mohalla* in the city is still called Puran Nagar which down to partition formed the main concentration of Hindu population in the old city.

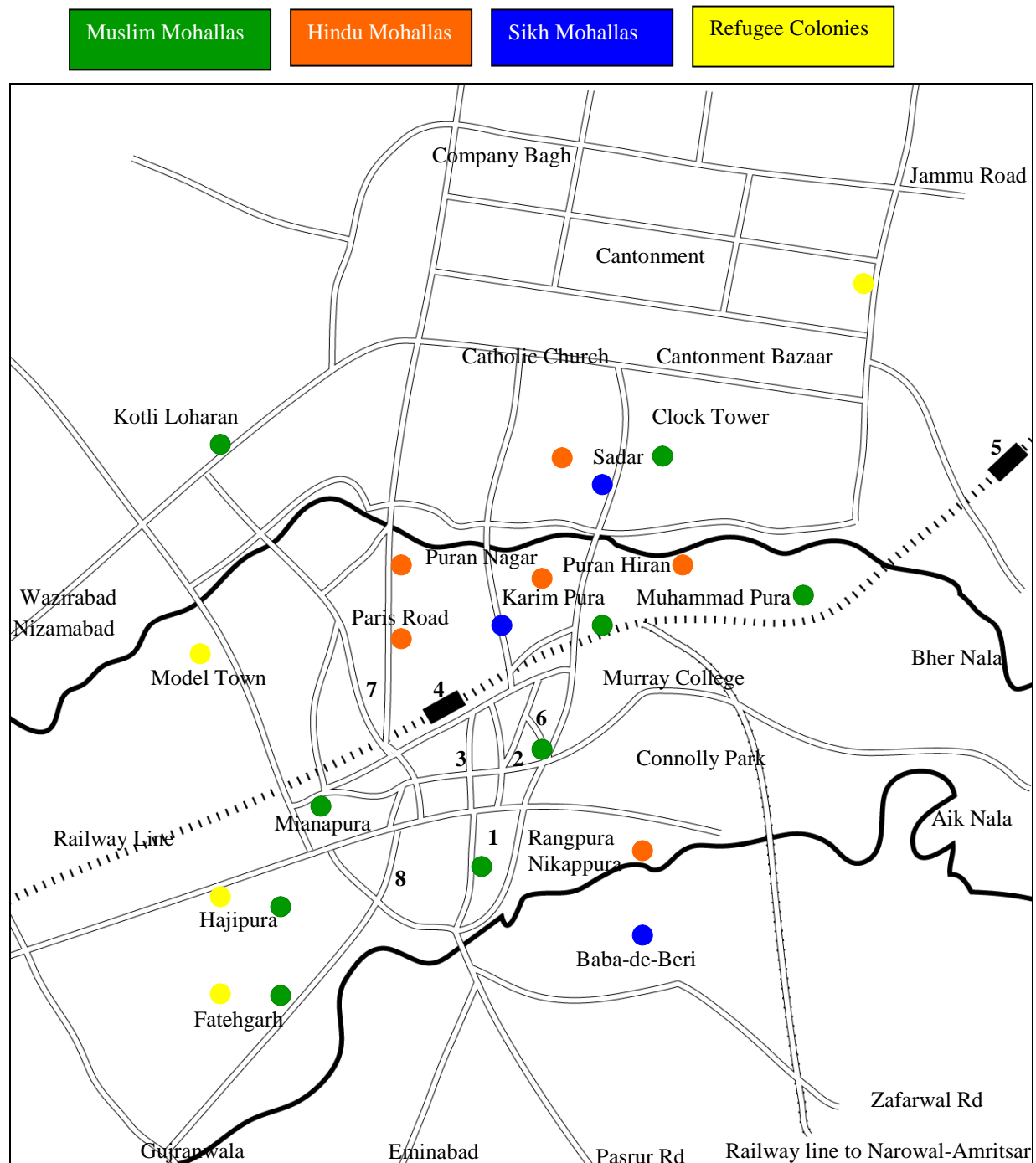
Pre-colonial Sialkot city possessed a fascinating architectural layout and structure. It possessed a labyrinth of narrow alleyways and crowded bazaars that were demarcated by the occupations and communities of their inhabitants. The architectural layout of the houses and bazaars had many similarities with the building style of neighbouring Kashmir. Inhabitants' traditional houses and double-storeyed balconies were usually built with Kashmiri wood. The inner city was highly congested because of the extended size of the families. The most prominent suburbs of the city were Rang Pura, Main Pura, Kashmiri *mohalla*, Puran Nagar, Hiran Pura, and Baba-di-Beri. The first three localities were the colonies of Muslim artisans, the latter as its name implies was inhabited by Sikh families. Rang Pura on the east and Main Pura on the west were the most important. The 1881 Census enumerated their population at 6,223. The inner city's Hindu population was concentrated in the *mohallas* of Puran Nagar, Neka Pura and Hiran Pura. Markets and bazaars were opened nearby these residential areas and were known for their specialities. For example, Barha bazaar was well-known for its specialty in jewellery, cloth and Kashmiri fruits. The localities of Rang Pura and the Kashmir *mohalla* specialised in Sialkot's well-known paper manufacture. The city's pottery-making such as tiles, jars, flower pots, tea sets was

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<sup>36</sup> Second son of Salivahan, Risalu became involved in wars with Raja Hudi, a Gakkhar chieftain. General Cunningham gave the date of the death of Raja Risalu 400 A.D. After the death of Raja Risalu, the country is said to have fallen under the curse of Puran, for 300 years lying totally devastated from famine and incessant plunder. For the details see, 'Four Legends of King Rasalu', *The Folk-Lore Journal*, Vol. 1, 5 (May, 1883), pp. 129-51.



### Map 3: Sialkot City in 1947



1. Iman Saib
2. Kashmir Mohalla
3. Trunk Bazaar
4. City Railway Station
5. Cantt. Railway Station (to Jammu city)
6. Budhi Bazaar
7. Kutcheri Road
8. Crematorium

also located in the suburban areas. The city's *Kanak Mandi* (market) was famous for grain goods. Over the years of migration and concentration, the suburbs of the city became very congested and had no further room to absorb the population. They remained stagnant, while the city was 'daily increasing in size'. In a decade, ending 1891, the city added more than 9445 persons to its population, reaching the total figure of 55,087, while the congested suburbs increased by no more than 471 persons in their population.

**TABLE 1.3**

**Composition of Population in Sialkot Suburbs, 1881-1891<sup>37</sup>**

<b><u>Name of Suburbs</u></b>	<b><u>1881</u></b>	<b><u>1891</u></b>
<u>Rang Pura</u>	3,676	3,865
<u>Neka Pura</u>	1,653	1,785
<u>Hiran Pura</u>	820	970
<u>Baba-de- Beri</u>	74	n/a

The densely-populated city was entered by ancient Do Darwaza (two doors). The old city possessed important religious shrines. The Muslim shrine of Iman-Ali-ul-Haq, know as Imam Shahib, is of ancient construction. Imam Shahib lived here during thirteenth century, during the reign of Feroz Shah Tughlaq (of the Tughlaq Dynasty). He is reputed to have converted a majority of the local population to Islam. During the Muharram festival Muslims all over the district flocked to pay homage to the Pir. During the regime of Ranjit Singh, the shrine of the first Guru Baba Nanak, known as Gurdwara Baba-de-Beri, which was built on Zafarwal Road, was held in great veneration by the Sikh community. Annually on 13 April a large Basakhi *mella* (fair) was held here and the Sikhs from all over the Punjab flocked to pay homage to the Guru. Still every year, many Sikh pilgrims come to visit here. There was also a

<sup>37</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 170, Punjab Archives Lahore.



Shaiwala Teja Singh Temple in Sialkot



Gurdwara Baba-di-Bari in Sialkot





Traditional Kashmiri Woodwork Architecture in Sialkot's Kashmiri *mohalla*



Uberoi Ganda Singh's former Mansion in Sialkot's Paris Road





A View of Kashmiri *Mohalla* in Sialkot



Uberoi Co-operative Sporting Goods Society in Sialkot's Paris Road



Former Hindu Rang Pura *mohalla* in Sialkot

big Hindu temple Gaho Shaiwala in the inner city that was built by the notable *jagirdar* Raja Tej Singh. Another famous monument of the city is the historical fort of Raja Salbahan. It afforded shelter to the European inhabitants of the cantonments during the 1857 Army Rebellion.

Unlike Gujranwala and many other old urban centres in the province, Sialkot was not a walled city, nor was it insanitary. In 1894, the Sialkot Gazetteer noted.

Sialkot is a fairly handsome, well built, and clean town. Its main streets are wide and open, and either paved or metalled, with good drainage on both sides... The sanitary arrangements are excellent, being facilitated by the elevated position of the town and the natural drainage afforded by the Aik stream on its south and east sides. The water-supply is obtained from wells in the city.<sup>38</sup>

With its flat terrain and fertile soil, Sialkot district was ideal for extensive and productive cultivation, with over 80 per cent of the land being cultivatable. The district was watered by an extensive system of small inundation canals that had originally been constructed by the Mughals in the eighteenth century. Sialkot was regarded as a 'fiscal district' and contributed a considerable amount of revenue to all those regimes who had ruled the region.<sup>39</sup> As a most fertile region of the province, with a regular annual rainfall of thirty to forty inches, 'Sialkot rice' had already attained a substantial level of development and trade on the eve of British annexation of Punjab in 1849.<sup>40</sup> The city had a grain *Mandi* (market), where the surplus crops of district were sold and exported to other parts of India. In 1894-95, the total export

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>39</sup> During Mughal King Shah Jahan period, the well-known engineer Ali Mardan Khan took over control of Sialkot and built the canals and wells in the region and helped the people to pay revenue by cutting canals and by other improvements. Administratively, under the Mughal rule (1526-1707), Sialkot formed part of the *parganah* of Eminabad (now a town of Gujranwala district). According to the author of *Ain-i-Akbari*, the *mahals* of Sialkot, divided into four *parganas*, paid revenue of Rs. 9 00,000. During the period of Ranjit Singh, about 125 villages in Sialkot territory, yielding estimated revenue of Rs. 95,390, were alienated to Sikh *jagirdars*. During the British rule the district was ranked second largest in revenue; in 1883-84, Sialkot paid revenue about Rs. 1,127,769, see, *Sialkot District Gazetteer*, 1883-84, Vol. XVI, Part A, p. 70, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>40</sup> J. M. Douif, *The Punjab Assessment Digest* (Lahore: Punjab Government Press, 1896), p. 24, (Punjab Board of Revenue Record Office, Lahore).

trade of the city was estimated at a value of four *lakhs* per annum, while the total import was estimated at about 15 *lakhs*.<sup>41</sup>

Sialkot's prosperity and abundant employment opportunities attracted regular waves of migrations from surrounding areas over the years. Many from the north-west region came seasonally for work, while others settled permanently. For example, Dr Lal's ancestors migrated from Batala to Sialkot 'due to poverty' in search of work in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> However, the majority of migrants in the district came from neighbouring Jammu and Kashmir as the state had a long history of migration and political association with Sialkot. Many would come over seasonally in search of work during the winter season, while others settled permanently, forming the largest concentration in the Kashmiri *mohalla* of Sialkot. In the years of 1878-79, a severe famine in Kashmir forced large numbers of people to migrate to Sialkot permanently. By the end of century, Sialkot because of the regular flow of migrants was regarded one of the 'most densely crowded' districts in the Punjab.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, the congestion of the population formed an increasingly anxious problem and land became an important commodity in the district. As the 1894-95 Sialkot Gazetteer trumpeted:

It is clear that the district had reached a point at which the main factor of the condition of the people is the intensity of their pressure on the soil, and if they

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<sup>41</sup> J. R. Dunlop-Smith, *Final Report of the Revision of the Settlement of the Sialkot District in the Punjab, 1888-1895*, p. 10, V/27/314/626. O.I.O.C.

<sup>42</sup> An Unpublished Autobiography of Dr. Kishan Chand of Sialkot, (1962) pp. 29-30, I am grateful to Dr Lal for providing me a copy of the memoir of his father.

<sup>43</sup> Dunlop-Smith, *Sialkot District in the Punjab, 1888-1895*, p. 6, V/27/314/626. O.I.O.C. Sialkot stood first in order of population among the districts of undivided Punjab, although it was one of the smallest in total area. It comprised 1.7 per cent of the total area of the province and 5.36 percent of the total population. The population density was 753.1 per square mile in 1881 and 768.6 per square mile in the following decade. Sialkot *tahsil* (including city) was the most congested, maintaining a population density of 760 persons per square mile. On average nine persons lived per house. *Sialkot District Statistical Tables, 1936*, Vol. XV, Part B, File No. J, 64/65, p. xv, (Punjab Board of Revenue Records, Lahore).

are to lift themselves out of the “hungry residue” of the population many will have to turn from agricultural to industrial pursuits.<sup>44</sup>

It became necessary for people of Sialkot to earn their livelihood from something other than the land. Industrial development came quite late but was rapid by the end of colonial rule. At the close of the Second World War, Sialkot was more developed industrially than anywhere else in the Punjab except Amritsar. Before examining this late surge, it is necessary to say a little about its much earlier beginnings.

Sialkot’s most important pre-colonial manufacture was in paper-making. This was due to its excellent geographic position and access to natural resources, especially wood and waterpower. The paramount consideration for paper mills was the presence of an abundant supply of clear running water from the four well-known local streams of Sialkot. During the Mughal period, paper made by Sialkot mills was noted for its ‘excellence’ throughout Northern India, being largely used in Delhi itself. In those days the yearly proceeds amounted to £80,000 in value. In 1894, Settlement Officer Prinsep placed the numbers of mills at work at the time of his settlement at 82, employing nearly 1,000 men and yielding an annual income of £7,500. On the average two thousand reams were annually exported, and three hundred more sold within the district.<sup>45</sup> The paper-making trade was a ‘hereditary profession’ and the workmen were mainly Kashmiris and Malik Awans of Kashmiri *mohalla* and Rang Pure of Sialkot, respectively.

Iron manufacturing was another industry which predated the colonial era. The nearby village of Kotli Loharan, about three miles north-west of the Sialkot cantonments, was famous beyond India for the work of its ironsmiths. By the time of

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<sup>44</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 42, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-8.



British rule, according to John Lockwood Kipling, 'The smiths or koftgars of Kotli-Loharan, near Sialkot, produce[d] a large quantity of caskets, shields, salvers, *mkstands*, and other articles of ornament'. The articles of the village were found all over India and some parts of Europe. Kipling noted that the hawkers of Kotli Loharan were 'frequently seen in the streets of Calcutta and Bombay; and the writer is acquainted with one who has included Italy, France, and England in his travels'. The articles of 'Kotli' found their way in 'considerable quantities to Europe and America'.<sup>46</sup>

During the colonial period, the industries of Sialkot underwent a great change. Many old occupations died out; as for example, those of *pashmina* shawl and paper-making. The principal reason for this was new competition, modern means of production and the opening of new markets. The manufacturing of *pashmina* industry and traditional 'garbi Lois' suffered severely with the concentration of the European market. Sialkot had only about six looms working instead of 100 by the start of First World War.<sup>47</sup> The decline in the paper trade was chiefly due to the new supply of 'Jail Paper' (made by prisoners as part of their rigorous punishment in different jails). The government ordered that jail paper should be employed for vernacular writing and for envelopes in all public offices. But many old traditional occupations died out, at the same time many new ones sprang up, relying on the pre-existing skills and the presence of an artisan stock. The most important were the emergence of sporting goods and surgical instruments. These products of the city, by the end of colonial rule, found their way not only all over India but were also being exported to the various British colonies. Before examining the considerable colonial development of Sialkot's

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 127-31.

<sup>47</sup> A. C. Badenoch, *Punjab Industries, 1911-1917* (Lahore: Government Printing, Punjab, 1917), p. 14.

sporting goods industry, we shall turn here first to the colonial development of the city and its impact on local trade and population.

### **Sialkot's Colonial Development**

Sialkot achieved considerable colonial urban growth. A large military cantonment was built with modern sophistication a mile and a half from the old city. The site of the Sialkot garrison was selected carefully by the British Commander-in-Chief Charles Napier, strategically lying between the seasonal streams, Bher Nala and Palkhu Nala. The foundation of the cantonment was laid down in 1849 and was completed in 1852. The cantonment measured over two and a half miles in length and one and a-half in breadth. It contained an area of about 6,670 acres. In addition it possessed two grass farms with an area of 2,800 acres and a dairy farm of 917 acres. The cantonment was well laid out with broad straight avenues and gardens. It was built on a high belt of land, having for its natural drainage the Palkhu stream on the north and the Bher stream on the south. It was well laid down and was fully supplied with good metalled roads. It was built in three long lines running east and west of the city. The different castes and religions were kept in separate units. The European regiments occupied the northern line and the Native regiments the southern with the public buildings and officers' houses in the centre.<sup>48</sup> Two station hospitals were built for British and Indian troops, respectively. In addition to the cantonment, a number of new buildings and streets were constructed. About a half mile to the north-west, new

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<sup>48</sup>The Maharaja of Kashmir also gifted a large amount of lime for the building of Trinity Church in the cantonment. Similarly, a private contractor of Lahore supplied about 1000 *mounds* of Kunkar lime for the Church. The confiscated arsenal of the Sikh Army at Chillianwala and Gujrat wars was also utilized for the roofing of the Church. The British authorities gifted about 120,000 old confiscated Sikh weapons for this purpose. Captain Gregory Rich, *the Mutiny in Sialkot with a brief Description of the Cantonment from 1852 to 1857* (Sialkot: Handa Printing Press, 1924). The measurement and map of Sialkot garrison can be seen in, S. A. Abbott, *Cantonment and Environs of Seealkote, 1868-69* (Calcutta, 1870), Maps. I.S. O.I.O.C.



Sialkot Cathedral established in 1850



Sialkot Murray Church of Scotland founded in 1889



Sialkot Murray College which the Church of Scotland founded in 1889

‘civil public buildings’- the court-house, treasury, jail and police lines- were built. With the expansion of the municipalities and cantonment, the area was rapidly transformed.

The impact of these constructions on local trade, production and most importantly employment was considerable. The trades in lime and wood received a stimulus from the rapid refurbishing of the civil lines and cantonment. The wood works flourished in the district as wood was easily available from the neighbouring Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>49</sup> The construction work created a high demand for labourers and a large number of ‘immigrants’ poured into the area in search of work. Sialkot received about 20,653 migrants from Kashmir alone.<sup>50</sup> The regular influx of Kashmiri migrants increased the existing population of their community in the city. Existing family networks stimulated a large partition-related refugee in 1947. Therefore, a large numbers of the 1947 Kashmiri migrants were to arrive in the city because of the existing family networks.

Sialkot town greatly increased in commercial importance with the arrival of the railway. The Alexandra Bridge, where the railway crossed the Chenab River at Wazirabad on its way to Sialkot, was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1876. In 1885, the twenty-seven miles-branch-line from Wazirabad Junction to Sialkot was opened. This was extended to Jammu in 1890 and twenty five years later the Sialkot-Narowal railway line was opened which connected the town with Amritsar. The opening of the railway connecting the town with the main junction at Wazirabad linked it with routes from Peshawar to Karachi. This enabled the rapid transportation of raw materials from the surrounding areas and in particular played an important role in the timber trade from Kashmir. The wood was distributed from the Wazirabad and

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<sup>49</sup> Rich, *Description of the Cantonment*, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p.34 and p. 40, Punjab Archives Lahore.

Jhelum depots, which lay on both the Chenab and Jhelum Rivers and the railroad between Sialkot and Rawalpindi. Sialkot also developed its means of communication with the neighbouring districts and the hills. In 1892 a line between Gujranwala and Sialkot opened.<sup>51</sup>

The extensive construction of the buildings, headworks and railways and the opening of the canals not only provided employment but also raised the importance and wages of '*mistri*' classes (skilled artisans). The lucrative employment with a salary Rs 30 or more per mensem improved their economic position and living standard.<sup>52</sup> At Marala, the head-works of the Upper Chenab Canal, there was a rise in pay of 2 *annas* per day in the case of *Lahors* (blacksmiths) and *Tarkhans* (carpenters). By the end of 1920, masons, blacksmiths and carpenters earned from Rs. 36 to Rs. 38 and 8 *annas* per mensem. With the consistent availability of work coupled with a better salary package, the skilled artisans had considerably improved their economic position. Such *mistri* classes of Sialkot by the turn of twentieth century had 'blossomed out' into owning red brick houses, good clothes and even carriages.<sup>53</sup>

Sialkot's rapid urbanization was intrinsically linked with the strong European presence in the cantonments. In the immediate aftermath of the 1857 revolt the number of the European troops increased and there was also the arrival of a large number of the Western Christian missionaries. This led to the rapid growth of commodity trading and the creation of new markets. In less than five years, with the construction of cantonments, the population of the Europeans reached over 1,800 and about half of them were civilians. The demands of colonial types and styles of consumption created new retail shops and grocery stores in the 'cantonment bazaar'.

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<sup>51</sup> Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 87, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>52</sup> Latifi, *The Industrial Punjab*, p. 232.

<sup>53</sup> *The Punjab District Gazetteer, Vol. XXIII-A: Sialkot District 1920*, (Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1921), pp. 113-4.

It was however the Hindu commercial castes who took the most advantage of the new urban environment. By the 1891 Census, the population of the cantonment reached over 15,475, while the town possessed about 32,918, making a total of 55,087 inhabitants.<sup>54</sup> The Hindu population rose to 17,978, compared with 12,751 a decade earlier. This population increase of over 5,000 was bigger than the migration of all the other communities in the town- including the Muslims, Sikhs and Christians- which totalled 4,236. Indeed the Hindu commercial castes were the first who had opened the shops in the cantonment bazaar and the towns. By the time of partition in 1947, they owned more than a thousand wholesale shops and grocery stores in the city.<sup>55</sup>

With the spread of Christian conversion, a substantial number of lower caste populations came to the city in search of work. A large portion of the newly converted Christians obtained menial employment in the cantonments, missionary hospitals and educational institutions. They were employed at higher rates than they had ever been before. Many worked in the military dairy farms and others as ‘canteen-keepers’, or ‘sweepers’ in the cantonments, hospitals and educational institutions. They also made furniture for the cantonments and other purposes. Their increased numbers in the cantonment area led to the establishment of a new Christian settlement ‘Hunterpore’ in the town, in the memory of Christian missionary Dr Hunter, who was killed along with his family during the 1857 mutiny. In a short span of time, the Christian concentration became a strong presence in the city because of employment facilities available to them. By the 1891 Census, Christian converts had outnumbered Sikhs in the town.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 170, Punjab Archives, Lahore. For the 1911 figure was consulted *Sialkot DG 1920*, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 30 December 1947.

<sup>56</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 69, Punjab Archives Lahore.

Urbanisation not only benefited the newly Christian convert community and Hindu trading class, but provided new opportunities for castes engaged in such activities as dairying and market gardening. The latter were the Arains, whose district wide population was enumerated at just over 72,000 at the time of the 1891 Census.<sup>57</sup> As good vegetable growers, they supplied vegetables and fruits to the urban community. The presence of the large European population in the cantonment had enhanced their business; for example, the consumption of potatoes grew considerably in the cantonment area. In a similar way, with the growth of the town, the income of *Dhadhis* (milkmen- Gujars) also increased considerably. The demand for milk enabled them to move nearby to the city. The Sheikhs also benefited from the European presence in Sialkot. They, along with Hindus and Jains, opened grocery shops in 'the cantonment bazaar'; for example, the well-know Sheikh Qadir and Sons General Store was one of the modern self-shopping style grocery outlets in the cantonment which chiefly fulfilled the consumption requirements of the European and upper class population of the area. This wealthy Sheikh family also owned two hotels in Sialkot, one in the cantonment by the name of the Mount View and the other called the Green Café in the inner city.

The end of First World War further speeded up the urbanisation process. At the end of war, returned Indian soldiers moved into the town because of its modern amenities and opportunities of education. Their living standard had increased because of their good service pay. The War not only hastened urbanisation but also speeded up the pace of Sialkot's industry. The export of surgical instruments and sporting goods to England and other countries developed immensely during the War when English industries were at standstill. The rapid 'boom in trade' doubled the salary of workers;

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<sup>57</sup>The majority of them were tenants with occupation rights. Many migrated to the canal colonies, receiving about 17,675 acres of land in the Chenab colony. B. H. Dobson, *Final Report on the Chenab Colony Settlement 1915*, p. 39, I.S.PU.20/53, O.I.O.C

as, for example, before the war a mechanic in the Sialkot sports industry commanded Rs 1 per diem and after the war was paid Rs 2.<sup>58</sup> The boom in trade stimulated the process of urbanization as a large number of labouring classes had been drawn into the city in search for work. Moreover, the 'richer *zamindars*', who were becoming better educated, and absentee landowners also moved into Sialkot. The population of the town, thus according to the 1911 census was 48,595, but had increased 70,619 by 1921.

Evidence of rapid urbanization was revealed not only in the census figures, but in house sales and legal disputes over property. The expansion of Sialkot saw its rise to the status of a First Class Municipality as early as 1867. The Municipal Water Works were erected at a cost of Rs. 475,000. A new drainage scheme at an estimated cost of Rs 600,000 was sanctioned by the government. The welfare of the cantonment was maintained by the Sialkot Cantonment Committee that drew revenue largely from various kinds of taxes. In 1920, the Cantonment Committee controlled an income of about Rs 90,000: more than half came from '*octroi*', while the rest was derived from a fixed house-tax on owners, a dog tax, a tax on traders and professions, and land-rents.<sup>59</sup>

Sialkot city possessed all the amenities associated with a district headquarters. There were schools, colleges, hospitals and *zanana* centres. Sialkot Murray College, which the Church of Scotland founded in 1889, was famous for its high standard graduate degree all over India. Similarly the Lady Anderson Girls High School was granting the standard matriculation degree. There were also primary and high schools maintained by the different communities and communal societies. In the 1920s, the 'educated classes' of the city were 'proving very useful in public service and in

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<sup>58</sup> *Sialkot DG 1920*, p. 113.

<sup>59</sup> Octroi was levied in the town of some provinces of British India, on all goods (other than a few specified staple items like wheat) intended for consumption in the town.



trades’.<sup>60</sup> However, it was again the Hindu trading and professional castes who utilised the opportunities of modern education facilities and emerged as the most educated class of the town.

**TABLE 1.4**

**Size of Population in Sialkot Town<sup>61</sup>**

<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1931</b>	<b>1941</b>
45,762	55,087	64,869	70,619	100,973	139,000

**TABLE 1.5**

**Composition of Community-wise Population in Sialkot City and Cantonment<sup>62</sup>**

<b>Census</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	<b>Hindus</b>	<b>Sikhs</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>Jains</b>	<b>Parsis</b>	<b>Others</b>
1881	28,865	12,751	1,942	1500	876	n/a	1,328
1891	31,920	17,978	1,797	2,283	1,105	4	n/a
1901	39,356	13,433	2,236	1,650	1,272	9	n/a
1911	40,613	15,417	4,290	3,222	1,310	17	n/a
1921	44,846	15,808	3,433	5,033	1,472	27	n/a
1931	69,700	18,644	4,931	6,095	1,570	7	26

### **The Hindus and Sikhs of Sialkot**

Sialkot’s Sikh and Hindu population was largely Khatri, Bania and Arora. They were not only the most educated class of the town, but also dominated the retail and wholesale trades and controlled the industrial sector. The principal concentration of

<sup>60</sup> *Sialkot DG 1920*, p. 203.

<sup>61</sup> For the 1881 figures consulted *Sialkot District Gazetteer, 1883-84* XVI, Part A, p. xviii, while for all other figures, except the 1941, consulted *Sialkot District Statistical Tables, 1936*, Vol. XV, Part B, File No. J, 64/65, p. xvi, Punjab Board of Revenue Record Office, Lahore. For the 1941 figure consulted, *The Partition of the Punjab 1947*, p. 85, Vol. III, table 16, p. 85.

<sup>62</sup> *Sialkot District Statistical Tables, 1936*, pp. xvi-xvii.

their commercial and business activities were in the Trunk, Budhi and Bara bazaars and around Samaj Chowk and Drumman-wala Chowk. In Bara bazaar, alone they owned over three hundred shops. Doctor Gurbakhsh Singh, father of the celebrated Indian journalist Kuldip Nayyar, possessed a medical clinic in Trunk bazaar, while Hakeem Lala Beli Ram operated a clinic of *desi* medical in the Budhi bazaar.<sup>63</sup>

Poor and artisan Hindus lived in the Sialkot suburbs of Nekapura and Hiranpura, while the middle class mainly resided in Purn Nagar. More affluent and rich residents had moved to houses along Sialkot's posh Paris Road. The road, unlike those in the inner city was wide and well-developed. On both side of it concrete double-storeyed houses were constructed. The area was exclusively a rich Hindu and Sikh locality. The most wonderful residences on the road belonged to the wealthy Hindu barrister C. Roy. Other important residences included the White Pillar Palace of Krishan Gopal Dutt (later a Finance Minister of East Punjab) and the Red Uberoi Mansion of the sporting-goods businessman Sardar Ganda Singh Uberoi. Other important attractive residences in the city were the Agarwal Bungalow of contractor Lal Gobind Ram and the Ahluwalia House of Kirpal Singh, the owner of the Pioneer Sports.<sup>64</sup>

The leading families of the Hindu and Sikh communities were Dutt, Roy, Uberoi, Agarwal, Nanda, Rai and Ahluwalia and Dew Sikh. Rai Diwan Chand dominated the banking and insurances sector and had taken a large amount of land on mortgage and owned two leading vernacular papers in the city. As a rich man of the town, he frequently contributed to various official and community schemes. During

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Malik Abbas, Lahore, 23 December 2008.

<sup>64</sup> An Unpublished Autobiography of Dr. Kishan Chand of Sialkot, (1962), pp. 29-30, I am grateful to Dr Lal for providing me a copy of the memoir of his father.

the First World War, for example, he donated Rs. 25,000 to the War Fund.<sup>65</sup> Munshi Ram Chand was the biggest mill-owner of Sialkot. His growing empire included the National Rubber Mill and the Munshi Cloth Mills. Pandit Toder Mal owned Sialkot's leading Machine Press, while Krishan Gopal Dutt owned the majority of the leather trade of the city. Lal Goind Ram and Karam Chand owned the company under the name Dittu Mal Gobind Ram and were the leading contractors and steel-rolling suppliers of the region. Sardar Bahadir Shiv Dew Singh, then a member of the Imperial Council of State, controlled the surgical instruments concerns of Sialkot which largely employed Muslim *Lohars* along with Sikh *Ramgarhias*. The well-known rich Nanda family not only controlled the entire business of transport in the district under the name of Sialkot Nanda Transport Service but also regularly operated in the different inter-cities routes. The most regular and frequent of these included the Sialkot-Jammu-Srinagar, Sialkot-Gujranwala-Lahore and Sialkot-Narowal-Amritsar routes. Later, a son of this family, Sialkot-born by the name Gulzari Lal Nanda, became twice Prime Minister of India. The sporting-goods tycoon H. S. Uberoi owned the majority of sporting goods trades of the town. His growing empire not only operated outlets in the major cities of India such as Bombay and Calcutta but also worldwide. The wealthy Sikh Balwadd Singh dominated the city's grain marketing trades, while his brothers Kirpal Singh and Rajindar Singh owned the city's successful Pioneer Sports which had branches not only in Jullundur, Bombay and Calcutta, but also at 6 Rangoon Street London by the name of J.S. Ahluwalia.<sup>66</sup> Kirpal Singh migrated to Jullundur in the 1947 partition and emerged not only as one of the most successful sporting businessmen of the city, but also played an important role in establishing a major rival sports goods industry to that of Sialkot in India.

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<sup>65</sup> *Sialkot DG 1920*, p. 196.

<sup>66</sup> I am grateful to Dr Lal for this information.

In all, Hindus and Sikhs owned two-thirds of Sialkot's shops and trades, and paid more over seventy per cent of its urban taxes, as for example, is evidenced starkly from the fact that they paid Rs. 132,870 as sales tax as against only Rs. 25,311 paid by the Muslims. As to income tax, they paid Rs. 115,542 as against Rs. 310,000 paid by the Muslims who formed over seventy per cent population of the city.

As the statistics reveal, the Muslims of Sialkot, like Gujranwala, were much poorer than the Hindus and Sikhs who controlled the city's business life. In comparison most Muslims were artisans and labourers. The Kashmiri *biraderies* of Khawaja, Mir, Dar, Butt and Gujars dominated the Muslim population. Other important Muslim communities were Lohars and Tarkhans, who were employed in the railway and canal headworks. According to an official estimate, they had a combined population of over 8,650 in Sialkot.<sup>67</sup> With the passage of time, they moulded their traditional skills and entered the newly emerging modern sporting goods and surgical instruments industries. These industries were Hindu-owned, but they were destined to be taken over by Muslim artisans after the migration of Hindus and Sikhs in 1947.

### **The Development of Sialkot's Industry**

In 1870, for the first time, some *mistris* of Sialkot repaired surgical instruments for the American Mission Hospital. Encouraged by the hospital staff, they gradually started manufacturing replicas of the originals, and subsequently a new industry steadily grew up in Sialkot. In a similar manner, a missionary in the Sialkot cantonment went to a carpenter's shop and got a badminton racquet repaired and paid Rs 2. Afterwards, the hawkers of the city visited all nearby and far away cantonments and the British

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<sup>67</sup> Latifi, *The Industrial Punjab*, p. 210.

quarters, where they supplied and repaired sport goods. While the actual stimulus of manufactures came from the British Indian Army and the Christian Missionary hospitals, Sialkot's surgical instruments and sporting-goods industries owed their emergence to the existing presence of artisan classes.

In 1908, Sialkot's first surgical instruments sector was founded by Sardar Bahadir Shiv Dew Singh. It was initially a scissors and small surgical equipment concern which chiefly supplied 'private practitioners'. In 1911, another firm Uberoi Surgical industry emerged which employed foreign machineries and Sheffield steel for the manufacture of its equipment.<sup>68</sup> With the big demand of orders during the First World War for the Allied forces, the city's production increased and in time around 26 medium factories arose which were producing instruments annually Rs 30 *laks*. After the war, Sialkot made surgical instruments for export to all parts of the subcontinent, as well as to Burma, Afghanistan and Egypt. The Second World War brought further 'blessing for industry' and many new firms sprang up as there was an industrial slump in the UK and the USA. On the eve of partition, the annual export of the surgical instruments was worth Rs 5,000,000.<sup>69</sup> As we have already noted, while Hindus owned the factories, Muslims supplied the skilled workforce.

The birth of the modern sports goods industry was linked to the Uberoi Brothers- Jhanda Singh and Sardar Ganda Singh. In 1894, Ganda Singh along with his brother started manufacturing badminton and tennis racquets with only half a dozen workmen. Production was expanded to include polo sticks, cricket bats, hockey balls, hockey sticks, footballs, golf clubs and gymnastics apparatus. In many ways, Sialkot benefited from its location at intersection of the Chenab and Jhelum rivers and proximity to Kashmir and Chamba states. The easy access to natural resources of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>69</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 25 November 1957, p. 3.

timber from these states was vital for the production of, for example, cricket bats. Timber was also vital in the furniture making trades, not only in Sialkot but in neighbouring towns.<sup>70</sup> Sialkot's sporting goods industry was at the cutting edge of the consumption of the Kashmiri willow. The combined benefits of raw material, technical labour resources and the natural favourable climate conditions ensured the city's sporting goods industry.

In 1903 Ganda Singh Uberoi visited England and imported for the first time English willow, power machines and English experts. In 1911 the Uberoi Sports Goods Limited started a system of apprenticeship, and workmen were contracted and trained to follow English methods, under a European foreman, and the supplied on a weekly basis as many cricket balls for which they could get orders.<sup>71</sup> The outbreak of First World War stimulated the demand for Sialkot products because of the stoppage of the corresponding European industries. The buoyant market led to the emergence of some new firms. Soon there were some twenty new firms and numerous cottage industry dealers. They were chiefly set up by workmen who had learnt their trade in the Uberoi Company. These home based manufactures did not use power machines and took stitching orders from the Uberoi Company. The latter was the only firm at that time that employed power machines and the 'latest appliances'.<sup>72</sup>

By the end of the War, Sialkot had become the centre for sporting goods products. The city's goods were exported to Japan, America, Australia, Africa and other countries, chiefly in the British Empire, and the output of goods amounted to

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<sup>70</sup> According to an estimate, during 1934-5 approximately 2,031,717 cubic feet of timber in logs and sawn form was annually floated down from the two states through the Chenab River into the Wazirabad Depot. The Punjab government's Forest Department was earning Rs 18,000 annually rafting fee from the trades.

<sup>71</sup> Latifi, *The Industrial Punjab*, p. 224. First they were taken on for a couple of months to judge their suitability, and were paid 4 annas a day. Their parents were then approached to agree that the boys could enter into a five year 'indentured contract'. They initially specialised in light work such as stitching balls, and as they grew they were pushed up into higher grade work in the same line.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

one million rupees in value annually. The Uberoi Company employed over 200 artisans and paid over Rs. 10,000 as income tax in the year 1920. Its owner Sardar Ganda Singh Uberoi had emerged as the leading businessman of the town. He was among the top contributors in the Government's War Funds during the War, donating Rs. 15,000.<sup>73</sup>

Sialkot was electrified in 1928. The Sialkot Electric Supply Company Power House generated 1200 kilowatts per day, an amount sufficient to meet the needs of the whole city without any disruption. Within two years, it had supplied electric power to the leading industrial concerns. Many new small sporting goods trades and factories emerged. Among others the most famous firms were Ali Shabier's Ali Trading Sports and Dr Kishan Chand's joint venture the Phillips and Co. By the mid-1930s, Sialkot was viewed by some observers as 'an industry city' with 'an organic community'.<sup>74</sup> The city was not only at the forefront of the manufacturing sector but also represented the Punjab province in various sporting activities at an all-India level. In 1930, for example, the city's team competed in the Mysore State Rackets Championship.<sup>75</sup> In 1940, when the Governor of Punjab visited Sialkot and Gujranwala for Second World War Fund raising purposes, he recorded that 'Sialkot is an industrial City of considerable importance.....with (there) being several large factories for manufacture of sports goods and, in addition, there are at least two small metal factories, one of which manufactures surgical instruments of excellent quality'. He hoped that the Government's 'Supply Department' would place orders from the

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<sup>73</sup> *Sialkot DG 1920*, p.113 and p. 196.

<sup>74</sup> C. Kanaganayakam and Zulfikar Ghose, 'Zulfikar Ghose: An Interview', *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 32, 2 (Summer 1986), p. 170.

<sup>75</sup> *The Times* (London) 29 July 1930, p. 6. In the later stages of colonial rule, cricket emerged as the chief game in Sialkot and an annual cricket tournament was held in the city's Connery Ground (now Jinnah Stadium). Indeed post-independence Sialkot produced more well-known national cricketers than any other place in the country.

town.<sup>76</sup> The sporting-goods industry of Sialkot had become one of the most important export centres in India by the end of British rule. Its products found their way throughout the empire. The following table shows the average annual exports of sporting goods throughout the closing years of British rule.

**TABLE 1.6**

**Total Value of Export Sports Goods before the 1947 Partition<sup>77</sup>**

<b>Years:</b>	1941-42	1942-43	1943-44	1945-46	1946-47
<b>Rupees:</b>	20,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000	25,000,000	30,000,000

The city's continued prosperity was badly hit by partition violence and the migration of the non-Muslim owners of the industry. It took decades to overcome the 1947 depression. This theme will form the focus of chapter six; here we will now address the important question of the extent to which the sharpened religious identities of the colonial era paved the way for the violence and mass migration of 1947.

**Religious Competitiveness and Communal Conflict**

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a gradual worsening of relations among the different religious communities in the region. Western Christian missionaries introduced an element of competitiveness in proselytisation which was soon picked up by indigenous religious reformers.<sup>78</sup> Through modern communication and

<sup>76</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 19 February 1940, Lionel Carter (ed.), *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War* (Fortnightly Reports) (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), p. 76.

<sup>77</sup> Abdul A. Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries in the Border Districts of Lahore and Sialkot* (Lahore: Board of Economic Inquiry, Ripon Printing Press, 1953), p. 56.

<sup>78</sup> Kenneth. W. Jones, 'Communalism in the Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 28: 1 (Nov; 1968), pp. 46-7; 'Ham Hindu Nahun: Arya-Sikh Relations, 1877-1905', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 32,3 (May, 1973), pp. 457-75; G. Barrier, 'The Arya Samaj and



organisational techniques, Christian missionaries developed and maintained a widespread network of schools, orphanages, medical missions, and introduced the *zenana* mission designed to reach women and girls in the seclusion of their homes. Sialkot was an attractive locality for the missionaries because of the considerable population of the lower classes and castes. As has been pointed out earlier, Sialkot was largely a town of artisans and labourers, many of them migrants attracted by jobs arising from the initially abundant agricultural labour and then the various colonial development projects. They included castes that were traditionally associated with menial occupations. For instance, *Meghs* (the weavers), *Chamars* (the leather workers) and *Chuhras* (the sweepers) among others were treated as untouchables because they collected and handled unclean substances such as dead carcasses. Historically, these lower communities had converted to Islam and Sikhism, but their social status and traditional occupation had rarely changed as a result. They were the prime human commodity available for reconversion, initially for the Christian missionaries and subsequently for the various religious and sectarian reform movements like the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabhas and Ahmadia of Sialkot from the late nineteenth century onwards.

Sialkot remained the epicentre of such conversion and sectarian exercises because of the strong concentration of lower caste groups. In all, the *kamins* groups comprised nearly 18 per cent population of the district. This percentage was larger than any other place in the Punjab. Alone the *Chuhras* formed nearly 8 per cent of the population and the *Meghs* formed district wide numbers over 115,429.<sup>79</sup> The arrival of

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Congress Politics in the Punjab, 1894-1908', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26:3 (May 1967), pp. 363-79.

<sup>79</sup> Lala Ganga Ram, *The Uplift Movement at Sialkot, Punjab* (Calcutta: A. C. Sarkar Press, 1915), p. 2. For the historical study of the caste and jajmani system, see A. A. Macdonell, 'The Early History of Caste', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 19:2 (Jan; 1914), pp. 230-44; Oscar Lewis and Victor

Western Christian missionaries introduced a new element of communal conflict and competition. In 1839, the missionaries established their first headquarters in the Punjab at Ludhiana. They moved forward rapidly with each new British annexation. In 1855 the mission of the United Presbyterian Church of American and the following year the mission of the Established Church of Scotland were opened in Sialkot. The Church of Scotland came to Sialkot in January 1857 when the first Scottish missionary, Thomas Hunter, came to live with his wife, Jane Scott, and baby son near the Brigade Parade Ground. In 1852, the first stone of the Trinity Church was laid and five years later it was consecrated by the Bishop of Madras on January 30, 1857. In 1880s, the Belgian Capuchins and the Roman Catholic mission were founded. Within a short span of time, they built several modern educational institutions, hospitals, churches, orphanage centres, training schools for converts and boarding houses.

The missionary presence intensified communal identity and conflict in Sialkot. The rapid growth in the number of native Christian converts alarmed indigenous reformers. Throughout the Punjab the number of Christian converts rose from 3,912 in 1881 to over 19,000 a decade later, and by 1901 had reached nearly 38,000. In the case of Sialkot, within a decade, the number of Christian converts rose rapidly from 1,535 in 1881 to over 11,668. This total represented an increase of no less than 660 per cent, larger than any other district of the province, and exceeded that of Rawalpindi, with the second largest number of the Christians, by 64 per cent.<sup>80</sup> At the Census of 1911 the Christians reached 48,620, against only 11,939 recorded a decade before. This meant the 'mass movement' of conversion was more successful in

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Barnouw, 'Caste and Jajmani System in a North India Village', *Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 83:2 (Aug; 1956), pp. 66-81.

<sup>80</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 65, Punjab Archives Lahore.

Sialkot than that of any other place in the Punjab, as for example is evidenced starkly from a fact that the converts there comprised 95 percent of the total in the province.<sup>81</sup>

**TABLE 1.7**

**Composition of *Chuhra*s Population in the Sialkot District<sup>82</sup>**

Years:	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Number:	1,535	11,668	11,939	48,620	62,266	66,365

Apart from the impact on the local religious reformers, the rapid rise in the Christian population greatly affected the socio-economic structure and the constitution of the village communities. With their conversion, the status of *chuhra*s increased. They freely enlisted in the Army particularly in the 7 (1st) and 7 (3<sup>rd</sup>) Punjabi regiments. Moreover, in 1899, special grants of over 11,500 acres land were awarded in the canal colonies for Christian Settlements. Many Christian converts migrated there as farmers and formed the settlement of Marryam Abad<sup>83</sup> and Youngson Abad.<sup>84</sup> The Mazhbi Sikhs received allotment ‘on special terms’ because of serving in the Pioneer Regiment.<sup>85</sup> Many converts migrated to towns, while others asked for ‘a more definite remuneration’ for their menial work. The rapid redistribution and urbanization of *Chuhra*s, who were traditionally employed as farm hands, significantly threatened the balance of the local rural labour market. The peasants complained about the shortage of menial labour. On the other hand, in the towns, conversions caused great concern amongst the rising Hindu elite. The converts

<sup>81</sup> Jones, ‘Communalism in the Punjab’, p. 42.

<sup>82</sup> Sialkot District Statistical Tables, p. xiii. For the 1891 figure consulted *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 65.

<sup>83</sup> This settlement was set up by the Roman Catholic Mission, purchasing about 645 of acres land in the Chenab Colony.

<sup>84</sup> Named after the British philanthropist Dr. J. W. Youngson who carried out many welfare projects in both Jammu and Sialkot.

<sup>85</sup> B. H. Dobson, *Chenab Colony Settlement 1915*, pp. 6, 37 and 42, I.S.PU.20/53, O.I.O.C.

were allowed to assimilate with the urban elite and the children of the outcastes were attending school with upper caste students.

The rapid growth in Christian converts, and the missionaries' close ties with government, created a deep fear of the 'Christian threat' among many Indian religious leaders. This became one of the major motivating forces for religious and sectarian revivalism in Sialkot as throughout the Punjab. In Sialkot, by the turn of the twentieth century, more than ten different social and religious societies were at work.<sup>86</sup>

The most influential reformist movement was the Hindu Arya Samaj. It boasted over three hundred members in the locality.<sup>87</sup> Initially, the founder of the Arya Samaj hardly criticised Islam and Sikhism, as his main targets were the Christian missionaries. Following the line of Christian Missions, the Arya Samaj began a *Shuddhi* (purification) campaign to reconvert untouchable Christian converts to the Hindu fold. It performed the 'purification' of over 40,000 *Meghs* (untouchables) and brought them into the fold of the organization in various districts of the province. For years the Sialkot Arya Samaj was the 'centre of attraction for the Meghs of the Punjab'.<sup>88</sup> On 28-29 March 1903, dates were fixed for the purification of about 3,000 Meghs in different villages. Later on, the purification extended to surrounding districts where in all about 36,000 'lost' people came into the fold of the Arya Samaj. Hindu 'traditionalists' opposed the mass purification of the lower classes which threatened to upset the ritual and social order. In Sialkot *tahsil* village, for example, Rajputs attacked the purification ceremony and, later on, expelled the new converts

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<sup>86</sup> *Sialkot DG 1920*, p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), pp. 68, Punjab Archives, Lahore. The aim of the society was to preach and revive the Vedic doctrines enunciated by Maharishi Swami Dyananad Saraswati in his well-known work, *Satyarth Parkash*, (The Light of Truth) which encouraged the view that the Vedas were infallible. He thought that all India's 'trouble and suffering' was due to 'the meat-eating and wine-drinking foreigners, slaughters of kine and other animals'.

<sup>88</sup> Ram, *The Uplift Movement at Sialkot*, p. 6.

from the village. On a numbers of other occasions, the forces of law and order authority were required to calm down the situation.<sup>89</sup>

The reform organizations also took over many public welfare projects. The most important public collective action of the Arya Samaj was the creation of Aryan schools in the region. In 1903, an Arya Industrial School of Sialkot was opened to educate the children of Meghs. To make *Megh* untouchables 'practical workmen', the classes of tailoring, carpentry, smithy weaving and drawing were started there. In 1912, the Arya Samaj established an Arya High School in Sialkot. The children of untouchable class were also admitted, although the school chiefly instructed urban children, mainly from the sponsoring lower-middle class, in both Vedic and Western knowledge. The philanthropists Lala Ganga Ram and Lala Khushal Chand provided the main funds for the building and other welfare projects.<sup>90</sup> The district government also came forward to help the society in its beneficial work. It granted about fifty squares of land to the society. By 1920, the Arya Samaj maintained six primary schools and a girls' school in Sialkot town alone. The strength of the Arya was seen in the symbolic construction of Sialkot's Samaj Chowk in 1921.

Sri Guru Singh Sabha society of the Sikhs was also an important society in Sialkot. It was established in 1884. The main aim of the Sabha was to preach Guru Nanak's doctrines and principles, and to raise the social status of the Khalsas by the light of education. This society maintained one Anglo-Vernacular high school for boys. Its imposing opening ceremony was inaugurated by the then Governor of the Punjab, O'Dwyer. Despite the Singh Sabha's initial alliance with Arya Samaj, many in the Sikh community saw its policy of reconversion as a direct threat to the Sikh identity. The Arya Samaj and another Hindu reform movement the Brahmo Samaj,

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-8.

during their street preaching, denounced the Sikh Gurus which embittered relations between Hindus and Sikhs.

Among the Muslim societies of Sialkot, the Anjuman-i-Islamia, an amalgamation of three 'native' societies, was the most active Muslim organization. It came into existence in 1908 to spread religious and secular education among the Muslims of Sialkot. The influence of the society was reflected in the creation of its own high school along with two lower primary schools. Another Muslim society which was very important in the district was the Anjuman-i- Ahmadia of Qadian. The founder of the reform Ahmadia movement in Islam was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian who was considered as the promised Messiah and Mahdi by his followers. The Ahmadia movement had many close parallels with the Arya Samaj. It became involved in serious competition with orthodox Islam, with the Christian missionaries and with a variety of reformist societies in all three major religious communities. Ahmadia sought to appropriate the Sikh prophet Guru Nanak as a Muslim, while the Arya Samaj and Khalsa, in turn, concentrated their attention on proving Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a Hindu. Indeed Sialkot was one of 'the great strongholds' of the communal activity of the reform Qadiani Party and Ahmadia movement. Its membership rose to over 28,000.<sup>91</sup> Until the emergence of the Majlis-i-Ahrars in the early thirties, the Ahmadia movement continued to dominate in Sialkot and contributed greatly to its religious competitiveness and communal conflict.

From the late nineteenth century onward, the growing organizational strength of, and rivalry between, the Ahmadia, Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj reinforced existing communal divisions. This process of reinterpreting the past and presenting a new vision of the future permanently changed relations among the three communities

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<sup>91</sup> *Sialkot DG, 1920*, pp. 56-7.

whose members had been living side by side with some degree of harmony for generations. Moreover, the strains of development and rapid urbanization also provided the circumstances for the development of communalism in the region. Sialkot because of the strong presence of Christian missions and sectarian educational institutions was an important centre for such burgeoning organizations. Most important of all, local printing presses magnified the mushrooming religious antagonism. Sialkot town alone published more than ten papers by the turn of twentieth century. They were evenly owned by the rival communities. Although religious revivalism was mainly confined to the city, by the first quarter of twentieth century communalism, to a lesser extent, had penetrated the countryside where 'The old joint-stock wells' had steadily been replaced by 'individually-owned wells... owing to the decay of the communal spirit'.<sup>92</sup>

Despite all the activities of reformers, in many ways competing religious affiliations and identities remained variegated and undifferentiated. Though religious separatism was to form the basis of the partition in 1947, until the later stages of colonial rule it did not overwhelm common caste, *biraderi* and regional sources of identity. The Punjabi identity remained more important than that derived from religion. As the British colonial officer Malcolm Darling observed, travelling through the region: 'In crossing the Chenab we entered the central Punjab (both Gujranwala and Sialkot formed this part of the province), where Muslims and Sikhs are as intermingled as barley and wheat when sown together...There are many villages where Muslim and Sikh are of the same tribe and both of Hindu ancestry, with still some customs in common'.<sup>93</sup> The diversity reflected past invasions, migration and

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>93</sup> Malcolm Darling, *At Freedom's Door* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 76. Denzil Ibbetson, who carried out the Punjab Census of 1881, described the tribe as 'far more permanent and indestructible than the caste'. He held the immense influence exercised by Muslims in Punjab to be

conversions which gave the region a history of continual change. Thus many kept up the customs and practices of the religion that they had left. They were all governed by customary law and the ties of their religion were generally somewhat loose.<sup>94</sup> The author of the 1894 Sialkot Gazetteer noted that the majority of Muslims who were converts still continued 'to pay respect to local deities and employ a Brahmin priest in their social ceremonies'.<sup>95</sup> Some evidence from the chief court records reveals limited intermarriage across religious communities. In Sialkot, Zafarwal, for example, a Hindu Rajput married a Muslim Arain woman and had two children.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, in 1905, the Pasrur Chief Court upheld the decision of a Hindu proprietor's will, in which he willed that his two sons from a Muslim woman would inherit half his property and his one son from a Hindu wife would inherit the other half.<sup>97</sup>

Given this complex scenario, the partition violence in the region in 1947 was by no means an inevitable outcome at the end of colonial rule. Granted the region had a history of 'traditional' religious conflict, but, at the same time, there was a well established tradition of community interaction and this co-existence with some degree of harmony continued to exist down to the late colonial era. In the cultural binding, the Punjab language played a key role. While about three per cent spoke Kashmiri and nine per cent spoke Dogri, Punjab was the principal language of the district, as elsewhere in the Punjab. Hindustani or Urdu was the language of the urban educated

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responsible for the suppression of Brahmanism and its caste restrictions. He declared that as a result, the restriction on marriage with other castes was neglected and what became important was the tribe. His interpretation of the nature of Punjab society dominated British understanding of the area right up to 1947. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes* (Delhi: Low price Publications, 1993), p. 16.

<sup>94</sup> C. L. Tupper, an administrator who drew up a compendium of 'customary law', found the institution of the 'tribe' to be central to understanding the principles of social organization from which the customs had evolved. He argued that the basis of the Punjabi custom was the cohesion of the tribe, the family and the village, and not the sanction of religious law. C. L. Tupper, *Punjab Customary Law* (Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1881), Vol. II, p. 78.

<sup>95</sup> *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, File No. K 21 (a) XVI, Part (A), p. 65, Punjab Archives, Lahore.

<sup>96</sup> D. J. Boyd, *Customary Law of the Sialkot District*, Vol. XIV (Punjab Government Press, 1917), pp. 8-9.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*



classes. Within religious communities, there were varieties of belief and practice as well as castes and *biraderis*. The laying of the foundation-stone of Sialkot's well-known Clock House by both leading lights of the city Sheikh Ghulam Qadir and Seth Rai Bahadur was an example of diverse sets of community relationships. Inter-community support undoubtedly existed. Wealthy Sialkoti Hindus time and again contributed to Muslim welfare. The empire of Ganda Singh Uberoi was at the forefront of such assistance. This included the construction of an auditorium for the Islamia College. A rich Hindu contractor Lal Gobind Ram Agrwala paid all the cost for the construction of a mosque at Sialkot's Wazirabad road. He also contributed fund to the Sialkot Muslim League. On the other hand, an influential Sialkoti Muslim Safder Khan was at the forefront of the Congress Party's political activities in the city.

Moreover, the communities relied on each other for everyday prosperity and livelihood. The Muslim artisan Abdul Ghani, who worked for a sporting-goods Hindu firm before partition, now living in Karim Pura *mohalla* of Sialkot, recalls the economic interdependence shattered in 1947.

Hindus were the owners of the factories and we worked there and earned sufficient earnings. Most of time they would provide us the different articles at our home and we stitched them and gave them back in the due time. At home all members of families worked including big children. This was the quickest way to finish the supplied work in time. After their migration and closure of the industry our livelihood ended and we remained jobless for a long time.<sup>98</sup>

Nevertheless, beneath the surface there were tensions that could erupt into violence. Sialkot's proximity to the Hindu-ruled State of Jammu and Kashmir was a potential source of tension. This is revealed in the interview below given by Abdul Islam Butt who was 18 at the time of partition and an active member of the Sialkot Muslim Students Federation.

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<sup>98</sup> Interview Abdul Ghazi, Sialkot, 5 January 2007.

The Hindus of Sialkot dominated the social and economic activity of the city. All the shops in the Kalaw Mandi belonged to them; even not a single one belonged to Muslims. Similarly all the residences at Paris Road belonged to the Hindus. This was a 'no go area' for the Muslims at night time. ....The Muslim workforce largely relied on the Hindu businesses for their livelihood. The political events in the neighbouring Hindu Dogra state [Jammu and Kashmir] always strained the Hindu-Muslim relations in Sialkot. As the news of Maharaja of Kashmir's bad treatment of Muslim Kashmiris reached Sialkot, the Muslims here took over the streets of the city and raised slogans against the Hindu Dogra ruler. In such protests, the Kashmiris of Kashmir *mohalla* and Dharowali were always at the forefront and the processions were mainly spearheaded by leaders of the Majlis-i-Ahrars.<sup>99</sup>

The politicising of religious identities, in the form of Ahrars, Khaksars, Akali Dal and Hindu Mahasabha, intensified the likelihood of communal violence in the late colonial period. The Majlis-i-Ahrars came to prominence in 1931. Their radical stance against the Maharaja of Kashmir in the 1931 July 'fatal communal riot' in Srinagar, in which the state troopers killed nine Muslims and wounded a score of others, prompted their influence in the region.<sup>100</sup> They shaped the course of the Kashmir outbreak and they, in turn, were influenced by it. Sialkot formed the epicentre of their agitational activities because of a large number of Kashmiri migrants many of whom had relatives in the state. In August 1931, in response to a call for demonstration, by the Ahrars of Sialkot, over 15,000 took out processions in the streets of city to express anger and sorrow at the state-sponsored killing of Muslims in Srinagar.<sup>101</sup> The Ahrar leadership believed in agitational politics and in keeping the masses occupied with one issue after the other to keep the momentum high. They also concentrated their energy on declaring the Muslim Ahmadia as non-Muslims and took a radical stand on the issue of Shaheed Ganj Mosque. Their radical stances on communal issues not only further swelled their memberships, but also their growing popularity resulted in a victory in a by-election in the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1937. The victory

<sup>99</sup> Abdul Islam Butt, Karim Pura *mohalla* of Sialkot, 7 January 2007.

<sup>100</sup> 'The Trouble in Kashmir', *The Times* (London) 5 November 1931, p. 13.

<sup>101</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asia Islam since 1850* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2001), p. 356.

enabled the Ahrars to debate their stance on the 'Kashmir issue' and 'Ahmadia as non-Muslims' in the provincial assembly.

There was sharp discord between the Majlis-i-Ahrars, the Tahrik-i-Khaksar and the Ahmadia Movement within the Muslim community. The groups, throughout the thirties, competed with each other and their tension became more acute in both Sialkot and Gujranwala. Both Ahrars and Khaksars chiefly drew their strength from 'urban *kami* castes' (lower classes). The former prevailed in Sialkot and the latter dominated in Gujranwala, while the Ahmadia in part influenced both cities. Gujranwala's well-circulated Urdu daily *Al Adal* (the Justice) was the mouthpiece of the Khaksars. It played an important role in swelling the numbers of the group in the city by not only highlighting the communal issues but also denouncing the controversial Islamic teaching of the Ahmadia. From early 1940 onwards, the group's substantial growing strength in the city alarmed the district authorities who maintained close watch on its founder Allama Mashriqi and kept New Delhi informed about the 'Khaksar troubles'. These were incorporated in the Viceroy's fortnightly reports to London.<sup>102</sup> This also included, on 15 July 1940, the assassination of a Sikh member of Punjab Provincial Congress. The following day a Sikh retaliated by murdering a Muslim.<sup>103</sup> Such isolated 'revenge' incidents furthered the communal divide in the city, which was to reach at breaking point by the summer of 1947.

Throughout the 1930s, the Muslim League was marginalised in Sialkot, as elsewhere in the Punjab. Its absence is evidenced from a letter of the Governor of Punjab Sir Herbert Emerson to the Viceroy in 1936, in which four major parties of the province were listed, absenting the Muslim League and Congress.<sup>104</sup> The

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<sup>102</sup> Craik to Linlingow, 14 April, 1940, Lionel Carter (ed.), *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War* (Fortnightly Reports) (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), p. 123.

<sup>103</sup> Craik to Linlingow, 16 July, 1940, Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>104</sup> Carter, *Punjab Politics 1936-1939*, p. 47.

correspondence indeed included the Majlis-i-Ahrars despite the fact that this group opposed to the ruling Unionist Party had little provincial political representation. It was only in the early 1940s that the Muslim League came to prominence in the region. In late April 1944, the Muslim League leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah visited Sialkot and stimulated Muslims there to come forward to accomplish Iqbal's dream. Earlier in 1930 Iqbal had put forward the idea of separate Muslim confederations as the 'final destiny' of the Muslims of the subcontinent. On 30 April 1944, Jinnah addressed the 'Historic Sialkot Convention'. Criticising the Punjab Unionist government, he exhorted local Muslims to join the Muslim League so as to achieve Pakistan. 'After seeing you so enthusiastic, I am greatly heartened and have no doubts about the success. The day is not far off when you will have the reward of your sacrifices', he concluded.<sup>105</sup> The Sialkot Muslim Students Federation was the chief organizer of the Muslim League convention in the city. The convention marked the beginning of the breaking of the stranglehold of the Unionist Party and swaying Muslim sentiment from the Ahrars towards the Muslim League in the region. Abdul Islam Butt was a prominent activist of the Sialkot Muslim Student Federation when Jinnah visited Sialkot and later remained active in Sialkot city's local politics as a veteran Muslim Leaguer. His opinions and policy statements would often appear the local newspapers. He also played a key role in the publication of the book *Role of Sialkot in the Pakistan Movement*. He has provided the following information in the course of an interview.

Quaid-i-Azam along with Liaquat Ali and many other prominent Muslim Leaguers visited Sialkot for three days on 28-30 April, 1944. He stayed in Sialkot cantonment's hotel Mount View. At time the Ahrars were very popular in the city. Their processions in Ram Tali Chowk would gather thousands of people. Their firebrand speakers such as Mazhar Ali Azhar and Ata-ula- Shah

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<sup>105</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 30 April, 1944.

Bukhari would scathingly criticize the Dogra Kashmiri Maharaja and the teaching of the Ahmadia sect. They also targeted the Muslim League. The problem with Ahrars was that their workers were largely poor segment of population. At time, the poor and labourers were not entitled to cast vote. Therefore they failed to win elections. In fact, with the joining of former Unionist Chaudhry Sarfarz into the Muslim League, the environment of Sialkot politics changed. Initially the educated classes supported the League because they only were entitled to cast a vote at the time. Afterwards opportunists such as Chaudhry [Sarfarz] benefited.<sup>106</sup>

The historic 1945-46 provincial elections, which were contested purely on communal lines, changed the outlook of the Punjab.<sup>107</sup> The Muslim League won a landslide victory in the elections in the Punjab. The Sialkot Muslim League swept aside the Unionists and Ahrars and won all four seats for the Punjab Legislative Assembly.<sup>108</sup> Despite the victory, the Muslim League was still kept out of power by the coalition government established between the surviving Unionists, the Congress and the Akali Dal. Jinnah's anger, in the wake of the Cabinet Mission, at the British invitation to Nehru to form an interim government and the latter's statement of 10 July 1946 in which he declared that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly 'completely unfettered by agreement and free to meet all situation as they arise', led him to abandon his strictly constitutional approach to politics. Jinnah thus retaliated by declaring 16 August 1946 a direct action day to demonstrate the Muslim League's potency and enthusiasm for the Pakistan movement. 'If you seek peace, we do not want war, but if you want war, we will accept it unhesitatingly', he declared.<sup>109</sup> Mass mobilization in Calcutta led to terrible violence. The ghastly outcome of this

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Abdul Islam Butt, Sialkot city, 7 January 2007.

<sup>107</sup> Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*; Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*; K. B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>108</sup> The 1945-46 Provincial Elections Results in Sialkot District

Muslim League	verses	Unionists/Ahrars	Winners
Sheikh Karamat		Mazhar Ali Azhar	Muslim League
Chaudhary Sarfarz		Faiz-ul-Hasan	Muslim League
Mumtaz Daultana		Mohamand Din Mirza	Muslim League
Chaudhary Nasir-ul-Din		Ghulam Gallani	Muslim League

<sup>109</sup> Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1964), Vol. II, p. 17.

manifestation set a dire precedent of the use of street violence as a tool of power politics. From then until independence such politics dominated the political scene. Violence was increasingly locked into an all-India pattern, as killings in one part of the country were justified as retribution for violence in another part.<sup>110</sup> Evidently, many people were losing faith in the efficacy of the state, and its ability to protect its inhabitants. The violence from the summer of 1946 onwards convinced the overwhelming majority of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims that the partition of India was inevitable. Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab demanded the partition of the province along with the division of India on religious lines following the Rawalpindi massacres of March 1947. At partition, as we shall focus in the next chapters, Sialkot and Gujranwala, as like places throughout the Punjab, saw widespread violence and experienced demographic transformation. This impacted heavily on the cities' continued prosperity.

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<sup>110</sup>The 1946 Great Calcutta Killing, in which communal massacres caused the death of at least 4,000 people, triggered riots in Bombay in September, in the Noakhali and Tippera districts of Bengal, and in Bihar in September and October 1946. For details see, Francis Toker, *While Memory Serves: Last Two Years of British Rule in India* (London: Cassell, 1950), chapter 12 and p. 176.

## Conclusion

Both the rural and urban areas of Gujranwala and Sialkot were immensely affected by colonial rule. This brought challenges to existing industries and increased pressure on the land. It also provided opportunities by way of migration and improved communications which linked local agricultural and industrial production with regional, national and even international markets. The advent of the railway greatly increased the cities' commercial importance. With the development of the means of communication, they served as a hub of flourishing commercial activity. In both cities, Muslims formed the artisan class, while trade and industry were the preserve of the Hindu commercial castes. The latter migrated to India at the time of partition thereby transforming the composition of the two cities.

In the case of Gujranwala, the combined benefits of excellent railway networks and main roads ensured a prominent position for the city in the Punjab province. Although its industrial growth lagged behind that of Sialkot, the city developed as a trade and industrial centre of iron manufacturing goods. The production was linked to the artisan communities of the locality, specifically with *Lohars*. In the case of Sialkot, once a large military and European population was settled, retail activities were boosted as were local dairying and market gardening commercial activities. Labour demands arising from European building projects encouraged migration from the surrounding areas. The Hindu trading and professional castes mainly benefited from the opportunities offered by the civil lines establishments and modern education facilities. Sialkot benefited from its proximity to Kashmir as there was a supply of timber necessary for the city's sporting-goods industry in the region. Although Sialkot's prowess in manufacturing activity had clear

pre-colonial roots, the demands of the British Indian Army and Mission hospitals provided the stimulus for the earlier stages of industrialization in the town. The artisan communities improved their position through the development of the region and the increased demand for their products.

Colonial rule not only brought increased material progress, but heightened awareness of communal identity. Such organisations as the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha and Ahmadia heightened religious identities. Reformers competed not only with Christian missionaries, but with each other in the race to popularise their views. Religious revival resulted in deterioration in existing communal relations. These processes went furthest in the urban areas of the districts of Sialkot and Gujranwala, but even the countryside was affected. Nevertheless, large scale violence was by no means inevitable at the end of British rule, but was contingent on political circumstances.

Political, rather than the religious, conflict created the tensions that ultimately resulted in the division of the Punjab in 1947. Gujranwala and Sialkot, like other areas of the region, were hit by communal violence and resulting mass migration. The departure of the capitalist Hindu and Sikh classes created immense dislocations before a recovery was achieved. Before examining the local level violence that generated the demographic transformation of Sialkot and Gujranwala, it is necessary to consider the province-wide context of this partition-related dislocation.



## **Partition Violence, Migration and Resettlement: Broader Punjab Level Picture**

The partition of the Punjab triggered a major displacement of population. An estimated four and a half million Hindus and Sikhs migrated to the East Punjab, while almost five and a half million Muslims moved to West Punjab. Hundreds of thousands of people died in the months around partition. This chapter contextualizes the case studies of Gujranwala and Sialkot by providing a general consideration of the division of the Punjab in August 1947 and its aftermath. It links both the decision to divide the Punjab and its accompanying violence with the earlier March 1947 disturbances in the Rawalpindi division. It also provides some useful introductory insights concerning the themes of women's abduction, conversions and the organization of violence. Using a variety of fresh sources, from the Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation to the records of the Governor General, the chapter considers the respective roles and responses of the West Punjab authorities to the processes of migration and refugee rehabilitation. It also focuses not only on the official policy regarding the refugee resettlement but also highlights the tensions between central and provincial authorities in implementing it. This theme has been developed by Sarah Ansari with respect to Sindh.<sup>1</sup>

### **Preparing for Violence and Partition**

Standard accounts of the 1947 communal violence in the Punjab commonly concentrate on the disorders of mid-August when the machinery of state was in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ansari, *Life After Partition*.

process of transition or being dismantled and even the boundary demarcations were uncertain. Violence in the Punjab's major towns and cities in fact started as early as March 1947 when the first actual movement of people began as a result of the Rawalpindi killings of Hindus and Sikhs. Violence later peaked at the time of the British departure and the announcement of the Boundary Award in August. The earlier March violence in the Punjab followed on from the growing tensions that had accompanied the 1946 provincial elections and was closely connected to the Muslim League's civil disobedience movement to topple the Unionist coalition government of Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana towards the third week of January 1947.<sup>2</sup> The agitation had been marked by processions and public meetings, which were organised in defiance of the provisions of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance. The real aim of the agitation was to topple the Unionist coalition ministry in the province. The daily agitations to demonstrate the Muslim League's potency and enthusiasm for the Pakistan movement not only heightened communal tension in the major cities and towns of the province, but also completed the politicisation of religion. The violence only took full hold when Khizr announced his resignation on 2 March. This enraged the Sikh Akali Dal as it not only brought the prospect of Pakistan nearer, but seemed to open the way for a Muslim League government in the Punjab.

The disturbances which began in both Lahore and Amritsar rippled out to other parts of the province. The worst violence occurred in Rawalpindi Division where serious rioting began during the first week of March. The raiders, some of whom were from the North West Frontier Province but also included local Punjabis, not only burned and looted many Hindu and Sikh villages in the region but also looted and gutted 'Murree hill stations' which were used by British troops during the

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<sup>2</sup> For the background to both the agitation and to Punjab politics after the formation of the Unionist Party see, Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana, The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (London: Curzon, 1996), pp. 145-56.

hot weather.<sup>3</sup> According to an official estimate by mid-March more than five thousand Hindus and Sikhs were killed in these raids and more than fifty thousand took shelter in the hurriedly established camps of Wah (Attock) and Kala (Rawalpindi). The gravity of the growing tension can be seen in the fact that special armoured trucks and tanks were sent to Rawalpindi and Attock to defuse the communal situation. A particular feature of the March violence was its 'genocidal aspect'. In the aftermath of the Rawalpindi killings, Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab demanded the partition of the province if India was divided.

There was a general agreement that these attacks on Hindus and Sikhs were 'carefully planned and carried out' and reportedly led by some retired Muslim army officers.<sup>4</sup> The poor law and order situation in the division made the minorities more vulnerable. Crime was being committed with relative impunity because of the protection which was afforded to the attackers by local politicians. This can be seen in the fact that, as early as mid-March, for the first time a passenger train was derailed about a quarter of a mile outside the Rawalpindi Chaklala railway station and armed Muslim tribesmen indiscriminately looted hapless Hindu and Sikh commuters. A worrying feature of the episode was the lack of effective intervention by the police. Indeed for the first time 'the worst cases of police partiality' and 'negligence' were openly observed.<sup>5</sup> Although an immediate inquiry recommended the suspension of C.I.D Hindu deputy superintendent of Rawalpindi Bashan Sen and twelve policemen on the charge of 'official negligence', political exigencies obstructed accountability. Unfortunately, the failure to punish rioters encouraged further violence.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Wreckage of Punjab', *The Times* (London) 18 March 1947, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Jenkins to Wavell, 17 March 1947, *Disturbances in the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents* (NDC, Islamabad, 1994), p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 15 March 1947, p. 3.

Powerful unscrupulous politicians played their role in heightening communal tension and fostering violence. They promised protection to its perpetrators. A prominent Muslim League leader Mumtaz Daultana, future premier of West Punjab, during his tour of the riot-torn Attock district, promised future protection for those who had been arrested.<sup>6</sup> There were some reports in the post-partition period that the Mamdot Villa of the Punjab Muslim League leader, the Nawab of Mamdot, later the first premier of West Punjab, was a centre for aiding and abetting street violence to topple the Unionist Coalition Ministry in 1947. Mamdot allegedly not only offered Rs 100,000 to four *achuhats* (untouchable) members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly to change their loyalty for his slot of the premier but also used his wealth and influence with the assistance of Begum Shah Nawaz to purchase arms and grenades from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, a Sikh leader Master Tara Singh, in the aftermath of the Rawalpindi killings, warned: 'We shall live or die, but not submit to Pakistan domination'.<sup>8</sup>

By late March 1947, Hindu and Sikh refugees from the violence stricken areas in the Rawalpindi division were arriving in Amritsar and other parts of the Punjab. As was to happen on a larger scale in August, the refugees' tales of atrocities raised animosities wherever they settled. They planned revenge and the Sikh community produced and circulated wildly inflammatory pamphlets and brochures. Shortly flight and violence went hand in hand. As early as late April, within six weeks of the Rawalpindi killings, there were reports of about 25,000 Muslims displaced from the Sikh Princely States of Patiala and Naba and over 5,000 had arrived in Lahore.<sup>9</sup> This

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<sup>6</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 April, 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, p. 506.

<sup>7</sup> 'Pre-Partition Riot Spotlight', *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 21 October 1949, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 April, 1947, *TOP*, Vol. X, p. 506.

<sup>9</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 25 April 1947, p. 3.

trickle was just a beginning of what after August 1947 was to become the biggest migration of the twentieth century.

The tide of violence and forced migration that started in August 1947 was thus not a sudden eruption but a culmination of five months of tension and conflict. Its genesis lay neither in the colonial policy of divide and rule nor in an inevitable conflict between religious communities. It was more linked with the political elites' struggle for power at the national and provincial level. Much of the violence was increasingly locked into an all-India pattern, as killings in one part of the country were justified as retribution for violence in another part. Reports of violence were being fully exploited by politicians of all shades of opinion. People began to arm themselves as they lost faith in the state's ability to protect them. The violence in the Punjab following on from that in Bengal convinced the overwhelming majority of Hindus and Muslims that the partition of India was inevitable. The Rawalpindi massacres not only speeded up the British decision to divide and quit India, but also led Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab to demand the division of the province along with the partition of India on religious lines. Ian Talbot has pointed out that British authority in the Punjab was declining from March onward and violence in the major cities of Lahore and Amritsar began as early as March 1947. He sees this episode of violence as being completely different in character from that of the 'traditional' communal riot in the Punjab and links it with that of partition period: 'August violence was not a sudden eruption but the final throes of a sustained period of conflict'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*, p. 58.

While the March attacks were entirely different in scale despite their ‘genocidal element’,<sup>11</sup> the horrific repercussions in August 1947 were intensified by the urgency to wind up the partition process in 72 days and to draw up the borderlines in just 36 days. Clearly, the magnitude of the violence and migration was unexpected in August, but many different warnings about the likelihood of violence were made from March onwards. Evan Jenkins, governor of the Punjab, thought the actual transfer of power was likely to provoke ‘large scale disturbances... [in] the principal districts of central Punjab. He reported to Mountbatten: ‘it would be difficult enough to partition within six weeks a country of 30 million people which has been governed as a unit for 98 years’.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Akhtar Hussain, Chief Secretary of the Punjab, reported that the situation would be worse if a hurried decision was taken to partition the Punjab. From his first fortnightly report to his last one, he consistently reported about the worsening communal situation. He wrote about militant organisations and their disruptive plans, claiming that the Akal Saina and Rashtriya Swayyam Sewak Sangh (RSS) would probably work in close co-operation.<sup>13</sup>

The local strongly communalized press exacerbated tensions. The newspapers *Ajit* and *Rajut* inspired the Sikh community to ‘be ready for sacrifices to maintain unity and the existence of the *Panth*’. The Muslim newspapers, *Azad* and *Inquilab*, wrote against the partition of Punjab with the heading, ‘Fragmentation of the Punjab’. They reported with an expression of ‘grim determination’ the need to resist the partition of Punjab, warning the Sikh leaders of the consequences of playing into the hands of the Hindus.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ian Talbot, ‘Violence, Migration and Resettlement: The Case of Amritsar’, in Talbot and Thandi (eds.), *People on the Move*, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup>Fortnightly Report, Governor’s letter to Mountbatten, 30 July 1947, L/P&J/5/250, O.I.O.C.

<sup>13</sup>Chief Secretary’s Report of Second Half of March 1947 to Mountbatten, L/P&5/250, O.I.O. C.

<sup>14</sup>Chief Secretary’s First Half of June’s Report, L/P&5/250, O.I.O.C.

The paramilitary originations had mushroomed and penetrated every corner of the Punjab. By June 1947, it was estimated that the RSS had opened 17 new branches; their membership had risen to 59,200.<sup>15</sup> The Muslim League National Guards had accumulated 43,200 members, not to mention the members of a variety of miscellaneous bodies such as the Majlis-i-Ahrars, Tahrik-i-Khaksars, Shahidi *Jatha* and Mahbir Dal.<sup>16</sup>

In particular, with the appointment of Radcliffe to map the boundary lines a 'sudden flare-up' was noted.<sup>17</sup> Energies were directed to making representations to the Radcliffe Boundary Commissioner. Teja Singh, the Sikh representative on the Punjab Boundary Commission, stressed 'the necessity of preserving the solidarity and integrity of the Sikh community'.<sup>18</sup> Obviously the Sikh representatives stressed that 'other factors' such as their substantial role in the agricultural life of the canal colonies and the relatively high ratio of land revenue paid by them had to be considered along with population criteria on religious lines. The growing uncertainty about the drawing of the boundary lines 'over-shadowed everything else', Jenkins reported to Mountbatten on 13 August.<sup>19</sup> As 15 August approached, when the Award was meant to be published, 'wildest rumours' of its outcome circulated.<sup>20</sup> The uncertainties and dissatisfaction with the Boundary Award found expression in the mass killings that took place not only during these days, but also for some weeks to come. With the announcement of the Boundary Award on 17 August, many people found themselves on the 'wrong side' of the border. Flight and violence went hand in hand. An 'almost universal conflict' and a 'fratricidal war of extermination' set in

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<sup>15</sup> Mudie Papers, Mss Eur F 164/22, O.I.O.C.

<sup>16</sup> Chief Secretary's Report of Second Half of June 1947, L/P&5/250, O.I.O. C.

<sup>17</sup> Jenkins to Abell, 13 August, 1947, 'Punjab Security Arrangement for Partition', Mountbatten Papers, Mss Eur F200/130, O.I.O.C.

<sup>18</sup> *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, Vol. III, p. 230.

<sup>19</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 August, 1947, L/P&J/5/250, O.I.O.C.

<sup>20</sup> Note by Field Marshal Auchinleck, 15 August 1947, Vol. XII, Document No. 486, p. 736.

through the twelve central districts of the Punjab.<sup>21</sup> The biggest migration of the twentieth century began. The caravans of refugees arrived from East Punjab cities and towns and carried with them harrowing stories of atrocities against Muslims, which were retold in the press. Indian papers detailed violence against Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab. Some newspapers were totally uncontrolled, calling for sacrifices and revenge. The publication of a cartoon in the daily *Shahbaz* depicted Gandhi and Tara Singh as the 'Indian cow', which illustrated the communal level to which the media and parties had sunk.

The air was thick with rumours. A rumour was gaining currency that Sikhs from Patalia State were infiltrating Lahore in small batches.<sup>22</sup> The authorities seemed quite reluctant to impose order. Law and order depended upon information. No information was reaching the civil power because the police had ceased to function effectively. The troops were in the process of being classed into Hindu and Muslim units and the force itself was riddled with communal sentiments, as Hindu, Muslim and Sikh troops witnessed their own homes being allocated and families and co-religionists being threatened and murdered. Muslim civil officers were sacked in East Punjab, leaving mainly Sikhs and some Hindu officers. Another feature of the heightened anxiety was that in East Punjab the Muslim policemen were disarmed and had been humiliated.<sup>23</sup> General Rees of the Punjab Boundary Force reported that a Hindu Superintendent of Police in Amritsar (named Kaul) disarmed the Muslim members of the Police Force which had 'created considerable alarm and despondency'.<sup>24</sup> Rumours of division and disarming of the police, army and

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<sup>21</sup> Rees Collections, Punjab Boundary Force, Mss Eur D 807/2, O.I.O.C.

<sup>22</sup> Mudie Papers, The Sikhs in Action, Mss Eur F164/23, O.I.O.C.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Note by Major General D. C. Hawthorn, 11 August 1947, *TOP*, Vol. XII, Document No. 432, p. 667; Jenkins to Mountbatten, 14 August 1947, *TOP*, Vol. XII, Document No. 459, p. 701; Mudie Papers, The Sikhs in Action, Mss Eur F164/23, p. 22, O.I.O.C.



bureaucracy had reached General Rees' Boundary Force of 25,000. The Boundary Force proved toothless in the outburst of communal frenzy.

Following the partition, violence and migration went beyond the control of the new governments of India and Pakistan. The number of refugees crossing the West Punjab border daily was between 100,000 and 150,000.<sup>25</sup> A Sikh army officer stated that the whole of East Punjab was engaged in 'hunting down and butchering Moslem minorities'.<sup>26</sup> The fearful tales and narratives by the refugees of slaughter, rape, and looting at the hands of the Sikhs in East Punjab further rationalised the emptying of Hindus and Sikhs and increased the violence in West Punjab.

Refugees travelled on foot, in bullock-carts and trains. Some of the refugee columns were stretched over fifty miles. The private armies who cut off stragglers and abducted women constantly attacked them. In the face of strong criticism, a decision was taken at a Joint Defence Council meeting on 29 August to abolish the Punjab Boundary Force (PBF) from 1 September 1947. After the failure of the force, the task of maintaining law and order in Punjab was taken over by India and Pakistan. To show their determination, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan issued a joint statement on 3 September calling on all communities to end the atrocities and warned the perpetrators that 'bands caught in the act of committing crime will be shot at sight'.<sup>27</sup> On the same day, the two Punjab governments set up the Liaison Agency to oversee the evacuation of refugees in all districts. This was headed jointly by two chief liaison officers based in Lahore and Amritsar. This agency along with the Military Evacuation Organization (MEO) was responsible for the movement of people across the borders of both Punjabs.

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<sup>25</sup> 'Indian Army's Hard Task', *The Times* (London), 26 September 1947, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Col. Peter Green, 'Eyewitness to the end of Empire', *Canberra Times*, 15 August 1987, (Peter Green Papers, Mss Eur C416, O.I.O.C).

<sup>27</sup> Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab, India and Pakistan*, pp. 508-9.

While large foot *kafilas* (columns) were the common means of evacuation for rural refugees, trains and motor trucks were used for evacuating the urban population. A Joint Evacuation Movement was formulated by the Military Evacuation Organizations of both Indian and Pakistan governments which organised 226 ‘Special Refugee Trains’ from Pakistan to India, and 211 in the opposite direction. They evacuated the refugees en masse and generally carried members of a single community only, with between 2,000 and 5,000 passengers placed in a single train. An official estimate put the numbers of the Muslims evacuated over 1.3 million by railway from late August till the end of November 1947 and over a million non-Muslims in the opposite direction.<sup>28</sup> Military trucks were used for short distance travel but were not available easily. While the compelling images of refugees remain the *kafilas*, which stretched over many miles and the trains with their compartments and rooftops packed with destitute refugees,<sup>29</sup> air travel was another mode of transport, which was swift and safe but available only to those who could pay the exorbitant price. Around 30,000 Hindus and Sikhs were evacuated by air travel from West Punjab.

The railway tracks and roads which led to the newly created border lines became battlegrounds. Armed mobs and gangs systematically detained the trains and engaged in wholesale slaughter and general plundering. The trains were attacked ‘with military precision, with one half of the gang providing covering fire while the others entered the trains to kill’. There were several methods used for the derailment of trains to massacre and loot the refugees. ‘Often the gang conducting this operation

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<sup>28</sup>The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 128/CF/48, File No. 36, p. 4, NDC.

<sup>29</sup> The powerful images of refugees can be seen the correspondence of *Life Magazine*, Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India in the Words and Photos of Margret Bourke-White* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949); Khushwant Singh’s fictional presentation has captured the emotion and fear of these train journeys experienced by some two million people. Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956).

had their couriers on trains who pulled the communication cord between stations, and then the killer gangs operated throughout trains'.<sup>30</sup> Another method was to throw crude bombs at the train or lay a boulder on the tracks. Sometimes the tracks were damaged with the full complicity of the local railway staff.<sup>31</sup>

Violence had clear class and gender dimensions. Politically astute members of the upper-middle class Hindu and Sikh population started to migrate months and weeks before the actual partition took place. They began to sell their property and shifted assets to 'safer zones'. Poor people who lacked not only the resources, but also were unaware of the growing political circumstances, were driven out from mid-August onwards. The possession and control of three commodities *zan*, *zar* and *zamin* (woman, money and property) belonging 'other' communities were the main elements in the aftermath of partition. Although the 'quest for *zar* and *zamin* had led to unpardonable offences against members of all three communities', as Ayesha Jalal emphasizes, 'the debasement of *zan* assumed nightmarish proportions'.<sup>32</sup> Men from all communities cut off stragglers and abducted women, manifesting their masculinity over powerless women. According to the Punjab police chief, over 100,000 abducted women and children were found to be 'missing' in the province.<sup>33</sup> Urvashi Butalia and others have brought the experiences of women to the fore and exposed the horrible

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<sup>30</sup> Swarna Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab 1947', p. 23. In Khushwant Singh's fictional presentation *Train to Pakistan* the saboteurs use a thick steel wire tied atop two poles across the railway track. The plan is to derail the train when it hits the steel wire and then kill all the passengers. In a poignant climax, the hero cuts the steel wire and falls on the tracks only to be crushed by the passing train that carries his beloved and their unborn child safely across the border.

<sup>31</sup> A Muslim Refugee Special train, for example, left Ambala and was derailed near the Sikh Princely State of Patiala, resulting in 129 casualties and 200 serious injuries. A subsequent enquiry report pointed out the accident occurred 'due to the train having been directed on to a deadline instead of the mainline, which is attributable either to gross negligence of the railway staff or a deep-seated conspiracy. The station assistant master, postman and the driver have been arrested. Report of Shambhu Train Accident, quoted in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab, India and Pakistan*, p. 565.

<sup>32</sup> Ayesha Jalal, 'Nation, Reason and Religion: The Punjab's Role in the Partition of India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 12, (August 8, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 22 February 1948, p.4. Earlier, a Minister of Pakistan Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan stated that over 53,000 Muslim women alone were abducted in East Punjab. For details of the statement see, *Inquilab* (Lahore) 10 January 1948, p. 2.

realities of abduction, rape and violence perpetrated against women in a patriarchal society.

Many delighted in violating the integrity of the 'other' religion and community, ripping apart the normal and the spatial landscape of the Punjab. Men as well as women were victims. Those whose religious identities were in doubt were forced to lower their trousers to confirm circumcision.<sup>34</sup> An official report by the Pakistan High Commissioner in India, Major General Abdul Rehman, stated that about 46,000 were involuntarily converted to the opposite religion in the province.<sup>35</sup> These forcible conversions displayed the degree of religious fanaticism to which the communities had sunk. Despite recent advances in historical understanding, such a sombre aftermath of partition rarely finds its way in the literature.

At the beginning of January 1948, M.E.O set up a special 'pocket clearance' organization to accelerate the evacuation work of 'converted persons, abducted women, prisoners, patients and prostitutes.'<sup>36</sup> In this regard, three government-run-homes were set up in Lahore: Milli Darul Atfal in Bahawalpur House, Women's Home in a section of Women Jail at Jail Road and Darul Muhajirat in a section of the Mental Hospital.<sup>37</sup> By the first quarter of 1948, the authorities in West Punjab had found over 18,100 converted persons to Islam and had recovered over 6,355 abducted Hindu and Sikh women. Many of them had been transferred to India.<sup>38</sup> The following year, the return of prisoners also started and, by the end of 1948, over 4,080 Hindu and Sikh prisoners from West Punjab jails were shifted to Indian jails.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 3 February 1948, p.2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 128/CF/48, File No. 36, p.3, NDC.

<sup>37</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 3 June 1951, p.4.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 128/CF/48, File No. 36, Appendix Dix (B), NDC.

<sup>39</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 23 December 1949, p.10.

The greatest task facing the new governments, however, was the reception and rehabilitation of hundreds of thousands of refugees. The scale of the problem was both unexpected and staggering. There was no structure in place to deal with the massive scale of crisis. We next turn to the West Punjab government's response to the arrival and resettlement of the Muslim refugees.

### **Refugee Reception**

In April 1948, the West Punjab authorities completed a refugee census and admitted 'the difficulty of resettlement' of the *Muhajirs*. The survey revealed that 5.5 million Muslim refugees had arrived in the Punjab, representing nearly 28 per cent of the population in the province.<sup>40</sup> This presented an unprecedented and unanticipated problem for the government. The most fortunate occupied properties abandoned by Hindus and Sikhs. Many others thronged in camps, schools, military barracks and squatted on railway platforms, footpaths and every conceivable space for many years. The immediate concern for the incoming refugees, whether they were urban or rural, was the provision of basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and medical attention. By the end of January 1948, the Punjab Government had established 75 refugee camps where hundreds of thousands of people were provided with free food, clothing and medical attention until they had been resettled. The high costs of dealing with the refugee 'problem' can be gauged by the fact that, during the period between August 1947 and March 1948, the government of West Punjab spent a sum of Rs 36,000,000 on maintenance of 'refugee reception camps'.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the West Punjab government was also feeding the 'pocket clearance' of the Muslim refugee population of the Julundhur Camp and Kashmiri Amritsar Camp by despatching every

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<sup>40</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, File no. B50, Appendix A, p. 9, NDC.

<sup>41</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 11 March 1948, p. 3.

day from Lahore several trucks loaded with food. The West Punjab government opposed their migration to the Punjab by arguing that the Muslim refugees were Indians and should be rehabilitated by the Indian state. Despite the regular protests of the West Punjab authorities to the Indian government that the Muslim refugees in the camps were 'Indian nationalists', it continued to feed them on 'humanitarian grounds' till late 1949.<sup>42</sup> Overall, expenditure reached over Rs 650 *lakhs* by that time. For the support of refugee, the Refugee Rehabilitation Finance Corporation with an authorised capital of Rs 3 *crores* was set up in 1948.<sup>43</sup> In addition to this, voluntary community assistance and charitable support for the refugees was institutionalised in the Quaid-e-Azam Fund and the Governors Fund.<sup>44</sup>

Water and sewerage arrangements were usually non-existent in the camps. Unhygienic conditions caused health problems. There were reports that over 100,000 died in the different camps because of disease and severe cold.<sup>45</sup> The refugees frequently protested against the inadequate housing conditions and shortage of rations. Different organizations representing refugee interests emerged. There were occasionally clashes between the refugees and the government authorities.<sup>46</sup> These increased rather than decreased as the months passed. To prevent permanent financial

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<sup>42</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 December 1949, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Budgets of the Central Government of Pakistan for the year 1947-48 to 1951-52, Book No, F6, B, p. 14, Punjab Archive Lahore.

<sup>44</sup> According to an estimate the people of Lahore alone supplied on average about 500 *maunds* (one maund is equal to 40 Kilogram) of *chapattis* and cooked food every day for a period of about six months for the refugees of three camps at Wagha, Bowli and Walton. By mid-April 1948, the Quaid-i-Azam Fund had reached worth over Rs 2 *cores*. *Inquilab* (Lahore) 13 April 1948, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 12 January 1948, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> For example, refugees in the Race Course camps in Montgomery attacked the local police and chanted slogans like 'do or die'. The police fired on the refugees and killed 24 refugees. *Inquilab* (Lahore) 26 August 1948, p. 1; On 1 July 1948, over 5000 refugees took over possessions at the front of Secretariat Lahore and the police was called to disperse them; *Inquilab* (Lahore) 2 May 1948, p.2; in Mandi-Bahauddin, the local people occupied in the property of refugees and this led to a 'war' between locals and refugees; *Inquilab* (Lahore) 10 March 1948, p.5; in Lahore Bowli camp, when refugees protested over the issue of ration, the police fired on them and killed two refugees; 'Terrible Incident of Bowli Camp', *Inquilab* (Lahore) 21 April 1948, p. 1; in Gujranwala, local landlords tried to eject refugees from their land and the incident was halted with the intervention of the district administration; *Inquilab* (Lahore) 2 May 1948, p. 2.

burdens the refugees were quickly 'processed' and temporary 'rehabilitated'. The state speedily directed the destination of rural refugees en mass to specific districts, *tahsils* and villages. Urban migrants, unlike agriculturalists, were not 'directed' by the state and settled where they wished. Most urban refugees chose to go to places where they had pre-partition family ties or business connections and where they thought they could find work. For many others, the process was arduous and involved relocations. Many thousands were convinced and shifted to their 'new provinces' of Sindh and NWFP, while many others preferred to make a reverse trek to their 'homelands' in India. According to an estimate, by April 1948, more than 80,000 'displeased refugees', mainly from the Lahore camps, had already returned back to India.<sup>47</sup> Many poor, as well as those who were indecisive about their destinations languished in the camps over the years. Over 250,000 Muslim refugees were returned to India before the introduction of the permit system.<sup>48</sup> By the end of October 1950, the Punjab authorities decided to clear the camps. Eventually, in late November, out of 25,000 in the Lahore camps, a 'last batch of refugees' more than 5,000 were transferred to Mardan in NWFP. The remaining 5,000, mainly Urdu-speakers, refused to relocate to the North West Frontier Province and asked the West Punjab government to make arrangements for their repatriation to UP- India. In fact, the demands of refugees for repatriation to India increased considerably with the 1950 Nehru-Liaquat Pact on the minority rights. Despite the Indian authorities' 'reluctance to accept' the Muslim refugees, more than 50,000 people had registered in Lahore alone for their return to India.<sup>49</sup> Their number increased rather than decreased as the months and years passed.

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<sup>47</sup> 'Return of Refugees to India', *Inquilab* (Lahore) 13 April 1948, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 23 December 1949, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 November 1950, p. 5.

At the same time, problems were exacerbated by the difficulties of the return of some Hindu trading families to the province who attempted to 'reoccupy' their houses and properties. As early as March 1948, over 2,000 returned Hindu traders were reported in Lahore alone.<sup>50</sup> While there has recently been a proliferation of research devoted to the 'refugee experience' and refugees' role in the urban development of the Punjab's cities, little has been written on the issues concerning the return of refugees to their 'homelands'.<sup>51</sup> We will touch on this untold aspect of the aftermath of partition in the case study of Sialkot in chapter six.

### **Government Policies and Practices of Resettlement**

The whole process of rehabilitation was divided into two categories of temporary and permanent measures. Various administrative measures were adopted to provide emergency relief and accelerate the pace of the resettlement progress. Initially, on 27 August 1947, a Refugee Commissioner for Pakistan was appointed. Once the scale of the refugee problem became apparent, on 5 September the Ministry of Rehabilitation was established at the Centre, echoed by the creation of a new department of rehabilitation in the Punjab, with many specialised agencies staffed by hundreds of both permanent and temporary employees. The entire administrative exercise of rehabilitation was divided into three categories of decision-makers: Rehabilitation Commissioner; Financial Commissioner Revenue; and Rehabilitation Commissioner for Industries and Director of Industries.<sup>52</sup> In order to co-ordinate the work of the Centre and the Province, on 15 October the Pakistan-Punjab Refugees Council was set up. At the district level, there were deputy rehabilitation commissioners dealing

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<sup>50</sup> 'Return of Refugees to India', *Inquilab* (Lahore) 9 March 1948, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

<sup>52</sup> A Note on the Work done by the Punjab Government, Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, 128 CF/48/, File 36, p. 14, NDC.



with the problems concerned with urban and rural property, allotments and repairs. Refugee Advisory Committees were set up in each district as well as Vigilance Committees for each *tahsil* and Patwari Circle.<sup>53</sup> The implementation of refugee resettlement involved a huge task of registering claims, exchanging records of rights between the two dominions, verification of claims on the basis of this record and the determination of comparative values of areas abandoned and claimed. An elaborate Central Record Office was set up in Lahore under the Punjab resettlement authorities for the verification of registered claims.

The primary concern for the state authorities was to resettle as many refugees as possible on the abandoned land, evacuee houses and property. Despite the sheer magnitude of people involved, rural resettlement was less challenging than urban rehabilitation because of the large amounts of land left behind by Hindu and Sikh evacuees.<sup>54</sup> Within two months of the creation of the Punjab Rehabilitation Scheme, a large number of agricultural refugees were ‘directed’ to the various districts of the Punjab. As early as the end of November 1947, many districts became ‘full up’ with refugees and the district officers were reported as ‘reluctant to take more’ numbers.<sup>55</sup> As a whole, by the end of March 1948, about 40 *lakhs* (90 percent) Muslim refugees were temporarily allocated evacuee and state land on the basis of twelve acres per family.<sup>56</sup> Under this ‘quasi-permanent scheme’, to re-unite, as far possible, scattered

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<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, 128 CF/48/, File, 36, p. 21, NDC.

<sup>54</sup> The records show that the Muslim refugees in the Punjab could receive 48.36 *lakhs* standard acres against the total rural population of refugees 43.25 *lakhs*. A scale of ‘graded cuts’ was introduced, although this was much less than in the Indian Punjab. A maximum limit of allotment was fixed. In order to ensure that every rightful claimant got a share, a cut of 50 per cent was imposed on claims beyond 20,000 units (roughly equal to 250 acres of irrigated land in Lyallpur) and no allotment exceeded 36,000 units, which were roughly equal to 450 acres of irrigated land in Lyallpur. The Punjab: A Review of First Five Year, 1947-1952, File E1 (9), A 82 (2), p. 48, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>55</sup> The Governor General’s File No. 803, p. 26, National Archive Islamabad.

<sup>56</sup> The Governor General’s File No.B50, p. 2, National Archive Islamabad. In time, a permanent settlement scheme of land allocation was developed after both the Punjabs had agreed for the exchange of revenue records of rural settlement. From November 1948 up to the end of January, 1949, revenue records of 15,184 West Punjab villages had been handed over to the East Punjab government, and in

social or family units, many attempts were made and opportunities were provided to concentrate 'homogeneous bodies of settlers' by offering them a choice of areas for their claims and '*chak* or village' where they wished to settle.<sup>57</sup>

The refugee survey of 1948 showed that most of the 'agreed areas' refugees who came from East Punjab province, East Punjab states and Delhi areas were largely resettled in the major West Punjab districts of Lahore, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Sargodha, Jhang, Gujranwala and Multan. While many refugees from the 'non-agreed areas' relocated to other provinces of the country, the Kashmiri refugees from Jammu and Kashmir were mainly accommodated in the 'border districts' of Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Gujrat and Sialkot.<sup>58</sup> The settlement of the refugees from the 'agreed areas' was considered relatively simple as almost all the holdings were allotted through the exchange of the unmoveable property record between the two Punjabs. In contrast the process of allotment in the 'non-agreed' areas was complex and involved many problems of 'bogus' and 'multiple' allotments.<sup>59</sup> In the case of the 'non-agreed' areas, records were lacking. Information was collected about the area abandoned by the displaced persons. In such a situation the only source of information on land ownership and claims to land were the refugees themselves who were invited to submit claims upon which a permanent scheme of resettlement could be drawn. Inevitably such claims were frequently exaggerated. The different pace of

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return, revenue records had been obtained from India of 14,449 villages of East Punjab and the East Punjab States, and of 13 villages of Delhi province. Resettlement of Refugees on Land, 1 July to 31 December 1954, E33, Part XIII, p. 5, Punjab Archive Lahore.

<sup>57</sup> Rehabilitation Settlement Scheme, Part II, p. 25, Central Board of Revenue Record Office, Lahore.

<sup>58</sup> The authorities divided the places of origin of migrants in India into two main categories. The refugees from East Punjab and East Punjab States fell in the category of 'agreed areas'; all the migrants from other areas more placed in the category of 'non-agreed areas'.

<sup>59</sup> Records of Lahore High Court show that hundreds of bogus and multiple allotments were subsequently annulled. For example, Sahibzadi Naseen Begum versus Settlement and Rehabilitation Commissioner (judgement order: NLR-1982-SCJ-1965); Salamatullah and others versus Settlement and Rehabilitation Commissioner (judgement order: 1982 SMR 1120-R of 1966); Gulab Khan versus Settlement and Rehabilitation Commissioner (1982 SCM 630-R/70), Lahore High Court Record Room, Lahore.

resettlement in the two areas can be measured by the fact that up to 1959-1960, ninety-nine per cent of claims by displaced persons from ‘agreed areas’ had been settled on agricultural land, while the percentage of settled claims for the displaced persons from ‘non-agreed areas’ was less than sixty per cent.<sup>60</sup>

**TABLE 1.8**

**Places of Origin of Muslim Refugees in the West Punjab**<sup>61</sup>

**(A) Muslim Refugees from East Punjab Cities and Townes**

<b>Places</b>	<b>Number</b>
Amritsar	741444
Jullunder	520189
Gurdaspur	499793
Hoshiarpur	384448
Karnal	306509
Hissar	287479
Ludhiana	255864
Ambala	222939
Gurgaon	80537
Rontak	172640
Delhi	91185
Kangra	33826
UP	28363
Simla	11300

**(B) Muslim Refugees from Princely States**

<b>States Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
Patiala	308948
Alwar	191567
Kapurthala	172079
Faridkot	66596
Bharatpura	43614
Naba	43538
Jina	41696
Together other small states	39322

<sup>60</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1960, E1 (12) 1960, PA, pp. 58-9, Punjab Archive Lahore.

<sup>61</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 13 April 1948, p. 5.

**TABLE 1.9****Percentages of Resettlement of Muslim Refugees in Pakistan, 1948<sup>62</sup>**

<b>Provinces</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Total</b>
Punjab	37.54	12.90	50.44
Karachi & Sindh	0.57	6.47	7.03
N.W.F.P.	n/a	0.31	0.31
Baluchistan	n/a	0.09	0.09
Bahawalpur State	1.99	0.66	2.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.76</b>	<b>24.16</b>	<b>67.92</b>

**TABLE 1.10****Rehabilitation of Refugees in Rural and Urban Areas, West Punjab, 1949<sup>63</sup>**

<b>Name of Place</b>	<b>Rural Areas</b>	<b>Urban Areas</b>	<b>Total</b>
Lyallpur	7 47,400	127,500	874,900
Montgomery	7 10,000	83,300	798,300
Multan	4 66,200	235,400	701,600
Lahore	419,000	280,000	699,000
Sheikhupura	4 09,000	56,000	465,000
Gujranwala	311,800	82,300	394,100
Sialkot	255,800	38,600	294,100
Gujrat	180,900	37,000	217,900
Shahpur	1 22,000	84,700	206,700
Jhang	112,000	93,500	205,500
Rawalpindi	30,100	125,000	155,100
Muzaffargarh	52,500	56,000	108,500
Mianwali	30,000	8,000	38,000
Jhelum	22,000	12,000	34,000
Dera Ghazi Khan	30,600	25,800	56,400
Cambellpur	400	1,000	14,000

<sup>62</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 128/CF/48, File No. B50, Appendix A, p. 9, NDC.

<sup>63</sup> The Policy and Progress of Rehabilitation of Muslim Refugees in the Urban Areas of Punjab up to 31 March, 1950; The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, File no. B.50-20/CF/50, p. 7, Appendix A, NDC.

The delay in resettling the so-called 'non-agreed areas' refugees in the Punjab resulted not only from the difficulties of exchange of record and over-stated claims, but was also rooted in government policy and response. At the outset, the Punjab government was ambivalent about providing massive relief for the 'non-agreed' refugees. It took the view that there simply were not enough resources in the province to house all the refugees who flooded in. So they had to be 'distributed' in a further forced exodus that would scatter throughout Pakistan. Indeed, the central government, based in Karachi, then decided to press or cajole other provinces to take in surplus refugees. The provincial government was of the view that the evacuee properties abandoned by the Hindus and Sikhs of West Punjab should be allocated to the Muslim refugees of East Punjab. The government representatives feared that any further allotment at resettlement would 'not only mean the waste of all the goodwill towards Pakistan created by distribution of free rations, but might also lead to active hostility towards Government'. The Central Minister for Rehabilitation of Refugees, Mian Iftikharuddin, came out with a radical solution for rehabilitating the refugees, when he proposed breaking up the large estates in the Punjab with a view to distributing land among the refugees. He recommended that 'a graded tax' should be levied on the income of all landlords drawing more than Rs 15,000 per annum from their agricultural land.<sup>64</sup> This revolutionary proposal was turned down by the provincial cabinet which was dominated by the landed gentry, with the Nawab of Mamdot its Chief Minister, one of the biggest landlords of the united Punjab. In turn, Mamdot criticised the central government's 'arbitrary decisions and interferences in the internal administration of the Province'.<sup>65</sup> He targeted the Refugees Minister who had failed to obtain for East Punjab Muslims the same treatment as regards property as

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<sup>64</sup> The Governor General's File No 804, pp. 13-4, National Archive Islamabad.

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 128/CF/48, File No. 262,- PMS/48, pp.36-7, NDC.

West Punjab Hindu and Sikh refugees.<sup>66</sup> Mian Iftikharuddin severely criticised the Punjab government's handling of the refugee issue and categorically rejected Mamdot's claims of the settlement of 50 *lakhs* refugees in the province. The refugee minister's resignation on the grounds that the Punjab government was unwilling to take speedy measures to rehabilitate the refugees further strained relations between the Centre and the province.

Relations were not eased between the provincial and central authorities despite the replacement of Iftikharuddin. The Pakistan-Punjab Refugee Council took issues of the refugee settlement with the Punjab and shortly found the attitude of the provincial government to be 'totally non-co-operative'. There was also a clash over the 'delimitation of functioning' between the Pakistan-Punjab Refugee Council and the Mamdot Ministry. This in particular reached its nadir over the issue of abandoned motor cars and vehicles when the provincial ministry consistently interfered and opposed the allocation of abandoned cars by the Refugees Council.<sup>67</sup> The Punjab Chief Minister threatened to refuse to cooperate within the Pakistan-Punjab Refugee Council because, in his view, it had no regard for Punjabi opinion. The Nawab of Mamdot instructed the provincial officers 'not to carry out' the decisions of the Council and threatened the withdrawal of the Punjab officers now employed in the Joint Refugees and Rehabilitation Secretariat, which was an integral part of the scheme.<sup>68</sup> Even within the Mamdot cabinet, there was a persistent tug-of-war over the allotting-power regarding the 'abandoned industrial undertakings' between the revenue minister and industries minister.<sup>69</sup> Mamdot was the focus of severe press criticism at the time within the Punjab for his handling of the refugee question.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> A Note on the Work done by the Punjab Government, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, File No. 36, 128 CF/48/, p.14, NDC.

<sup>68</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, 2 (2)-PMS/48, 26 March, 1948, p.2, NDC.

<sup>69</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, File 1350, 20 CF/49/50, p. 2, NDC.

Twenty refugee members of the provincial assembly threatened in early 1950 to move a non-confidence resolution against him in the assembly. One of them expressed 'the callousness and indifference of the Punjab rehabilitation authorities have demoralised the refugees to a considerable extent'.<sup>70</sup> Mamdot was also embroiled in factional rivalries with other landlord politicians such as Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Shaukat Hyat. Their bickering was to culminate in January 1949 with the Governor-General of Pakistan Khwaja Nazimuddin ordering the governor of Punjab to dissolve the Punjab Legislature Assembly and take the provincial administration under the control of the Central Government. It was not until 1955 that the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan abolished the distinctions between 'agreed' and 'non-agreed' areas in respect of allotment of evacuee property on a permanent basis. The role of unscrupulous politicians and bureaucracy over the issues of refugee rehabilitation greatly affected the relations between Centre and Provinces. Such tensions between the Province and the Centre over 'refugee question' were by no means unique to the Punjab. Sarah Ansari has pointed out the tensions in Sindh between the provincial authorities and the Centre over refugee resettlement and shows how the refugees 'found themselves caught in the middle' of such political bickering.<sup>71</sup>

Though, at the state level, the refugees were quickly processed or resettled, in reality the transitory period for the processing and settlement of urban refugees, unlike rural refugees, was a lot longer. Apart from the exchange of records between the two Punjabs, it essentially entailed the tasks of addressing the shortage of housing, allocating and matching jobs and most importantly stimulating commercial activity again. The acquisition of evacuee houses provided accommodation that was far from adequate. As the 1948 refugee census reveals, 1,315,000 urban Muslim refugees

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<sup>70</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 28 February 1950, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ansari, *Life After Partition*, p. 94.

replaced an outgoing 1,102,000 Hindu and Sikh refugees in West Punjab. This meant that the urban areas of the province were burdened with an excess of over two and half *lakhs* of refugees.<sup>72</sup> Housing in urban areas thus was limited. The situation was further exacerbated by the reality that many evacuee houses were damaged during the partition-related violence and therefore had to be repaired before they could be allocated to refugees. According to an official estimate, by the end of 1949, the government had spent a total amount of Rs 3,213,773 on repairing 23,000 evacuee properties in the various towns and cities of the Punjab.<sup>73</sup> The main difficulty associated with the repair of evacuee property was the shortage of finance, technical staff and above all, a suitable construction agency to carry out this work.

Many malpractices and irregularities happened in the settlement of refugees. Long-established residents competed with refugees for abandoned Hindu and Sikh property. More than fifty per cent of the abandoned houses and thirty-six per cent of the shops were illegally occupied by the local residents.<sup>74</sup> The officials of the Punjab rehabilitation department ranging from local *Patwari* circle to the Lahore Central Record Room benefited themselves at the expense of the refugees. The daily earnings of the Lahore Secretariat pavement-sitting petition-writers increased ten-fold, as is evidenced from the fact that over one thousand petitions were being filed every day by the refugees in Lahore alone. For many poor and ‘aggrieved refugees’, it was almost impossible to file their claims without offering bribes to the officials, or their ‘touts’. A chain of functionaries ranging from the local *Patwari* to the secretariat petition-writers and the Central Record Room clerks and concerned officers worked

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<sup>72</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 20/CF/49, File no. B.50, p.18a, NDC.

<sup>73</sup> The Policy and Progress of Rehabilitation of Muslim Refugees in the Urban Areas of Punjab up to 31 March, 1950, The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, File no. B.50-20/CF/50, p. 18a, NDC.

<sup>74</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 20/CF/49, File No. B.50, p. 18b, NDC.



together in this 'holy alliance'. Many regularly ran 'like shuttle-coaches' between the district headquarters and the Central Record Office Lahore to obtain 'favourable orders from the concerned officers' for those who paid the toll.<sup>75</sup> Most serious of all, politicians attempted to enrich themselves and their relatives by occupying evacuee property, or by illegally allotting it. There were many reports against the first two Premiers of West Punjab, Nawab Mamdot and Mumtaz Daultana, for their misuse of power. One of them, for example, was that Daultana favourably allotted the 'biggest flour mill of the subcontinent' to his brother-in-law in Sargodha, plus an evacuee shop on the Mall Road Lahore and the Odeon cinema in Lahore.<sup>76</sup> The charges against Nawab Mamdot were the misuse of public office to secure prime land at low concessional rates in Montgomery district. An official report of the Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation revealed the political corruption at district level itself.

The abandoned evacuee property offered a temptation to which many of the leading figures in the districts succumbed, and political considerations prevented suitable action being taken in such cases. In allocating houses and especially factories it was found to be very difficult.<sup>77</sup>

Some efforts were made by the martial law regime of Ayub Khan (1958-69) to recover 'unauthorisedly held' evacuate property. This is evidenced from a 1959 recovery operation of the Enforcement Staff and Evacuee Property Intelligence Bureau in which it 'unearthed hidden evacuee property' worth over Rs 20 million.<sup>78</sup> The following year, the Directorate of Enforcement discovered urban evacuee property alone worth about Rs 70 million.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> 'Lahore Scribes Thrive at Expense of Refugees: Resettlement Claims a Vicious Circle', *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 17 July 1954, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 7 July, 1950, p. 3. The charges against the Nawab Mamdot were the misuse of public office to secure prime land in the Montgomery district.

<sup>77</sup> A Note on the Work done by the Punjab Government, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, File No. 36, 128 CF/48/, p.14, NDC.

<sup>78</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1959, E1 (12) 1959, PA, p.61, Punjab Archive Lahore.

<sup>79</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1960, E1 (12) 1960, PA, p.59, Punjab Archive Lahore.

## Urban and Economic Development

Early in 1950, the authorities in Punjab carried out a survey of people who were still living on the pavements of cities and towns. The great majority of estimated 5 81,000 required 'housing'. Sheikh Fazal Alahi, the Punjab Refugee Minister, declared that at least two *lakhs* houses were required to solve the housing problems of the displaced persons in the province.<sup>80</sup> To address immediate refugee requirement, new housing schemes were designed to meet the different needs of the displaced persons coming to the cities. This resulted in an unprecedented urban expansion of the cities and towns of the province through the development of new residential and commercial areas. Refugees were allocated one or two room accommodation, depending on the extent of their compensation claim. The creation of additional housing facilities in the cities meant that refugees not only came to acquire permanent homes, but also a semblance of permanence in their daily lives.

The Urban Rehabilitation Department constituted the West Punjab Housing and Settlement Agency under the chairmanship of Khan Mohammad Leghari in 1948. The schemes were designed to meet the requirements of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons who could not be accommodated in abandoned houses. The Improvement Trusts were set up for planning and procuring land for the construction of 'satellite town schemes' in various towns. In less than a decade, 33 satellite towns and refugee colonies in 13 different urban areas were constructed. The total estimated cost in 1960 of the satellite towns' scheme stood at Rs 112 million.<sup>81</sup> However, the newly constructed posh 'satellite towns' did not solve the acute housing shortage. These new housing schemes were primary designed to meet the standards of the rich

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<sup>80</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 7 May 1951, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1961, E1 (12) 1961, PA, p. 99, Punjab Archive Lahore.

and upper classes. These were unaffordable for the poor class of refugees. In 1958, under the Martial Law regime of Ayub Khan, a rapid survey of the displaced persons was carried out through the local authorities; it was found that there were still around 146,700 families of displaced persons in 35 towns requiring housing facilities in one shape or another.<sup>82</sup> In 1959, the central government set aside Rs 118,700,000 as a grant, in addition to a loan of Rs 20 million, for the construction of cheap housing. Over 6,300 two-room quarters or extensions were planned in different satellite town schemes. There were also 3,800 new sites developed and over 3,000 houses constructed, involving an expenditure of Rs 13,984,806. In addition to this, in 1960, the central government developed cheap housing schemes of 'one and two-roomed nucleus houses' to meet the needs of 13,397 families. There was further construction of 35,534 'developed plots' for low-income families. To meet the needs of 28,988 'low-income groups of displaced families', the Lahore Township Scheme was designed, which was to be completed by the end of 1968.<sup>83</sup>

Housing on its own could not ease the problems of refugees. They urgently required some means of living. It was not just the refugees but locals who had suffered from the dislocation to trade and industry. The dislocation of trade and industry had left behind a large labour population without jobs. This included not only around 300,000 urban refugees but around 100,000 urban locals who had lost their jobs because of the economic consequences of partition.<sup>84</sup> Monthly wages of industrial labourers declined to below Rs 75. The industries of the Punjab faced the acute shortage of a managerial, technical personnel and the entrepreneur class. Production also suffered due to shortage of capital and non-availability of raw

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, 20/CF/49, File no. B.50, p.18d, NDC.

materials, absence of normal trade channels, transport and as a result of marketing difficulties. There were also an acute shortage of trained staff in banking sectors.

The government fully recognised the serious scale of the problem. The 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Pakistan-Punjab Refugees Council on 24 October 1948 took some important decisions to overcome the difficulties facing the industries of the province. Under the aegis of the Council, five committees were set up. These included the General Economic Committee to supervise the general rehabilitation of the economic life of the province, the Industries Committee to formulate plans for starting new industries and the Public Work Committee to explore the possibility of utilising refugee labour on public welfare. To assist refugees to find suitable employment, the government planned various schemes and used Employment Exchanges. The Ministry of Labour provided technical and vocational training. Some training-cum-work centres for refugees were opened in refugee camps. Refugees could engage in paid work while acquiring new skills such as spinning, weaving, and knitting. The different steps were taken to address the skill shortage. The well-known Commerce Hailey College of Punjab University started additional evening classes for training bank employees and other staff in ‘accounting and elementary education of banking’. At the same time, the different financial institutions sent their ‘newly-recruited staff’ for training in the college. The Lahore Central Co-operative Department also started its own banking classes and courses for training clerks for the co-operative banks.<sup>85</sup> In mid-1948, the Muslim Commercial Bank opened in Lahore. There were also six Employment Training Centres and five Vocational Centres. They not only provided

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<sup>85</sup>Board of Economic Inquiry West Punjab, Monthly Summery, October 1947- June 1948, p. 4, ISPA.11/4, O.I.O.C.

training, but also helped 'exploring employment opportunities'. By mid-1949, these institutions had trained about 6,500 people.<sup>86</sup>

Most of the factories were looted or damaged during the partition disturbances. Out of 2,900 unregistered factories, 135 undertakings were found to be in 'unauthorised possession' and 115 were badly damaged. By 1950, 1,654 factories had been allotted. On the basis of a comprehensive survey, a high-power Development Board was set up to co-ordinate as well as to prioritise development schemes under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Punjab. The Punjab government developed many schemes for which finances were obtained from the Pakistan Industrial Finance Corporation, the Refugees Rehabilitation Finance and Central Government Development Loan Fund. Another important step was the setting up of the Industrial Facilities Promotion Committee to assist and advise industrialists in matters relating to the acquisition of land, procurement of raw materials, machinery, power resources, railway sidings, trained personnel and marketing facilities. The committee was thus designed to motivate private enterprise. In addition to this, there was the Punjab Provincial Co-Operative Bank and the network of Central Co-Operative Banks and societies in the province and districts. The total working capital of all the co-operative banks in the Province was Rs. 160,705,679. There were about 400 industrial co-operatives societies operating in the Punjab.<sup>87</sup>

The West Punjab Government thus made considerable efforts to support restoration of normal commercial activity in the province. At the national level, in 1948, the first central bank of the country, the State Bank of Pakistan, was set up and capitalised at Rs 30 million. In 1949, to cope with finance, the Small Scale and Cottage Industries Development Corporation with an authorised capital of Rs

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<sup>86</sup> West Punjab Economic Survey, July-September 1949, (Board of Economic Inquiry Publication, West Punjab, Lahore, 1949), p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> The Punjab: A Review of First Five Year, 1947-1952, File E1 (9), A 82 (2), pp. 35-6.

5,000,000 was established.<sup>88</sup> The following year, the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation was created with an amount of Rs 30 million. This had the responsibility to provide medium and long-term capital to industry, when private capital and enterprise was inadequate. The Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Finance Corporation funded mainly refugee craftsmen.<sup>89</sup> Alongside it were the Refugee Artisans and Craftsmen Rehabilitation Committee and the Pakistan Spinners and Weavers Association. In 1950, the Pakistan government launched the Small Business Corporation, aimed at small entrepreneurs in the industrial field. The main strategy was to provide capital to existing enterprises and to create new industrial establishments. By March 1951, the federal government had granted 34 *crores* for economic development. This was described as the 'largest grant for rehabilitation in Punjab'.<sup>90</sup>

To conclude, partition-related-migration brought immense socio-economic challenges for the new Pakistan state. Many major cities of the Punjab now had half their population comprising Muslim refugees from India. Both the national and provincial governments directed huge resources to deal with the problem of refugee rehabilitation, including the provision of housing and employment. But while partition brought initially huge problems, it also created new opportunities for both refugees and locals. They were also to fill the economic niches left by departing Hindus and Sikhs. This unstudied aspect of the aftermath of partition will form the focus of chapters five and six in the case studies of Gujranwala and Sialkot. We will turn first, however, to a localised study of the patterns of violence and migration. Gujranwala

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-4.

<sup>89</sup> J. R. Andrus; Azizali F. Mohammed; Mohammed Afzal, 'State and Private Enterprise in Pakistan', *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 20:7 (April 1951), p. 61. Also see, Jafer Mehdi, 'Private Enterprise and Industrial Development', in *Industrial Development in Pakistan 1947-1975* (Lahore: Progress Research Council, 1976), p. 10.

<sup>90</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 April 1951, p. 7.

and Sialkot shared in the violence and dislocation taking place across the Punjab. Despite this little has been written about the circumstances in which their Hindu and Sikh populations fled to India, or about the reverse inward migration of Muslims.

## Part II

### Locality, Partition-Violence and Migration

I can identify the men who murdered my father and took away my mother, provided I see them. One of them appeared Bashir Kashmiri. I am a victim of cruel crime; please investigate my case.

- Priyan Kaur reported to the Gujranwala Sardar Police Station, 7 June 1947

On 14 August 1947, two police constables, by the names and badges Mohammad Ali Shah Police No 427 and Rahmat Ali Police No 312 perpetrated an attack upon the Hindu *tarkhans* of a village called Shala (Sialkot). Despite the opposition of local Muslim Jats and Gujars, the policemen pulled out the Hindu population of the village. They not only looted their all belongings but also sold them on the spot to the local Muslims. The purchased-receipts of Hindus' possessions with the hand-writing and signature of Mohammad Ali Shah Police No 427 had been recovered.

- Sialkot District Police Record, 10 November 1947



### **Partition, Violence and Migration: The Case Study of Gujranwala**

This chapter reflects on the circumstances which led to the widespread violence and the emptying of minorities in both Gujranwala city and district in 1947. This locality-driven approach seeks to understand the complex and differential aspects of the localized acts of violence and migration. It draws on hitherto unexplored original sources, including Punjab Police Intelligence Reports and Gujranwala District Police First Information Reports to explain the nature, motivation and purpose of violence at the local level. Use is also made of oral source material to shed light on the experiences of violence and abduction and further to identify the perpetrators of violence in the region. Despite the advances of historical understanding regarding the 1947 violence, especially in terms of its organisation, the exact identity of the perpetrators is usually hazy. The analysis will for the first time shed light on the leading role of local *Lohars* who were in the forefront of attacks on the Hindus and Sikhs of Gujranwala. Much of the violence in Gujranwala was planned which fits in with the emerging insights produced by locality-based studies elsewhere in Punjab. Interestingly, however, the Police First Information Reports, despite the evidence they provide to the contrary, persist in regarding the violence as communal mob attacks which were unorganised. Evidence of planning is clear in local episodes, as well as in the largest scale killing in the district, the Kamoke train attack, which forms an important case study for the chapter. The chapter not only considers the partisan official and police response to the Muslim perpetrators of violence, but also reveals

the local policemen's direct involvement in the looting and large scale murders of Gujranwala's Hindus and Sikhs. It begins with a description of the growing tension and violence in the city and its surrounding areas from March 1947 onwards. This in particular established a pattern of partisan official and police responses which were later to account for the large numbers of deaths in the intense violence that accompanied the transfer of power in August 1947.

### **Partition Violence in Gujranwala**

Until recently, nothing has been written about the extent of partition violence and the emptying of minorities in the town and Gujranwala district. The locality was badly hit in 1947, and by the end of the year the entire population of Hindus and Sikhs was forced to quit the city. Violence in Gujranwala rose with the Muslim League's street mobilization against the Khizr Tiwana Ministry, which sought political gains as elsewhere in the Punjab. On 1 March 1947, one day before the resignation of Tiwana as premier of Punjab, over one thousand people took out processions in the streets of the city with a variety of slogans such as *Khizro Toddy Bacha Haay Haay*, (Khizr, a stooge of the British) *Ban Ka Ray Ga Pakistan*; *Lar Kay Lengey Pakistan*. (Pakistan would be achieved at any cost). That day's gatherings ended by the hoisting of the green Muslim League flag on the building of Gujranwala's Magistrates Court by some passionate members of Muslim League National Guards. The hoisting of a Muslim League flag upon the public buildings was regarded as a show of triumph against 'other' communities. For the minorities of the city, security became the paramount need of the hour in the heightened communal situation.

Against the backdrop of growing communal tension, the preparations for violence were underway in the city as they were in many of the Punjab's towns.

Communal armed bands mushroomed. By the beginning of March, a Special Branch Intelligence Police reported that the strength of the non-Muslim volunteers stood at about one thousand in Gujranwala.<sup>1</sup> Equally the Muslim League National Guards and the RSS had been drawing immense strength from the students and youths for months. With the burgeoning enrolment of bands and gangs, 'a widespread collection' of funds and arms began. Locally-manufactured arms of Nizamabad and Wazirabad were easily available in the district. Their demand had already increased with the March massacres of Hindus and Sikhs at Rawalpindi. By the end of first week of March, there was 'an unprecedented rush' and stockpiling of various kinds of weapons such as carbine rifles, pistols, spears, swords, daggers, Kirpans, *kulharis* and *lathis*. The accumulation of arms and ammunition was not limited to the scared minorities of Gujranwala. 'The members of all communities hurried to arm themselves', a Special Branch Intelligence Police reported on 8 March 1947.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the first week of March, within a few days of the fall of the Khizr Government and soon after the incident of Rawalpindi killings, life within the inner city was disrupted by isolated cases of arson and stabbing attacks. These initial violent episodes sowed deep apprehension among the minorities of the city. In early March, for the first time a 48-hour curfew was imposed in the city as a preventive measure, and afterwards whenever there appeared to be tension and trouble. However, the introduction of curfew alone could not provide the necessary reassurance to Gujranwala's non-Muslim residents, and sporadic disturbances continued throughout March. On 22 March, on Pakistan Day, a large number of Hindus and Sikhs paraded on the streets of city, observing 'Anti-Pakistan Day' and chanting against the Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> Secret Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 1 March, 1947, Vol. LIXIX, p. 57, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Islamabad (Henceforth The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence 1947 followed by page number, NIHCR).

<sup>2</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 8 March, 1947, pp. 82-3, NIHCR.

League. The disturbances and communal incidents in the surrounding areas also affected the city. For example, the burning of a Hindu sweet-shop in neighbouring Wazirabad city caused 'a great panic' in Gujranwala city. News and rumours fanned rapidly. There was a rumour circulating in the city that many non-Muslims were fleeing.

Communal sentiment continued to simmer throughout April. Illegal manufacturers of bombs and other forms of explosives began to collect. Bombs were now being manufactured in the inner city. A number of episodes were reported of accidents involving the manufacture of home made bombs. On 4 April, for example, a Hindu in Baghbanpura *mohalla* severely injured himself making a bomb when it exploded. Five days later, a Sikh in Guru Nanakpura *mohalla* injured himself in the same way. In early May, the callous murder of a well-known Muslim Pir Sahib near the civil line police station aggravated the communal temperature in the already tense city of Gujranwala. At the end of the month, riots broke out following an explosion in the Kakeen Rai area. The trouble spread to the Hindu and Sikh localities of Gobindgargh and Guru Nanakpura where shops and property were looted and gutted. The constantly tense situation led the district magistrate to impose a 48-hour curfew in the non-Muslim localities.<sup>3</sup> Rigid curfew brought the disorders under control. Nevertheless retaliation became the order of the day. The city entirely divided along communal lines and minorities felt safe only in their own localities. By the time of the announcement of the 3 June Partition plan, the preparation for communal battle had accelerated. There were 14 cases of incendiarism and stabbings were reported in the city. Muslims and non-Muslims vied with each other in this war of communal competition. Different groups of young hooligans were roaming in the city. Sporadic

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<sup>3</sup> Gujranwala District Police Record Office, File no, IV/14, 1947, Civil Line, Gujranwala.

ambushes and assaults on the minorities became one of the prime crimes of the day. These included an attack by a gang of nine Muslims on two young Sikhs who were cycling by the city railway station. One Sikh was brutally axed to death while the other narrowly escaped and reported to the city's Sadar Police Station, providing a sketch identification of the killers.<sup>4</sup>

At this point, the district law and enforcement agencies appeared relatively dysfunctional, and crime was being committed with relative impunity. Although cases were registered, they were not followed up and the reality was that no one was ready to stand witness. In one instance, a young Hindu woman revealed the identity of a culprit to the local police: 'I can identify the men who murdered my father and took away my mother, if I see them. One of them appeared Bashir Kashmiri. I am a victim of cruel crime; please investigate my case'.<sup>5</sup> Such isolated episodes could be seen to cow the minorities of the city, if not drive them out. Moreover, the minorities viewed the predominantly Muslim police of the city as unreliable and partisan. This resulted not just from the generally deteriorating communal situation, but from isolated attacks, especially on night patrols, by non-Muslims. On 21 June, for example, a Muslim Police Foot Constable on duty was assaulted.<sup>6</sup> Again the increasingly 'acute' situation was met by the imposition of a 72-hour curfew in the city. This time, despite the deployment of the troops, the situation could not be brought totally under control and some people were arrested 'disobeying curfew orders' and carrying arms with them.<sup>7</sup> The situation grew more serious by the beginning of the first week of July. A government publicity van which toured the city to proclaim curfew was attacked and the Muslim announcer was killed. The incident made the situation very tense and

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<sup>4</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, First Information Report (FIR) no, 12/14, Note Book No. 122, 10 June, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 158, Note Book No. 130, 14 June, 1947.

<sup>6</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 21 June, 1947, p. 251, NIHCR.

<sup>7</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 4/14, 7 July August, 1947.

several cases of the stabbing of Hindus and Sikhs were reported in the city. The property of Sikhs and Hindus in Guru Nanakpura, Lohianwala, Dulay and Sayad Nagar areas was looted and destroyed. This episode was not only an important signal to the minorities that they could not win the struggle for power in the city, but also a message that this could be done with impunity and the law and enforcement agencies were not going to protect minorities. Growing tension led the district authority to describe it as being at 'boiling' point. This state of affairs led the governor of Punjab, Sir Evan Jenkins to report to the Viceroy Mountbatten that Gujranwala which had been 'simmering for some time, boiled over on 4<sup>th</sup> July, when there were several stabbing incidents'.<sup>8</sup>

Amidst such a 'deeply engrained hatred', wealthy Hindus started to sell up their property and shift their capital out of Gujranwala. In early July, the district authorities received intelligence reports which warned: 'Gujranwala Hindu businessmen are contemplating moving their assets elsewhere and hatred between the communities appears to be deeply engrained'.<sup>9</sup> There were some frantic attempts to try and prevent retaliatory violence in the city. For example, on 11 July, a peace committee meeting of some leading members of all communities was called in the city town hall. In this, a well-known Hindu lawyer Niranjan Das acted as an important go-between. The peace efforts received a major setback when he was callously murdered as he tried to pacify an angry mob which he encountered on his way back from the meeting. His efforts to rescue an injured Muslim led to his own death.<sup>10</sup> This horrific incident acted as a catalyst for further violence in the city and prompted anticipatory migration by wealthy Hindus and Sikhs. One instance was that of a

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<sup>8</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, Report no. 697, 14 July 1947, R/3/1/91 OIOC, in *Disturbances in Punjab*, pp. 291-3.

<sup>9</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 7 July, 1947, p. 449, NIHCR.

<sup>10</sup> Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 225, pp. 628-9.

leading entrepreneur Ram Gopal Arora who sold off his iron-workshop and other businesses to a local Muslim foreman of the workshop and shifted his assets to 'India'.<sup>11</sup> This trend of anticipatory migration of the business class was by no means unique to Gujranwala. Such writers as Ian Talbot and Ravinder Kaur have pointed to the anticipatory flight of wealthy Hindus out of Lahore in the months leading up to independence.<sup>12</sup>

On 3 August, Sunder Dass Midhah, the Hindu deputy commissioner, was replaced by a Muslim, Pir Mubarak Ali Shah. The former was well respected for the way in which he dealt with the law and order situation in the district with firmness and efficiency, and with the predominantly Muslim police force. His replacement at another time might not have been as alarming to the city's Sikhs and Hindus, but at this juncture it served to emphasize the helplessness of the minorities. As Shah took over charge of the district's law and enforcement agencies, many houses, shops and warehouses in the city's inner areas were raided. The searches of the area on 9 August recovered thirty-six bombs of different types and two grenades from the possession of a Sikh Granthi. From now onwards police raids on non-Muslims were considered as attacks by them. In some places, the policemen faced counter-attacks in such raids. In one example, a police picket in Guru Nanak Pura was fired at from the rooftop of a Sikh house, wounding two policemen. An immediate raid on the locality arrested five Sikhs.<sup>13</sup> These searches were primarily of Sikh rather than Muslim areas. They suggest a partisan attitude as does the failure of the authorities to deal with violence quiescence, when properties in the Hindu and Sikh localities- of Guru Nanakpura, Gobindgargh, Hakim Rai, Mandi Khajurwali, Brahm Akhara, Chauk Chashma,

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with the owner of Anwar Mechanical Engineering, Gujranwala, 24 January, 2007, this theme will be discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

<sup>13</sup> Mountbatten Paper, File no. 128, Acc no. 2794, Appendix iii, p. 450, NDC.

Sheikhupura Gate area- were being looted and destroyed. The Hari Singh Nalwa bazaar represented the look of total destruction when Hindu businesses and properties were looted on the eve of independence. Those who resisted the destruction of 13 August were killed. One of the most brutal and shocking murders was that of the well-known Dr Tej Bhan of Gujranwala by an 'unknown' man. As the date of independence arrived, a situation of preparation for civil war almost prevailed in the district. Hindus and Sikhs moved from their cut-off *mohallas* and deserted bazaars to Khalsa College and the Gurdwara. Refugees from outlying villages and towns also arrived in the city. Their full scale evacuation was started by the MOE in mid-September and within 2 months the majority had migrated to India. By early-November, there were still over 16,000 refugees, mainly from rural areas, awaiting their departure from Gujranwala city camps.<sup>14</sup>

While Muslims held the upperhand, Sikhs were also preparing for attack, as is evidenced by the following report of a local *Lambardar* Ghulam Haider about his Sikh counterpart Sardar Lal Singh of a village Basianwala.

Sardar Lal Singh, son of Bago Singh, caste Khatri, is very much a Congress like-minded person in village Basinwala. He has always been involving in malicious propaganda against the Muslims. Often, the different *jathas* of Sikhs used to arrive in his place and he always entertains them very well. Today after-noon, a Sikh *jatha* of between 25 and 30 Sikhs armed with Kirpans came from Eminabad to Basinwala and Sardar Lal Singh entertained them with cold sweet water. Lives of the Muslims of Basinwala are in consistent danger. It is submitted please make some adequate arrangements for the protection of local Muslims'.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed in some places, Sikhs and Hindus were aggressors rather than victims. The reports of Sikhs' attacks on Muslims appear repeatedly in the files of Gujranwala Sadar Police Station. For example, a police report lists the following string of

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<sup>14</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 4 November, 1947, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 7/12, Book No. 159, 17 August, 1947.



‘communal riot’ crimes; a Kashmiri Muslim flower-seller narrowly saved in *mohalla* Baghbanpura; a young Muslim was found dead in Sharawala Chowk; a Gujar Muslim was murdered in Dulay; a tailor was assaulted in *mohalla* Syed Nagar, three persons were found dead, including a women, at Eminabad Road and so on.<sup>16</sup> A report of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) itself boasted that ‘the Hindus and Sikhs of Gujranwala were a well organised and fearless people, and gave back to the Muslims better than they got. Especially [when] the Gurdawara was attacked, from which Sikhs kept their assailants well at bay’.<sup>17</sup>

When violence spread from the major towns to the villages or *qasbas* it took on a new intensity not only in the Gujranwala district, but throughout the Punjab. Unlike wealthy and educated Hindus and Sikhs living in the city, poor and rural communities who lacked resources, political awareness and hesitated to abandon their traditional cultivable land were the ones who bore the brunt of the violence. Violence was directed by various gangs against them aimed at driving them out through fear, looting and murderous means. The worst violence in Gujranwala occurred in the outlying towns and villages of Kamoke, Eminabad, Hafizabad, Ram Nagar (now Rasul Nagar) and Akalgarh (now Alipur). According to an estimate, two thousand Hindus and Sikhs were killed in Akalgarh alone and over two hundred women were abducted.<sup>18</sup> There were about 150 non-Muslims killed in Kamoke. Their grain depots, flour mills and husking factories were looted and burned. Many took refuge in the Gurdwara of Dam Dama Sahib. Similarly the Sikhs of Eminabad took refugees in the Gurdwara Rori Sahib.

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<sup>16</sup> These isolated cases were taken from the Gujranwala Sadar Police FIRs record from early June 1947 onwards.

<sup>17</sup> Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, p. 182.

<sup>18</sup> Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 151.

Violence in Gujranwala district was frequently marked by its cold-blooded organization. The attacks were not the work of a few manic belligerents, but organised violence was a feature of the attacks in the district as throughout the Punjab, although some scholars still try to maintain that it was a spontaneous 'temporary madness'. Some attacks were carried out by 'outsiders', while others were by the 'locals'. In a few instances there were mass war-bands drawn from more local populations who were motivated by the desire for loot. Some attacks on refugee trains were systematically carried out by the *Lohars* of the region with the connivance of local railway staff. In many instances, *hamlahawars*<sup>19</sup>(attackers/raiders) had purpose and meaning, though they rationalised their activities in terms of the attacks in East Punjab by killing Hindus and Sikhs and to expelling them from their property. They carried out the attacks with impunity because of the breakdown of government authority.

Criminal incidents continued to be reported, as we can see from the local police records. There were few prosecutions, or attempts to investigate these episodes which were merely noted and now provide sources for the historian. Included in such records, for example, was the case of a young Hindu man, who was murdered by some 'unidentified men' at Nowshera Virkan main road.<sup>20</sup> The reported cases ranged from petty trouble making to large scale murder. In one instance, a 'nameless' Muslim murdered an 80 year old Sikh couple while sleeping on their rooftop, merely in order to loot their belongings in the house.<sup>21</sup> In another instance, mass raiders drawn from the local population outnumbered the victims. In a village, Tata Chana, the lure of loot attracted a mob of over 2,500 Muslim villagers to attack a relatively

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<sup>19</sup>This term is consistently appeared in the police records and FIRs for the attackers/ raiders/ criminals

<sup>20</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 142, Note Book no. 122, 2 August, 1947.

<sup>21</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 12/14, Note Book no. 64, (n.d) 1947.

small population of Hindus and Sikhs, as is evidenced by the following report of a Muslim *Lambardar* of the village to the Gujranwala police.

Today, a big crowd of over 2,500 Muslim villagers attacked Tata Chana. After seeing such a big gathering of people attacking the village, local Hindus and Sikhs left their houses unlocked and ran away. Some Hindus and Sikhs had already gone and locked their houses. *Hamlahawars* looted their houses and took away everything. They set alight some houses after looting'.<sup>22</sup>

In a similar way, in a village, Kanginwala (two miles south of Gujranwala city), some 'outsider' Muslim '*hamlahawars*' attacked its Hindus and Sikhs in the early hours of morning, hiding their identity in darkness. Prior to the attack, some of them consistently fired in the air to make a big noise so that the 'influential landowners' could vacate their houses in a fear of alarm. A local Sikh *Lambardar* Khark Singh reported the incident to the district police the following day.

I am a Lambardar [of Kanginwala] where half Muslims and half Hindu and Sikh residents live. All Muslims are either *kamies* or tenants while Hindus and Sikhs are landowners. Therefore they were not in a position to attack the Hindus and Sikhs. Yesterday, between 5 and 6 a.m early morning when there was time of Azan-i- Fajar and most of people were still at their homes, all of sudden a big noise [of gun-fire] was heard, this was continued for a while. I abruptly rushed to my rooftop and saw a crowd of between 40 and 50 people was coming to the village. Without any pause, their gun-fires continued. The people of the village were running here and there to save their lives. My family took refuge in nearby sugarcane fields, in the north side of the village. Some fires of a gun hurt one of my arms. Armed *hamlahawars* were Muslims. Because it was dark at time and was also raining, I was not able to identify the men. As the danger was over, I have rushed to the *thana* (police station) to report about [this incident].<sup>23</sup>

The attacks on both Tata Chanwa and Kanginwala point to the nature of violence in Gujranwala. They suggest that far from being a spontaneous occurrence, such attacks were marked by their cold-blooded planning and execution. Moreover, such massive gatherings could not occur spontaneously, nor did they acquire their

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<sup>22</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 71/69, Note Book no. 63, 26 August, 1947.

<sup>23</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR no, 8/14, Book No. 100, 23 August, 1947.

weaponry without advance planning. In fact, various organized groups of criminal gangs arranged the attacks and drove out non-Muslims and looted their property. While the attackers operated in limited bands of groups, their social support base was extended to the majority. Taking advantage of the disturbed conditions, the local population mopped up after the raids, in expectation of loot and amassing property. They carried off what they thought was their share, and there was nothing to prevent them from taking advantage of the spoils of raids. In many raids and operations, booty ranged from valuable ornaments to merely a couple of duvets. It is possible to identify looting and violence carried out with 'social approval', in the same way that Paul Brass has pointed out that 'the communal situation made such looting inevitable and acceptable to nearly everyone except the victims'.<sup>24</sup> Such attacks could occur because of the quiescence of local police and officials. They were either genuinely helpless because of the scale of the disorder, or sympathised and connived with the attacks, and even in some instances individual policemen participated in them. It is to this little-studied vexed issue we will turn now.

### **Partition Violence and the Role of Gujranwala Police**

The Gujranwala police largely condoned and contributed to the violence, not because of a spontaneous 'temporary madness', as is sometimes associated with the partition-related violence, but because they could act with impunity in an environment of insubordination and administrative breakdown. In some places such as Vanikay Tarar and Nowshera Virkan, for instance, local *thanadars* (station house police officer) declared Hindus and Sikhs 'disloyal' to Pakistan. There were also reports that a rural *kafila* on its way to the Gujranwala camp was attacked by mass war bands with

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<sup>24</sup> Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab', p. 83.

complicity of local police.<sup>25</sup> Some individual constables 'headed' the attacks on the non-Muslim localities and directly participated in 'large-scale' murders and looting.

A fine example of the criminalization of the Gujranwala police is provided by a letter from Lieutenant Colonel P.C. Gupta, in-charge of 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Sikhs) the Frontier Force Regiment in Gujranwala, to Inspector Sadar Police Station Gujranwala on 18 August 1947. Gupta wrote the letter after witnessing the scene of violence in the village of Mamanwali (6 miles north of Gujranwala city). Here he saw an attack and widespread looting in progress in which 'ten leading men were heading the mob to attack the non-Muslim village'. They were 'apprehended' on the spot by the 'Military Patrol'. In the letter, Gupta listed separately the 'Reasons for their arrest' in the front of the captured criminals' names. 'These men were apprehended while dispersing the mob attacking the village of Lamnanwali where they had already committed large scale Murder and Loot', he continued, both highlighting and underlining the last two words. Of the ten men when Gupta arrested, two of them hailed from Lamnanwali, and they assisted the main perpetrators to figure out the houses and property of Hindus and Sikhs, while others came from the nearby villages of Arup and Samra. Most troubling of all was the discovery of a 'serving Police Constable in plain clothes' who was 'heading the mob' in attacking and looting the Hindus and Sikhs of Lamnanwali. 'No 739 Police Constable Bashir Ahmed, Gujranwala Police Line', Gupta concluded, 'committed large scale killings and loot in village Lamnanwali. He had a 303 serving rifle and 50 cartridges in his possession'.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, this kind of behaviour was neither isolated, nor unique to Gujranwala. Such episodes contradict writers like Javed Alam who have declared that the partition

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<sup>25</sup> Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, p. 630.

<sup>26</sup> A report (No.op.4/1) from P.C. Gupta, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Sikhs) the Frontier Force Regiment, Gujranwala to Inspector Sadar Police Station Gujranwala, Note Book No. 109, 18 August, 1947 (Gujranwala District Police Record Office).

violence was a spontaneous result of mass frenzy and argue that there was ‘no involvement of large organizations’.<sup>27</sup> Material drawn from Gujranwala reveals on the contrary that violence frequently appeared to be carried out in a systematic and organised way. The local police not only connived with ‘*hamlahawars*’ and ‘headed’ the attacks but also participated in the looting. Ian Talbot provides similar examples in the 1947 events in Lahore and Amritsar. He emphasises that the ‘connivance or participation of the police makes sustained violence possible. Rioters act with impunity because they have no fear of prosecution. Powerful political patrons afford them protection’.<sup>28</sup> He concludes that ‘institutional decay enabled *goondas*, paramilitary formations, looters, rapists, and some state functionaries to act with impunity’.<sup>29</sup> All the indications are that the killings of non-Muslims and looting of their localities in Gujranwala were well planned and calculated. The violence had elements of genocidal intent, and was designed to remove non-Muslims from the district. Policemen coordinated or participated in the violence. The parallels are shockingly close to episodes of large scale communal violence in post-independence India such as the 2002 Gujarat pogrom.

### **Uncovered Histories and Missing Themes**

There were some instances of solidarity of ethnic ties even amidst deep-seated communal animosities and lust for loot. G. D. Khosla in his account *Stern Reckoning* writes that in a village Chak Ghazi in Gujranwala district two Jat Muslims, Fateh Mohammad *Lambardar* and Mian Rehmat Khan, ‘escorted’ the Hindu and Sikh Jats safely to the Akalgarh camp. During my fieldwork, I went to visit the village and

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<sup>27</sup> Javed Alam and S. Sharma, ‘Remembering Partition: A Dialogue with Suresh Sharma,’ *Seminar* 461 (January 1998), pp. 98-104.

<sup>28</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*, p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

interviewed Fateh Mohammad *Lambardar*, who was 26 at the time of partition. He provided the following information that suggests that ethnic ties even in these circumstances could cut across religious identity.

There were only a few families of Hindus and Sikhs living in Chak Ghazi village. Hindus operated grocery shops in the village and Sikhs were peasants like us. Hindus and Sikhs of our village did not suffer at all and migrated to Ali Pur (Akalgarh) camp. Many Sikhs of Ramkay [a neighbouring village] came in our village and sought help. We not only protected them but also escorted them safely to the Ali Pur camp.<sup>30</sup>

Such evidence of ethnic ties leading to the protection of religious minorities emerged in many other accounts given by Jats in the district. However this was not reported in the press and has been neglected in historical narratives. Partition and its accompanying forced migration meant different things to different people. For some people of Mandi-Bahauddin, it was an opportunity to capture the lucrative businesses of Hindu *artties* (banias) and in lieu set up their own.<sup>31</sup> For large numbers of Muslim Jats, evacuation of Sikhs held the promise of swift possession of land (though this was subsequently allotted to the Muslim refugees). Locals did have opportunities to acquire land at very low rates, as the account below from village Pandoian illustrates. It was given by Nawab Bibi, the daughter of the Muslim leading landowner.

I was 18 years old at the time of partition. A few months before the departure of non-Muslims, my father who was *Lambardar* of the village, bought 24 acres of land from a Sikh at price of Rs 15,000. After independence, this land became a bone of contention between my father and the government. The latter sued my father and claimed that he bought the land at a very low price from market and even did not possess all required documents such as *Intakal* (registry of land). Despite possession of land for many years, my father was involved in litigation with the government till the Ayub Khan period. After becoming tired of *kachary chakar* (prolonged court red tapism) he finally sold the land to a local influential landowner at a very low price.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Fateh Mohammad *Lambardar*, Gujranwala-Chak Ghazi, 28 December 2006.

<sup>31</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 2 September, 1947.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Nawab Bibi, Gujranwala -Pandoira, 8 March 2007.

Local Muslims differed in their attitudes to their Hindu and Sikh neighbours. In Chak Bhatti, for example, some of them wanted to exterminate the '*kafirs*' while others were of the opinion that they should be converted and then allowed to stay 'unmolested.'<sup>33</sup> Such hidden stories about making the non-Muslim local population '*dindar*' (new converts) are paralleled in the oral accounts that I collected of Muslim Jat residents of the Gujranwala district. A long-established resident, *Lambardar* Mohammad (previous name Jagira Singh) of Chanawa, for example, remembers that his family's protection and restoration of property was contingent on conversion. While male adults were spared circumcision, children were circumcised in a special ceremony in a local Mosque.

My many relatives migrated to India but I decided to remain in Pakistan. Still everybody knows in the region that we were the Sikh before 1947. Some people call us *dindar* and this term has become a sort of identity. Some hesitate to arrange marriages with us. I had to struggle a lot to find a suitable girl for my oldest son. I cannot arrange their marriages with *kamies*. One of my sons divorced his wife. The people of the region linked this family problem with our *dindar*. After the divorce matter it became more difficult to get girls for marriages.<sup>34</sup>

Conversion occurring at the time of partition is seldom acknowledged. Still little is known about the converts' struggle to acquire acceptance. It is nonetheless evident from reports of the district liaison officers on 'recovered and returned converts' that a large numbers of people involuntarily converted to Islam. According to a report by the Gujranwala district liaison officer there were over 2,000 recovered converts in the district to be evacuated to India by the end of April 1948.<sup>35</sup>

Police reports reveal instances of old scores being settled in the circumstances of communal animosity. The horrifying murder of *Lambardar* Bahader Singh

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<sup>33</sup> Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 153.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Mohammad *Lambardar*, Chanawa-Gujranwala, 8 March 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Chief Liaison Officer (India) Lahore to Chief Secretary East Punjab, in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 219, pp. 613-4.



Ghumman in the village of Kala Singh, for example, was orchestrated by a Jat Muslim in the disguise of communal strife in order to solve a fifteen-year old enmity over the issue of disputed agricultural land. In this killing some local Muslim *Kamies* and a Christian played the role of mercenaries.<sup>36</sup>

Like this, many other registered cases in the police FIRs were simply written: ‘*Ya wakaya farkawarana fasad malom huta hay*’ (this incident appears communal riot), *hamlahawars* were described *na malom afrac* (unknown/nameless people), and big gatherings were called *mushtal hajum* (furious and uncontrollable crowd). Such reports echo British colonial accounts of communal violence which were frequently attributed to spontaneous and furious ‘mobs.’ Such reporting may have almost unconsciously slipped into the colonial representation of violence. More sinisterly, it may have been adopted to conveniently displace blame for violence and to remove the need to prosecute locally powerful groups and individuals. As we have already revealed, such reporting ignores the well attested elements of organisation and purpose in communal killings. Moreover, the case material in the section below on the local *Lohar* perpetrators clearly identifies the level of organisation behind the refugee train attacks and the connivance of local railway-drivers in them; surprisingly the subsequent Police Report merely but conveniently termed them as a ‘communal riot.’

### **The *Lohars* of Nizamabad: The Perpetrators of Violence**

The most chilling killings of Hindus and Sikhs in Gujranwala were perpetrated by the *Lahors* of Nizamabad. Gural Singh’s *qasba*, Mansoorwali, was raided on 24 August and the *hamlahawars* took away ‘*har cheej*’ (everything) belonging to its non-Muslim

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<sup>36</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR No, 150, Note Book No. 66, 10 August, 1947.

residents. Singh reported that the following items had been stolen from his house, and he suspected that the *hamlahawars* were the Nizamabad men.

4 big silver pans, 4 silver glasses, 11 round silver *patalay* (pans), 4 deep silver *parataw* (pans), 4 knitted *manjaya* (cotes), 5 knitted *paray* (sitting cotes), 6 *razaya* (quilts), 7 bed-spreads/sheets, 14 *kash*, 3 steel trucks, 1 *sandok* (wooden big box), 1 steel *balty* (bucket), 1 *dapra* (around bucket), 6 *tola* gold necklace, a 4 *masa* gold ring and a 10 *tola* bracelet.<sup>37</sup>

Gurpal Singh's suspicion apart, the stories of killings of Hindus and Sikhs and attacks on their trains by the Nizamabad *Lohars* in August and September 1947 are common even now in the region. Their actions received little official and press attention. They could thus be revealed in full only by ethnographic fieldwork research. Many of the accounts and narratives that I have collected from Nizamabad and its surrounding areas which are reproduced here were not represented in the press and have thus not entered the historical narrative. The popular image of Nizamabad people is brave, brutal and enterprising. A former resident of Nizamabad, now living in Gujranwala's Gill Road, provided me with the following information during the course of an interview.

Have you heard about 'Nizamabad Lohars'? They are famous for their iron-works expertise. They also manufactured cutlery and arms. They were the people who mainly killed the non-Muslims and looted their property. They were armed with guns, swords, blades and axes. They perpetrated attacks on Hindus and Sikhs in the region and afterwards looted their houses and property. The tales of the killings of Hindus and Sikhs in the area are well-known from Gujranwala to Wazirabad. Just go there and asked old people *santaly di tabhaye di mutalak* (about the killings/destruction of 1947) they will tell you all about this.<sup>38</sup>

As a native of Gujranwala, I had heard similar stories of non-Muslim massacres since my childhood. It was only during the course of fieldwork for this

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<sup>37</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR No, 70, Note Book No. 57, 25 August, 1947.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Iqbal Bilal, Gujranwala, 28 January, 2007.

study that I followed up these popular stories. I utilised local knowledge to track down respondents and, in doing so, discovered hidden stories of partition that have not found their way into any written accounts. G. D. Khosla in his work *Stern Reckoning* has briefly mentioned the brutality of Nizamabad *Lohars* on the Hindu and Sikh population and has pointed out their involvement in the derailment of a refugee train near Wazirabad.<sup>39</sup> This apart, the material on the *hamlahawars* in Gujranwala represents an important advance in knowledge by uncovering the actual perpetrators of the violence. The firsthand accounts give a graphic account of the violence unleashed upon Hindus and Sikhs. They provide evidence of the existence of organization and the well-planned raids on trains and the systematic slaughter of the non-Muslim passengers and the general loot of their processions afterwards. One of the most striking elements uncovered in the eye-witness accounts was that there was, in fact, connivance between individual railway-drivers and the local *Lohar* perpetrators to stop the trains for ambush at a 'marked point'. Before pursuing this untold story, it is important to point out that Nizamabad was an important centre of the cutlery cottage industry where hundreds of blacksmith families plied their craft in about thirty iron-workshops and large quantities of knives and daggers were made and sent to different places in India. There was thus a stockpile of weapons for those who were prepared to use them in the troubled conditions of 1947. Moreover, many *Lohars* because of their iron-work expertise were employed in the local railway as drivers, railway-masons and railway-smiths. Nizamabad's strategic location on both the Wazirabad- Gujranwala and Wazirabad- Sialkot- Jammu main railway lines was also an important factor in attacks on the refugee trains. All the trains on their way to

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<sup>39</sup> Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 149.

East Punjab as well as to Jammu, arriving from the north, passed through Nizamabad. The *gasba* and its inhabitants earned notoriety for such attacks on the minorities.

One of the worst train massacres occurred in the outskirts of Nizamabad on the Wazirabad-Jammu railway track on 18 August 1947. The story of this systematic massacre at Hindu and Sikh passengers is well-known in the region, especially in Nizamabad. This was however never reported in the press and is not part of historical narratives. There are eye-witness accounts of the train carnage in Nizamabad itself. An eyewitness, Mohammad Ramzan, 18 at the time and a resident of Nizamabad, provided this detailed and graphic account of the episode.

First, Hindus and Sikhs in India attacked the Muslim trains and killed the Muslims. To take revenge and desire for loot, *Lohars* of Nizamabad planned to attack a Hindu and Sikh train in Nizamabad. One night they gathered at Ibrahim's place [house] and made planning for a train attack. They planned everything with Rahamat Kashmiri who was a train driver of the train which operated via Wazirabad-Jammu railway track. He was asked to stop the train at Sialkot-Jammu railway track about a mile away from the Nizamabad railway station. Rahamat Kashmiri suggested to them to put a couple of big trees in the front of the track because this not only helped him to identify the 'stopping-spot' but could provide a justification to stop the train. The next day more than 200 people with axes, swords and daggers *barches* concealed themselves in the sugar-cane fields. The train stopped where he [Rahamat Kashmiri] was told to stop, where they had thrown some cut-trees [on the track]. They attacked the train and killed all the people in the train, including children and women. They did not spare a single one. The train and whole place around filled with corpses and blood. I was 18 years old. I saw the [*Lohars* of Nizamabad] first enter in the train and then slaughter Hindus and Sikhs. They looted all their belongings and took tem away their big trucks, carrying on their shoulders and heads. I did not loot anything.<sup>40</sup>

The involvement of the driver Rahamat Kashmiri was repeated in many other accounts that I collected in Nizamabad. Some eye-witnesses such as Mohammad Ali blamed him entirely for the carnage and believed because of this 'sin' he was punished by God subsequently throughout his life. Mohammad Ali, about 92 years old in 2008, provided the following information.

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mohammad Ramzan, Nizamabad, 17 December 2008.

Yes, I know they [*Lohars* of Nizamabad] chopped the train and cut into pieces its Hindu and Sikh passengers. That train was on its way to Jammu railway track. I was ploughing in the field that day. They hid themselves in my fields. They killed all Sikhs and Hindus and looted everything. They attacked the train only because of loot. All including *Lohars* and Kashmiris of Nizamabad were involved in the attack and loot. Policemen were also there in the train for Hindus' safety. They also helped in killings and loot. The driver Rahamu (Rahamat Kashmiri) connived with them [*Lohars* and Kashmiris of Nizamabad] and he was the real culprit who stopped the train there. They blocked the track by placing trees on it. Rahamu [Rahamat Kashmiri] himself asked them for placing trees in the front of track for the identification of stopping point. He was evil. He died many years ago. God punished him [for this crime] in his own life. He lived a miserable life afterwards. He died miserably and his dead body filled with insects, bees and ants. His wife ran away with somebody. He made mistake [to stop the train]. He had even taken a bribe of Rs 10000 from Hindus [and Sikhs of the train] and promised them that he would not stop the train anywhere, but he still stopped it.<sup>41</sup>

The sequence of the events that set in motion the attack on the train questions the explanations of the violence as a spontaneous outburst of revenge. Eye-witnesses of the train carnage are almost unanimous that it was planned and the driver Rahamat Kashmiri was convinced to stop the train at a 'marked point'. The well-prepared, armed and hidden *Lohars* systematically slaughtered all the passengers and looted their possessions with remarkable precision. Such episodes not only have parallels with accounts of the 2002 Gujarat attacks on Muslims but contradict such writers as Donald Horowitz who argue that planned riots may be less deadly than relatively spontaneous violence in which leadership 'rises to the occasion, rather than creates the occasion'.<sup>42</sup>

The accounts, in many instances, reveal that the perpetrators were merely engaged in looting occasioned by the administrative breakdown. They rationalised their cold-blooded killings of Hindus and Sikhs in terms of revenge, because of attacks on Muslims elsewhere. They had the social approval of the local population, though limited, for their criminal activities because of a general belief that they were

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Mohammad Ali, Nizamabad, 17 December 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, pp. 257-66.



Nizamabad Railway Station on the Punjab North-Western Railway Track, which connected Gujranwala from Peshawar to Karachi. A Parallel track which connected Wazirabad to Sialkot-Jammu also passed through the qasba.





Mohammad Ramzan of Nizamabad, who provided an eye-witness account regarding the Nizamabad train massacre



Mohammad Ali of Nizamabad, who provided an eye-witness account regarding the Nizamabad train massacre

engaged in jihad. Many however bluntly stated that the raids on non-Muslims were prompted by the temptation of loot. Some boasted of their killings and driving out the Hindus and Sikhs. An elderly *Lohar* of Nizamabad, by the name of Ghulam Nabi, provided an interesting account of his brother's role in the killings of Hindus and Sikhs. He glorified his actions by saying that this was in 'revenge' for the killings of Muslims in India.

My brother died three years ago, God blesses him; he killed many Hindus and Sikhs all round Wazirabad and Gujranwala [in revenge for Hindus and Sikhs killings of Muslims in India]. He was renowned all over the place because of killing the Sikhs. He was not among those who looted the property of Sikhs. He was a six feet tall man. The people of the area still know our house/family because of his deed.<sup>43</sup>

The account shows the interest to which the perpetrators of violence did not feel remorse for their criminal acts. Instead the respondent proudly states the fact that his brother murdered many non-Muslims. The account also indicates, alongside the cold-blooded killings, a desire for loot, though his brother was not involved in this himself. From a number of other respondents, a similar sort of narrative emerged of well planned attacks on Hindus and Sikhs and the looting of their houses in Gujranwala district's Wazirabad tahsil. Jamal Din, a resident of Nizamabad, aged 80 plus in 2008, told me about an attack that he along with his mates carried out at the Jamkay railway station.

I killed many Sikhs at Jamkay railway station. They were gathered in the station departing to India. We all knew about this. We, about fifteen people, left Nizamabad that day and from Wazirabad we took a train to reach in Jamkay. I got my sword with me. Some of them possessed carbines; Asraf and Sadiq had their guns with them. We killed Sikhs at *asar* (late afternoon) time that day. We did not plunder anything, but the local people afterwards looted their belongings. I heard the following afternoon some army men came to Nizamabad and investigated the incident. Nobody told them anything. All our relatives lived there. They did not arrest anyone. [In fact] they were looking

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Ghulam Nabi, Gujranwala-Nizamabad, 27 February, 2007.



for the missing women. *Kuda goha hay* (God is witnessed) we did not carry away any non-Muslim woman.<sup>44</sup>

The stories of Nizamabad *Lohars'* attacks on non-Muslims population and refugee trains were constantly repeated as I travelled around Nizamabad and its surrounding areas such as Wazirabad, Mansoorwali, Salarwali, Jamkay, Chanawa, and Pandoian. The respondents did not need to be persuaded to speak and they readily agreed to talk to me. This response was quite different from what I had experienced with urban residents of Gujranwala, where most of the time prospective respondents had to be convinced of the credentials of the interviewers and the usefulness of the project before they would say anything. One of the most compelling interviews conducted in Gujranwala district was with Sardara Dindar, a Sikh convert to Islam from the time of partition. He was 18 at the time and is now a resident of village Chanawa. He still remembers the events of that period vividly when his relatives, along with the Sikh population of the village migrated to India, but he and his one brother chose to remain in Chanawa. While representing the victims of partition violence, Sardara narrated his story.

*Har koi jan da hay Nizamabadi Lohars har pasay tabey machi sei* (everybody knows *Lohars* of Nizamabad carried out devastation everywhere in the area). Nizamabad *Lohars* killed thousands of Hindus and Sikhs and looted their property. They were very brutal and well armed people. They would attack one village, then other. At that time there were all round rumours that the Nizamabad *Lohars* are coming! They are coming! There were fears, and talks all over the region about their cruelty. They raided in Jamkay, Manchar, Mansoorwali, Kalra and Wazirabad and so on. There were many big gangs. They used to attack with swords and guns which they made for themselves. They killed Hindus and Sikhs without any reason; they would say the Sikhs killed Muslims in India. Hundreds of dead bodies of Sikhs were found in the Chahnaway Canal Head. Many their dead bodies were without heads. Many naked dead bodies were floating at the canal bank.

Sometimes local villagers of the areas invited them (Nizamabad *Lohars*) to attack their villages to clear out the Hindus and Sikhs. The local

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Jamal Din, Gujranwala-Nizamabad, 27 February, 2007.

people also looted lots of property of Hindus and Sikhs and eventually placed the blame on Nizamabad *Lohars*. Many other people looted and killed the non-Muslims but there were general feelings in the region that only the Nizamabad *Lohars* were at forefront. In some places, the local Muslims convinced the Hindus and Sikhs of their places to leave villages. Many helped them across the dangerous zones. All my relatives migrated to India but I chose to remain here and embraced Islam. I had to convert to save my life and property. I often visit my Sikh relatives in Ambala-India.<sup>45</sup>

Sardara Dindar's brother added the following information. 'Although the *Lohars* of Nizamabad largely made attacks and loot in the region, many *kamies* people in the camouflage of the *Lohars* looted the property of Hindus and Sikhs. The non-Muslims were too much scared of the *Lohars*'. Sultan stressed that 'they had modern weapons, resources and were all relatives and lived in one place'.<sup>46</sup>

It is possible to point out that the Nizamabad *hamlahawars* in many instances used the trains as a means of transportation for their criminal activities. They chiefly targeted those places for their attacks, which were either situated on the railway stations or adjacent to the railway-lines, because they used the train as mode of transport. For example, all the above-mentioned attacked localities of Wazirabad, Mansoorwali Salarwali and Jamkay had railway stations. Moreover, they did not confine attacks to their neighbourhood, but covered an area of more than fifty miles for instance, 'as far as Kamoke and the Naushera Vir[k]an Railway Station[s]'.<sup>47</sup> It would be extremely difficult, without careful planning and the help of the local railway staff to carry out such precision attacks. A remarkable instance of this fact is the extent of an attack on a Hindu locality of Lohianwala (a mile north of Gujranwala city), at the main railway track and Grand Trunk Road. On 24 August, a train coming from Wazirabad to Gujranwala stopped at Lohianwala and a big crowd of people got off the train and attacked and looted the locality. After completing the ransack in a

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Sardara Dindar, Gujranwala-Chanawa, 21 February, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Sultan, Gujranwala-Chanawa, 21 February, 2007.

<sup>47</sup> 'Report of work in Gujranwala District', in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 225, p. 632.

couple of hours, *hamlahawars* got back on the train, which was surprisingly still waiting for their return at the railway station. A local resident and an eyewitness of the event, named Mohammad Sanaulla Bhatti, reported the incident to Gujranwala Sadar Police on the same day.

Today afternoon, a train which was heading for Gujranwala stopped at the Lohianwala railway station. Around between four and five hundred men got down from the train, waited for orders and attacked Lohianwala. After seeing such a big crowd of *hamlahawars* in the locality, all Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims of Lohianwala hurriedly exited their houses and run away, and all gathered on the north side of the locality. After sometime, a haze of smoke and light of flames appeared over the locality. Sometime later, we saw the *hamlahawars* returned back to the railway line. In this whole happening, the train remained stopped at the railway station until the *hamlahawars* boarded it back. As they all got on the train; it went away. This big crowd of *hamlahawars* appeared to be Muslims. I was watching the incident at a distance so could not identify any of the *hamlahawars* who were involved in this incident. What I noticed I have informed you.<sup>48</sup>

The police record is unable to explain where these *hamlahawars* came from, where they boarded the train and why the train waited their return. Yet despite the clear organisation behind it, the subsequent Police Report merely termed it ‘a communal riot’ by the ‘unknown’ nameless people. This is evidenced by the forwarding remarks of sub-inspector of Gujranwala Sadar police station: ‘*Ya wakaya farkawarana fasad malom huta hay Jasay hie mazed malomat maltiay aap ko beg de jay gee*’ (‘The incident appears communal riot so as soon as further detail comes out it will be forwarded to you’).<sup>49</sup>

The quiescence or dysfunctional behaviour of local police aside, the episode could obviously not have been carried out without the connivance of the local railway staff. Some studies on partition violence have pointed out the ambushes on ‘refugee trains’ and the involvement of the railway staff in them. Until recently, nothing has

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<sup>48</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, FIR No, 9/14, Book No. 110, 24 August 1947.

<sup>49</sup> Gujranwala Police Record, Book No, 110, 24 August, 1947.

been uncovered about the use of trains as a mode of transportation for the attacks. Remarkably, how it could be possible to execute such a performance without the involvement of local railway and resources of the perpetrators? A close analysis of the event further suggests that the attack on Lohianwala was a calculated move rather than the haphazard ‘eruption’ of ‘spontaneous’ violence. There are three points to be noted here. First, the site was carefully selected, not only because of its location at the Grand Trunk road and the main railway line but due to the concentration of wealthy Hindu and Sikh populations in the locality. Second, the occurrence indicates the state authority had become weak to the point of being non-existent, and the criminal gangs were making use of the situation to act with impunity for their own personal and local ends. Such a situation was by no means unique to Gujranwala. Indeed it prevailed throughout the Punjab. Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, drew a similar conclusion, when he reported to Mountbatten on 13 August that the gangs were both ‘well armed and well led’ and the village raiding was quite impossible to control without a very great display of force.<sup>50</sup> Third, the prime purpose of the *hamlahawars* was apparently widespread looting, rather than ‘revenge and retaliation’ which is sometimes associated with partition violence. Significantly, they did not spare Muslim houses. For them, the conflict was not a religious one but a moment of significant opportunity. Pecuniary gain was the main purpose rather than communal revenge.

In understanding this, a study by Ayesha Jalal of communal violence in 1947 Punjab is instructive.<sup>51</sup> In this article, she emphasises that the struggle over territory in the Punjab as a whole was mirrored at the local level in ‘strategies to appropriate the property of neighbours’. The material benefits of the ‘localised and personalised nature of the battle for social space’ accrued to individuals, not local communities.

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<sup>50</sup> Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 August 1947, L/P&J/5/250, O.I.O.C.

<sup>51</sup> Ayesha Jalal, ‘Nation, Reason and Religion’, pp. 9-17.

Jalal argues that much of the violence was committed by ‘gangs representing majorities against minorities’, and this actually demonstrated ‘battles for control in urban and rural localities that were as vital to them personally as they were to the purported interests of their respective communities’.<sup>52</sup> The motivation of Gujranwala *hamlahawars*’ cold-blooded attacks on minorities was a desire for loot on the pretext of a ‘revenge’ ideology of jihad because of attacks on Muslims in East Punjab. They committed mass crime for their own personal ends in an environment of anarchy and state transition. Jenkins, the governor of Punjab, stressed the importance of a sense of impunity in the outbreaks of communal violence in the rural Punjab in August. He believed that in many ways the gangs carried out operations with relative impunity and social approval, in ‘the general feeling that all cases will be dropped on 15<sup>th</sup> August...’.<sup>53</sup>

Gujranwala also provides important case material on incidences of abduction of women. This was seen most clearly in the incident of the Kamoke train carnage. One of its most troubling elements was the direct involvement of local police in carrying away Hindu and Sikh women along with the criminals. We will reveal this in the case study below.

### **The Kamoke Train Carnage and the Abduction of Women**

The region between Gujranwala and Lahore because of its geographical location on the Grand Trunk Road and main railway lines earned great notoriety for the systematic attacks on some of the ‘refugee special’ trains and convoys. One of the

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<sup>52</sup> Jalal, ‘Nation, Reason and Religion’, pp. 10-13. Khosla also believes that it was ‘not religious emotion or aggressive chauvinism...but the prospect of personal gain’ which prompted Muslim outrage against Hindus and Sikhs in Jhelum. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 198. Similar evidence emerged from the work of Ishtiaq Hussain on Lahore, ‘Forced Migration and Ethnic Cleansing in Lahore; Some First Person Accounts’, in Talbot and Singh (eds.), *Region and Partition*, pp. 116-67.

<sup>53</sup> Cited by Talbot, *Divided Cities*, p. 56.

worst train massacres occurred in the Kamoke railway station, a satellite town of Gujranwala on 24 September at 12 noon on a train coming from Jhelum-Pind Dadan Khan, carrying over three thousand non-Muslim refugees towards the East Punjab. The attack was planned. The daily newspaper *The Times* reported on 26 September 1947: 'In spite of heavy firing by the escort, the Muslims, attacking from the rear, forced their way into the last four carriages. The attack lasted 40 minutes, after which the train returned to Gujranwala, where the wounded were taken to hospital'. It quoted 375 casualties.<sup>54</sup> The Punjab police estimated the fatalities at over 400, with about the same number injured.<sup>55</sup> Despite the fact that the Pakistan government 'severely condemned' the incident and assured the Indian government that it would punish the 'culprits', the extent and severity of the carnage led the Indian Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation to set up a 'Fact Finding Committee'. With the consultation of both district liaison offices of Lahore and Delhi and the statements of survivors and eye-witnesses of the tragedy, the fact finding officer Chaman Lal Pandhi submitted his report to Delhi within a short span of time. The report gave the death toll as 'at least 3,000' and revealed the involvement of local police in the abduction of large numbers of non-Muslim women. According to the findings of Pandhi, 'The most ignoble feature of the tragedy was the distribution of young [non-Muslims] girls amongst the members of the Police force, the [Muslim] National Guards and the local *goondas*. The S.H.O Dildar Hussain collected the victims in an open space near Kamoke Railway station and gave a free hand to the mob. After the massacre was over, the girls were distributed like sweets'.<sup>56</sup> The following long account of a victim

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<sup>54</sup> 'Sikh Refugee Train Attack', *The Times* (London) 26 September 1947, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 27 September, 1947, pp. 382-5, NIHCR.

<sup>56</sup> The report of Fact Finding Officer Chaman Lal Pandhi, Fact Finding Branch, the Indian Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, Delhi, in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 225, p. 631.

Shrimati Laj Wanti provides some indications of the horrors of the women in the Kamoke train carnage.

Even clothes were torn in the effort to remove valuables. My son was also snatched away in spite of my protests. I cannot say who took him away. I was taken by one Abdul Ghani to his house. He was a tonga driver. I was kept in the house for over a month and badly used. I went to other houses to look after my son. I saw a large number of children but I was unable to find my son. During these visits I also saw a large number of Hindu women in the houses of the Muslim inhabitants of Kamoke. All of them complained that they were being very badly used by their abductors. After about a month it was announced by beat of drum that the Hindu Military had arrived and those of the inhabitants who had Hindu women and children in their possession should produce them at the police station. ...The 150 women who were produced at the station, Kamoke, were taken in tongas to Gujranwala. Out of the women collected only 20 got up and said that they wanted to return to India. I was one of them. There were 10 children with these women. The remaining lot was put into the trucks and sent back to Kamoke by the Sub-Inspector of Police. We were then taken to the Hindu refugee camp and put into trucks which brought us to Amritsar.<sup>57</sup>

This account is taken from the SGPC publication *Muslim League attacks on Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab* and it is difficult to know how much weight to give this. Yet this description rings true in the light of oral accounts that I collected from the site during my fieldwork. The respondents vividly reflected the ‘*kat-lo-garat*’ (mass killings) of Hindus and Sikhs and ‘*augwa*’ (abduction) of their women at the Kamoke railway lines in 1947. A migrant Ali Akbar whose family came from Amritsar to Kamoke told me during the course of an interview.

Upon my arrival in Kamoke, there were many talks that Kamoke people killed hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs and looted their possessions. Many women of non-Muslims were also abducted by the local people during the killing and loot. I did not see anyone, but heard many time people were talking about them. Nobody will tell you about them.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> A statement of Shrimati Laj Wanti, widow of Shri Manak Chand, Age 23 years, caste Khatri, resident of Nurpur Sethi, District Jhelum, to the Chief Liaison Officer, Lahore, in Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, p. 261.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Ali Akbar, Gujranwala-Kamoke, 15 February, 2007.

One local resident, Rashid Ahmad, age 80 plus in 2007, vividly remembers the attack on the train which he recalled as follows:

The train arrived in Kamoke that night and stayed there till following *dopar* (afternoon). Something was wrong with either train engine or train track. There was news all around that a Sikh train stopped in the railway lines. People were planning to attack the train from *fajur* (early morning). Many hundreds of people took part in the attack and looting. My father and I were also there. Many people died when soldiers fired on them. I know personally some people of Kamoke who killed Hindus, looted their belongings and took away their women. Acho Musali and Allah Dita were among them. You know, many women subsequently voluntarily embraced Islam and became a part of Muslim society. They did not want to back India. They did not live in Kamoke. Many moved in other towns and villages to hide this fact. I know some of these women were sold off. Despite their marriages, people still call them different names; some call them *mulliy aurat* ( sold woman); others name them *adulee aurat* (abducted woman).<sup>59</sup>

My first respondent Ali Akbar, believing that one of his acquaintances had taken away a woman in 1947, introduced me to another person by the name Ghulam Khadar. The latter was an elderly resident of Kamoke. Before providing any information about the 1947 Kamoke tragedy, I had to convince the respondent first about my credentials and the usefulness of the project. The interview was not easy despite this explanation because of Ghulam Khadar's scepticism. Some main excerpts from a long interview are reproduced below which reveal the fate of such women.

The people attacked the train at the station and killed many Hindus and Sikhs. The attackers were not the locals; they came from out of Kamoke. Yes, many non-Muslim women were also abducted in Kamoke. The people took them away in other outlying areas so that military could not find them. My brother took a woman to Sheikhpura and lived and worked there in a brick-kiln for many years. This woman converted to Islam and became pious. She was a Patwari woman. She lived with him till her death. Islam allows this. They have had four sons and two daughters. They are labourers and poorer. They are more concerned about their daily livelihood.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Rashid Ahmad, Gujranwala-Kamoke, 15 February, 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Ghulam Khadar, Gujranwala-Kamoke, 16 February, 2007.



A few aspects emerge from the above accounts. First, the abducted women were immediately shifted to other places in fear of military searches as well as to escape themselves from social disgrace. Second, the majority of these women preferred to live where they were rather than be sent to India. The account of Shrimati Laj Wanti, for example, identifies that out of 150 women only 20 were ready to go back on India. Third, there is also an indication that the army was periodically researching the recovery of ‘missing’ women. The following account of a recovered woman of the Kamoke incident not only points to the repeated efforts of the army for the recovery, but also further provides evidence regarding the awful experience of the ‘main victims’ of partition. The tale of this recovered ‘girl’ is that after abduction she was taken away to village Pandorian by a Kashmiri Muslim who kept her in his house for five days and afterwards tried to kill her.

I had 16 *tolas* of gold sewn into my under-garments. I requested him not to kill me and offered him the gold which he took and made over to his brother. In the house, the Kashmiri raped me and then suggested that I should marry his nephew Din Mohammad. Owing to the shock and the atrocities my brain became unbalanced. A month later Gurkha military came to the village. I was concealed in a Muslim refugee’s house. For some hours the Gurkha military searched for me in vain and went away. Three months later the military again came to the village. Neither the Kashmiri nor Din Mohammad were in the house. I had been concealed in a corn bin. The soldiers were going to leave when a Muslim woman told them of my whereabouts. The soldiers returned to the house in which I was concealed and hearing their foot-steps I came out and fell down senseless.<sup>61</sup>

Overall, it is difficult to determine the number of women abducted in Gujranwala in 1947. G. D. Khosla puts the number of ‘young girls’ who were ‘taken away’ during the Kamoke train carnage at about 600. Despite providing the statistics of casualties of the Kamoke train incident, the Punjab police report does not mention the abduction of any women. However, one official government document, ‘Details of

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<sup>61</sup> Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 152.

Converts and Abducted Women in the districts of West Punjab' of the Central Ministry of Refugee Rehabilitation provided 'Evacuation Progress' of the 'recovered' with 21,219 non-Muslim women being returned to India by the week ending on 24 April 1948. In Gujranwala district alone, by that date, 676 non-Muslim 'abducted and converted' girls were recovered and 'evacuated' to India. At the same time, another 138 recovered girls of Gujranwala were 'still in camps'.<sup>62</sup> According to a report of the Gujranwala district liaison officer to the chief liaison officer Lahore, of the 185 women who were discovered 3 were stated to be 'with police officials and 9 with known *badmashes* or influential persons in the district'.<sup>63</sup> From anecdotal evidence it seems probable that there were many incidences of abduction and conversion of individuals by marauding gangs that received little official and media attention.

Similarly, it is hard to figure out overall the numbers of communal killings in Gujranwala district during the 1947 disturbances. A considered estimate would be somewhere in the region of 9,000-10,000 people. A report of the SGPC placed the total number of Sikh casualties in Gujranwala district at about 15,000, while Francis Mudie, the Governor of West Punjab, reported to Viceroy Mountbatten that the 'Estimated Casualties After 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1947' stood at about 4,000, on the basis of the Punjab Chief Secretary's Fortnightly Reports on the law and order situation in Gujranwala district.<sup>64</sup> Indeed there were numerous isolated massacres in the innumerable villages and *qasbas* and murders of individuals that received no official and media attention. One of the most important factors was that there was no effective communication between the district headquarters and the outlying local police stations. The reality was that, by the end of August, the authorities had little idea of

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<sup>62</sup> 'Details of Converts and Abducted Women Evacuated during the Week Ending 24<sup>th</sup> April 1948, File No 36, 128/CF/48, Appendix B, NDC.

<sup>63</sup> Chief Liaison Officer (India) Lahore to Chief Secretary East Punjab, in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 219, p. 613.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 735, Appendix II.

what was happening in the remote villages. Of course, in comparison with casualty statistics from some East Punjab localities, Punjab princely states and the Jammu and Kashmir region, these figures are low. This in no way, however, diminishes the horror of the brutal killings and abductions and the evil purposes of the *hamlahawars*.

### Partition, Violence and Migration: The Case of Sialkot

Sialkot witnessed a far higher level of violence and killing than Gujranwala. More than a third of Sialkot was burnt down. About eighty per cent of its industrial concerns were abandoned or closed and its working capital growth declined by over ninety per cent because of the almost total -migration of the Hindu and Sikhs trading classes.<sup>1</sup> The city's electricity grids in part remained closed more than six months after partition and the continuing 'black-out' caused the stoppage of all five tube-wells of the town, which were supplying water to the city.<sup>2</sup> Sialkot was transformed overnight from a central Punjab city to an international border town. This chapter highlights the level of organization, chief characteristics of violence and draws attention to, and analyses, the prime perpetrators of violence that took place here in Sialkot. It draws on unexplored original documentary sources to uncover the partisan and participatory role of police in the violence. The chapter also draws some insights on the relationship between violence and the state, examining the neighbouring Jammu and Kashmir State's complicity in the perpetration of organised acts of violence against Jammu Muslims. Finally, it examines the impact of Sialkot's border existence on the untouchable *Chamars* community. This unexplored topic draws on fresh sources that reveal the role of incoming Muslim refugees and demobilised army deserters in expelling the untouchable *Chamars* of the region. The actions were chiefly rationalised in terms of labelling them a 'spying caste', because of Sialkot's

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul A. Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries in the Border Districts of Lahore and Sialkot* (Lahore: Board of Economic Inquiry, Ripon Printing Press, 1953), pp. 61-78.

<sup>2</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 1 April 1949, p. 1.

security concerns with its sensitive border with Jammu and Kashmir. In reality, such claims, as we will assess, were motivated by the desire to appropriate the *Chamars'* limited resources. Before addressing these issues, the chapter begins by explaining the preparations for violence in the city, months before the actual partition, and sheds light on some processes of anticipatory migration of Sialkot's wealthy Hindu and Sikh communities, which began before the mass migration.

### **Sialkot and Partition Violence**

Partition violence in Sialkot was largely politically motivated, as in Gujranwala. In fact, it was the Muslim League's direct action campaign against the Unionist-led coalition government that led to the first riot in Sialkot. The Sialkot city Muslim League had appointed its own 'paid workers' at a salary of Rs 50 monthly to carry out 'propaganda' amongst the Muslims and untouchable *Achhuts* of the district. The Leaguers frayed the communal situation in the city for political gains, by utilising religious events such as Eid-i-Milad to increase their street power. The procession on this occasion numbered over 10,000. The agitation intensified daily, for example on 21 February 1947 there was almost a complete *hartal* (shutting down and stoppage of business) in Sialkot and an estimated crowd of over 6,000 paraded on the city streets to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement. Although public pronouncements were made against the use of violence for political ends, the mob, as a part of the civil disobedience agenda, stormed the city's central jail and in the incident eleven policemen were injured.<sup>3</sup> This all made the situation disturbing in the town. In the first week of March, 1947, three Sikhs were attacked by a mob of Muslims in the town. A non-Muslim was killed in the neighbouring village

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<sup>3</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 26 April, 1947, p. 149, NIHCR.

of Ghannumon. The murder had the sequel of the death of a Sikh sub-inspector of police Trilok Singh during his investigations into the affair. After this incident, many meetings for the unity of the Muslims and the Hindus and Sikhs were held, but the situation remained uneasy. Violence erupted over the celebration of 'Pakistan Day' on 22 March, despite the fact that Sialkot fell under the jurisdiction of the newly introduced Disturbed Areas Act.<sup>4</sup>

The growing violence in Amritsar against the backdrop of the March Rawalpindi massacres of Hindus and Sikhs had resulted, by the third week of April, in a small trickle of Muslims quitting the city for Sialkot. This disquieted Hindus and Sikhs living in the increasingly tense city. Some packed their bags for neighbouring Jammu. This initial exchange of population had an 'ever worsening effect' on the region, as pointed out in late April 1947 by a Punjab Secret Intelligence Police Branch report.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, some of the Hindus and Sikhs were to return to Sialkot as the communal tensions 'eased' in May.

Preparations for violence were underway in Sialkot as they were in many of the Punjab's cities. The Punjab Secret Intelligence Police regularly reported the mushrooming of private paramilitary organizations, the enlistment of volunteer bands and their daily movements. The Sikh Shahidi *Jatha* (war band) was observed as one of the largest volunteer organizations in Sialkot with district-wide branches and formations. Giani Labh Singh was 'commander-in-charge' of the district. Harcharan Singh was the 'supervisor' of district branches and Jathedar Puran Singh was 'in-charge' of Sialkot city branch. By the end of April, over 500 volunteers had already 'enlisted' to provide their services.<sup>6</sup> Funds were earmarked for the procurement of arms and transports: about Rs. 900 was collected alone at Gurdwara Baba-di-Beri.

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<sup>4</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 22 March, 1947, p 106, NIHCR.

<sup>5</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 26 April, 1947, p. 265, NIHCR.

<sup>6</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 26 April, 1947, p. 363, NIHCR.

Five motor-cycles had been acquired for the purpose of carrying messages quickly and for maintaining connection with the rural *jathas*. There was also large-scale manufacturing and selling of traditional arms such as *kirpans* and swords; for example, the sale of arms of the Sword and Kirpan Factory of Qadian, according to a Police Secret Intelligence report, was at 'a roaring trade'.<sup>7</sup> Arms 'made in' Nizamabad and Wazirabad also found their way to Sialkot district.

Muslim organizations were also preparing for future conflict. Many students were enrolled in both the Muslim League National Guards and the Muslim Student Federation. The latter took over the onus of relief and aid of the riot victims, while the former was directed to 'arrange *thikri pehra*' (night-patrolling) in the rural areas. Because of the success of the regular propaganda campaign, Majlis-i-Ahrars' volunteers began joining the Muslim League National Guards in large numbers. A newly established 'Volunteer Jaishes' was also recruiting volunteers in the district under the supervision of Hissam-ud- Din and Maulana Abdul Rehman Mianvi.<sup>8</sup>

Preparations for violence were not only occasioned by the backdrop of the Rawalpindi massacres, but the growing uncertainties surrounding the Punjab's future. These were especially great in border areas such as Sialkot as no one knew where any future boundary line of demarcation between the Indian and Pakistan Punjabs might run. The atmosphere in Sialkot was very tense and uncertain. Kuldip Nayar, a former resident of Sialkot and now the celebrated Indian journalist, writes in his memoir of the city: 'Mountbatten's announcement [of 3 June 1947 Partition plan] came as a bombshell to us in Sialkot city....There was suddenly a sense of fear and insecurity...

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

Both Hindus and Muslims began to pass anxious moments because they did not know through which area the dividing line would run.’<sup>9</sup>

While many rural areas of Sialkot suffered with the announcement of the Boundary Award, the city’s economic life was badly hit throughout the summer of 1947. Wealthy and politically astute Hindu and Sikh traders had started to quit the city weeks before the formal partition happened. Some began from June onwards to send the female members of their families and children to the neighbouring Jammu city and started shifting assets and capital to other places. Such well-known Sialkoti Hindu traders as H. S Uberoi and Lala Gobin Ram had shifted their families to the neighbouring Jammu city. This anticipatory migration is neglected in standard historical accounts, though it is clear from both documentary and oral sources that the commercial class of Sialkot started to sell and shift their assets to what would become India months prior to the actual Punjab division. ‘We shifted our family and assets many weeks prior to actual partition’, Dr Lal, at the time 26 and living in Karim *mohalla* of Sialkot, recalls, ‘my father was the president of the Sialkot Congress and fully understood the simmering political situation. He started selling assets sometime in late June 1947. One day he came in the house and gathered all of us and said “pack the possessions I am shifting you to Jammu”. We took the Sialkot train to Jammu. We rented a room in a Jammu hotel. I can not recall the name of the hotel; it was opposite to a famous cinema in Jammu city’.<sup>10</sup> Dr Lal had returned to Sialkot in early 1947 after completing his degree in odontology from Britain. He operated a family clinic along with his father and a sister doctor. His father Dr Kishan Chand was the president of the Sialkot Congress Party branch and had won the municipal elections.

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<sup>9</sup> Kuldip Nayar, ‘The Trial of Mountbatten’, *Dawn* (Karachi) 10 August 2002, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> An Unpublished Autobiography of Dr. Kishan Chand of Sialkot, (1962), pp. 29-30, I am grateful to Dr Lal for providing me a copy of the memoir of his father.



Politically astute Dr Chand thus well recognized the mounting uncertainties in the region as British rule ended and began winding up his assets in advance, weeks before the formal partition happened. He writes in his autobiographical account that the family immediately following the announcement of 3 June partition plan not only sold out property and shifted capital to India but also in advance purchased a plot for a house in Delhi.

I decided to sell off my property. I sold Sialkot house for Rs. 40,000 and adjoining vacant plot for Rs 8,000. Seven plots at Ravi [R]oad Lahore were also sold.....I sold my house and took the same on rent of Rs. 80 per month from the purchaser and took all the money to Dehra Dun....purchased a plot on Ajmal Road....I had [already] put my jewellery in Punjab National Bank Hoshiarpur locker', [by shifting it to the Sialkot branch of Punjab National Bank.]<sup>11</sup>

This account not only challenges master narratives that present migration as chaotic, disorderly, and hurried, but also provides a clear example of anticipatory migration for the wealthy and educated people months in advance of any official territorial demarcation. Institutions as well as individuals shifted asserts in anticipation of future trouble. The Punjab National Bank stopped lending and began arrangements to transfer its office from Sialkot to Delhi. As early as June 1947, with the growing concerns and shifting of capital out of Sialkot, most of its businesses and commercial activity had come to a 'standstill'. The Muslim labouring classes, which largely had relied on Hindu and Sikh employers, faced economic hardship as a result of the closure of the city's factories. They regularly protested to the district authorities to re-open industrial concerns in order to save them from 'half-starvation'. This resulted in labour unrest. There were some cases of looting and destruction of Hindus' and Sikhs' shops. The British authorities received intelligence reports which warned that the intense economic hardship in a continuing closure of the business activity in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the city would 'create a situation when the labour elements would either turn to crime or take to general lawlessness'.<sup>12</sup>

Violence in the city increased in July. Many cases of attacks, arsons and looting were reported with the appointment of Radcliffe to map out the boundary lines. Radcliffe was inundated with claims and counter claims which raised the communal temperature. Hindus and Sikhs claimed Sialkot for India and contended that it had historically, geographically, culturally and, above all, commercially been associated with the Sikh community. They claimed that the north-eastern part of the district was for centuries a part of the State of Jammu, and the eastern parts of Narowal *tahsil* used to form a part of the Amritsar district. This part had a majority of the non-Muslims. Commercially, the Sikhs had played a major role in the development of Sialkot and had a large economic and commercial stake in it. Though Hindus and Sikhs formed a little more than a third of Sialkot's population, they controlled the trades of the city and paid more than fifty-five per cent of its taxes and revenues.<sup>13</sup> In the event Sialkot was to be awarded to Pakistan because of its Muslim majority.

Violence flared up in Sialkot on the eve of independence, aimed at displacing Hindus and Sikhs. Hundreds were killed. Several residences and businesses went up in flames. Between three and four hundred people were killed between 11- 13 August. Rich Hindu and Sikh homes and businesses were prime targets, which after being

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<sup>12</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 7 June 1947, p. 234, NIHCR.

<sup>13</sup> As regards Sialkot district, the land revenue paid by the non-Muslims was Rs. 844,725 as against Rs. 687,391 paid by the Muslims. Similarly the non-Muslims paid Rs. 132,870 as sales tax as against Rs. 25,311 paid by the Muslims. As to income tax, the non-Muslims paid Rs. 11, 5542 as against Rs. 3, 10,000 paid by the Muslims. As regard to Gujranwala, the figures as to the payment of taxes indicate that the trade and industry of this district were also in the hands of the non-Muslims. The urban immoveable property tax paid by them amounted to Rs. 65,000 as against Rs. 13,000 paid by the Muslims. The sales tax paid by the non-Muslims amounted to about Rs. 201,765 as against about Rs. 12,500 paid by the Muslims. The income tax paid by the non-Muslims amounted to about Rs. 700,000 as against about Rs. 50,000 paid by the Muslims. For details see, Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab, India and Pakistan, 1947*, pp. 223-224. The Muslim League's point of view on the districts, see *The Partition of the Punjab 1947*, p. 85, Vol. III, pp. 43-8.

looted would be set on fire. It could be seen as an unwarranted assault on Sialkot businessmen and their wealth, designed to ruin them and drive them from the city in advance of any outcome of the Boundary Award. On 13 August, the house of S. Baljit Singh, a renowned advocate, was set on fire by a Muslim mob. Dr. Badri Nath Chawla, who was a Congressman, was massacred. The leading trader of the city Munshi Ram Chand along with his three family members were mercilessly butchered in his home.<sup>14</sup> The city was under a 21-hour curfew from August 27. Police began raids and discovered eight guns together with more than one thousand arrows and blades each in Sialkot.<sup>15</sup> Seventeen spears, 151 hatchets, 43 big knives, 5 *gandalies* and 12 daggers were discovered. In another raid, large amounts of arms and ammunitions were discovered in a Hindu firm's office.<sup>16</sup> Such raids, primarily on Hindu and Sikh premises, owed more to the partisan behaviour of the police than to effective efforts to halt looting and violence.

By the end of August, most of the property and businesses of Hindus and Sikhs had been seized, looted or destroyed. Over three hundred shops in the city's Bara bazaar were plundered and partially destroyed. Twelve major non-Muslim owned factories were destroyed in which thousands of workers were employed. This included three factories belonging to the rubber and cloth Munshi Ram Chand and four sports goods concerns owned by H. S. Uberoi. Similarly, the wealthy grain merchant Balwald Singh's depot worth '*lakhs*' was burnt to ashes. Hindu *mohallas* were burned and looted. They presented a picture of ruin and desolation. 'Most of the Hindu *mohallas* had all been burnt down. Homes lay abandoned with their doors swinging forlornly on their hinges. Household articles and objects the rioters had

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<sup>14</sup> Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 234, p. 697.

<sup>15</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 7 September 1947, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending 23 August 1947, *Disturbances in Punjab 1947*, p. 363; *The Journey to Pakistan: Documentation on Refugees of 1947*, (NDC, Islamabad, 1993), p. 302.

found of no use or value lay scattered everywhere, on the street and inside the homes', Khalid Hasan, who migrated from Kashmir to Sialkot in September 1947, writes in his memoir of Sialkot. 'The most disturbing and by far the saddest things that lay scattered everywhere were children's toys. I do not think I have ever seen in the years since anything so desolate, anarchic and disturbing and I have no desire to see anything like it again. Freedom had come to the subcontinent but at what cost'!<sup>17</sup> A similar situation was reported in the press. On the issue of 2 September, the daily *Hindustan Times* reported the events in the city with such front page headings: 'Sialkot in ruins' and 'Sialkot city deserted'.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike the inner city, Sialkot's cantonment population remained unscathed throughout the disturbances. Here the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim shops stood open 'side by side' and the non-Muslims were comparatively seen in 'better spirits'.<sup>19</sup> By the end of August, Hindus and Sikhs had 'entirely abandoned' the inner city and concentrated in 'the army-run refugee camp' in the cantonment area. Its safety appears to have been assured by the presence of a British officer Brigadier Cooler, and Gurkha troops. In other ways the absence of violence in the cantonment area illustrates that the existence of an operating and impartial administrative agency was a crucial element in the containment of strife and the sustaining of high moral. The violence in the city was accelerated by either the indecision or absence of the police. The authorities now saw the removal of Hindus and Sikhs to India as the only way to bring aback peace. Military trucks and special refugee trains from Sialkot cantonment started transporting non-Muslim refugees to neighbouring towns of East Punjab. Sialkot's strategic routes such as the Sialkot-Jammu, Sialkot-Jesser, Sialkot-Gurdaspur and Sialkot-Narowal-

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<sup>17</sup>*Friday Times* (Lahore) 27 May 2005. Khalid Hasan was a Washington based correspondent of the *Friday Times* until his death on 6 February 2009.

<sup>18</sup>*Hindustan Times* (New Delhi) 2 September 1947.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

Amritsar were used for transporting the refugees. They were periodically blocked and the trains and trucks carrying refugees were systematically attacked on the way. Between 15 and 18 August, three trains coming from Wazirabad to Sialkot were attacked and the Hindu and Sikh refugees systematically massacred and their possessions plundered. On 25 August, another train which left Sialkot for Jammu carrying Hindu and Sikh refugees was derailed at the border where passengers were callously slaughtered.<sup>20</sup>

Many trucks started to evacuate the refugees en masse. But these were also attacked and the complicity of some drivers was a noticeable feature. On 25 August, for example, a large convoy of sixty trucks was despatched from the refugee camp at Sialkot cantonment to Amritsar via the Grand Trunk Road. The convoy was attacked near the Ravi river and several Hindus and Sikhs were 'literally hacked to pieces' and their possessions were looted. The ambush was apparently planned. Some survivors of this ill-fated convoy reported the connivance of the drivers in the attack. 'When the vehicles reached the river Ravi, the Muslim drivers left them and were absent for a couple of hours', a survivor recalled, 'When they returned and resumed their journey they were attacked by an armed mob estimated at around a 1000'.<sup>21</sup> At Amritsar, when the convoy with its piles of dead arrived, many people rushed to the hospital, calling for revenge and war. Lady Mountbatten was in the city when the shattered remnants of this convoy arrived there. She herself counted fifteen bodies and seven others were in a very critical situation. By the beginning of September, out of 45,000 Hindus and Sikhs who had been sheltered in the Sialkot cantonment camps at the outbreak of the disturbances, only 10,000 remained there, though many more were arriving from the outlying places using the district as a transit point.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> 'Armed Raid at Lahore on Sialkot Convoy', *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi) 28 August 1947.

There were in Sialkot some isolated incidents of forced conversions and abductions of women. In Badomali alone, there were reports of over 500 cases of the abduction of non-Muslims.<sup>22</sup> In Daska, many girls were abducted. Some Pathans were reported as abducting and buying non-Muslim women in Sialkot. Some Muslim refugees involved in the abduction of Hindu and Sikh women were arrested. Muslim refugees from Gurdaspur, on their way to Sialkot, captured about 300 women, having attacked a train at Jessar-Sialkot border. On their arrival at Sialkot, over forty were arrested and about the same number of women was recovered from them.<sup>23</sup> According to an official estimate, by the end of January 1948, over 5,300 'pockets clearance' of abducted women was discovered in Sialkot district.<sup>24</sup> The brutalisation of women resulted from the way in which men of the opposite religion and community used them as a 'tool' for retribution. As Ayesha Jalal has correctly pointed out, 'the commonality of masculinity' during the partition violence was stronger than 'the bond of religion'.<sup>25</sup>

Little if anything has been written about the awful experiences of the abduction of Sialkot women at partition. Nothing has been written about its Sikh population's involuntarily conversion at the time. Many cases of forcible conversion to Islam were reported in Sialkot, Daska and Narowal. In Narowal *tahsil*, where Hindus and Sikhs together formed the majority, more than two dozen Sikhs of all ages were involuntarily converted to Islam. On 2 September 1947, a choice was thrust upon them between getting killed and becoming Muslims. They chose the latter. Their hair was bobbed and their beards trimmed in Muslim style. For the Sikhs it is a treasured article of faith never to cut their hair. The gravity of the situation was

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<sup>22</sup> Home Secretary West Punjab to Chief Secretary East Punjab, 9 January 1948, Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, pp. 581-2

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *The Journey to Pakistan: Documentation on Refugees of 1947*, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> Jalal, 'Nation, Reason and Religion', p. 13.

echoed in the press and alarmed the state authority. Almost immediately, Sardar Baldev Singh, the Indian Defence Minister, and Abdur Rab Nishtar, the Pakistani Communications Minister, rushed to the town. They were appalled to see the humiliated Sikhs who were 'weeping bitterly'.<sup>26</sup> Such aftermath of the forcible conversion of the 'other' religion still awaits its way into scholarship.

There were also other villages and *qasba* in Sialkot district burnt, looted and their Hindu and Sikh population driven out in a manner reminiscent of Gujranwala. In the village of Kharta, fourteen Sikhs were killed while the non-Muslim casualties of Markiwal were 118. In Badomali, almost the entire Hindu and Sikh population of approximately 5,000 were murdered.<sup>27</sup> The situation in Sambrial also worsened with the arrival of thousands of Muslim refugees from Hissar, Rothak, Karnal and Hoshiarpur.

Organized violence was a chief characteristic of the attacks in Sialkot as in Gujranwala and elsewhere in the Punjab. Its aim was what would now be termed the 'ethnic cleansing' of the non-Muslim population. Organized violence co-existed with spontaneous assaults motivated by the desire for loot. Both individuals and war-bands took advantage of the administrative breakdown and amassed property regardless of their religious background and ethnic affiliations. The registered police cases in the various local *thanas* of Sialkot provide several examples of such episodes. These included a case of looting money and jewellery worth about Rs 10,000 belonging Chaudhry Hanraj Singh Jat and his brother by their close Sikh relative just a day before their departure to India on 24 August.<sup>28</sup> In a similar manner, despite Saraj Din and his neighbours' appeals that they 'are Muslims, not Sikhs', some Muslim

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<sup>26</sup> 'Forcible Conversion of Sikhs', *The Times* (London) 3 September 1947, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Home Secretary West Punjab to Chief Secretary East Punjab, 9 January 1948, Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, pp. 581-2.

<sup>28</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. 106, 24 August 1947.

criminals plundered their property.<sup>29</sup> On 31 August, a Sialkot police sub-inspector reported: 'a group of Muslims was found looting the property of all communities, including Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims'.<sup>30</sup> Another example of such episodes of 'general loot' was noted in a place called Sako Chak, where, apart from plundering Hindu and Sikh houses, local Muslims also took away 'everything' from the local school, hospital and post-office. Perhaps the most appalling was the case of the callous murders of Muslim *Lambardar* Khusi Mohammad Jat and his wife of Daska-Bukha Wala. They were burned to death by a group of six local Muslims, only because the Jat family provided cross-community assistance for the safe evacuation of Sikh Jats of the locality and resisted the looting of their belongings.<sup>31</sup> All the indications are that a desire for loot was an important element in a situation of anarchy and feeling of impunity. The greatest violence however resulted from organized attacks designed to displace a minority population. They could only succeed because of the quiescence, partiality and complicity of the local police and officials.

### **The Characteristics of Violence and the Role of Police**

While many individuals, groups and opportunists merely engaged in looting occasioned by the administrative breakdown, violence in Sialkot as in Gujranwala had a purpose and meaning. Organized attacks were perpetrated by members of uniformed organizations, political activists, students, labourers, refugees, policemen and army deserters. Both documentary and some retrospective interviews reveal that the Sialkot violence, in the main, was pre-planned, organised and aimed at displacing Hindus and Sikhs. It was encouraged by the involvement, coordination and indecision of the local

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<sup>29</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Charar, FIR no, 67, 13 September 1947.

<sup>30</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Daska, FIR no, 125, 31 August 1947.

<sup>31</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Daska, FIR no, 130, 5 September 1947.



police. The systematic looting of property of Sialkot's biggest businessmen, shopkeepers and moneylenders was designed to ruin them and drive them from the city. A clear example of this can be seen in the orderly looting of the property of the largest sporting-goods businessman H. S Uberoi. On 13 August, throughout the night two trucks were kept engaged for the removal of luggage from Uberoi Mansion at Paris Road, while its guards were kept locked in the city police station.<sup>32</sup> There is an eye-witness account of this episode that points to not only its careful organization but the complicity of police. Abdul-Islam Butt was an active member of the Muslim Student Federation of Murray Collage and met M. A. Jinnah in 1944 when he visited Sialkot. Now a veteran Muslim Leaguer and Tahrek-i-Pakistan gold medallist, he lives in the Karim Pura *mohalla* of Sialkot. He has provided a vivid account of the Uberoi Mansion pillaging during the course of an interview.

Some Muslim League activists with the help of Sialkot police looted the mansion of Ganda Singh at Paris Road. They carried out this with careful planning; they arranged some trucks and started looting at night. They did not spare anything; they even stripped off the valuable Iranian rugs and carpets. The trucks took the stolen-stuff to Lahore. All this happened under the supervision of SSP Haq Nawaz...I was an eye-witness of this occurrence.<sup>33</sup>

The ransacking of the city's richest and most influential personality's residence was an important event in Sialkot. The news of the looting of Uberoi Mansion fanned the inner city and there quickly followed the destruction and looting of residential and commercial properties of Hindus and Sikhs. Hundreds of shops and businesses in the Sadar, Bara, Truck and Budhi bazaars were destroyed. Eyewitnesses believed that the Muslim League workers themselves were responsible for initiating the attacks on Hindus and Sikhs, but these were not well reported in the press and did not receive subsequent attention. 'Young Mohammedans used to stand at safe points

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<sup>32</sup> Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 234, p. 697.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Abdul-Islam Butt, Sialkot, 7 January 2007.



Abdul-Islam Butt was an active member of the Sialkot Muslim Student Federation in 1940s. He met M. A. Jinnah during his two days visit in Sialkot in April 1944. In 1997, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country he was awarded the Tahrek-i-Pakistan gold medal by the Government of Pakistan.



Malik Abbas was a stenographer of Sialkot's deputy commissioner in 1947



Dr Lal worked in a private family clinic in Karim Pura *mohalla* of Sialkot in 1947

and when [they] saw a single Hindu they stabbed him and hid themselves in some house of a Mohammedan', Dr Kishan Chand writes his memoirs of Sialkot city, 'the police took no action'.<sup>34</sup> Malik Abbas, who was 20 at the time and was a stenographer of Sialkot deputy commissioner (DC) M. M. Muzzafer, provides a vivid account of the communal situation in the city. 'The Muslim League workers were everywhere in the city. The labourers and shopkeepers all were now the Muslim Leaguers. In fact they were celebrating the moments of independence. They thought everything now in Sialkot belonged to them. They thought the police was on their side. They began looting and destroying Hindu and Sikh property in the city. The district administration was pro-Muslim', the interview continued, '...Sometimes in late August, I had to travel on a train from Sialkot to Shakargarh for some office work. In my compartment, some young Muslim National Guards, looked-like students, found a middle-age Sikh. He wished to go Gurdaspur. They decided to kill him. I tried to stop them; they shouted at me and said: "you do not know how they are killing Muslims over there (India)". They threw him out of the train window'.<sup>35</sup>

Malik Abbas walked daily from his inner city residence at Rang Pura *mohalla* to the DC office and witnessed the violence. He denied police involvement, although he admitted that the police were partisan. Source material drawn from the district police record, however, reveals that, whilst the police in Sialkot were not the main perpetrators of the crime committed against the minority population, they clearly acted as accomplices, participants or co-conspirators in many ways. In several cases, the local *thana* police was 'dispatched to assist' the majority population against the minority. Many individual policemen with the help of local Muslims not only killed Hindus and Sikhs but were also either involved in looting or brought their belongings

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<sup>34</sup> An Unpublished Autobiography of Dr. Kishan Chand of Sialkot, (1962) p. 30.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Malik Abbas, Lahore, 23 December 2008.

back to the police stations. On 31 August, for example, a party of six policemen from *thana* Charar was dispatched, on the demand of a local *Lambardar* Ahmad Ali, for the assistance of Muslims of in a place called Bhtwal against the Hindus and Sikhs. They killed one Sikh and injured many in this episode. Subsequently, the sub-inspector reported the incident in a memo, which clearly signals the partiality of the police: 'We loudly warned them [the Hindus and Sikhs] not to make *fasadat* (riot) and go to [India]. But some of them, especially Mann Singh Zalidar of Chak Sarpal, Bhacet Singh of Jhmya Della, Kashi Ram of Bhtwal were more incited to riot. They wanted to resist. They claimed Muslims wanted to drive them out of the village and intended to loot their possessions. We warned them again and finally fired on them, in which a Sikh was killed on the spot and many injured. Afterwards they ran away and took away the dead and injured men's guns'.<sup>36</sup> In a similar case, the police of *thana* Satra went to 'assist' the local Muslims against the 'Sikh badmashs' of the village Jatol, and in the operation killed twelve Sikhs and brought their possessions to the police station.<sup>37</sup> The complicity of the Daska police in 'pillaging Hindu and Sikh houses' along with the Muslim mob was also reported.<sup>38</sup>

There is thus clear evidence that the police in Sialkot directly participated in violence and looting. The police record itself reveals the criminalization of individual local policemen. A clear example of this is evidenced in an organised attack on the Hindu *Tarkhans* of a village Shala-Sialkot by the policemen of Shakargarh *thana*. On the day of independence, two police constables attacked the village and pulled *Tarkhans* out from their houses, before looting and then selling their moveable property to the local residents. What is most striking about this incident is the fact that the crime was committed, despite the resistance of local leading Muslim Jats and

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<sup>36</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, *thana* Charar, FIR no. 65, 31 August 1947

<sup>37</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, , *thana* Satra, FIR no. 85, 27 August 1947

<sup>38</sup> 'Deserted Tracts and Town in West Punjab', *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi) 2 September 1947.

Gujars who had protected and convinced the skilled Hindu *kamies* to stay in the locality as they needed their traditional labour. The local *Lambardar* Muslim Pir Mohammad himself went to register a FIR but the local *thana* police refused to accept the complaints about their fellow constables. After repeated failed efforts, finally in a desperate mood, 25 days after the incident, the entire adult male population of the village gathered at Sialkot D.S.P office in a procession, protested and demanded to be allowed to register the case. On 10 October, at the 'special order' of DSP, the sub-inspector Ghulam Hussian registered the FIR against both criminal constables which provides the following information. Although the Sialkot police registered cases, few were chased up and rarely were any captured criminals indicted afterwards.

This is an incident of 14 August 1947. Two police constables named Mohammad Ali Shah Police No 427 and Rahmat Ali Police No 312 went to attack the village Shala-Sialkot where still Hindu *tarkhans* lived there. Both policemen against the will of local Muslim Jats and Gujars forced them to quit the village and looted and even sold their belongings to the local people. The purchased-receipts of Hindus' belongings, writing and signature by the hand of Mohammad Ali Shah Police No 427 had been recovered. The local *Lambardar* Pir Mohammed was also an eye-witness of this incident. It is an order of D.S.P Sialkot that this is an incident of different nature so this initial report is considered as a special report. Therefore, panel code section 392 is applied here.<sup>39</sup>

Further evidence of police involvement and lack of professionalism and impartiality could be found in their behaviour when they went to deal with scared and vulnerable minorities. In many instances, the police in Sialkot remained either conspicuously absent, or were slow in responding to the minority populations' appeals for assistance, when attackers went on the rampage in their localities. A wealthy moneylender Satya Ram of Sambrial, because of his extensive business concerns and lending-recovery, did not want to migrate and had sought the protection of local police. On 20 October, the police remained within the *thana* while the adjacent shops

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<sup>39</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Shakargarh, FIR no. 139, 10 September 1947.

and house of Satya Ram no more than 50 yards away were being looted and burned by 'a big mob of lenders'.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, on 28-29 August, the police received 'repeated information' of big gatherings of over 10,000 Muslims in a village Sodra 'to attack and to burn' a nearby Sikh village Doburge. However, the police from the *thana* just a couple of miles away arrived next day when the army from 30-miles distant Wazirabad had already arrived and averted the tragedy.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, a most disturbing feature of the situation in Sialkot as in other places of both East and West Punjab was the transfer of those professional officials who sought to act impartially in this highly polarised communal situation. The Muslim deputy commissioner of Sialkot M.M Muzaffer, who had arrested members of the Muslim League National Guards for violating the curfew in the town, was for example immediately transferred on the special request of a local member of Legislative Assembly.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, this kind of action and the police failure to maintain law and order for minorities has been frequently repeated in the contemporary subcontinent. As Kuldip Nayar, a former resident of Sialkot, has noted, for example, during the 1992-3 Mumbai riots and the 2002 Gujrat massacres the 'police instigated and protected the rioters. The day of Partition came back before my eyes. At that time too, the police were hand in glove with rioters or, for that matter, the killers'.<sup>43</sup>

Sialkot increasingly received refugees mainly from the Jammu region because of its proximity to the state of Kashmir. In this Hindu Dogra state just as in neighbouring Sialkot there was official complicity in the 'ethnic cleansing' of

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<sup>40</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. 136, 20 October 1947.

<sup>41</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. 117, 29 August 1947.

<sup>42</sup> K. M. Tufial, *Tahraqay Azadi may Sialkot ka Kardar* (Sialkot: Institution of the Publications of Pakistan Movement, 1987), p. 213.

<sup>43</sup> Kuldip Nayar, 'The road taken from Sialkot to Ahmedabad', *Indian Express*, 3 April 2002, [http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/full\\_story.php?content\\_id=124](http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/full_story.php?content_id=124), visited on 31/07/2006.

minorities. In this case the Muslims were the victims. It is to this agony of the Kashmiri refugees, which has been overlooked in scholarship, that we now turn.

### **Massacres of Jammu's Muslim population and Arrival of Refugees in Sialkot**

Violence in Jammu had many parallels with that in Sialkot. What gives the Jammu massacres a special character is that they were mainly ordered by the Hindu Dogra state of Jammu and Kashmir and involved political motives to ethnically cleanse the Muslim population. This was intended to ensure a Hindu majority in the Jammu region. Violence was undertaken in the main by the state troopers. They received support from disgruntled Hindu and Sikhs refugees from West Punjab. The danger for Muslims multiplied 'every hour', as hordes of Hindu and Sikh refugees started pouring into Jammu from areas that were going to become Pakistan. In many ways, Kashmiri Muslims were to pay a heavy price in September-October 1947 for the earlier violence of West Punjab. These killings had created a motive for revenge. 'A large flock' began to arrive after the March 1947 Rawalpindi massacres of Hindus and Sikhs.<sup>44</sup> By late 1947, over 160,000 Hindus and Sikhs had migrated from the western districts of Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> In Jammu city alone, by mid-September, they numbered over 65,000. They carried with them harrowing stories of Muslim atrocity, which were retold in the press and given official sanction by the state media. Their arrival brought the communal tension to 'the breaking point' and further intensified the Muslim killings and exodus. For example, a well-circulated Jammu-based daily, *Kashmir Times*, boasted that 'a Dogra can kill at least two hundred Muslims' which illustrated the communal depths to which the media and parties had sunk. Almost immediately, the Dogra refugees, backed by their relatives from Jammu and Dogra

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<sup>44</sup> 'Refugees Flock into Kashmir', *The Times* (London) 14 March 1947, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> 'Tribal Hazards in the Border Territory', *The Times* (London) 26 January 1948, p. 5.

troopers started a general clearing of the Muslim population. They were provided with arms and ammunition by state officials. Sikh deserters of the Sialkot Unit, who had migrated to Jammu, now put to use the weapons they had taken with them.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to point out here that the Muslim population of Jammu province largely consisted of Punjabi speakers. Muslims of western Jammu had well-established geographic, historic, economic, ethnic and cultural connections with West Punjab's cities and towns. They had strongly favoured joining Pakistan, unlike the Kashmiri-speaking Muslims of the Valley who supported the secular leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. Within Jammu province, the location of the majority of Muslims and Hindus partially explains their differing aspirations for Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>47</sup> Overall, the Dogra Hindus formed a narrow minority in Jammu province, though they formed a majority in its eastern districts such as Udhampur, Kathua and the Chenani Jagir. Seventy-five per cent of Jammu's Hindus lived in these four districts which were contiguous to Hindu-majority districts of Punjab such as Gurdaspur, which was incorporated into India in 1947. The majority of Muslims in Jammu province lived in the western districts of Mirpur, Reasi and Pooch Jagir and they were contiguous to the towns and cities of the Punjab. Muslims numbered 158,630 and comprised 37 per cent of the total population of 428,719 in Jammu province in the year 1941. Their

<sup>46</sup> The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the week ending of August, 1947, p. 612, NIHCR.

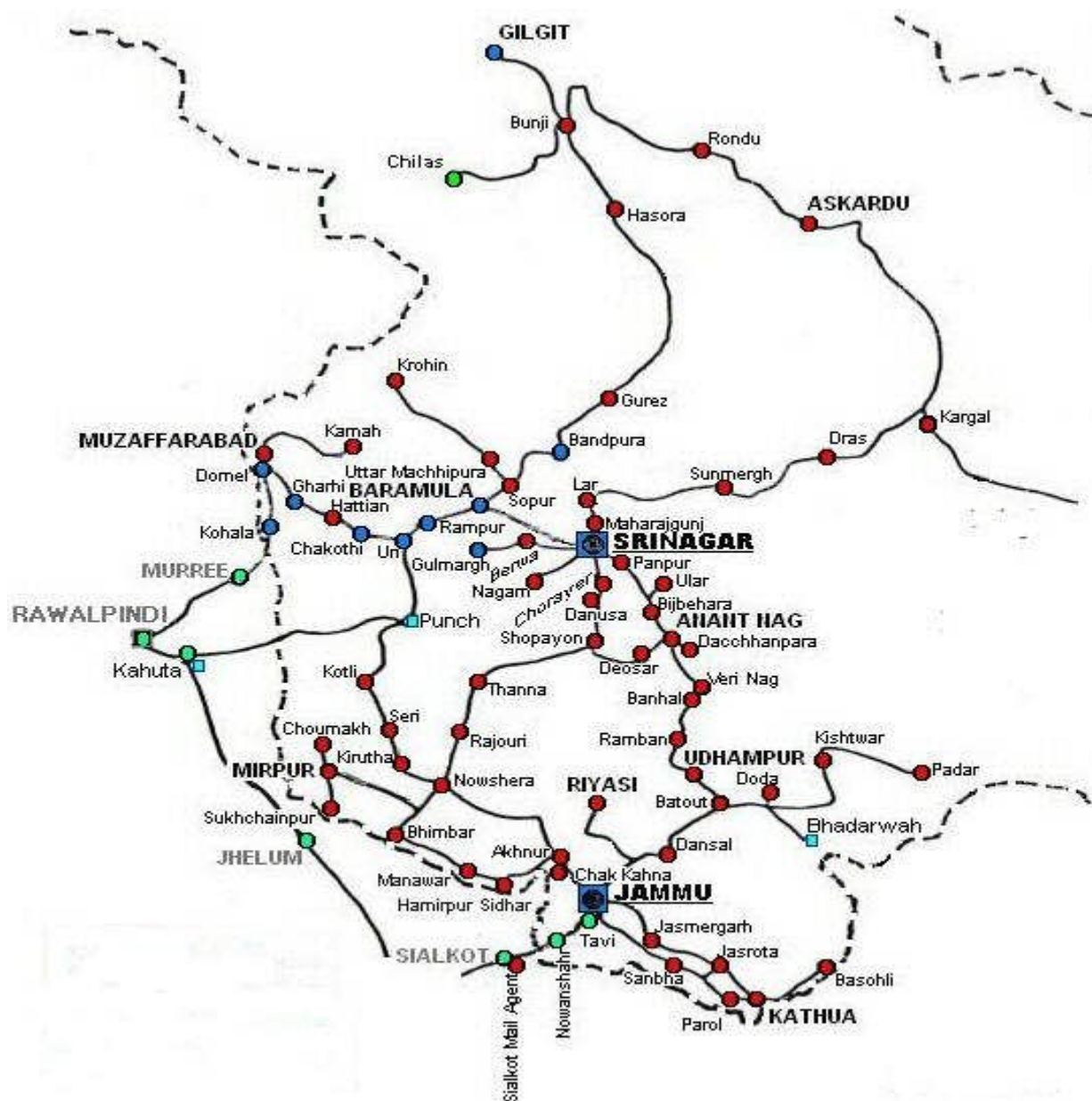
<sup>47</sup> According to the Census of 1941, the eastern half the Jammu province, cutting across a small strip of Punjab plain was inhabited by 619,000 non-Muslims, including 10,000 Sikhs and 305,000 martial Dogras Rajputs and Brahmins, and 411,000 Muslims. Forming 40 per cent of the population of this whole area, to the north and astride the Chenab Muslims were in a majority in the Riasi, Ramban, and Kishtwar areas and nearly attained parity in Bhadrawah.

Composition of Communities population in the Jammu Region

District/	1941 Population	Hindu%	Muslim%
Jammu	431,362	57.53	37
Kathua	177,672	74.31	n/a
Udhampur	294,217	56.02	n/a
Reasi	257,903		67
Mirpur	386,655		80.41
Pooch Jagir	421,828		90

Source: 'Elimination of Muslims from Jammu', Part II, *The Times* (London) 10 August 1948, p. 5.





Geographical Boundaries of the Jammu and Kashmir Princely State Prior to 1947

proximity to Punjab proved significant as they enabled refugees to flow relatively easily into and out of Jammu province at partition. Communal division was much stronger in these areas. Both the RSS and the Jammu Muslim Conference of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Kashmir dominated here. Almost all the communal violence took place in Jammu province. Hundred of thousands were killed and fled to the border cities of Sialkot, Gujrat and Jhelum.

The level of destruction was worst in Jammu city where Muslims were in a minority. Their major concentrations were in Ustad da *Mohalla*, Pthanan da *Mohalla* and Khalka *Mohalla*. The latter was much larger than the other two combined. These Muslim localities presented a picture of destruction by mid-September 1947. Hundreds of Gujars were massacred in *mohalla* Ram Nagar. Village Raipur, within Jammu cantonment area, was burnt down. The killings and dispersal of the Muslims from Jammu city were a clear example of the ethnic cleansing of a locality. By mid-September, the city's Muslim population was halved.<sup>48</sup> By late November more than 100,000 Kashmiri refugees had arrived in the border towns of Sialkot, Gujrat and Jhelum.<sup>49</sup>

The Dogra state troops were at the forefront of attacks on Muslims. The state authorities were also reported to be issuing arms not only to local volunteer organizations such as RSS, but also to those in surrounding East Punjab districts such as Gurdaspur. G. K. Reddy, a Hindu editor of the *Kashmir Times*, said in a statement published in the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 'I saw the armed mob with the complicity of Dogra troops was killing the Muslims ruthlessly. The state officials were openly giving out weapons to the mob'.<sup>50</sup> The state administration had not only demobilised a large number of Muslim soldiers serving in the state army, but Muslim police officers,

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<sup>48</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 19 September 1947.

<sup>49</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 20 November 1947, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 29 October 1947, p. 2.

whose loyalty was suspected, had also been sent home. In Jammu city, the Muslim military were disarmed and the Jammu cantonment Brigadier Khoda Box was replaced by a Hindu Dogra officer. There were also reports that the Maharaja of Patiala was not only supplying weapons, but also a Sikh Brigade of Patiala State troops was also operating in Jammu and Kashmir. A main aim of the state authorities was to change the demographic composition of the region by compelling the Muslim population to leave because of the fear of death. They succeeded. The Dogra troopers ejected the entire population of Muslims of Dulat Chak on 28 November, claiming it was a part of the state. The troops of a Sikh Brigade raided the bordering villages and forced the Muslims there to evacuate and go beyond the old Ujh river bed.<sup>51</sup> There were reports that the Maharaja of the Dogra Hindu state was 'in person commanding all the forces' which were ethnically cleansing the Muslims.<sup>52</sup>

After the closure of the Sialkot-Jammu railway line, the Muslims started concentrating in a camp from isolated pockets to the large enclaves within the Jammu Police Lines. They sought assistance from the Pakistan government to take immediate steps to ensure their safety.<sup>53</sup> In the first week of November, the Pakistan government despatched many buses to Jammu city to transport the refugees into Sialkot. When the convoy arrived at Jammu-Sialkot road, Dogra troopers, RSS men and armed Sikhs attacked the caravan and killed most of the passengers and abducted their women. The fortunate ones managed to escape to reach Sialkot. According to a statement of a well-educated Muslim refugee who had fled from Jammu to Sialkot, 'Thirty lorries carrying Muslim evacuees out of Kashmir State were attacked by Dogra troops at Satwari in Jammu. Most of the male members were massacred, while the women [were] abducted'. He concluded that the official proclaimed there that 'there was no

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<sup>51</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, , thana Shakargarh, FIR no. 179, 28 November 1947.

<sup>52</sup> 'Elimination of Muslims from Jammu', Part II, *The Times* (London) 10 August 1948, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 19 September 1947.

place for Muslims in Kashmir State and that they should all clear out'.<sup>54</sup> Oral sources collected from Sialkot provide a clear picture of the ethnic cleansing of Jammu's Muslims. Zafar Butt, who reached Sialkot from Jammu in late 1947, stated that his entire family was killed by the Dogra troopers in Nawa Kot.<sup>55</sup> Khalid Ali Gujar's two brothers and a sister were murdered in Ram Pura *mohalla* in Jammu city.<sup>56</sup> Kawaja Tahir, who now resides Sialkot's Askari colony, lost his parents and a brother in Jammu.<sup>57</sup> A leading Muslim Conference leader Hameed Ullah's young daughter was abducted in Jammu.<sup>58</sup>

The removal of the Muslim population in Jammu region is evidenced clearly in the 1961 Census of India. In Jammu province, about 123 villages were 'completely depopulated', while the decrease in the number of Muslims in Jammu district alone was over 100,000.<sup>59</sup> It is possible to point out that the inter-religious violence that occurred in Jammu included a possible 'genocide' of Muslims in September-October 1947. The Maharaja of the Dogra Hindu state was complicit in the targeted violence against Kashmiri Muslims. Out of a total of 800,000 who tried to migrate, more than 237,000 Muslims were systematically exterminated by all the forces of the Dogra State, headed by the Maharaja in person and aided by Hindus and Sikhs.<sup>60</sup> There is evidence of similar behaviour in other Princely States. A police report pointed out that over 250,000 Muslims alone were missing in the Sikh state of Patiala.<sup>61</sup> In Kapurthala

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<sup>54</sup> *The Journey to Pakistan: Documentation on Refugees of 1947*, pp. 298-9.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Zafar Butt, Sialkot, 16 January 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Khalid Ali Gujar, Sialkot, 16 January 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Kawaja Tahir, Sialkot, 16 January 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Zarar Hussian, Sialkot, 15 January 2007.

<sup>59</sup> The Census of India, 1961, Vol. VI, cited in M. H. Kamili (ed.), *Jammu and Kashmir: Census of India* (Delhi : Manager of Publications, 1967), p.42 and p. 157 and pp. 359-60.

<sup>60</sup> 'Elimination of Muslims from Jammu', II, *The Times* (London) 10 August 1948, p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Mudie Papers*, The Sikhs in Action, Mss Eur F164/23, pp. 50-51 and 60, O.I.O.C. A correspondence from Nehru to Patel evidenced genocide in Patiala, the largest Sikh State: 'Story of designs and resistance of Muslims [is] false and fantastic. They died like goats and sheep. About a *lakh* [100,000] murdered in whole State; about 12,000 in Patiala alone. Whole families wiped out'. See, Nehru to

where Muslims formed 63 per cent of the total population, not a single Muslim was left within a few weeks of partition'.<sup>62</sup> Ian Copland's<sup>63</sup> and Shail Mayaram's<sup>64</sup> accounts about the 'ethnic cleaning' and 'Clearing Up campaign' (*safaya*) of the Muslim minority in the states of Bharatpur and Alwar highlight similarities with the events in Jammu. The crime committed on the Kashmiri refugees was nothing less than genocide. Refugees in the Punjab received some protection and assistance in migration through the Punjab Boundary Force and the Military Evacuation Organisation. No such mechanisms were in place for the Jammu Muslims.

By the end of 1947, over 100,000 Kashmiri refugees had arrived in Sialkot. They recounted gruesome tales of brutal massacres by the state's own troops and the burning of their homes and crops to a party of Englishmen who visited the city on 21 November. The harrowing images and stories of atrocities against Muslims were retold in the press as well as in the sermons of Friday *Juma* prayer. The refugees' frustrations in trying to find suitable accommodation and livelihood were exploited by radical groups such as the Ahrars and the newly established Anjuman-i-Jammu Muhajirian. They used the refugees' frustration as a fertile recruiting ground for their brand of politics. There were calls for revenge and jihad. The radical newspaper *Zamindar* was at the forefront in encouraging such action. The paper's daily repeated provocations led to its being banned for a fortnight.<sup>65</sup> Many Kashmiri refugees offered their services as *razakars* (volunteer) fighters. The Anjuman -i- Naujawan-

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Patel, 5 October 1947, Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-1950* (Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1971-4), Vol. I, p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 10 September 1951, pp. 3-4.

<sup>63</sup> Ian Copland, 'The Further Shores of Partition: Ethnic Cleansing in Rajasthan, 1947', *Past and Present*, 160, (1998): pp. 203-39; 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, 36, 3 (2002), pp. 657-704.

<sup>64</sup> The violence in Alwar and Bharatpur is analyzed in Shail Mayaram's *Resisting Regimes* in which the author presents strong evidence that what occurred in the these Princely States and in the adjacent Punjab district of Gurgaon, where the Meos were widely distributed, was nothing less than ethnic cleansing against the Meos. Shail Mayaram, 'Speech, Silence and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat', in *Subaltern Studies IX*, pp.126-161. Also see her work, *Resisting Regimes*.

<sup>65</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 1 October 1947, p. 1.

Kashmir Sialkot was at the forefront in supplying *razakars* to the Kashmiri Liberation Movement. Earlier there were reports that around one hundred trucks loaded with ‘tribesmen’ equipped with modern weapons and signalling system had entered Kashmir.<sup>66</sup> In such a warlike situation, ‘a state of panic’ prevailed at the newly-developed Sialkot-Jammu border. Now there were regular attacks ‘with automatic weapons’ on the Sialkot-Jammu and Gujrat-Jammu borders, leaving behind several casualties on a daily basis. By the turn of 1948, India and Pakistan were heading for a war over the territorial claims of the Kashmir region. On January 12 that year, the Indian District Liaison Officers who wished to recover ‘pocket clearance’ of abducted women and converts were banned from entering Sialkot, although their work continued in Gujranwala and other cities of the West Punjab. While official activities could be controlled, the border between Sialkot and Jammu remained porous and free movement between both regions was possible. This was evidenced most clearly in cross-border incursions on Sialkot.

### **Sialkot and Border Incursions: The Role of Dogra Refugees and Troopers**

Partition transformed Sialkot from a central Punjab town into one bordering Jammu and Kashmir and the East Punjab districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar- via Narowal. Sialkot’s proximity to such towns and cities proved significant as it enabled refugees to flow into and out of the district. This was one of the reasons that the refugees had started to arrive earlier in Sialkot than in other parts of Punjab, and a small trickle of refugees had entered the district some four months prior to partition in April 1947 to the backdrop of the Rawalpindi violence. The influx was, however, especially

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<sup>66</sup>*Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 29 October 1947, p. 2.

concentrated between September 1947 and January 1948. The daily flood peaked in late 1947, and had tailed off by the early 1950s.

Being a border town, Sialkot saw a number of incursions from Jammu region in the early weeks and months of independence. The most serious episodes involved fitful incursions by the evicted Hindu and Sikh refugees from Sialkot and the Dogra troops of Jammu. These post-partition raids on the Muslim population appear regularly in the files of Sialkot border *thanas*. For instance, the police FIRs list a string of ‘border raids’ - on 20 September, in a raid on a border village, the Dogras not only killed 60 Muslims and destroyed their crops, but also carried away eleven women; on 27 October, they killed Abdul Majeed Kashmiri and took away his cattle; and on 25 October, they burned a village Chak Begay. On some occasions, the Dogra troopers encountered the local police and the newly-created West Punjab Home Guards. The former with their ‘automatic weapons’ outnumbered the latter’ who lacked the resources of arms and ammunitions. The recent work of Ian Talbot with respect to violence in such Punjab localities as Lahore and Amritsar has pointed out the traditional form of cross-border ‘cattle raids’ in the newly created borders of Amritsar and Lahore.<sup>67</sup> In Sialkot, one of the most striking elements was that, in fact, raids were carried out by evicted Hindu and Sikh refugees with the involvement of Dogra troopers. In many instances, as the police record reveals, they went to take revenge on those individual Muslims, who had earlier ejected them, and burned and looted their property. For example, the ejected Sikh residents of Mailkhan Wala, with the help of Dogra troopers, raided the village on 4 September 1947, and targeted specifically those whom they intended to kill. A registered police report by the

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<sup>67</sup>Talbot, *Divided Cities*, p. 69.

relatives of the deceased provides the following information about such ‘targeted’ killings.

There is a Sikh refugee camp in a village called King, on the right side of upper Chenab River. The camp is under the security of Dogra military. Yesterday about 4:00 pm between 6 and 7 Sikhs along with 3 or 4 Dogra Platoon troopers came in Mailkhan Wala. First, they killed a Muslim Kashmiri, who was working in a garden and then they searched for Ghulam Sial, son of Noor Sial, and found him nearby the graveyard and killed him. Afterwards they moved to Parozwala and killed Wali Mohammad and Noor Mohammad... The local people can recognise the Sikhs because they are the former residents of Mialkkan Wala.<sup>68</sup>

In another case on 9 October, there was an attack in Sahjoki-Sialkot at the house of Allah Buksh Manhas by former Sikh residents with the complicity of Dogra troopers. The extent of the targeted destruction and looting is evidenced from a FIR by the victim. The scale of looting shows this could only have been accomplished with the existence of large-scale pre-planning and logistic of assistance.

In Sahjoky, the majority of Sikh population lived. They owned most of the land and other businesses. Sensing the dangerous communal situation, they altogether left the village on 28 August and went towards Daska. Today, they along with the Dogra military attacked the village and particularly burned my house and plundered many valuable belongings. They did not harm Imam Din Tarkhan and Allah Ditta Kashmiri, who were present in the village during this incident. Both informed me the former residents of village especially Harnam Singh and Pala Singh set alight to my house... a few army men from the Dogra military force and a Sikh *jathas* on the horseback were with them. Below is a list of damage and missing belongings with their cost in rupees:

House damage Rs 4000, jewellery Rs 2000, silk and other cloths Rs 4000, 40 sacks of wheat Rs 1000, net case of money Rs 2000, 160 kilograms rice Rs 125, black *chana* Rs 60, copper and brass pots and pans Rs 800, a sewing machine Rs 285, a cycle Rs 80, a wooden bed (*palang*) and cotes Rs 200, a buffalo Rs 400, two big grain containers (*manty* and *parolay*) Rs 200.<sup>69</sup>

Some displaced Sikhs not only raided the places where they had previously lived but also from the nearby refugee camps went in pursuit of loot. One such attack

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<sup>68</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. [was deleted], 4 September 1947.

<sup>69</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. 132, 9 October 1947.



was on the Sambrial Railway Station by over 300 Sikh residents of the nearby King Camp, in which they killed one Muslim railwayman and ‘ransacked’ the station, looted and even took away ‘office windows and doors’.<sup>70</sup> Such episodes have not been previously included in standard accounts of the aftermath of partition. They exclusively concentrate on the violence inflicted on minority communities in terms of ‘revenge’ and portray refugee populations chiefly as ‘victims’. It is however evident from material drawn from Sialkot that in some instances refugees were aggressors. This was certainly the case with respect to the raids on the untouchable *Chamar* population of Sialkot. It is to this unexplored topic that we will now turn.

### **Sialkot Violence and the Experiences of Untouchable *Chuhra*s and *Achhut***

As has been pointed out earlier in chapter one, *Meghies*, *Mazbis*, *Chamars* (all *Achhut*) and *Chuhra*s (Christians) formed a substantial portion of Sialkot’s population. They were employed as sweepers, porters and canteen-servants in different hospitals, factories and schools and formed an integral part of the traditional rural menial labour. Together these caste groups formed about eight per cent of the population of the district. This large community was the focus of conversion efforts by both Christian missionaries and indigenous religious reformers from the late nineteenth century onwards. Until recently, little has been written about untouchables’ experience during partition and its aftermath, with the exception of Urvashi Butalia’s brief reflections.<sup>71</sup> More recently, Ravinder Kaur in her work on Punjabi refugee settlement in Delhi has devoted one chapter to the untouchable experience in the violence and resettlement.<sup>72</sup> Nothing has been written about the untouchable castes and partition. They were not anticipatory migrants like upper caste Hindus and Sikhs.

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<sup>70</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Sambrial, FIR no. 119, 4 September 1947.

<sup>71</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*.

<sup>72</sup> Kaur, *Since 1947*, pp. 156-87.

Even at the time of independence some stayed. While the majority of both *Meghies* and *Mazbis* fled to India because of the violence, the *Chuhras*, being seen as Christians and not associated with Hindus and Sikhs, remained largely unaffected by the violence. As elsewhere in Punjab, the *Chuhras* were non-migrants. This did not however mean that they were unaffected. A large number faced unemployment, due to the migration of their Hindu and Sikh employers.

Alongside Muslims, the *Chuhras* of Sialkot took advantage of the breakdown of the administration and made attempts to appropriate the resources of Hindus and Sikhs. This untold fact is evident both from documentary sources and oral accounts. On 31 August, for example, a Sialkot police sub-inspector reported that ‘a group of Christians’ were found looting the property of Hindus and Sikhs in a Sialkot village called Gloya Wala.<sup>73</sup> On another occasion, some *Chuhras* assisted local Muslim Jats in the organised ambush and looting of a refugee camp in a village called Sooinwala. One of the *Chuhras* who was involved, a man called Matela who was 20 at the time, has provided the following information.

They [Muslims] planned to loot the Ramkay Hindu camp at night. Chaudhry Sharif Lomba, Nazra and Ayuab were with us, when we attacked the camp. They owned one horse and second they arranged. Also they arranged a bull-cart and parked it a few yards away so things could be loaded. We attacked the camp in late night. I killed only one Sikh woman with my *danda*. We looted their belongings and brought them on the horsebacks and a bullock-cart at Chaudhry Sharif Lomba’s house early in the morning. I did not know what was in those trunks, perhaps included jewels. I was only a servant; they did not give me anything’.<sup>74</sup>

The eye-witness account not only points to the careful planned attack on the camp but also shows the *Chuhras* as allies of the Muslims at partition. However, the untouchable *Chamars* (*Achhut*) of Sialkot could not, unlike *Chuhras*, be regarded as

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<sup>73</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Daska, FIR no. 125, 31 October 1947.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Matela, Sialkot, 19 December 2008.

neutral and thus be isolated from the violence. They did not migrate in large numbers at the time of partition. Some *Achhut* of the Punjab had supported the Muslim League and its movement for Pakistan.<sup>75</sup> The *Chamars* of Sialkot who were settled along the Aik stream did not migrate to India because of their small trade in raw leather. Unlike the mainstream population of Hindus and Sikhs of Sialkot, they were largely isolated from the main thrust of the violence in August-September. They were not only encouraged by the government to remain in order to avoid the loss of their traditional menial labour, but they were also protected by local Muslim *Zamindars* because of their cheap human labour. The *Chamars* of Sialkot nevertheless had to pay a heavy price in November-December 1947 for the violence in the Jammu region in September-October. They were largely driven out by disgruntled Muslim refugees and army deserters from the Dogra Princely State. These groups were so desperate that the *Chamars*' limited belongings were coveted.

A number of complaints against the '*alagay kay Muhajirian*' (refugees of the area) and '*fauji*' (military men) were brought to the attention of Sialkot police authorities for the protection and assistance of *Chamars*. On 4 November 1947, the *Chamars* submitted the following letter to the Sialkot DSP.

It is submitted to the Deputy Superintendent Police of Sialkot that we *Chamar Achhut* wished to live in Pakistan. This is an incident of yesterday. Ghulam Ahmed son of Fuaj Din, and Ismail, Abdul Gufoor, sons of Ghulam Ahmed, and Akbar, son of Nazim Din- all caste of Gujars- accompanied by other eight persons who appeared military men and were armed with guns entered our houses at 10:00 pm and said "the *Chamar Achhut* have no right to live in Pakistan, they should live in India....come out from the houses and whatever possessions/belongings you want, you can carry with you. We intend to take

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<sup>75</sup>Some sections of untouchable *Achhut* groups/parties supported the Muslim League's civil disobedience against the Khizr Coalition Government in Punjab. In particular, the representatives of Punjab Adi-Dharm Mandal, Punjab Ravidass Sabha, Punjab Depressed Classes League and Punjab Municipal Workers Federation mobilized their community and sent their representatives to the various villages and towns for the support of Pakistan movement. For *Achhut* support for the Muslim League and Pakistan, see *The Partition of Punjab, 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 142-9. A prominent *Achhut* leader Sukh Lal, then the deputy mayor of Lahore, repeatedly stated that 20 lakhs *Achhut* of the Punjab would make Pakistan their 'homeland' and would continue their struggle for 'Achhutastan'. See, *Inquilab* (Lahore) 7 March 1947, p. 3 and 10 April 1947, p. 5.

all of you to the border”. One of the *Chamars* replied “we want to live in Pakistan”. As he uttered these words, one of them hit him with gun. Thus all *Chamars* bundled their belongings and followed them. As we walked about six miles towards the border, they forcefully looted our possessions. A list of the looted-belongings is annexed... When we arrived back, our houses were locked and the *Lambardar* Ghulam Mohammed took over the keys. Those six military men had already broken in our houses and had taken away all our remaining possessions. We poor *Chamar Achhuts* are now without any belongings please help us and make efforts to return us back. Please take serious action against the culprits.<sup>76</sup>

Such assaults were rationalised by claiming that the *Chamars* were spies and saboteurs. The insecure and threatening border situation with disputed Jammu and Kashmir created the conditions for such claims. Despite the support of local population and the local police, the *Chamars* were attacked, looted and dragged to the border. On 15 November, a *Chamar* victim named Kaka who had a narrow escape brought the case, with the help of a local *Lambardar*, against the criminal refugees to the local *thana*. He stated that:

The Muslim refugees of the area always accuse us that the *Chamars* are *jasos kom* (spying caste) and has been doing this for Hindustan. However, the local Muslim *Zamindars* and the police always protected us against these *Muhajirs*. Yesterday, at 11:00 pm, between 14 and 15 people armed with guns and axes jumped over the walls of our houses and made us hostages. Some wore *khaki* trousers and others were in *shalwar kameez*, while some had traditional *topi* (hats) on their heads. However, all of them wore scarf around their necks. First, they looted our house-belongings, including my Rs 80, cloths, quilts, and *kesh*. They were whispering “we do not get any salary so take away whatever you can”. Then they said, “We want to take all of you to the big officer in Sangra.... ‘We had already killed the policemen of Chamal who had been providing you protection. If you make any resistance, we will kill you too’”. They tied our hands in the back and tightened our faces with cloths. They locked the children in one room, because they were making noise. They took us to Sangra where in sugar-cane fields they isolated the women. Here, I managed to escape but I came to know they had killed all the men. Still the fate of women is unclear. It is requested please a case be registered against them. The *Chamar* untouchable are suffering too much in Pakistan, please help us.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Shakargarh, FIR, no. 87, 4 November 1947.

<sup>77</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Shakargarh, FIR no. 152, 15 November 1947.

In another instance, the *Chamars* of a place called Nathu Kot had to quit Sialkot for India because they had become a cause of dispute between the local Muslim Gujars of Nathu Kot and Borr Dala over the issue of controlling their subordination and movement. The former wanted to retain them in their place, while the latter wished to shift them to their village. Finally, on 27 December, after a prolonged tug-of-war for the control of *Chamars*, though many families were forced to move to Borr Dala to serve the influential Gujars, the majority decided to leave for India. A *Chamar* Babu Ram, with the assistance of the disgruntled Muslim Gujars of Nathu Kot, was able to report the case in the local *thana*. 'It is submitted that we *Chamars* want to live in Pakistan, but Muslims of Borr Dala forcibly took us in their village and wanted us either to serve them or leave Sialkot for India forever. Majority *Chamars* had already been forced to quit Sialkot. We are now only small numbers in the area; they wanted to occupy our houses and property. Please help us'.<sup>78</sup>

The expulsion of the untouchable *Chamars* of Sialkot made their possessions available for incoming refugees and army deserters. A desire to appropriate resources was the key element in the attacks rather than the desire to revenge attacks, or a backlash. The cold-blooded killings and expulsion of destitute untouchables was rationalised on the pretext of security concerns which arose as a result of Sialkot being on the hostile border with Jammu and Kashmir and Gurdaspur. The earlier killings and expulsion of Hindus and Sikhs from the region had been justified by the Muslim sufferings in India. It is also clear that the wider political context for violence was a permissive rather than a motivating factor in such episodes, for the majority of the local population and even the police attempted to assist and protect the untouchable *Chamars*. While there is a proliferation of scholarship on the impact of

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<sup>78</sup> Sialkot District Police Record, thana Shakargarh, FIR no. 165, 27 December 1947.

partition that highlights the differing experience of refugees, such aftermath of partition for the subaltern class rarely finds its way into scholarship.

## Conclusion

Both Gujranwala and Sialkot's history of violence confirms recent research which has emphasised that it was planned and politically motivated rather than a temporary madness and religiously inherited. Alongside individual criminals' desire for loot, the violence clearly had a political background and intent. Violence in both cities was linked with the Muslim League's campaign against the Khizr Government, which sought political advantage. It intensified over the cities' uncertain fate in any boundary award and peaked with the announcement of the boundary result.

The case material has revealed different sets of migration. It has provided an incisive analysis of the differing experiences of elite and subaltern classes. The wealthy élites played a key role in anticipatory migration and shifted their capital or assets to safer zones months before the actual partition, while the poor population who lacked resources bore the brunt of the violence.

The cases, which form the source material for the chapters, revealed the involvement of the forces of law and order in wanton destruction and looting and their conspicuous absence and lack of impartiality when they came to deal with the minorities. Further evidence is produced by the fact that when cases and complaints were filed, they were not followed up. The failure to prosecute the guilty encouraged those involved and intensified the violence. The '*hamlahawars*' both in Gujranwala and Sialkot were not only free from the possibility of arrest and prosecution because of the breakdown of administration, but they acted with social approval and most importantly with the connivance of local railwaymen and the complicity of policemen.

The analysis has sought to point out the prime perpetrators of violence in the region. Evidence from Sialkot reveals refugees both as the victims and perpetrators of violence. It has uncovered the terrible fate of untouchable *Chamars* who although they had remained safe from the main wave of partition violence were victimised in the closing months of 1947. It has also identified the criminal role of refugees and army deserters who made some resources available by expelling them on the pretext they were spies in a sensitive and volatile border area. At the same time, the Sialkot case study has revealed that the Jammu violence, which had a backlash effect in the city, was clearly part of a plan by the Dogra-ruled state to ethnically cleanse Muslims. Violence in Sialkot was likewise planned and designed to drive out minorities but not to the same extent. Many individuals engaged in attacks on minorities did not think in these wider terms, but only worried about loot. However their criminal actions could not have happened on such a large scale without the complicity of police and officials.

Until recently, very little specific knowledge was available concerning local level violence at the time of partition. The case material drawn from Gujranwala and Sialkot adds significantly to this with its identification of the role of the *hamlahawars*. The case studies have revealed not only the value of Police Records as a historical source for district level examination of partition violence in the Punjab, but also uncovered new material regarding abduction of women, as well as the conversion of Sikhs at the time of partition and the difficulties in acquiring social acceptability by such new converts. This whole sensitive topic is another under-researched area of partition history. Gujranwala is surely by no means unique with respect to such episodes.

The expulsion of the Hindus and Sikhs in the cities made resources available for incoming refugees. The ways and means by which they were rehabilitated in the



two cities and how they, alongside the locals, filled economic niches that had been left by the Hindus' and Sikhs' departure, or created new ones, will form the focus of the final section of the thesis, beginning with an examination of the situation in Gujranwala.

### **Part III**

#### **Locality and the Aftermath of Partition**

It was the conjuncture of partition and the demands of iron-products after independence of Pakistan which boosted our iron-works trade and manufactures. There was no competition at that time. The government required steel-products because of the stoppage of such material from India.

- The owner of Gujranwala's Climax Steel Limited, 19 December 2008

Who benefited from the migration of Hindus? Those who had experience, skill, information and family background (working in sporting goods industry)... Look at the Sublime Industry... Father of the owner of this big enterprise had worked in the city's oldest firm the Uberoi Sports Goods Limited.

- A trustee of Sialkot's Uberoi Co-operative Sports Goods Society, 21 January 2007

### **Aftermath of Partition: Case Study of Refugee Resettlement and Development in Gujranwala**

Gujranwala experienced considerable demographic transformation and socio-economic change in the post-1947 period. The city's Hindu and Sikh population was replaced by Muslim migrants from the East Punjab, who by the time of the 1951 Census accounted for over 60 per cent of the city's 120, 852 inhabitants. This chapter attempts to examine the ways in which Gujranwala's local economy and urban landscape changed in the aftermath of partition. It focuses on such questions as the role of refugees as opposed to local Muslim *Lohar* artisans in its development and the extent to which its industrial growth depended on government assistance. The chapter will highlight the complex experience of post-1947 Gujranwala's industrial growth and draw on fresh source material to understand this previously unexplored topic. Oral source material is also utilised to shed light on the role of entrepreneurs who fostered the development of the metal-working industry and informal businesses of hosiery and jewellery of the city. Before elaborating on the contribution of entrepreneurs in the city's development, we turn first to the ways in which Gujranwala adapted to the influx of Muslim refugees from the East Punjab.

### **Partition and Gujranwala's Demographic Transformation and Urban Development**

The majority of Gujranwala's Muslim refugees came from Amritsar, Ludhiana and Patalia. In comparison with localities such as Lyallpur (Faisalabad) which received

the large industrial magnates such as Seghal and Chinioti families, the majority of Gujranwala's refugees came from the middle ranking Amritsar refugee families of Arains, Sheikhs and Pathans. Refugees also came to the city from the artisan Ludhiana families and the *sunhary* (jewellers) operators from Patalia state. The pre-1947 presence of such communities partly explains why so many East Punjabi Muslim refugees sought shelter in the city. A major theme that emerged from the oral narratives of refugees was that family ties and pre-partition business connections played an important role in the resettlement process and the groups of refugees from the same locality lobbied to settle in one place. Moreover, in addition to this, Gujranwala's strategic road and railway connections made it a logical destination for many refugees. The Pakistan state exerted a much smaller influence on urban refugee resettlement than on that of agriculturalist migrants. It sought to settle the latter en bloc in specific *tahsils*, localities and villages. In early September 1947, the Punjab government was actively distributing pamphlets and leaflets in Urdu and Punjabi at Lahore 'concentration relief camps' that over 100,000 migrants from Karnal, Ambala, Amritsar, Jullunder, Patalia and Ludhiana had already settled in Gujranwala. Therefore the refugees from these areas were advised to 'move in' to Gujranwala for their resettlement.<sup>1</sup> By the end of March 1948, a memo of the Ministry of Refugee and Rehabilitation reported that around 400,000 refugees had been resettled and allotted over 311,800 acres of land abandoned by Hindus and Sikhs in the district.<sup>2</sup>

The refugees in Gujranwala town, the district headquarters, came from a variety of backgrounds, which included landowners, village menials, petty shopkeepers and artisans, as well as a few upper class families who flew from Delhi.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 5 September 1947, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Policy and Progress of Rehabilitation of Muslim Refugees in the Urban Areas of Punjab up to 31 March, 1950, The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, File no. B.50-20/CF/50, p. 7, Appendix A, NDC.

The poor refugees who did not have any entitlement to property claims still settled in the city because of its employment opportunities. Many initially laboured in Gujranwala's grain and fruit *mandis* (markets), construction works, transport and catering businesses and, subsequently, formed much of the labour for the city's emerging industrial expansion. Overall, the urban refugees numbered in the city over 82,000 by the end of 1947. In addition to the East Punjab Muslim refugees, a large number of Kashmiri refugees from the Jammu and Kashmir region also arrived in Gujranwala. In early February 1948, there were over 9,000 refugees in the city's four camps<sup>3</sup> and their concentration was to increase threefold by the following year as the Kashmiri refugees from Mansehra, Wah and Kala camps started 'pouring in' because many of their relatives had already arrived in the city.<sup>4</sup>

Accommodation was scarce because for every two outgoing non-Muslims, at least three Muslim refugees came into Gujranwala. Over-concentration of refugees in the city created a big administrative problem for the district authority. Wealth and personal connections were very important not only in assisting the migration process and deciding destination but also for the post-migration resettlement. A clear example of this is the settlement of wealthy members of Kazim Shah's family in one of the Civil Lines' biggest evacuated house. Although Kazim Shah flew from Delhi to Lahore and then drove to Gujranwala in August, his father in the weeks before actual partition had already sent the female family members to Gujranwala. He provides a first-hand account of utilising pre-existing connections for the speedy process of resettlement. 'My father had been district judge in Gujranwala sometimes before partition. Therefore he knew the city and its people very well. He had many friends and connections in the city. Even before our arrival, one of his friends had already

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<sup>3</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 10 February 1948, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 21 August, 1956, p. 3.

arranged accommodation in the Civil Lines'.<sup>5</sup> Corruption as well as nepotism was important factors in the speedy settlement of refugees. Stories of 'making money' from the refugees were occasionally reported by the local press. The Urdu daily *Inquilab* admitted on 4 January 1948, for example, 'several malpractices' involving the Gujranwala rehabilitation staff.<sup>6</sup> Such instances are emerging in first hand testimonies of refugees not only in Gujranwala, but in localities across the subcontinent.

The refugee experience was frequently not just a matter of a single dislocation, but years of upheaval and moving from place to place. Many thousands of Muslim refugees from Gujranwala were persuaded to relocate to Sindh for 'better arrangements' for their resettlement. The first 'Muhajir Train', amid balloons, bouquets and green Muslim League flags, carried over 4,000 refugees from Gujranwala to Sindh on 9 March 1948.<sup>7</sup> While some spent years moving from one place to another in search of stability, others quickly occupied old non-Muslim *mohallas* such as Gobindgargh, Baghbanpura and Nanakpura. Most of the refugees submitted 'claims' for compensation, but for some it often seemed an arbitrary decision rather than one based on factual evidence. Subsequently, such false claims created a huge problem, when the actual task of planned permanent resettlement finally commenced. The Gujranwala Majilas Insar-o-Muhajir, set up in April 1948, tried to solve some issues of relating to 'illegal occupation' in the city, but overall it had little success. A decade later, there were still problems of illegal occupation, as is evidenced in a 1958 decision of Gujranwala's civil judge, in which over 2,000 such 'fictitious claims' were 'disallowed'. The decision eventually led the police to 'forcefully eject' the refugee families from property and houses they had occupied

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Kazim Shah, Civil Lines Gujranwala, 27 January 2007.

<sup>6</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 4 January 1948, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) 10 March 1948, p. 6.

since partition.<sup>8</sup> On several occasions, refugees came into conflict with local residents as well as with the law and the police.

### **Gujranwala Satellite Scheme**

The refugee overcrowding led the state to build new settlements. The Gujranwala Satellite Scheme was one of the state-developed colonies for the settlement of refugees. It started in 1950 on the south-west side of the city at Daska Road. It initially covered an area of 247 acres that was bounded on the north by village Khokher Key, on the south by the city canal, on the east village Shamushabad, on the west *mohalla* Ram Basti of Gujranwala. The scheme comprised hundreds of plots ranging from 20 to 5 *marlas* in size. Each area was earmarked for more than one type of housing that fell into A, B, C or E category. Block A, consisting of 147 acres, was designed an 8-marla house, Block B of 819 acres comprised a 14-marla plot, and 375 acres Block E was consisted a 7-marla plot. Block C of 534 acres measured between 5-9 *marla* and a large part was designed for commercial activity. Initially an amount of Rs 803,916 was allocated for the basic lay out of the area.<sup>9</sup>

Upper middle class refugees who had higher claims to compensation bought most of the plots. The allottees could pay in monthly instalments. Loans for the construction of houses were also provided by the government; they were given on low interest rates and were repayable in 20 years. Some wealthy allottees had built houses by the mid-1950s. By that time, there were still few civic facilities for those who had settled in the satellite town. The ‘plight’ of the satellite town’s residents is evidenced from a report of a correspondent of the *Pakistan Times* on 22 December 1956, ‘even after moving after two years, there is no school, no street lights, and no park and

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<sup>8</sup> *Civil and Military Gazetteer* (Lahore) 10 July, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Gujranwala Hosing and Property Department Record Office, File No, 32, (Model Town Office, Gujranwala).

children had to go far for schooling'.<sup>10</sup> Gujranwala Satellite town was primarily designed to meet the standard of the rich and upper middle classes. Many who could not afford to build houses sold their plots to local residents. By the end of 1956 a 'notice' was served to the allottees, by the Gujranwala Housing and Physical Planning Department, either to complete the construction in a period of two years or face the 'cancellation of allotment' afterwards.<sup>11</sup> This deadline led many allottees to sell their 'claim plots' to local residents. In many instances, well-off locally established Sheikhs, Arians and Kashmiris were the principal beneficiaries. At that time the price for a 7-*marla* plot was Rs 1,879.

In September 1962, the satellite town was transferred to the Municipal Corporation Committee Gujranwala for 'civic management'. A series of correspondence and directives was exchanged among the Rehabilitation Ministry, the Gujranwala Housing and Physical Planning Department and the Municipal Corporation. This afforded opportunities for legal disputes over ownership involving locals who had occupied unconstructed plots. Gujranwala police department utilised this opportunity and occupied a big two *kanals* plot of the migrant family of Kazim Shah (the interview cited earlier in this chapter) and set up a police *choki* (station) over it. Subsequently, as late as in 1982, the police department had to pay over Rs 80,000 for compensation to the allottee on the order of the High Court.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from the upper class Gujranwala Satellite Town, low-cost housing schemes were designed to have one-room, two-bedrooms and single-storey and double-storey three-room flats. A D-type colony in the extension of Gujranwala Satellite Town was started in 1956 and initially covered over twenty acres the south of the Chaman Shah Cemetery. These 3-*marla* design plots were slowly developed

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<sup>10</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 22 December, 1956, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 13 December, 1956, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Kazim Shah versus State, Gujranwala Hosing and Property Department, File No. 32.



throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>13</sup> This D-type colony stands in stark contrast to Gujranwala Satellite Town sites. Its streets are narrow, with small cramped apartments, open garbage lots and unauthorized additions to the apartments for extra space. This poorly constructed and planned colony was exclusively built for the settlement of Kashmiri refugees, over 25,000 of whom were still sheltering in the city's makeshift accommodations in 1956.<sup>14</sup> The first phase of flats was allocated to those Kashmiri refugees whose 'claims' had been cleared by the government of Azad Kashmir. Many without any claims had to house themselves in illegal squatter settlements over the years. Subsequently the allotment of the colony was opened to other sets of migrants.

The failure of urban planning to absorb the rapid influx of population into Gujranwala has led to the growth of a large network of sprawling *katchi abadis*, or informal and illegal squatter settlements, located in the outer suburbs. The largest of these are the so-called two Kashmiri colonies in the city. The unabated rise in Gujranwala's population, (approximately 1,132,509 in 1998), has added many more localities around the so-called original refugee colonies. Its annual population growth rate at over 7 per cent is the highest for any major city in the country. In addition to the partition migrants, there has been a continuous influx of workers seeking job opportunities in its manufacturing and commercial centres.

### **Partition and Gujranwala's Economic Development**

Gujranwala's industry has developed dramatically since independence from its small beginnings during the colonial period. It is now one of the most important industrial cities of Punjab, and is playing a significant role in Pakistan's economic growth.

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<sup>13</sup> Gujranwala Housing and Property Department, File No. 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 21 August, 1956, p. 3.

There were over 6,000 small and medium entrepreneurs and 25,000 cottage-industries of diverse nature operating in the city in 2002, with an annual export of around \$300 million.<sup>15</sup> The city's main economic activity has centred on small scale manufacturing of textiles and made up steel products, sanitary ware/fittings and electrical and light engineering goods. This rapid growth had small beginnings. There were just 39 registered factories in 1947. By 1961, they had already grown to 225.<sup>16</sup>

How can we explain this growth in the immediate post-partition period? Some studies have focused on the impact of refugee labour, skill and capital in the urban regeneration and industrial development of different cities and towns of Punjab.<sup>17</sup> Others have stressed the influence of caste and family background on entrepreneurial manifestation and success.<sup>18</sup> To what extent was this a significant factor in Gujranwala? The new sources uncovered by this research reveal that there were a range of complex factors at work in Gujranwala's post-independence industrial growth. Many of contemporary Gujranwala's metal-working and light engineering industries developed out of iron-works which were begun in the colonial era by the artisan community of *Lohars* (iron-smiths). This community monopolised the sector during its earlier years. The situation is somewhat different in the city's two other important industrial and commercial sectors; namely, the hosiery and jewellery trades. Research involving in-depth interviews with owners and workers, and extensive

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<sup>15</sup> Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce Record Office, File No, xxii, p. 7, Civil Lines, Gujranwala

<sup>16</sup> Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce, File No. xxi, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> Sukhpal Singh, 'Refugees as Entrepreneurs: The Case of the Indian Bicycle Industry', *Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3: 1 (1994), pp. 81-96; Ian Talbot's recent work *Divided Cities* on the aftermath of partition has revealed the substantial role of Amritsar Muslim refugee entrepreneurs and artisans in Lahore's post-partition growth of the hosiery and carpet industries. For the impact of refugee labour in the post-1947 development of Lyallpur's textile industry see, Pippa Virdee, *Partition and Locality: Case Studies of the Impact of Partition and Its Aftermath in the Punjab Region 1947-61* (unpublished PhD thesis, Coventry University, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Khalid Nadvi, *Employment Creation in Urban Informal Micro enterprises in the Manufacturing Sector in Pakistan* (New Delhi: ILO-Artepp, 1990); Leighton W. Hazlehurst, *Entrepreneurship and the Merchant Castes in a Punjab City* (Durham: Duke University 1966); K. L. Sharma and Harnek Singh, *Entrepreneurial Growth and Development Programmes in Northern India* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1980).

observation and participation on the shop floor reveals the significant impact of refugee labour, capital and entrepreneurial enterprise in their development. Before examining this aspect of Gujranwala's development, we will first turn to the growth of manufacturing steel products and electrical and light engineering goods, where as we have already noted, the community of entrepreneurial *Lohars* played an important role.

### **The Development of Gujranwala's Iron and Steel Industry**

Gujranwala is the third most important locality in Pakistan for iron and steel production after the major centres of Lahore and Karachi. The steel industry has emerged as an important source of employment-generation and export earnings. There were over 700 stainless steel units functioning in Gujranwala in 2002, with a production of some 5,000 pieces of various metal products daily. The city was at the same time importing around 5,000 tons of steel sheets every month from Japan, China and some European countries. The main manufactures include iron safes, copper, brass, and aluminium utensils, agricultural implements, home electrical appliance, sanitary fittings and small and medium electric transformers.

Central to post-partition Gujranwala's steel industrial success is the presence of a large number of skilled workers of artisan stock. Most of them were traditionally associated with the metal-work trade in colonial India. As has already been discussed in chapter one, the roots of Gujranwala's modern iron and steel industry go back to the colonial era and to the migration into the town of *Lohars* in search of employment. Down to 1947, they monopolised the trade and there is no evidence of any other community engaged in the manufacturing aspect of this industry, although local Hindus played an important role as traders and financiers. Most of the unit-owners'

current occupations are therefore simply extensions of their *Lohari* backgrounds, though in recent years some non-*Lohar* castes have entered this profession and have been very successful.

Many middle-class factory unit owners of Gujranwala regard themselves as labours-turned-proprietors. Many who had begun their life as apprentices in a smithy shop, and worked as labourers and machinists, repairing locks and making small agricultural implement or producers of simple industrial machinery and tools, rose to set up their own workshops and machine tool factories after 1947. Subsequently, some of them diversified their units into related product lines of steel products and electric appliances. In this period, the industrial growth of the city was fuelled initially by the demand for agricultural implements, diesel engines, electric pumps and tractor driven implements, and subsequently by the rising needs of the state and domestic demand for consumer goods. The combined benefits of excellent railway networks and the Grand Trunk Road further ensured a prominent commercial position for the city in the Punjab.

In many ways, the artisans benefited from the opportunities brought by partition. Possessing entrepreneurial skills and practical experience, together with the favourable business environment provided by the government, some of these skilled entrepreneurs managed to mobilise equipment and other resources critical to establishing themselves as independent producers. The business history of Gujranwala's imposing Anwar Mechanical Works and Engineering illustrates this process. The business emerged as one of the biggest electrical and light engineering units in the city in the early 1950s. Its order books included both government and domestic consumers. The enterprise was established by Rafiq Anwar, a *Lohar*, who came to Gujranwala in search of work. In 1944, he joined the Hindu entrepreneur

Ram Gopal Arora's Prabhat Engineering Factory and worked there down to 1947. Arora's migration to India provided his foreman Rafiq Anwar with an opportunity to take over the control of the foundry, as we see from the account given below by his son Khalid.

My family has been in the iron-works since the Mughal Rule. Our entire family moved from a nearby village to the city during the British period. My father and uncle began iron-work in Ram Gopal Arora's Prabhat Engineering. This workshop manufactured various kinds of metal-works such as pipes, hoes and pumps. My father was eventually promoted to the foreman of factory. Ram Gopal Arora fully trusted in my father and this trust enhanced developing good relations between both families. I heard often my father praising the Arora family. We shared sorrow and happiness on special occasions. They joined us during the *Eids* and we joined them for their festivals such as the *Diwalis*. During the 1947 disturbances in Gujranwala, my family protected them, and in particular at the time of introduction of curfew in the city we used to provide dry food and all other support they required. Many weeks before partition, Arora family had migrated from Gujranwala to India and handed over the control of the factory and some of their immoveable property to my father.

After independence, my father and an uncle took over the charge of the industry and resumed steel manufactures. In the meanwhile, the Government allotted this industry to a refugee named Yaqoob from Ambala. He did not know too much about metal-working so he sold out the 'claim' to my father. In the post-partition period, my father bought land at the GT Road and extended the business. He renamed the factory Anwar Mechanical Works. After independence there was a rising demand of the iron-works. My father employed all those artisans who had been working with Arora. Many of them eventually set up their own independent workshops. Some of them have emerged much more successful than us.<sup>19</sup>

The account not only demonstrates the anticipatory migration of the Arora family but also reveals how a worker benefited from the departure of his employer. Initially he took over the charge of factory and subsequently bought it from a refugee. In the post-independence period, the Anwar Mechanical Works grew to become the largest integrated foundry in the region, manufacturing such items as electric motors,

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Khalid Anwar, Gujranwala, 24 January 2007.

power pumps, engines, structurals, machine tools, cycles and power looms. Subsequently, this small-scale industry successfully diversified into the production of ceiling fans. Gujranwala's well-known pioneering 'Super Asia Fan' belonged to the Anwar Mechanical Works which not only fulfilled household consumption but also state needs. The rising empire of Anwar Mechanical Works was subsequently plagued by family disputes with each brother establishing his own separate unit. Experience of working in the Anwar Works was utilised by former employees who used their technical expertise in machine tools manufacture to go on and establish giant ventures of their own such as the Faizey, Master and Fasial.

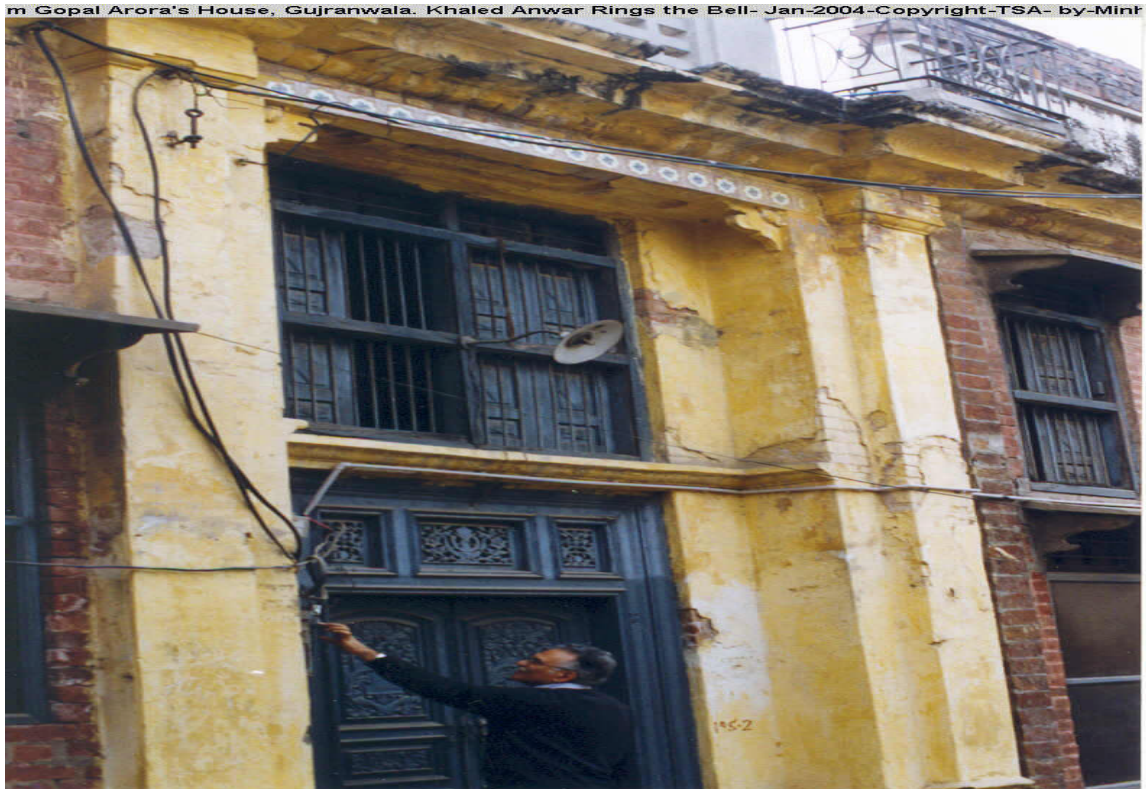
The only other pre-partition unit comparable to the Anwar Mechanical Works is the Climax Engineering Private Limited of Gujranwala. This foundry has established itself as one of the most successful manufactures in the small mechanical and engineering sectors in the region. The paid up capital of the company was worth Rs 33.12 million in 2002.<sup>20</sup> A *Lohar* from a nearby village Gillawala migrated to Gujranwala during the time of the Second World War and began the Climax Engineering Private Limited in 1940 as a small-scale foundry to make cast-iron *moulds* and then started working in the utensil units before moving into manufacturing machine tools and electric appliances. He gradually began making machines and built a workshop to assemble them into lathes, oil expellers and diesel engine. The Climax saw rapid growth in the post-partition era, manufacturing electric appliances and machine tools. The owner of Climax told me during the course of an interview that 'it was demands of iron-products after independence of Pakistan which boosted our iron-works trade and manufacturing. There was no competition at that

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<sup>20</sup> This reference was taken from the Climax Engineering Record Office, Gujranwala.



Wealthy Kazim Shah flew from New Delhi to Lahore and then arrived in Gujranwala in 1947. His family was allotted the former residence of Banarasi Shah in Gujranwala



Khalid Anwar, the owner of Anwar Mechanical Works, whose father took over the control of Gopal Arora's Iron-workshop in Gujranwala, rings the bell of Arora's House in Gujranwala (Courtesy Khalid Anwar)





Metal Works in a Gujranwala factory



Aluminium Roller being prepared in a Gujranwala iron-workshop



time. The government required steel products because of the stoppage of such material from India'.<sup>21</sup>

In 1951, the Climax industry took off in terms of a wide range of products of electric and heavy metal to fulfil the needs of state institutions such as the Pakistan Railway and Military Engineering Services. In 1956, Climax Engineering initialled its own electric transformers and started manufacturing the Gujranwala Electric Motors. Such new installations not only boosted the business the company but also at the same it started manufacturing heavy transformers with the collaboration of the English Electric Company.<sup>22</sup> It not only fulfilled local demand for home electrical appliances but also emerged as a major supplier of heavy electric transformers to the leading government and semi-government organizations.

### **Government Assistance**

Much academic attention has been devoted to the Pakistan state's fiscal incentives to large scale migrant entrepreneurial industrialists residing in Karachi largely drawn from Gujarati-speaking Khoja and Memon refugee communities from Kathiawar Bombay. They comprised a part of the country's well-known 'Twenty-two Families'.<sup>23</sup> Mohammad Waseem has, however, pointed out that government support was also given at an earlier stage to East Punjab capitalist migrants such as the Seghal, Arain and Chinioti families by such influential bureaucrats and politicians

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Qayyum Ahmad, Gujranwala, 19 December 2008.

<sup>22</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 18 September 1956, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Feroz Ahmed, 'The Twenty-Two Families and the Rural Gods', *Pakistan Forum*, Vol. 3, 12 (September 1973), pp. 22-3. Some economists such as Tahir therefore term this phase a 'refugee economy' as the entire government apparatus was engaged in the task of rehabilitation. Tahir Pervez, *Pakistan: an Economic Spectrum* (Lahore: Arslan Publications, 1974), p. 4. Also see J. R. Andrus; Azizali F. Mohammed; Mohammed Afzal, 'State and Private Enterprise in Pakistan', *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 20, 7 (April 1951), p. 61; Jafer Mehdi, 'Private Enterprise and Industrial Development', in *Industrial Development in Pakistan 1947-1975* (Lahore: Progress Research Council, 1976), p. 10.

from this same background as Ghulam Muhammad and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali.<sup>24</sup> Little has been written about the state's support for the restoration of normal commercial activity in Gujranwala, yet it is clear that the West Punjab Department of Industries made considerable efforts to reopen abandoned factories and shape Gujranwala's industrial landscape. The need for credit was pointed out in a 1948 Punjab Department of Industries survey of small scale manufacturing not only in Gujranwala, but also in Wazirabad and Nizamabad. The government's response was to encourage self-employment by financing artisanal manufacturing activities. As part of its initial strategy, the government extended its credit to those who had basic skills to help generate a large number of small private firms in sectors such as metal working and machine-tools. The bigger units such the Anwar Mechanical Works and the Climax Company had been able to obtain credit from the specialised financing agencies such as the Small Finance Corporation. Gujranwala's industrial clusters were regarded as important not only in order to meet government requirements for steel and engineering products but to generate employment. The Anwar Mechanical Works was at the forefront fulfilling the demand for electric agricultural implements, while the Climax Company remained a major supplier of electric transformers and other steel-products to the leading state departments.

The government not only provided start up capital, but it also helped the more established firms in terms of technical assistance by building industrial estates. For example, in 1960, with the financial assistance of the International Development Association, an affiliate of the World Bank, the West Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation set up two industrial estates for small and medium-scale

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<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Waseem, 'Urban Growth and Political Change at the Local Level: The Case Faisalabad City, 1947-75', in Akbar S. Ahmed (ed.), *The Social Sciences Perspective* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 207-28.

industries at both Gujranwala and Sialkot at the cost of \$ 6.5 million.<sup>25</sup> Another manifestation of the state's policy of encouraging the industrial development of backward areas was tax concessions. This support was introduced in April 1959 and the 'tax holidays' ranged from two to six years. In the 1960s, the easier procurement of raw materials-billets, ingots and re-rolling scrap and the appearance of local furnaces in the following decade played a significant role in the growth of steel mills.<sup>26</sup>

As Gujranwala's industrial sector expanded, it began to attract entrepreneurs seeking to make their fortunes. The successful entrepreneurs served as a resource and role-model for others, encouraging them to migrate to the city and invest in urban manufacturing. Such rural to urban migration, mainly by *Lohars*, increased considerably in the post-independence era, although not always with such spectacular entrepreneurial results. A parallel is the dominance of the artisan *Lohar* community in Sialkot's surgical instruments industry and the *Ramgarhias*' and *Viswakarmis*' key role in Ludhiana's development in the field of light engineering and machine tool industries.<sup>27</sup>

The expansion in the metal-working industry had multiplier effects as it played a dominant role in the growth of a burgeoning hosiery industry, with the manufacturing of power-loom, machines and other tools and equipment. This can be seen in the fact that the number of hand-loom in the city increased from 11 in 1947

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<sup>25</sup> 'International Bank for Reconstruction and Development', *International Organization*, Vol. 17, 1 (winter, 1963), pp. 270-1.

<sup>26</sup> Anita Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>27</sup> For Sialkot's Surgical Instrument Cluster see, Khalid Nadvi, 'Social Networks in Urban Punjab: A Case Study of the Sialkot Surgical Instrument Cluster', in S. M. Naseem and Khalid Nadvi (eds.), *The Post-Colonial State and Social Transformation in India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 142-178. For Ludhiana's industry see, Meenu Tewari, 'Intersectoral Linkages and the Role of the State in Shaping the Conditions of Industrial Accumulation: A Study of Ludhiana's Manufacturing Industry', *World Development*, Vol. 26, 8 (1998), pp. 1387-1411.

to over 1,000 power-loom in the mid-1961.<sup>28</sup> The substantial concentration of skilled refugee workers in the city provided the basis for expansion of the hosiery industry. We shall turn now to a consideration of the role of refugee labour, skill and capital in the industrial growth of the city, asking whether it was as significant as in other West Punjab cities such as Lyallpur.

### **Refugee Entrepreneurs and Gujranwala's Economic Development**

Gujranwala's hosiery trade, unlike the metal-working industry, is largely a post-independence development in which refugees played a crucial role. The hosiery manufacturing sector is largely situated in the residential areas of Guru Nanak Pura, Gubind Gargh and Garjakh. These are significantly almost exclusively refugee neighbourhoods. However, most of the sale points of hosiery products are located in Thatyara Wali Galli in the congested area of Sialkoti gate of Gujranwala. There are about 500 floor shops and this number is constantly rising. This research on the previously under-studied hosiery industry in Gujranwala reveals that it is dominated by migrants from East Punjab, many of whom are Ansari from Ludhiana. They reside in close proximity and are also related as neighbours and as kin, and such kinship bonds are socially reproduced through socio-economic interactions and intermarriages. This is recognised by both entrepreneurs and workers, in the commonly used expression '*hum sub rashtaidar*' (we all are relatives) from Ludhiana.

What enabled these refugee families to become successful entrepreneurs in the hosiery industry? One of the most important elements was their previous experience and skill in the industry prior to migration from India. Muslims dominated the workforce in the main centres of textile and hosiery manufacturing in colonial Punjab,

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<sup>28</sup> Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce, File xxi, p. 22.

namely Amritsar, Jullundur and Ludhiana although the factory ownership rested with the Hindu commercial castes.<sup>29</sup> Partition refugees from Ludhiana and to a lesser extent Amritsar and Jullundur settled in large numbers in Gujranwala. Here they utilised pre-existing family ties and business connections, and transferred their skills to the city's textile and hosiery economy. This process can be illustrated through the case of the city's well-known Muhajir Cloth House.

Muhajir Cloth House was pioneered by an Ansari family that migrated from Ludhiana in 1947. The family business has grown from small beginnings to become one of the biggest cloth wholesale operators and dealers in Gujranwala. The owner of Muhajir Cloth spoke about the way he used his previous skill and experience of working in the hosiery trades in Ludhiana to set up a new venture in Gujranwala.

We had an ample of experience in hosiery business before arriving in Gujranwala 1947. We owned a big cloth shop in Ludhiana city. We came in Gujranwala because one of my father's friends to whom we used to supply silk cloth belonged to this place. So instead of going anywhere, we chose to settle in Gujranwala. Many of our relatives then settled in Gujranwala. In the early days of independence, there was not much competition and there were a lot of business opportunities and demands for the products. We brought some money with us and soon after settling down in the city we set up a hand-loom at home. I can confirm that our family was the pioneer of cotton spinning in Gujranwala. Some people from Ludhiana worked with us and many others learnt skill from my father. He had many trainees. Our entire family and all relatives are in this business. Some own powerlooms and shops, while others deal with the wholesale supply of yarn.<sup>30</sup>

Haji Mohammad Ismaili, the owner of Ludhiana Hosiery, provided a similar first hand account of his business activities. He was also a cloth-cum-supplier dealer before partition. Previous experiences and skills in Ludhiana assisted him in seeking new niches in Gujranwala. Though he started on a small scale, later on four of his sons opened separate shops in the city's hosiery market. He recalls:

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<sup>29</sup> A. K. Luthra, *Impact of Partition on Industries*, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Akmal Ali, Gujranwala, 22 January, 2007.

My family had been in the hosiery trade for many generations. My father was a cutter-master in Ludhiana. After partition we were allotted a house nearby the Gujranwala Islamic High School. My father started garments business in 1948. Initially it was very hard to set up the trade. Apart from our own saving, we were lent some money by our relatives. We first set up a hand-loom in our house. Now my four brothers, four nephews and many other relatives own their shops and trade of ready-made cloths and powerlooms.<sup>31</sup>

Jabar Mohammad provides a third personal testimony of the importance of the Ludhiana connection in Gujranwala's hosiery trade. After migration he was allotted a house in *mohalla* Gobind Gargh in the inner city. Apart from his technical skills, he utilised previous connections from Ludhiana to set up successful hosiery business in Gujranwala. Initially, he did different menial jobs and then worked in the hosiery trade, stitching merchandise. He owned two shops in the hosiery bazaar of the city. He recalls:

Ludhiana was famous not only in the Punjab but all over the India for its cloth and hosiery industries. I used to operate a Hindu hand-loom so that it was easy for me to work in this field. I saved some money and also had brought a little money with me from India. I set up a handloom in my house and we members of the family worked there. The days we started handloom business in Gujranwala, it was difficult to get raw material such as yarn and dying synthesis. I knew many people from Ludhiana in Lyallpur and used to go there every week and brought raw material of yarn and silk thread. I used to get yarn from one of my hometown acquaintances and, in return, used to sell finished goods to him. It was a relation of trust. He provided me yarn in advance without money. This relation was based on trust. Afterwards, I started to supply yarn and other related material to the local manufactures. This was less tedious and more profitable. Finally I ended up a successful wholesale dealer.<sup>32</sup>

Another Ludhiana migrant Maqbol Ahmad provides a similar story. He started a garment trade many years after partition. Initially he worked for sometime in Sabazi *Mundi* and afterwards with some family members' help entered the hosiery trade.<sup>33</sup> Majeed Baba's family also brought with them from Ludhiana the necessary

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Haji Mohammad Ismaili, Gujranwala, 22 January 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Jabar Mohammad, Gujranwala, 27 February 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Maqbol Ahmad, Gujranwala, 23 February 2007.

experience and skill to succeed in the hosiery trade. This comes out clearly in the extract below from a long interview about their business life.

My father owned a small hosiery shop in [Ludhiana's] Sayed-da-Chowk and my uncle owned a shop in Kampri. Hosiery is our family profession and we have been doing this for ages. One of the reasons to come to Gujranwala was our business contact here. Before partition, we used to supply hosiery products to uncle Shafiq of Gujranwala. He used to visit us in Ludhiana once a month. After partition, sometime in September, we arrived in Gujranwala and the first six months stayed in uncle Shafiq's house. He was a nice man and helped us a lot in the settlement. We were allotted a house in *mohalla* Dhulay. First of all, we set up a handloom at home. From the start, our business was very successful as uncle Shafiq was very good in marketing and many times he was able to get advance orders. Subsequently, we for the first time set up a powerloom in Gujranwala and began to supply hosiery products on a large-scale. At that time, there was a big demand for garments. The Anwar [Mechanical and Engineering] Works set up this powerloom for us. Now we own over two dozen powerlooms. Now we not only deal with the wholesale trade [of hosiery garments] but also have opened three shops in the city. Most of our hosiery products such as jersey and sweaters for children and adults go to the Northern Western Areas and Baluchistan. Pathans [from NWFP] often come and purchase the products in the wholesale. Hosiery trade in many ways is a seasonal trade. Now my four sons own their garments shops and one of them is a big dealer of garments.<sup>34</sup>

This account suggests how pre-partition businesses links were vital not only in the settlement process, but also to start up a business in a new environment. The other factor that emerges is the demand for the hosiery products. The availability of locally assembled hand-loom and power-loom machines was another contributing factor for the rapid development of this industry. Iqbal Mohammad whose family came from Ludhiana and live now in Gujranwala's satellite D-type colony, also provided a first hand account of his family's experience of developing a successful business in the city. Like the other respondents he also was assisted in its creation because he possessed pre-partition trade connections.

My father owned a *tanga* (horse-cart) in Ludhiana and mainly got labour of delivering hosiery raw material and products one place to other. He knew almost

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Majeed Baba, Gujranwala, 23 February 2007.

all the hosiery traders of the city. We arrived in Lahore first [and then shifted to Gujranwala]. In fact, my father's many acquaintances either settled in Lyallpur, Jhang and Gujranwala. We opted for the latter. We lived hand to mouth in the first few years after partition. I was 13 at the time and started work as a helper in a Kashmiri's *tonga*. After sometime, I bought my own *tonga*. Apart from commuting passengers, I started delivering raw materials and goods to the hosiery traders. Sometime later, I began supplying wholesale yarn and this business was very successful. I knew many people who were engaged in this business. I used to get the products and paid money the next months. They trusted me because they knew my father from Ludhiana.<sup>35</sup>

The account highlights that even a poor individual could possess valuable social capital as a result of personal contacts. Previously 'being known' was an important element for enhancing 'trust' and developing a business for a *tonga wala* in the new opportunities after 1947. Community support from people who came from similar locality and ethnic background was another way to deal with the exigencies of resettlement and starting of a trade. Some of the people and employers acted as local 'kind man' and patrons and cared for their kinsfolk or migrants from their hometown. For example, Haji Sheikh Taj Palu, the owner of United Hosiery Factory, is well-known as '*onn ka badshah*' ('king of cotton') in Gujranwala's hosiery community. He was not only a pioneer in the hosiery trade in Gujranwala, but also encouraged many people from Ludhiana to set up the trade. A migrant hosiery dealer, by the name Maqbool, explained: 'Taj Palu has always been willing to help Ludhiana people out financially and he is a real patron for everyone who is in need in Gujranwala, and not only for those who work in his factory'.<sup>36</sup> Taj Palu began from a very small shop and shortly emerged as one of the biggest hosiery businessmen of Gujranwala. His son Sheikh Umar declared during the course of an interview:

My family came from Ludhiana's *mohalla* of Kocha Palwan. My father owned many handlooms in Ludhiana. In Gujranwala my father set up a hand-loom at home. This was the first loom in the city by any Muhajir. We started from

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Iqbal Mohammad, Gujranwala, 22 February 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Maqbool, Gujranwala, 23 February 2007.



scratch. Now we own this factory and employ more than dozen labourers. They are all from Ludhiana. Many of them had worked with us [previously in Ludhiana]. My father helped them and provided them with employment when they had nothing to do. They often would come to my father and offer their stuff of yarn and silk materials they fetched with them during migration. [Also] My father would go to the Lahore Londa bazaar and purchase old jerseys, sweaters and other silk materials. We used to un-knit them and then with new design knitted them and sold in good price. My father also used to go to a friend at Mian Chono (Multan) to buy cotton yarn. Our success in this trade is totally based on self-survival; there is nothing due to the assistance of government.<sup>37</sup>

It is not only refugees from Ludhiana, however, who utilised pre-existing skills and business contacts to start up enterprises from scratch. Similar cases can be found amongst migrants from Amritsar. In the case of Gujranwala's Amritsar Hosiery business they even perpetuated the name of their former home in the firm's title. The owner of the Munir Hosiery was a *taypa laganay wala* (cloth-printer) in Amritsar before partition. The fact that he had distant relatives in the city encouraged him to settle in Gujranwala. Soon after partition, the family set up a handloom in an allotted house and began knitting *chaader*, bed-sheets and *kash*. Now almost the entire extended family is involved in this business. Some own handlooms, while others possess shops in the city.

Oral accounts whether from Amritsar or Ludhiana migrants attest to the importance of kinship networks in establishing business activities in Gujranwala. Many of the hosiery traders are relatives connected with each other either through kinship, or are acquaintances because of shared locality (neighbourhood). This is reflected in the use of the term '*hum sam hak ha*' (we all are same) on the shop floor. Some are raw material suppliers, while others operate the shops and own the power-looms. Most power-loom owners depend entirely on the yarn dealer agents of

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Sheikh Umar, Gujranwala, 17 February 2007.

spinning and composite mills at Lyallpur and Karachi. Nonetheless, in these communities, like in any other, cooperation and support coexist with gossip, competition and rivalry. A few better-off hosiery makers, who run larger units, have purchased power-looms and machines following a trend towards mechanised hosiery. In a few cases, they competed effectively in the cloth business with local Sheikhs, who previously had dominated the textile trade. Apart from the inner city, a large and increasing number of hosiery units can today be found also in the locations of Model Town, Muslim Town, Dulay, Checherwali and Garjakh. However, there are only a handful of mechanised hosiery units and most of the yarn hosiery in the area is entirely manual operation.

### **Refugees and the Case of the Jewellery Trade**

Some of Gujranwala's most famous refugee entrepreneurs, mainly from Patiala, are associated with the city's jewellery business. The material presented in this section, based on semi-structured interviews with 32 jewellery operators, 25 service providers and 4 Sarafa Anjuman leaders, testifies to their economic success. Gujranwala's jewellery industry is informal, unorganised and unregulated. A significant proportion of the trade is concentrated in the small alleys of the old city, where many Hindus and Sikhs lived previously and which were then occupied by the Muslim refugees. The Sarafa bazaar in the Sialkoti gate is one such area. A number of interviews were conducted in this locality.

As first hand accounts reveal, one of the reasons why refugees' set up this labour intensive small business was the ancestral skill and experience they brought to Gujranwala. In addition to this, community ties were crucially important in establishing a trade which depended so greatly on trust. Refugee families from Patiala

thus brought with them skills and social capital. In many instances, they started up their trade with the gold they had managed to secrete during their perilous migration. Abdul Saleem, the proprietor of the city's well-reputed Patiala Jeweller, explained to me during the course of an interview that his family had been in the jewellery business for several generations. Prior to partition, his father Hafiz Abdul Sattar owned two big jewellery shops in Patiala's Sherawala Darwaza. The royal family members of the Maharaja of Patiala Princely State were their regular customers. Abdul Saleem's family had trade connections and kinship links in Gujranwala and that was one of the reasons why the family had migrated to the city. The family began the jewellery business as a small scale concern in 1950. Today it has extended to many shops and outlets. The following account of the head of the family, Abdul Saleem, has provided details of how the family utilised the previously acquired skills, experiences and capital to establish a business in Gujranwala.

Our family had been in jewellery making trade for many generations. My father was a well-known jewellery artisan in Patiala. We possessed two shops in Patalia and employed 4 artisans. We were six brothers, five worked in the shops. We not only used to supply jewellery to the regular customers but the families of the Princely State of Patalia were also our regular customers. Sometimes, my father would visit the Maharaja of Patiala's palace on the demand of the royal family and he made ornaments on the demand of the royal women. My father was a prudent man and well aware about the 1947 disturbances. Sometime before partition, he shifted gold to Gujranwala where one of our distant relatives lived. He made the right decision as afterwards during the 1947 disturbances some Sikhs of the state looted our shops and houses.

After arriving in Gujranwala, we did not start proper business for many years, but the people who knew us from Patiala often came to our house. Some of them wanted to sell their gold, while others wanted to make up new ones for the marriages of their daughters. From our home we started the business and within a few years it became very successful. We employed some of the artisans who used to work for us in Patalia. Some of them are now well-know jeweller traders of the city.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Abdul Saleem, Gujranwala, 5 March 2007.

The owner of Guffar Patiala Jeweller, by the name of Abdul Guffar (a cousin of Abdul Saleem), operates one of the most successful shops in the Sarafa bazaar. His family was associated with jewellery business before partition. He told me that his two brothers, cousins and an uncle were also associated with this business.

Many Muslims of Patiala were artisans of jewellery. My father was a well-know jewellery artisan in Patiala. During the 1947 partition riot, some Sikhs killed my five brothers and a sister. My father and I remained safe and carried with us some gold to Gujranwala. We first arrived in Lahore and then proceeded to Gujranwala because my father-in-law lived here. We were allotted a shop in Sialkoti gate. We opened a shop in 1950 and began from scratch. My father in-law helped me set up the business. We brought with us a large amount of gold from Patiala. We would buy also 'old gold' from refugee families and re-sold in new shape and design. A jewellery trade relies on trust. You cannot trust others in this business. Therefore only the artisans who worked with us in Patalia were employed again in Gujranwala in polishing and inscribing. Now my sons control the business.<sup>39</sup>

The above accounts reveal three core factors. First, they show how the refugees despite killings and disturbance were able to carry gold to build their future life. The first interview also reveals that some Muslims like the documented cases of Hindu traders anticipated the disturbances and took measures in advance of August 1947 to move property and possessions. Second, they reveal a feature which is common not just to Gujranwala, but to other locality- based studies of partition and its aftermath that refugees were best able to restart their businesses when they possessed pre-existing skills and contacts. Third, they reveal that fellow migrants could act as trusted employees, suppliers or valuable customers for refugee businessmen.

Apart from the Patalia house of jewellers, two groups of Amritsar refugee jewellers, by the names of Amritsar Jeweller and Fathagarh Jeweller, control the main business in Gujranwala. Haji Mohammed Hassan, the owner of Amritsar Jeweller, migrated from Amritsar in August 1947. As it increasingly seems to be the case, this

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Abdul Ghafar, Gujranwala, 2 March 2007.

location was chosen because of the presence of distant relatives, one of whom had only arrived a month earlier. Hajji Mohammad Hussian opened a shop in partnership with a friend. Currently the jewellery trade business is run by his three sons. The eldest son Rana Amjad Khan took over the Amritsar Jeweller, Fadia Hussian opened a shop in his own name and the youngest son Rana Akthar Iqbal opened the New Karan Jeweller.

Another Amritsar refugee family own the Asim Jewellery. They now reside in Satellite town. The head of the family business recalls its history in the extract below.

My whole family are associated with jewellery business. My four brothers, uncles and all other relatives are linked with this occupation. My father was an artisan of jewellery in Amritsar. We brought gold and tools when we migrated to Gujranwala. The main reason to move to Gujranwala was that some of our distant relatives lived here before partition. Many years after partition we did not have any shop in Gujranwala. My father was doing jewellery business at our house. Later on, I do not remember when, my father was able to rent a shop in Sialkoti Gate and that was the beginning of our business. Now all my brothers had their own shops. About 15 years ago, I bought this shop and shifted my shop from Sarafa bazar to here. The Satellite Town is a posh area; here customers can easily pop in rather than going in the congested Sarafa bazaar.<sup>40</sup>

Most of the jewellers of Gujranwala are related, or had business connections before partition. The operators of Earam Jeweller, Razwan Jeweller, Ghazal Jeweller, Safina Jeweller, Delight Jeweller and many others informed me during the course of interviews that they knew each other before their arrival in Gujranwala in 1947. Many stated that the city's existing trade and jewellery manufacture was the creation of the partition migrants. The business simply did not exist before 1947. There was thus no competition and many opportunities opened for the new arrivals. It is only much more recently that the fierce competition between the Patiala house of jewellers and the Amritsar chain of jewellers has emerged.

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with the owner of Asim Jewellery, Gujranwala, 3 March 2007.

## **Economic Mobility of Refugee Entrepreneurs**

Many refugees, whether they were jewellery operators from Patalia and Amritsar, or hosiery workers and entrepreneurs from Ludhiana, achieved upward economic mobility in Gujranwala through their own efforts, and in particular because they had brought skills and contacts from India. This reality contrasts with the 'official' history that projects a unified effort to rehabilitate the refugees. The personal accounts of refugee entrepreneurs tell a different history of success. Kinship and previously shared community values were one of the sources that led to joint action, co-operation and the success of the migrant community in the hosiery and jewellery trades. All were neighbours, living only a few houses away from each other. This 'sticking together' in a specific locality or *mohalla* was seen as both a symbol and a factor in community success. Refugee businessmen preferred to employ poorer labourers who had also migrated in 1947. The management of both hosiery and jewellery enterprises is of the joint family type and there is no separation of ownership and control in this trade. Most of the key positions are held by the members of family or relatives. In many ways, the refugee traders thus depended mainly upon family members and the migrant community for the operation and success of their business.

Lack of credit was cited as a leading initial constraint by most of the refugee entrepreneurs. Despite state schemes to fund refugee businessmen, the theme which emerges from firsthand accounts is that most of the capital which was raised came from their own family fund. As revealed through interviews, the capital assets which they had carried with them during the migration from India constituted an important source of their investment. The other source was the compensation they received in lieu of their 'claims' of various kinds of immovable property that they had abandoned in India. The state was of course involved in overseeing this process, but

refugees regarded it as part of their 'right'. Therefore again, they tend in interviews to play down any notion of state assistance in their success. Some Patiala refugees started the jewellery business with the gold they carried with them at the time of migration, while some utilised the opportunity to buy the refugees' gold at a low price. The exploitation of needy refugees' selling of their gold assets in the search for economic stability is evidenced from documentary sources. A November 1947 West Punjab Economic Inquiry, for example, reported that the 'bullion dealers' were taking a profit of 22 per cent per a *tola* in the purchasing of 'refugee gold'.<sup>41</sup> Many of those who did not have the occupational specialization or skill to obtain sufficient credit to become small entrepreneurs tended to remain bazaar shopkeepers and small market dealers.

The Pakistan state's agencies such as the Small Finance Corporation were not known to many respondents. This contrasts to the official portrait that the state was providing assistance grants to rehabilitate the refugees. In fact the class that forms the informal sector of Gujranwala presented little influence or lobbying in the upper echelons of the state, as was the case in Karachi or Lyallpur. However, constituting over half of the city's population, the migrant community increasingly influenced Gujranwala's local and municipal levels of the government. The strong sense of community identity is visible in a substantial residential concentration, financial independency and cultural ascendancy. The latter is demonstrated by the establishment of institutions and associations to present and promote advancement. As early as in April 1948, for example, the Gujranwala Muhajir Hosiery Anjuman complained about the 'impracticality' of obtaining cotton yarn and synthetic dyes which were either imported or were produced in large factories in Karachi. Their

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<sup>41</sup> Board of Economic Inquiry West Punjab, Monthly Summery, November 1947, Vol. III, No. 11, p. 6. ST625, O.I.O.C.

representatives criticised the government's attitude towards refugee hosiery traders as 'unjust and brutal'. They demanded the quotas of the import of thread should be 'fixed per city' and the state should subsidise excise taxes.<sup>42</sup> In one way, the selection of Gujranwala as the venue of the 1954 annual general meeting of the All Punjab Joint Stock Textile Federation was the result of successful lobbying by the Gujranwala Mohajir Hosiery Anjuman. Here Gujranwala traders particularly pointed out the difficulties of importing cotton silk yarn. Subsequently they were able to convince the Federation to despatch a representative to Karachi, then the capital of the country, for the issue of import licences for cotton silk yarn to the members of the Gujranwala Muhajir Hosiery Anjuman.<sup>43</sup> Over the years, this and other associations such as Gujranwala Sarafa Anjuman have become the chief instruments through which the city's key businesses pressure the state for benefits and promotion.

The strong presence of pre-existing ties not only influenced the destination of migration, but also assisted in the process of acceptance by the local population. As Sarah Ansari's recent work has revealed, the Urdu-speaking migration in Sindh resulted in ethnic tensions with the local population.<sup>44</sup> Despite the fact the refugees outnumbered the established population in Gujranwala, however, conflict between refugees and local population in the city, as elsewhere in the Punjab, was muted. Even when refugees did not possess pre-existing ties, assimilation was made easier because of a common Punjabi language and cultural proximity. Sheikhs, Arains and Ansaris from East Punjab, for example, who migrated to Gujranwala found fellow *biraderi* members there, even if they did not have however distant family relatives. Tensions may also have been muted because, as we have seen with respect to the Gujranwala

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<sup>42</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 17 April 1948, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Civil and Military Gazetteer* (Lahore) 24 February 1954, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Ansari, *Life After Partition*.





Batala Steel Vessel General Store in Gujranwala's Sialkoti Gate



Guffar Patiala Jewellers in Gujranwala's Sarafa Bazaar

jewellery and hosiery trades, the refugees were not competing with established local businesses, but bringing in new enterprises. Nevertheless, relationships between locals and refugees were based on separation, rather than integration. Refugees had their own clearly defined residential quarters and were unlikely to encourage intermarriage with locals from other *biraderis*. Even those who were economically successful found it difficult to forget their former homes. Hence the establishment of businesses in Gujranwala with such names as Patalia Jeweller, Amritsar Jeweller, Ambala Utensils and Ludhiana Hosiery is just a small way in which memories of the ancestral home in East Punjab is apparent, or has been preserved.

We will now consider whether similar processes were at work as Sialkot coped with its demographic transformation and slowly began an economic recovery after the 1947 dislocation.

### **Aftermath of Partition: Case Study of Refugee Resettlement and Development in Sialkot**

Sialkot experienced serious economic difficulties in 1947. They arose from capital flight, loss of financial expertise in the banking and business sector, and loss of access to markets and raw materials. The city faced a powerful regional competitor in Julundhur in Indian Punjab where capitalist refugees from Sialkot sought to establish a rival sports good industry. Sialkot also now had the locational disadvantage of being situated on the sensitive border with both Kashmir and Indian Punjab. Security worries discouraged new refugee entrepreneurs. The economic dislocation however proved to be ephemeral. With the birth of Pakistan, a new chapter was opened in Sialkot's development. But like the colonial era, it was to build on pre-existing skills and capital development to usher in a rapid period of economic growth. The departure of the Hindu community provided space and new opportunities for Muslim traders and artisans. This chapter will address the important question of how the economic gaps were filled by the indigenous population and the extent to which Sialkot's industrial growth depended on government assistance. The findings draw on fresh source material, and will provide the key to understanding how Sialkot, despite its border handicap and loss of traditional markets as well as raw materials, recovered from its partition- related economic depression to become a thriving industrial town of the region. Before examining Sialkot's urban and industries growth, we shall turn to the ways in which Sialkot dealt with the influx of refugees.

## Refugee Resettlement in Sialkot

What kind of refugee population came to Sialkot? This question is important in understanding both the city's demographic and economic transformation. Though Sialkot received refugees from East Punjab towns and cities, the city was much less successful in attracting refugee entrepreneurs than cities such as Gujranwala, Lahore and Lyallpur. A major constraint was its border position with the attendant security fears. The outgoing Hindus and Sikhs were therefore replaced largely by Kashmiri Muslims from the neighbouring Jammu region. The city with a road and railway connection from Jammu was a logical destination for these refugees. Moreover, many Kashmiris already had kinship and business ties in the city. The Kashmiri refugee population thus not surprisingly became the most visible community in the city.

The process of refugee resettlement in Sialkot dragged on far longer than elsewhere in West Punjab. The delay in resettling the Kashmiri refugees in Sialkot resulted not only from local difficulties and over-concentration, but was rooted in Government policy. The Punjab government's priority for the settlement of 'agreed areas' refugees (from the East Punjab) delayed the rehabilitation process of Kashmiri refugees. Moreover, throughout 1948-49, the city being on the border ballooned with a continued influx of Jammu and Gurdaspur refugees through the Suchetgarh Crossing and Pathankhot- Shakargarh route. For these 'new arrivals', a new Lal Kurthi Camp was set up near the cantonment areas. In April 1949, their numbers reached over 25,000.<sup>1</sup> As relations with India deteriorated, many more arrived despite the introduction of visa restrictions between both neighbours. In addition to refugees who arrived directly, migrants came to Sialkot from elsewhere in Pakistan because they had relatives in the city. In 1949, more than 5,000 refugees from camps at Wah

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<sup>1</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 20 April 1949, p. 5.

(Rawalpindi) and Mansara (Jhelum) were 'ready' to join their relatives in Sialkot.<sup>2</sup> At a time when the authorities were still struggling to accommodate the earlier refugees, these additional arrivals added to the pressure that characterized the resettlement process.<sup>3</sup> By the end of October 1949 an estimated, 200,000 refugees were squatting in camps, evacuee factories and open spaces in Sialkot.<sup>4</sup> The most fortunate occupied properties abandoned by the Hindus and Sikhs. Many others thronged camps, schools and military barracks platforms for many years. The least fortunate were accommodated in the 'most appalling', 'de-humanised' and 'like cattle' circumstances in the premises of evacuee factories. Unhygienic conditions in the factory-camps caused health problems. Many refugees and their children suffered some kind of 'mental and physical pain' in an evacuee rubber factory. Almost all 2,000 refugees in the city's Ganda Singh School caught small-pox.<sup>5</sup>

The continued arrivals placed enormous strains on the district authorities' ability to handle the rehabilitation process, especially since the resettlement of earlier refugees was still hardly underway. The administration lacked the infrastructure to cope. The gravity of the refugee concentration and the difficulty in their resettlement was reflected in the fact that the Sialkot deputy commissioner reported to the Punjab Rehabilitation authority expressing concern that 'the refugees from the [other places] camps must not be sent to Sialkot'.<sup>6</sup> Many refugees were either without shelter or were lodged in unsatisfactory housing and camps. The district authorities also faced

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<sup>2</sup> Maintenance and Resettlement of Jammu and Kashmir Refugees, the Government of Pakistan, File No. B132, 169/CF/ 53, p. 2, NDC.

<sup>3</sup> According to an estimate, by the end of October 1947, nearly 200,000 refugees, given out 115,690 acres, had been settled in Sialkot district. Another 66,339 acres were given on leases. The district rehabilitation officer stated that the district at the maximum could absorb 253,917 people and had 489,296 acres of land for the refugees. *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 31 October 1947.

<sup>4</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 October 1949, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> A.R. Siddiqi, 'Kashmir Refugees: Restore the Refugees', *Civil and Military Gazette's* Sunday Digest (Lahore) 9 October 1949, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, the Government of Pakistan, File no. B50, Appendix C, p. 11, NDC

constant demonstrations and resentment by the different refugee organizations. The Anjuman-i-Muhajireen Jammu was at the frontline for protesting over the authorities' handling of refugee resettlement.<sup>7</sup> The Anjuman was established by the Jammu refugees by the end of December 1947 with Dr Bashir Ahmad, as its president. The organization claimed to speak for all Jammu refugees and saw one of the main tasks as putting pressure on the authorities, calling for quick accommodation and some means of earning a living. Not all refugee groups lined up with it. At this stage, the Kashmir Muslim Conference also started to take steps to increase its impact. The representatives of the Conference disassociated themselves from the Anjuman on the grounds that it was 'a non-constituted body'. They claimed that their body solely represented over 32 *lakhs* Kashmiri Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Its president, Ghulam Abbas, during a meeting with the Punjab Governor, pointed to the abolition of a distinction between 'agreed and non-agreed' refugees. If this was impossible, he emphasised that the Jammu and Kashmiri refugees should come next to the refugees from the 'agreed areas' in the order of priority. His solution for the resettlement of the refugees, together with escaping the 'intense heat of the plains', was the shifting of the Kashmiri refugees to the 'cooler localities' of the Northern Western areas such as the Kagan valley, Abbotabad, Kotli and Ali Beg.<sup>9</sup>

The refugees frequently protested against the inadequate housing conditions and shortage of rations. There were occasional clashes between the refugees and the government authorities. On 27 April 1949, after visiting a refugee camp at Sialkot, the Governor of Punjab, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, addressed the refugees and sought to calm down the situation by saying: 'Sheikh Abdullah wants to sell you to Indians for his own ends like the British who sold you to the Dogra nearly a hundred years ago. It

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<sup>7</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette*, (Lahore) 8 April 1948, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 9 April 1948, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 7 May 1948, p. 7.

is better to live in an inhuman manner than in slavery'.<sup>10</sup> He recounted the government's achievements in providing 4,000 jobs to the unemployed Sialkoties in the Military Uniform Clothing Factory in the cantonment. On this occasion, the Governor exhorted the Kashmir Muslim Conference President, Ghulam Abbas and the Anjuman Jammu President, Dr Bashir Ahmad to work together for the welfare of the refugees as well as co-operate with local officers for the speedy process of resettlement.<sup>11</sup> The mollification of both Kashmir spokesmen towards the government led the Majlis-i-Ahrars entering the scenario. In April 1949, the Ahrars' annual conference in Sialkot highlighted the refugees' discontent and their firebrands outspokenly blamed the Government for the misery of the refugees and stressed the need for a jihad against India.<sup>12</sup>

The refugee organizations continued their ceaseless processions and targeted the city's deputy commissioner's office. In October 1949, the pressure culminated in the suspension of Mohammad Akram, deputy rehabilitation officer, on the grounds of the 'too slow' process of resettlement, in which refugees had been 'suffering heavily'.<sup>13</sup> Alongside refugees, local labourers protested and demanded free rations, like refugees, until the Government restarted the factories abandoned by Hindus and Sikhs and provided employment.<sup>14</sup> As the pressure increased, in February 1950, the army took over the charge of the camps. Almost immediately, it closed down all the refugee camps in the city and moved refugees to the Wavell Lines in the cantonment. These military barrack accommodations were considered a 'most airy, comfortable

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<sup>10</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 28 April 1949, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 30 November, 1949, p. 5. At the time, many Kashmiri refugees offered their services for volunteer freedom fighters/*razakars*. In this Anjuman -i- Naujawan-an-Kashmir Sialkot was at the forefront for supplying thousands of *razakars* to the Kashmiri Liberation Movement.

<sup>13</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 23 October 1949, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 14 November 1949, pp. 4-6.

and suitable location'.<sup>15</sup> Under the army control of the camps, rations were improved which raised the morale of the refugees. Within less than three months the press reported that refugees were living there 'like an average citizen'.<sup>16</sup>

From now onwards, a self-reliance policy was encouraged. Refugees could engage in paid work while acquiring new skills such as spinning, tailoring, leather-working, weaving and knitting. Special classes for tailoring and leather-working were arranged at the Government Vocational Training Centre Sialkot. Refugees while acquiring new skills received an amount of Rs. 7-8 a month. This lucrative paid training attracted a large number of refugees. In this way, over one thousand male and 700 female refugee students were trained in knitting and house-spinning respectively. At the same time, more than one thousand refugees had been trained in leather-working, while a batch of 700 refugee students had been sent to the Lahore Training Centre through the Sialkot Branch of Employment. Stipends were also awarded to Kashmiri students from primary to intermediate schools which covered tuition fees, books and stationary. In the 1951-52 budget years, an amount of Rs 200,000 was allocated as scholarships for Kashmiri refugee students.<sup>17</sup>

### **Partition and Sialkot's Urban Development**

Urban redevelopment following partition has been the focus of a number of recent studies.<sup>18</sup> The riot-destruction in Sialkot provided an opportunity for the development of commercial and residential schemes. The city's infrastructure was also damaged greatly by the frequent failure of electricity and water supply. The Sialkot Municipal Committee struggled to fulfil its civic duties. Throughout 1947- 49, it faced criticism

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<sup>15</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 25 February 1950, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 May 1950, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 17 July 1951, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*; Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asian* (London: Routledge, 2000); Ansari, *Life After Partition*.



and resentment arising from the frequent failure of electricity supply and shortage of water. Sialkot's civic problems arising from the social upheavals of partition were compounded by the heavy floods of 1948 and 1950 in the rivers and streams of Aik, Tawi, Pulkhu, Bher and Dek. The damage of the 1950 monsoon flood was estimated at over Rs 1 *crore*. In the city alone, the cost of house property damage reached over Rs 400,000.<sup>19</sup> The inadequate refugee accommodations were particularly badly affected. The locality of Ghazipur was completely 'washed out', where more than 62 families of Kashmiri refugees were living in more than a hundred inadequate accommodations. The Governor of Punjab, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, visited the devastated area and announced the construction of a new colony of Nishtarabad for refugees on the remnants of Ghazipur. At the time it was estimated that after completion each house would be allotted at the cost of Rs 5,000.<sup>20</sup> The responsibility for construction was taken over by the Sialkot Improvement Trust.

The Sialkot Improvement Trust was set up on 29 September 1950, under the Punjab Town Improvement Act 1922. The Improvement Trust initially turned its attention to the renovation of 'the burnt down' areas of Budhi bazaar, Bara bazaar, Basawala bazaar and Raja bazaar under the West Punjab Damaged Areas Ordinance of 1948. The trust not only built houses and shops, it also widened roads and bazaars, relieving the congestion of the city. For the extension of the congested Budhi bazaar, it acquired about four and half *kanals* land in the surrounding areas. The aim was to facilitate heavy traffic through the congested old bazaar. In January 1950, the Sialkot Improvement Trust drew up a scheme for the extension of Serai Maharaja Road to south Basawala bazaar right up to Raja bazaar in the east. It also acquired 28 *kanals* in

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<sup>19</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 October 1950, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 January 1951, p. 5.

order to undertake the extension and development of a grain market.<sup>21</sup> Indeed the Sialkot Improvement Trust's refurbishing schemes formed a significant element in the city's riot-damaged redevelopment.

On 22 February 1954, the Governor of Punjab declared that a satellite town would be constructed for the resettlement of refugees in Sialkot.<sup>22</sup> Earlier the Pakistan Housing Building Finance Corporation had sanctioned an amount of Rs 1,000,000 for the scheme.<sup>23</sup> By the end of September, the Sialkot Improvement Trust had procured 302 acres of land lying between the town and railway station. This old Ugoke area was now given the new name of 'Model Town', which was constructed with all modern amenities, facilities and sophistication under the supervision of the Model Town Co-operative House Building Society. By the end of September 1954, the society was receiving applications from people from all walks of life.<sup>24</sup>

For the accommodation of Kashmiri refugees, low-cost housing schemes were designed to have one-room, two-bedrooms and single-storey and double-storey three-room flats. A Kashmiri Colony was started in 1956 and initially covered over 25 acres on the east of Sialkot town on Pasrur Road.<sup>25</sup>

Urban rebuilding had to be accompanied by industrial expansion if the large refugee community was to recover from partition. This was however a daunting task in the wake of the physical destruction and dislocation following the violence we have earlier surveyed.

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<sup>21</sup> *West Punjab Gazette*, Lahore, January – December 1950, Part III, January 6, 1950, p. 2. Punjab Public Library, Lahore.

<sup>22</sup> *West Punjab Gazette* (Lahore) January-June, 1954, p. 155.

<sup>23</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 13 January 1954, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 30 September 1954, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 28 September 1956, p. 2. More recently, in the late 1990s, another 4- *marla* low-cost housing schemes was constructed at Ahrah locality, although the failure to confine the allotment solely to homeless Kashmiri refugees led to dissatisfaction with the scheme.

## The Impact of Partition on Sialkot's Economy

Until recently, little has been written about the consequences of partition for Sialkot's industrial development. Anita Weiss has briefly considered the post-independence development of Sialkot's sporting goods industry.<sup>26</sup> She has provided immensely useful overviews of the emergence of a new middle-level entrepreneurial class and she effectively links the development of the sporting goods industry to larger cultural, class and kinship-based cooperation issues in the Punjab. Her study is, however, limited to the 1965-75 decade, so she overlooks the dislocation and recovery of the immediate post-partition period.

Sialkot's trade was badly hit in 1947. Its industrial labour force declined by 90 per cent and its production figure by 93 per cent.<sup>27</sup> In all, nine rubber manufacturing factories, four sporting goods factories, two surgical equipment factories and one that produced musical instruments were abandoned. These included such former large enterprises as the National Rubber Mill, the Munshi Cloth Mills, the Punjab Surgical Instruments and Uberoi Sporting Goods Limited. The city's working capital growth declined by over 90 per cent. Estimates of losses incurred in the sporting goods and surgical instruments industries' production and export were phenomenal. According to one estimate, the production and export of the surgical instruments declined over 83 per cent while in the case of the sports goods, the decrease was no less than 95 per cent.<sup>28</sup> Further evidence of the dislocation emerges starkly from the following figure: out of 53 registered factories working in 1946, only 12 factories remained in partial operation after partition. The year before partition, Rs 149 *lakhs* worth of capital was sunk in Sialkot factories, but this had decreased by over 90 per cent to Rs 14 *lakhs*, in

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<sup>26</sup> Anita Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan: The Emergence of an Industrial Bourgeoisie in Punjab* (Lahore: Vanguard Books 1991), pp. 120-47.

<sup>27</sup> Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries*, pp. 61-78.

<sup>28</sup> *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, Vol. III, pp. 663-68.

1947. The industrial production figure for the year 1946 was Rs 218 *lakhs* which fell in 1947 to Rs 15 *lakhs* only, a decrease of over 93 per cent.<sup>29</sup> The continuing closure of industries rendered thousands of workers jobless. Over 90 per cent of the labouring classes of Sialkot were laid off and more than five months after partition over 35,000 former workers were still 'sitting idle'.<sup>30</sup>

Sialkot's colonial development had depended greatly on its sound banking system. Due to the extent of businesses and continuing prosperity, the city had become the second most important financial centre in the Punjab. It was surpassed only by Lahore, which was the hub of commercial and financial activity in the province. Most of the leading banks of India such as the Bharat Bank, the Punjab National Bank and Kashmir Bank and Imperial Bank had opened their offices and branches in Sialkot. The traders and industrialists of Sialkot could obtain loan advances against their stock of raw materials simply by presenting railway receipts. At partition, the city's financial system was severely handicapped with the loss of bankers and financial expertise. In November 1947, a senior bank officer summed up the financial handicap situation in Lahore, but it also reflected the situation in Sialkot. 'Never in the history of banking has any country faced such a colossal problem', he noted, 'as the banks of Lahore are being facing [with] at present'. He concluded: 'Banking cannot be taught overnight. Besides, the newly appointed staff, as usual seem to have little aptitude for it'.<sup>31</sup> The absence of banking service and insurance facilities also 'struck a death blow' to the Pakistan Stock Market and it 'stopped functioning altogether'. Indeed the Pakistan Stock Exchange did not start functioning

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<sup>29</sup> Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries*, pp. 61-78.

<sup>30</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 8 February 1948, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Board of Economic Inquiry West Punjab, Monthly Summery, November 1947, Vol. III, No. 11, p. 6, ST625, O.I.O.C.

until the beginning of 1948.<sup>32</sup> The monetary setback in Sialkot's credit structure is seen in the fact that in early 1947 the city possessed 19 banks. By the end of same year, only one bank was partially operating in the city and this was the sole Muslim-owned Australasia Bank. It further enforced 'drastic restrictions' in the supply of credit as grave uncertainties loomed over the much dislocated economic structure of the town.<sup>33</sup>

The problems facing Sialkot's businessmen arising from the lack of credit were compounded by the industries' access to markets and raw materials. The city was cut off from former trade routes. The basic raw materials for the surgical and musical instruments manufacture were traditionally obtained from Calcutta, Kanpur and Jamshedpur which now formed parts of India. Similarly, the city's sporting goods industries depended largely for their timber requirements upon neighbouring Jammu and Kashmir which was affected by India's claim over the state. The availability of raw materials from abroad was also hampered because of the lack of adequate transport facilities. The city's rubber factories obtained raw materials from Ceylon, Burma, Java and Malaysia. This availability was greatly disrupted because of the 'rapidly changing political situation' in these British colonies leading to an acute shortage in October 1949.<sup>34</sup> Some consignments of raw materials were left stranded midway because of the non-payment of freight and custom duty. For example, the release of a large consignment of feathers for shuttlecocks in the Karachi Sea Port became a 'headache' for Sialkot traders. Despite the tedious efforts of the Sialkot

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<sup>32</sup> Board of Economic Inquiry West Punjab, Monthly Summery, October 1947- June 1948, p. 6, ISPA.11/4, O.I.O.C.

<sup>33</sup> Australasia Bank was the only Muslim Bank that was functioning before partition in Sialkot. The bank was established in December 1942 and owned by Khawaja Bashir Bux of Lahore. In 1974, the Board of Directors of Australasia Bank was dissolved and the bank was renamed as Allied Bank of Pakistan.

<sup>34</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 14 October 1949, p. 4.

Sports Goods Exporters Union, the stranded cargo could not be cleared until early 1950.<sup>35</sup>

Sialkot lost traditional markets as well as raw materials following the division of the subcontinent. The city's industries were the main source of supplies of medico-surgical rubber goods, railway sleepers, sport cycles and automobile accessories for a large part of India. Before partition, about three quarters of musical instruments had been sold in areas which were now in India.<sup>36</sup> In a similar way, about fifty per cent of the production of Sialkot's medico-surgical, dental and veterinary instrument industries had found their way to areas which had now become part of India.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to problems of credit, supply and demand, Sialkot's industrial production was further handicapped by the frequent failure of electricity. Before partition, the Sialkot Electric Supply Company by generating 1200 kilowatts units had sufficiently fulfilled the power demands of over 85 per cent of the industrial concerns of the city. With the loss of non-Muslim engineering and managerial expertise, the city faced frequent power failure and was plunged into complete 'black-out' for a month in April 1948. More than a year later, there were still problems of frequent failure of electricity leading to an acute shortage in August 1949.<sup>38</sup>

The ongoing industrial problems resulted in labour unrest. Workers' representatives throughout 1948 protested to the provincial and central governments and appealed for the re-opening of industrial concerns in order to save them from 'starvation'. On 7 February a massive *hartal*, stretching over 'a mile long procession' marched through the streets and demanded the government to 'gear up' all the

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<sup>35</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 31 January 1950, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Abdul A. Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries*, p. 105.

<sup>37</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 October 1949, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 18 August 1949, p. 9.

surgical and sport industries of Sialkot as quickly as possible.<sup>39</sup> The gravity of the labourers' worry can be seen in their desperate appeals for 'free ration' (like the refugees in the city's camps), until the government reopened the abandoned factories and provided jobs.<sup>40</sup> More than a year later, in a submission to the Federal Minister of Industry Chaudhary Nazir Ahmad on his visit to Sialkot on 14 November 1949, the Sialkot Labourers' Committee reiterated that the government should reopen the city's factories and raw materials should be provided to the local factory owners as soon as possible. In this way, the committee hoped, '40,000 labourers of Sialkot could be saved for the clutches of death and half-starvation'.<sup>41</sup>

Little if anything has been written about Sialkot's labour unrest and post-partition economic difficulties. The impact on its Christian and *Achhut* minorities is totally neglected in scholarship. The migration of their Hindu and Sikh employers to India left a large number of these caste groups without jobs. Prior to partition, they were mainly deployed in factories, schools and hospitals as sweepers, porters and canteen-workers. The Christians of Sialkot appealed to the government and the local Muslim League leadership to take immediate measures to restore the socio-economic activity of the city. Similarly, on 6 June 1948, a delegation of local *Achhut* travelled to Lahore to meet the Pakistan *Achhut* Federation leader Sukh Lal, then deputy mayor of Lahore, in order to express their economic hardships.<sup>42</sup>

While such historians as Joya Chatterji have addressed the issues of the return of refugees in Calcutta,<sup>43</sup> the impact of the return of Hindu trading families in Sialkot, as elsewhere in Punjab, is totally neglected in existing scholarship. It is however

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<sup>39</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 8 February 1948, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 29 April 1948, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 14 November 1949, pp. 4-6.

<sup>42</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 6 June 1948, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

evident from both documentary and oral sources that some Hindu trading classes returned to Sialkot in 1948. Obviously the decisions or reasons to return were determined by their large stake in the city. Most of the returnees came from a commercial and wealthy background. They notably included Lala Gobind Ram, Karim Chand Agarwala, Lala Gopal Das and Beli Ram Attar. In early June 1948, they repossessed their residences, properties and industrial concerns which had remained un-allotted.<sup>44</sup> They were provided protection and assistance by the district administration in this retrieval. This was because the authorities desperately required their commercial expertise and capital for the city's redevelopment. Locally unemployed labourers obviously were desperate for the reopening of business activities. The returned migrants rationalised their return by saying that they only shifted their families to India and they did not migrate, but just 'disappeared' from the 'violence scene' and as soon as the situation became 'normal' they returned to their 'homes'. They also asserted their 'pledge' for the recovery of economic activity.<sup>45</sup> But the reason for Beli Ram's return was his emotional attachment to Sialkot, rather than business stakes and concerns. He resumed his well-reputed practice of traditional medicine. He converted his residence into the 'Women House' and dedicated his life to the recovery, rehabilitation and returning of abducted Hindu and Sikh to India. 'He did not want to spend the later part of his life out of house', Mailk Abbas, a former residence of Rangpura and then a stenographer in Sialkot DC office, recalls, 'despite repeated efforts of his son to take him back to Delhi, Beli Ram spent his entire life in his Budi bazaar house in Sialkot. He devoted his life for the recovery of abducted

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<sup>44</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 6 June 1948, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



women and the welfare of the Sialkoti population. He was a well-know *hakim*. He died in the city in 1971'.<sup>46</sup>

How much did the return of Hindu migrants benefit the economic recovery of Sialkot? Lala Gobind Ram and Karim Chand after taking the control of their residences of Paris Road and the well-know metal-working trading company 'Dittu Mal Gobind Ram', resumed their involvement in the manufacturing sector of iron-works. Some rapid increase was noticed in the sporting-goods trade of Lal Gopal Das in the immediate recovery of post-partition Sialkot after his return in June 1948. Overall, however, their return contributed only marginally to the economic resurgence and reduction of unemployment. They were few in numbers and had been daunted by the 1947 violence. The Government found little justification for any special treatment for them in preference to the Muslim refugees. The returned migrants unsurprisingly had to prove repeatedly their loyalty to Pakistan, despite being Pakistan nationals. At the same time, the conflicting stories of the Pakistan government's treatment of these wealthy Hindus in Sialkot were occasionally reported by the Indian press. 'I am a loyal citizen of Pakistan', Hindu business Lal Gopal Das emphasised, 'I am very much surprised to read the news in the Indian press I was compelled by the Pakistan government and migrated to India and [am] now living in Bikaner state'. He concluded: 'I am residing in Sialkot and spending a happy life after partition and the Pakistan government has given me full facilities and civil liberties'.<sup>47</sup> A local resident Malik Abbas explained to me that the Hindu traders came back to Sialkot because of their huge stack of property. 'They sold out their unmoveable assets and properties in a due course of time and returned back to India'.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Mailk Abbas, Lahore, 23 December 2008.

<sup>47</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 10 September 1949, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Malik Abbas, Lahore, 23 December 2008.

Sialkot traders constantly complained both to provincial and national leaders about their 'criminal neglect of the dying Sialkot enterprise'. In October 1949, the representatives of the Sialkot Sports Manufactures Association pointed out to the Provincial Board of Allotment of Factories the continuing closure of five bigger abandoned factories of sporting goods and appealed that an immediate allotment of these concerns to the local traders would provide employment to 4,000 'redundant skilled labourers'.<sup>49</sup> They also referred to the difficulties in obtaining capital, import licences and raw materials. They demanded that the government 'take strong decisions' to enhance the city exports and give concessions to manufacturers and exporters in terms of the reduction on postal charge and abolition of sales tax on sporting goods. Their immediate solution for the 'industrial crisis of sports goods of Sialkot' was the advancement of an amount of Rs 3,000,000 against the bills of exports through the banks.<sup>50</sup>

The representatives of the Sialkot Rubber Manufactures Association raised similar complaints about the 'slumber' position of the government in the restoration of the rubber industry 'even after a year of partition'. They also complained about the unavailability of raw materials and demanded the complete abolition of the sales tax on raw materials and imposition of 100 per cent duties on all imported rubber goods. They pointed out that the Indian government had provided tariff protection (with 30 per cent import duties on Pakistan goods) and incentives to the 'rubber migrants'. They also urged the Pakistan government to re-classify rubber goods from class I to class II for the purpose of railway freight in order to reduce costs. They maintained that Pakistan 'railways are starving for their rubber goods supplies and some of the trains have to run without their vacuum system, which exposes the travelling public to

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<sup>49</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 October 1949, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 14 November 1949, pp. 4-6.

serious dangers'.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Sialkot's makers of surgical instruments urged government support and sought assured markets in the state and army hospitals.<sup>52</sup> How effective was the government's response to these industrial demands?

### **Government Assistance and Industrial Development of Sialkot**

While Ian Talbot has revealed the key role of government in the urban and industrial development of Lahore,<sup>53</sup> little has been written about the government's support for commercial and industrial activity in Sialkot. It is nonetheless clear both from contemporary press reports and such records as those of the *West Pakistan Year Book* and the *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates* that considerable efforts were made. The government assistance was largely fulfilled in terms of organization, loan, and licences as well as through other incentives and initiatives. The post-independence development of Sialkot was seen as central to the national interest, because the city's industrial clusters were regarded as important generators of both foreign exchange and employment. The state assistance in Sialkot's industrial recovery was therefore speedier and more substantial than in any other cities and towns of the Punjab.

In early 1948, the Punjab Department of Industries surveyed 'the special difficulties' of small scale manufacturers of sporting goods and surgical instruments of Sialkot. In this survey, the main difficulties were pointed out in relation to credit, industrial organization and power infrastructure. The department recommended to the Central Ministry of Commerce and Industry the necessity to take consistent measures to restore the city's banking sector. In 1949, to help provide finance, the Small Scale and Cottage Industries Development Corporation with an authorised capital of Rs

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<sup>51</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 October 1949, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 31 January 1950, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*. pp. 93-6.

5,000,000 was set up.<sup>54</sup> In April 1950, the Pakistan National Bank was opened in Sialkot. In the ensuing year, five leading banks were operating in the city, including the Central Exchange Bank, Habib Bank and the Central Co-operative Bank Sialkot.<sup>55</sup> The latter agreed to advance long-term credit to small manufacturers engaged in the local industries. In addition, the Pakistan government persuaded the Bank of Turkey and Bank of Egypt to open their branches in Sialkot.<sup>56</sup> The Punjab Board of Industries also persuaded the Pakistan Industrial Finance Corporation to relax its rules in favour of small scale industries and to open a branch in Sialkot. The small scale manufacturers and traders were granted loans at the rate of interest at 3 ¼ per cent annually and repayment of the loan was fixed for 10 years.<sup>57</sup> Such monetary efforts helped considerably in solving the problems of credit which were often the main problem of private industrial enterprise.

The government also made some satisfactory arrangements to meet Sialkot's energy supply. Initially, in August 1949, the Military Engineering Service (MES) transferred three electric generating sets and turbines from Karachi to Sialkot. Within five months, it installed four diesel generators with a daily output of 800 kilowatts.<sup>58</sup> In the following year, the Punjab Public Work Department (PPWD) took over the Sialkot Electric Company House and the chief engineer electricity, M. Hassan visited Sialkot and ordered 'with immediate effect' the disconnections of over 2,000 electric-meters of abandoned Hindu and Sikh premises due to the non-payment of electricity bill, and issued new notices to the present occupiers for the registration of new

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<sup>54</sup> First Five Year of Pakistan, 1947-1952, File E1 (9), A 82 (2), p. 34, Punjab Archive Lahore.

<sup>55</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 April 1951, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, Vol. III, p. 812.

<sup>57</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 22 December 1951, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 29 January 1950, p. 6.

electricity connections.<sup>59</sup> The action not only increased the department's income but also helped it increase supply capacity.

By the early 1950s, there were signs of a recovery of Sialkot's 'benumbed industry'. This can be gauged by the fact that around 675 registered and non-registered concerns employing about 15,000 workers were at work. While the value of output of the registered factories in Sialkot was still 83 per cent below 1946, it had increased by over 500 per cent since 1947.<sup>60</sup> The rubber industry started to grow steadily. In 1948, the government allotted the biggest evacuee factory, the National Rubber Factory, to its former workers on the basis of a co-operative society. Its products were sold to the Pakistan Railway. To overcome raw material problems, the government planned to use the Chittagong Hill Tract of East Pakistan for the growing of hevea- best quality rubber plant.<sup>61</sup> This did not mean its recovery was smooth. In 1955, the production of rubber goods was badly affected by the unavailability of coal. The substitution of wood for coal raised costs and could not prevent a slowing down in production to three quarters of its previous level. Workers were laid off as the machines stood idle. By March 1955, over 1,300 labourers had been retrenched and the factory was in production only 20 days a month.<sup>62</sup>

In the case of surgical instruments the demands from the state and army hospitals led the government to invest in the industry. In 1949, an Advisory Committee of Surgical Instruments, consisting of the representatives of the surgical industry, provincial and central governments, including the Army, was set up. The prime aim of the committee was to devise ways and means for the development of surgical instrument manufacturing as well as to carry out necessary survey work for

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<sup>59</sup> *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, Vol. III, p. 812.

<sup>60</sup> Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries*, p.102

<sup>61</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 14 October 1949, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 22 March 1955, p. 2.

marketing. By the end of the year, the Government Surgical Instruments and Allied Trades Development Centre was reorganised and additional machinery installed to render effective assistance to the industry. During the first few years of independence, the government not only provided substantial monetary assistance in the development of surgical instruments, but also bought about 40 per cent of the products. A manufacturer of Sialkot's surgical instruments industry applauded the key support of government which 'saved the lives of hundreds of families drawing their livelihood from the surgical industry'.<sup>63</sup> The surgical instrument manufactures also increasingly found new markets in the Middle East and South East Asian countries. Within three years of partition, the value of the annual output of surgical instruments rose to Rs 1,000,000. It reached Rs 3 million in 1956 but it was still 40 per cent below the pre-partition annual output.<sup>64</sup>

### **Annual output of Sialkot's Surgical Instruments<sup>65</sup>**

Year:	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1954	1955
Rs:	5,000,000	1,000,000	250,000	400,000	1,000,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	1,600,000

### **Development of Sporting Goods Industry**

The sporting goods industry provides a further example of the impact of government support. There were similar demands as in other industries for support for

<sup>63</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 10 September 1949, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> West Pakistan Year Book, 1956, E 1(12), 1956, Punjab Archive Lahore, p. 125.

<sup>65</sup> The figures between 1946 and 1951 were quoted from *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 663-4; and the figure from 1954 onwards were cited in *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 25 November 1957, p. 3.

manufacture. The fact that the industry's prosperity was export based meant, however, that issues such as export licenses were raised more than calls for financial aid or improved power supply, although this was a problem as with all Sialkot's industries. The crisis in 1949 following the devaluation of sterling threatened to ruin the industry as its export prices increased. Much of its production stopped, exports collapsed and the industry went into serious recession. In the course of its aftermath, over 10,000 workers were laid off. Moreover, at the same time, it faced a powerful local competitor just across the border in Indian Punjab where capitalist refugees from Sialkot sought to establish a rival sports good industry. The Pakistan Government thus came under heavy pressure to support its Sialkoti sports goods producers.

Until the onset of the sterling devaluation crisis, the Sialkot sports goods industry had made a steady recovery from the immediate post-partition dislocation. It continued to serve the overseas markets which had been established in the colonial era. Over 80 per cent of the sporting goods were sold overseas. Low production costs accounted for the industry's international competitiveness. The most popular products included footballs, rugby balls, volleyballs, rackets, hockey sticks, cricket bats and balls, badminton rackets and various kinds of rubber gloves. Despite the 1947 disruption, the industry revived after independence as the phenomenal international demand for Sialkot's sports goods remained unabated. During the six months after partition, the export of sporting goods was worth about Rs 821,388. Exports rapidly rose in the following years, reaching Rs 3,932,461 in 1948 to Rs 6,700,000 in 1949.<sup>66</sup> The buoyant demand for Sialkot's products led representatives of foreign firms to visit the city throughout 1949-1950. In early 1949, a delegation of British industrialists led by J. A. Stirling, the Secretary of the Board of Trade Commission

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<sup>66</sup> The Government Statistical Bulletin, January-June 1960, Vol. 8, No.1, Table 14, p.25, Government of Pakistan, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Economic Affairs.

visited Sialkot and expressed concern about the required supply of sporting goods for Britain.<sup>67</sup> Two months later, an Argentina firm deputed Dr. Diego Luis Molinari to Sialkot for ‘the impressive needs of sports goods’.<sup>68</sup>

At this stage, the industry was not able to profit fully from the international demand for its products because of lack of capital and raw material difficulties. A further handicap for production was the power supply problem. This was in some ways a similar situation to that of Sialkot’s other industries. The president of the Sport Goods Exporters Union lamented in January 1950 that, ‘although orders from foreign firms amounting to nearly Rs 200,000 had been received in the last months and dealers were in position to fulfil the orders, the electricity crisis had given rise to a new difficulty and was likely to effect supplies of sports goods to foreign buyers’.<sup>69</sup>

Sialkot’s traders faced the gravest difficulty in obtaining export licences. As was seen in chapter one, before partition the middlemen, organizers and exporters had all been Hindus. Their departure had left the industry without adequate marketing arrangements. Production was export led and required export licences. The fact that these needed to be obtained in Karachi compounded traders’ difficulties. Sialkot exporters consistently expressed concerns about these ‘new inconveniences’ and exhorted the central government to open an export-import licence office in Lahore for the Punjab. The desperation of Sialkot’s traders to profit from growing international demand is evidenced clearly in that, by the beginning of 1950, over a hundred cases of applications for export licences were pending in Karachi.<sup>70</sup> Sialkoti manufactures set up an Industrial Advisory Committee to express their concerns for expediting these applications.

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<sup>67</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 1 December 1949, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 2 February 1950, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 31 January 1950, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 25 February 1950, p. 7.



The 1949 sterling devaluation crisis severely curtailed exports.<sup>71</sup> Pakistan's refusal to devalue its rupee resulted in a great financial loss to all the exporters of the country. Sialkot's sporting goods industry, as a part of a global market, was especially badly affected. Its goods were successful because of their cheapness, so a sudden increase of 44 per cent in the prices of sport goods forced many UK, European and Commonwealth firms to cancel their orders. Thus within a few months, many orders were cancelled, firms and sub-contractors ceased operation, and a large number of workers were laid off. Within a few months of the devaluation crisis, Sialkot's sports goods industries lost over Rs 400,000 worth of business, with the result that more than 1,000 labourers were thrown out of work.<sup>72</sup>

Most serious of all, Sialkot faced an economic rival in the sports goods industry as a result of partition. Jullundur's sporting goods industry was established by Hindu financiers and labourer refugees from Sialkot. They were fully expert in the techniques of procurement, standard checking and exporting arrangements. In a short span of time, they had established many sporting goods units in Jullundur. Their efficiency is evidenced clearly in the fact that by May 1949 Sialkoti migrants had established about 75 big and small centres of sports goods manufactures and their monthly production was worth about Rs. 200,000.<sup>73</sup> Some of Sialkot's Hindu capitalists, who earlier had opted to settle in Delhi and Bombay, subsequently shifted to Jullundur because of the concentration of Sialkoti population in the city. Jullundur

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<sup>71</sup> On 18 September 1949, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps announced a 30 per cent devaluation of the pound from 4.03 dollars to 2.80 dollars in relation to the USA dollar. Almost immediately the European and Commonwealth countries, including India followed suit, but the government of Pakistan refused to devalue its rupee. The main reason put forward for this course of action was that Pakistan had not had an unfavorable balance of payments mainly because of its agricultural economy.

<sup>72</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 18 February 1950, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 3 May 1949, p. 7. Sialkoti migrants in Jalandhar also greatly contributed in the enterprise of Surgical Instruments Industry, see for details Manjit Singh, 'Surgical Instruments Industry at Jalandhar: A Case Study', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37: 31 (Aug. 3-9, 2002), pp. 3298-3304.

had also an advantage of raw material access. The raw materials needed for the industry were willow and mulberry wood. The former was found chiefly in the region of Kashmir and subsequently the Indian government made efforts to grow willow wood in the banks of Beas River in the Kulu Valley of the East Punjab.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Jullundur greatly benefited from the devaluation crisis and began competing with Sialkot's industry. Now 100 Pakistan rupees were equal to 144 Indian rupees. This imbalance priced Sialkot's sporting goods out of many markets. International demands for Jullundur's sporting goods considerably increased in Britain, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and the West Indies.

Moreover, earlier in June 1948, to develop the sporting goods of Jullundur, the Indian government had banned the illegal flow of Sialkot sporting goods into the country. During the early years of independence, there was a considerable 'illegal trade' of timber and 'unfinished goods' of sporting goods to India by merchants from Sialkot and Jammu. By mid-1948, unfinished goods of sports 'in *lakhs*' had been smuggled to India through 'illegal channels'. Some indication of the scale of this activity can be seen in the fact that more than 20 *lakhs* worth goods of Sialkot sports items had been seized by the Indian Government.<sup>75</sup>

The representatives of the Sialkot Sports Exporters Association demanded that the Pakistan authorities provide concessions to the exporters and pointed out that India was able to double the production of sporting goods because of the Pakistan government's decision regarding non-devaluation. They pointed out that the Hindu industrialists of Sialkot who had now established their business in India had been receiving regular orders from foreign countries. The Indian ambassadors in foreign countries had been taking 'deep interest in securing markets, while our ambassadors

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<sup>74</sup> Tyagi. V. Singh, *The Economic Impact of Partition*, pp. 160-1.

<sup>75</sup> *Inquilab* (Lahore) 9 June 1948, p. 3.

[were] not doing anything in this direction'. Sialkot exporters made demands to the Export Promotion Bureau that rupee-dollar parity should be fixed to help sporting goods exports in Europe and America. They believed that the solution to save this industry lay in securing a foreign market.<sup>76</sup> Despite the fact that the Pakistan government brought about some changes in import duties and made some arrangements on a 'barter' basis, as a whole Sialkot's industry continued to be hard pressed until February 1951, when India accepted the 'No-Devaluation Decision' and signed a trade agreement on the basis of the new exchange ratio.<sup>77</sup>

In 1951, the Export Promotion Bureau 'studied' the export problems of Sialkot's industry and took some 'drastic actions' for the uplifting of the city's production. It tried to solve the raw material problems by substituting Afghan willow from the forests of Hazara and Swat for Kashmiri willow. A new willow was introduced from the state plantations in Changa Manga and NWFP.<sup>78</sup> The flexibility of the small Sialkot manufacturers had been demonstrated immediately after partition. For example, the Trumans Enterprise's speciality before partition was shuttlecocks, now it switched to making sports gloves, balls and apparel because of supply problems with imported raw materials of goose feathers and cork used for the base of the shuttlecock. Similarly, the well-known firm Centre de Commerce shifted from manufacturing cricket bats and tennis rackets to wooden hockey sticks because of the unavailability of willow from Kashmir.<sup>79</sup>

The other raw material items were glue and nylon gut strings. They were mainly imported. A leading artisan of Sialkot was trained in gut manufacture in

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<sup>76</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 25 February 1955, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Anwar, *Effects of Partition on Industries*, p. 113.

<sup>78</sup> Manzoor Anwar, 'Sialkot Strives for Trade Revival', *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 18 February 1950, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan*, p. 127.

Japan.<sup>80</sup> Subsequently, the manufacturing of gut strings started locally and it proved 'as good as any foreign made'. Some steps were also taken to standardise sinew gut manufacture to enable it to compete with Nylon gut. The indiscriminate export of raw material required for the manufacture of sports goods was stopped. The availability of raw materials led not only to the mushrooming of small establishments, but increased the production. This fact along with rising world demand enabled the volume of exports in 1951 to exceed the 1947 figure by over 400 per cent.<sup>81</sup>

Government policy in terms of promoting the industry was very clear. The manufacturers received assistance from the government in form of loans, reduction of tax, issuing of import licences and subsidies. From 1951 onwards, sports goods were completely exempted from the sales tax. The custom duty on raw-material was either abolished or reduced. Freight charges were also reduced. Smuggling of semi-finished sports goods across the border was stopped.<sup>82</sup> The Central Co-operative Bank of Sialkot advanced short and long term loans at concessional rates. Most important of all was the development of co-operative society enterprises. These spread across a number of industries, but were most influential in the sports goods sector.

### **Sialkot Industry and Co-operative Societies**

At the very outset, Sialkot's industries were organised along co-operative lines and several industrial co-operative societies were formed. In November 1949, the Finance Minister, Chaudhary Nazir Ahmad Khan, announced a set of procedural reforms during his meeting with workers and factory owners at Sialkot. He announced that the Pakistan authorities would only provide grants to those 'businesses built on co-

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<sup>80</sup> The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596-7.

<sup>81</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 July 1951, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596-7.

operative bases'. The minister deplored the tendency among industrialists to 'indulge in cut-throat competition' and stressed that 'if industrialists initiate businesses on co-operative lines the government would help them'.<sup>83</sup> By early 1950, the Punjab Industrial Finance Corporation in collaboration with the Co-operative Department had allotted the major evacuee industries to the workers who had been previously working in the concerns. Initially, the Pakistan Sport Co-operative Industrial Society was registered under the Co-operative Societies Act 1925. By mid-1950s, about 30 co-operative societies had been established in the city.<sup>84</sup> They were formed on occupational grounds, corporate linkages, family networks and kinship basis. There were, for example, weavers, carpenters and blacksmiths societies. Other important ones included shuttlecock makers, rubber makers and surgical instruments manufacturer cooperative societies. Their members ranged from a dozen to fifty plus. The most important and largest were the Pakistan Sport Co-operative Industrial Society and the Uberoi Co-operative Sport Society. The former was the main source of procuring and supplying raw materials to small and home-based manufacturers at cheap rates. The latter mainly furnished the common arrangements for marketing. These societies not only gained credit on easy terms, but also were granted export-import licences on a 'more liberal scale'.<sup>85</sup> The Central Co-operative Bank of Sialkot earmarked an amount of Rs 20 *laks* to advance short and long term loans at concessional rates.<sup>86</sup>

The sporting goods industries were largely begun by the workers who had been previously employed in Hindu and Sikh concerns. In 1951, the former craftsmen of the Uberoi Limited bought the factory at auction for Rs. 1,450,000 to form the

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<sup>83</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 14 November 1949, pp. 4-6.

<sup>84</sup> Finance Minister Chaudhary Nazir Ahmad Khan to the Governor of Punjab Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar, 2 December 1949, (Ministry of Industries, Government of Pakistan), File No. 5, pp. 2-3, NDC.

<sup>85</sup> *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596-7.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 812.

Uberoi Co-operative Society. Initially, the cooperative had 22 shareholders with its managing director Kawaja Hakin Din, who was a former foreman of this firm. To meet the financial requirements, the cooperative loaned Rs 600,000 from the Central Co-operative Bank of Sialkot. In addition to manufacturing, grading, assaying, valuing and processing of sporting goods, the other main mission of the Uberoi Co-operative Society was to buy from small-scale producers, and to sell profitably in order to enhance foreign-exchange earnings from the sector. The co-operative arranged to export small producers' goods through its marketing branch of Global Trading which was located on the Paris road. As it was a co-operative based organization, a society-appointed Board of Directors controlled day-to-day operations. A managing director- assisted by three department heads of finance/administration, operations and auditing- headed the corporation.<sup>87</sup> The society provided valuable marketing information and technical expertise for the small scale producers in the immediate period after partition.

### **‘Made in Sialkot’: A Drive to Patronage Sporting Goods**

The government adopted a variety of export-enhancing devices and schemes for the promotion of Sialkot's sporting goods. In order to provide adequate markets for the city's products, the central government while entering into trade pacts with other countries took 'special care' to include sports goods as one of the important items of export. With a view to attract increased demand for sports goods in other countries, the State Bank of Pakistan increased the rate of commission granted to the 'lobbying agents in the foreign lands'. The United Kingdom Board of Trade was also successfully persuaded to raise the import-quota of Pakistani sports goods

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<sup>87</sup> Uberoi Limited record, Uberoi Co-operative Sports Society, Uberoi Building, Paris Road Sialkot.

substantially.<sup>88</sup> The government also publicised sports goods worldwide. In this regard, diplomatic and trade channels were used for 'greater publicity' in foreign countries. 'Special Arrangements' were made for the display of 'Made in Sialkot' sports goods at the British Industrial Fair in London and other international commercial and industrial exhibitions in such cities as Lille, Milan, Izmir and Prague.<sup>89</sup> A couple of American business magazines were also used for publicity. Sialkot industrialists were persuaded to open branches of their business offices in foreign countries, especially in London which imported more than half of the output of the sports goods industry. By the early 1950s, one such office had already been established while more were expected to be opened shortly.<sup>90</sup> In the ensuing years, a number of Sialkot firms opened overseas offices and entered into collaborative arrangements with overseas retailers.

By the mid-1950s, Sialkot's industries had recovered to an extent from the setback of partition and the devaluation crisis. Nevertheless the sports goods industry's export value at Rs 7,543, 000 was still lower than its pre-partition peak and around 10,000 former workers were either on casual work or facing unemployment. Sialkot industries still faced crippling power supply problems. Many factories had to operate 20 days in a month and throw a number of workers out of jobs.<sup>91</sup> The government policy for granting export-import licences to small and home-based manufactures was also restricted. Most of the small firms and manufacturers dealt indirectly with foreign buyers. Many exporters were granted import-export licences just for six months and they had to renew twice a year, (from January to 30 June and 30 June to 31 December). Such limitation was seen as 'uneconomic' in the

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<sup>88</sup> *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596-7.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 February 1955, p. 2.

mushrooming of the industry and was described by a Sialkot manufacturer as ‘a veritable hornets nest for exporters’.<sup>92</sup> The government was more concerned with the continuing problems surrounding the quality of the range of sports goods items.

The success of the Sialkot sports goods industry in the colonial era depended firstly on its low prices and secondly on the quality of its products. After 1947, the quality of sports products decreased considerably as per international requirements. Many international firms and buyers started complaining about sub-standard products. In August 1951, a delegation of American industrialists, during a visit to Sialkot, registered complaints about the ‘very low standard’ of sports goods which had been exported to the USA. Such sub-standardization of both sporting goods and surgical instruments was echoed by the American Council General of Pakistan.<sup>93</sup> For the government to maintain quality levels was a difficult task because Sialkot industries were largely operated on an unregistered small-scale and cottage basis. Even the larger manufacturers depended upon subcontractors and middlemen. There were many kinds of exporters and sub-exporters at work in Sialkot. These included a range of direct exporters and subcontractors. The latter did not always meet the standard of quality required by overseas customers. To try to address this issue, in 1951, the government prepared a scheme for the registration of ‘bona fide manufacturers and exporters’. From March onwards, it became mandatory for the exporters of sports goods to register with the Punjab Department of Industries and a certification of quality was required for export. This meant that only ‘approved manufacturers’ were allowed to export sports goods and were required to quote their registration number on consignments so that exporters responsible for ‘malpractices’ could be traced. The authorities also categorically warned of the cancellation of the registration of any

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<sup>92</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 March 1955, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 18 August 1951, p. 10.



exporter who was found 'guilty of supplying goods to foreign markets below standard'.<sup>94</sup> Quality control had become a very high priority in the government's policies and incentives. The Pakistan Government made all efforts to improve the quality and quantity of sporting goods to meet the arising international requirements. These also included opening up a Development Centre for Standardization and a Metal Works Institution for advancing skill courses in the various manufacturing fields. The UK government was approached to provide a sum of Rs 500,000 for the purchase of modern electrical machinery.<sup>95</sup>

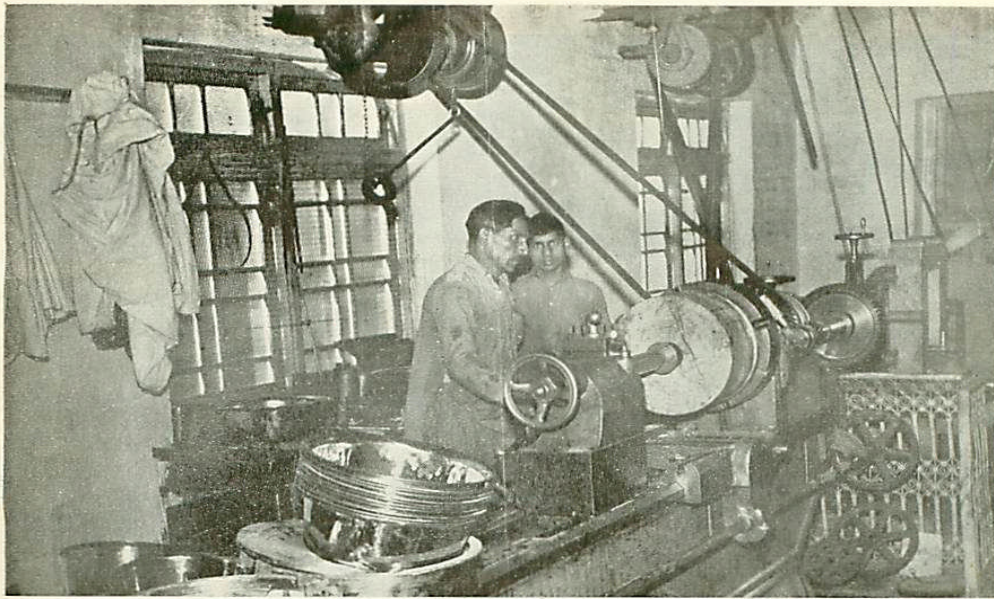
Towards the end of the 1950s, and especially during the early 1960s, different Pakistan governments adopted a number of export-incentive schemes and bonus. The most important was the introduction of the Export Incentive Scheme in 1955. It encouraged the establishment of large industrial firms. At the time, three types of establishment were present in Sialkot: the big establishments generally geared to export; small manufacturers who catered to the domestic market; and finally, numerous unregistered home-based units in the urban pockets and rural areas, which were usually run by family members, but at times with the help of a couple of hired employees. To change the composition of firms, the State Bank of Pakistan fixed the deadline of 1 March 1955, for registration of the industrial firms of Sialkot. The key aim was to dismantle the home-based units and encourage the large-scale manufacturing activities. The bank fixed the minimum export value of Rs 5,000 to obtain a certificate for export.<sup>96</sup> Such measures effectively blocked many small scale producers who had worked from their own homes, stitching footballs, sanding rackets and planking hockey sticks. A manufacturer described the scheme as designed to 'kill small firms'. On the contrary, a number of the Manufacturers of Sports Goods

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<sup>94</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 July 1951, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 December 1956, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 11 March 1955, p. 2.



*Surgical instruments prepared in Sialkot factories not only meet demand of this country but also earn foreign exchange.*



*Surgical instruments and hospital equipment are manufactured by Sialkot factories—  
Work in progress in a local factory.*





*Sialkot is famous for manufacture of sports goods—Great demand in foreign countries.*



*Hockey sticks being manufactured in a Sialkot factory.*

Exporters Association viewed this development as ‘a golden chance to get them established on firm bases.’<sup>97</sup> In the long run, the scheme significantly contributed to the emergence of a new industrial class, largely based on kinship. This also paved the way for the establishment of a separate body of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries on 25 February 1955, by the twenty-seven members of the former Sports Goods Exporters Association.

In 1959, perhaps the most significant move was the Export Bonus Voucher Scheme which stimulated new industrial entrepreneurs and exporters. Under the scheme, the exporters received a fixed percentage of their exports in terms of the entitlements to imports. They were entitled to receive the import entitlements to the extent of 20 per cent and 40 per cent respectively of their export proceeds. The government received the foreign exchange earnings, and, in turn, gave the exporting firms an additional percentage share from the hard currency transaction. The scheme encouraged firms to boost productivity by using their hard currency vouchers to import machinery. Such measures facilitated access to imported capital equipment and gave rise to a new class of small industrialists. The introduction of the new machinery not only increased production but its quality level. The economist Shahid Javed Burki has pointed out that the Bonus Voucher Scheme ‘reduced the monopolistic profits of big industrial houses and ultimately resulted in the emergence of a large number of medium and small industrialists’. These newcomers to the industrial sector were responsible for creating the now important Lahore-Lyallpur-Sialkot industrial triangle in the centre part of the country’.<sup>98</sup>

By the end of the 1950s, the Sialkoti traders had captured the most important foreign markets. The main market was the UK with over 60 per cent of total export

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<sup>97</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 February 1955, p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> Shahid Javed Burki, ‘Politics of Economic Decision-making during the Bhutto Period’, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 14, 2 (Dec; 1974), p. 1132.

sales. Other major destinations of exports were the USA, South Africa, Egypt, Sweden, Netherlands, Burma, Canada, Malaysia, Germany, Belgium, France, Cyprus, Australia and New Zealand. These together accounted for 85 per cent of the export of sports goods, with over 61 per cent going to sterling areas, 15 per cent to dollar areas and the remaining 24 per cent to the rest of the world.<sup>99</sup> More than fifty per cent of the sports goods that were manufactured comprised different kinds of inflatable balls. Besides the balls, the other sport goods that were largely manufactured were tennis and badminton racquets and frames, shuttlecocks, hockey sticks and blades, cricket bats and balls and different kinds of gloves and protective equipments. In 1959, the overall value of the export of sporting goods from Sialkot had grown to above Rs 14,000,000 but the city was to wait a decade more before it matched the 1946 export amount of Rs 30 million. This reveals the setback to the industry arising from partition and the length of recovery time that was required, despite government assistance and the stock of local entrepreneurial skills. Loss of raw materials, migration of Hindu expertise and capital, the non-devaluation of the rupee and most importantly the shifting of former Sialkoti owners to establish a powerful rival Jullundur based business were all important factors in this slow recovery. It also arose from infrastructural problems which were the bane of all of Sialkot's post-independence industries, as elsewhere in the West Punjab.

While the problems on Sialkot's industries should not be overlooked, they were nevertheless important in regional development in the two decades which followed partition. The achievements were by no means inconsiderable, given the huge problems arising from partition. We shall turn now to a consideration of the role of refugee labour and capital in the industrial recovery. Was it as significant as in

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<sup>99</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 July 1958, p. 2.

other West Punjab cities such as Lyallpur? Or did local workers and investors play a more significant role?

**TABLE 1.8**

**Total Value of Export of Sporting- Goods, 1952-59<sup>100</sup>**

Year:	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
Rs:	4,326,000	5,639,000	5,430,000	7,543,000	9,713,000	11,472,000	13,989,000

**TABLE 1.9**

**Customers Countries of Sporting- Goods and Exported Amount in Rupees<sup>101</sup>**

UK	USA	South Africa	Sweden	Burma	Canada	Egypt	New Zealand	Australia
436,000	158,000	151,000	128,000	65,000	52,000	48,000	48,000	35,000
Netherlands	Switzerland	Malaysia	Germany	Belgium	France	Cyprus	British colonies each	
26,000	20,000	18,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000		14,000

**Sialkot Development: the Role of the Refugee and Local Entrepreneurs**

There has recently been an increasing awareness about the impact of refugee labour and entrepreneurs in the urban and industrial development of different cities and towns of Punjab. Ian Talbot's recent work on the aftermath of partition has revealed the substantial role of Amritsar Muslim refugee entrepreneurs and artisans in Lahore's post-partition growth of the hosiery and carpet industries.<sup>102</sup> More recently Pippa Virdee has provided an immensely useful insight into the role of refugee labour in

<sup>100</sup>The Government Statistical Bulletin, January-June 1960, Vol. 8, No.1, Table 14, p.25, Government of Pakistan, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Economic Affairs.

<sup>101</sup>*Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 24 July 1958, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*, pp. 85-99.

Lyallpur's urban and industrial development.<sup>103</sup> Sialkot's experience of post-independence industrial growth stands in stark contrast with the experiences of such cities as Lyallpur, Lahore and Gujranwala. This is not only in terms of export led growth, but the role of locals rather than migrants. In part, the city's geographical handicap of being on the border, particularly with 'disputed' Jammu and Kashmir, provided opportunities for locals, as it was less attractive to refugee entrepreneurs. The Muslim refugee capitalists preferred to locate further westward away from the border to small cities such as Lyallpur, Jhang, Sargodha and Gujranwala. Many used Sialkot as a transit point to go to other places. East Punjab refugees formed a much smaller proportion of the population in Sialkot than any of the other big towns of West Punjab. Refugee industrialists' attitude to the other border location towns such as Lahore differed sharply. Lahore remained the capital of the Punjab; there was no shortage of applications for evacuee factories from both refugees and locals to the Allotment Tribunal.<sup>104</sup> In the case of Sialkot, by 1951, applications had only been received for half of the total evacuee factories. This situation was explained by Finance Minister in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, pointing out that 'the government is receiving a few applications in relating to evacuee Sialkot industrial concerns from the agreed areas [East Punjab] refugees..... we cannot allot these to the migrants of Bombay and Calcutta [non-agreed areas]. Only option is left to allot them to the locals'.<sup>105</sup>

Refugees in Sialkot, as we have noted, chiefly came from the Jammu region. The Kashmiri refugees' migration experience and pattern of settlement were sharply different from their East Punjab counterparts. Although some influential Kashmiri refugees were able to find properties vacated by non-Muslims, the poorer majority

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<sup>103</sup> Virdee, '*Partition and Locality*'.

<sup>104</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*, p. 96.

<sup>105</sup> The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> to 29 January, 1948, Vol. I, p. 223.

had to live in various camps and slums for many years. Despite the central government's sympathy for the Kashmiri refugees, Pakistan's claims over the disputed territory of Kashmir not only excluded them from the permanent settlement schemes for a long time but also omitted them in the 1951 post-partition census report.<sup>106</sup> The difficulty of settlement was rooted in government policy. At the beginning, the West Punjab government preferred the 'agreed areas' refugees over the Kashmiri refugees in allocating evacuee properties. Government representatives pointed out that there were not enough evacuee properties to allocate to the Kashmiri refugees and therefore a decision to prefer the Jammu and Kashmir refugees over their Muslim counterparts from East Punjab would 'lead to great discontentment'. The provincial government directed the deputy commissioners of the 'border districts' to 'do their best to liquidate the camps' of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) refugees but always give preference to 'agreed-areas' refugees in resettlement processes.<sup>107</sup> In 1950, therefore, when almost all the camps of refugees from East Punjab had been cleared, over 100,000 Kashmiri refugees were still squatting in the various government-run camps in Sialkot, as elsewhere in the Punjab. It was the central rather than the Punjab government that had made arrangements to feed the Kashmiri refugees. It considered that the Muslims of Jammu province had suffered 'proportionally more violence than any other class of refugees' and that they were targets of 'real genocide'. They were not allowed to carry any possessions and property document with them. Their representatives pointed out that it was impossible to get the records from 'Occupied Kashmir' and it was therefore unjust to continue depriving the J&K refugee from the allotment process. The central government

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<sup>106</sup> Sialkot showed an apparent decrease of nearly 2 per cent in 1951 which was due to inclusion of the population of a big refugee camp in 1951, Population Census of Pakistan, 1951, Vol. 1, Statement 2.17, pp. 11-20.

<sup>107</sup> The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, File no. B50, Appendix C, p. 11, NDC. Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Attock and Jhelum were named the 'border districts'.



considered that the Kashmiri refugees, therefore, should be given ‘the first preference in allotment’ because they ‘had no option but to migrate’ from the Hindu Dogra state.<sup>108</sup>

**TABLE 1.10**

**The number of JK refugees in the Punjab 1952<sup>109</sup>**

<b><u>Towns</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>
Sialkot	11, 0,143
Gujrat	37,474
Gujranwala	4,625
Rawalpindi	5,384
Lahore	1,101
<u>Total</u>	<u>161,966</u>

The Centre and the Punjab government differed not only with respect to allotments for Kashmiri refugees, but over the issue of financing the refugee camps. The Punjab government tried to evade responsibility for dealing with the Kashmiri refugees. It was of the view that it was spending as much as Rs 50 to 70 million a year for the mere feeding of the refugees. Early in 1948, the Pakistan-Punjab Refugee Council, a liaison body between the centre and the province, invited representatives of the Punjab government to debate the ‘political repercussions’ that might follow after giving priority to the J&K refugees over their counterparts from East Punjab. With this in mind, the central government injected an element of coercion. The provincial government was pressed to accept the financial responsibility for refugees and compelled to provide help to the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in the temporary resettlement of J&K refugees. The Punjab government sent its staff to train and equip the Azad Kashmir staff in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, and education. The

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Maintenance and Resettlement of Jammu and Kashmir Refugees, File No. B132, 169/CF/ 53, p. 4. NDC.

Punjab government also agreed to allow some of their Dairy Farm experts to visit Azad Kashmir area for a period of fifteen days. Experts from the Thal Development Authority also visited the region.<sup>110</sup>

On 17 February 1951, in a decision with the Punjab Refugee Council, the Punjab Rehabilitation Department agreed to make available about 106,134 acres of land in the Punjab border areas, which had not been claimed by the refugees from 'agreed areas', for the resettlement of 50,000 Kashmiri refugees. The Punjab government also agreed for the temporary resettlement of J&K refugees both on the 'uncultivated land and the land not allotted but in the unauthorized possession of locals' in the six border districts of Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Attock and Jhelum. In addition, the Kashmiri refugees were also included in the various schemes of the 'Grow More Food' campaign in the border and non-border districts, in which refugees were encouraged to bring under the plough uncultivated land which did not require intensive development. For this purpose, the government granted a loan of Rs 675 for each refugee in the first instance. This marked a new phase of activity on the part of the provincial government. However, in the meantime the Punjab government dealt with the outstanding claims of the refugees from the 'agreed areas' more quickly than the J&K refugees. It explained to the Centre that the previous position no longer obtained and most of the land had been claimed by the refugees from the 'agreed areas.' However, the province was willing to release

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<sup>110</sup> At the beginning, many attempts were made to resettle as many as possible Kashmiri refugees in the Kashmir region. The Azad Kashmir Rehabilitation Department was set up in early 1949. By the end of October 1949, over 500,000 Kashmiris had settled in Bhimber tahsil of Kashmir. By mid 1951, about 298,231 *kanals* land had been allotted to the refugees. Apart from agricultural land, 47,000 meadows, 125 water mills and 2,500 shops had been allotted to either refugees or locals. At this stage, the Azad Kashmir government was still supplying free rations to over 88,000 'dilapidated refugees'. *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 12 July 1951, p. 5.

uncommanded crown land on payment for the J&K refugees 'if they could prove ownership of their claims through secondary sources'.<sup>111</sup>

In reality, the Punjab government's attitude remained ambivalent towards J&K refugees. It was quite reluctant to assist the refugees until the distinction between 'agreed' and 'non-agreed' areas was abolished in 1955. The relief and rehabilitation programme for Kashmiris was only produced at the behest of the central government. It was only after the abolition of the categories of refugees that the settlement of Kashmiri refugees was speeded up. On the basis of secondary sources such as an affidavit, the government issued 'Refugee Claim Card' to refugees of their ownership of property in Jammu and Kashmir territory. On the basis of these cards, they became entitled to allotted property. In Sialkot, by late October 1956, more than 125,000 Kashmiri refugees had been settled on land.<sup>112</sup> Most of the settlers were the Gujars of Jammu province. They were mainly settled on the tracts of the Tawi River alongside the Indian Kashmiri border areas. Their largest single concentration was in the Bajwat area where around 15,000 families were settled in 84 villages and had been allocated 179,200 acres of land. The refugee settlers were allotted land at the scale of one acre per head in the area irrigated by canals and wells, as opposed to one and half acres in un-irrigated areas. The settlers were granted *taccavi* loans for bullocks and seeds. By the end of 1956, the government had granted Rs 172,500 for this purpose, while an amount of Rs 43,000 was distributed as dole money to the settlers. A further sum of Rs. 151,400 was sanctioned for the following year.<sup>113</sup> These measures were insufficient to resettle all the Kashmiri refugees. Others were compelled by the

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<sup>111</sup> Maintenance and Resettlement of Jammu and Kashmir Refugees, File No. B132, 169/CF/ 53, pp. 3-6, NDC.

<sup>112</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 28 September, 1956, p. 2. By that time, 200,000 acres of land had been allotted to over 400,000 Kashmiri refugees in other 'border districts' of Gujrat, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Attock and Jhelum. For details see, The Government of Punjab, Year Book, 1956, p. 99, Punjab Archives Lahore.

<sup>113</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 December 1956, p. 3.

authorities to move to such places as Dera Ghazi Khan. Around 32,000 acres of land were reserved in the Ghulam Muhammad Barrage area for the resettlement of J&K refugees, while many others obtained land and property in the Thal areas under the Thal Project Scheme.<sup>114</sup>

The continuing plight of refugees in Sialkot is brought home by the fact that even at the end of 1956 over 59,000 refugees, mainly from urban backgrounds, were still subsisting on government rations. The state authorities attempted to reduce this continued dependence by a series of lump sum donations, loans and grants.<sup>115</sup> Earlier, in September 1954, the Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation had set up a separate Finance Cooperative exclusively for the Kashmiri refugees with an amount of Rs 25 *lakhs*.<sup>116</sup> The Pakistan government set aside a 'lump sum' amount of Rs 467,000 for around 1,900 Kashmiri artisan families for 1956 and a further sum of Rs 729,000 was sanctioned the following year. The government also provided funds to skilled refugees to enable them to re-establish their old trades. A loan of Rs 5,000 per family was disbursed to Kashmiri refugees who were engaged in some sort of business in the Kashmir region before partition. The Jammu and Kashmir branch of the Pakistan Refugee Rehabilitation Finance Corporation also granted a loan of Rs 204,000 for the settlement of 130 shopkeepers and petty businessmen in Sialkot.<sup>117</sup>

1960-61 was the most important year in the history of the settlement of refugees in Pakistan. All temporarily transferred properties- houses, shops, buildings sites, factories and industrial concerns- were given in 'complete ownership' to the

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<sup>114</sup> West Pakistan, Year Book, 1960, E1 (12) 1960, PA, p.59. In the early 1950s, the government floated a number of new agricultural colonies and projects for the resettling of the labour and agricultural refugees. These multi-purpose developments brought a vast number of deserted lands into cultivation by harnessing the rivers. Of the multi-purpose developments, which brought a vast number of deserted lands into cultivation by harnessing the rivers, the biggest and most important were the Ghulam Muhammadabad Colony, Tasusa Barrage Scheme and Thal Development Project. The three projects altogether overall rehabilitated more than 100,000 refugees.

<sup>115</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 December 1956, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) 18 September 1954, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 December 1956, p. 3.

refugees. Pakistan's claims over the disputed territory of Kashmir meant however that the refugees from there were excluded from this development. In fact the UN Security Council Resolutions of 1948 and 1949 established that all refugees who had left the State of Jammu and Kashmir for Azad Kashmir or Pakistan since 1947 were in fact citizens of the State and had 'the right to return to the State.'<sup>118</sup> To represent this fact they were only allotted property in Pakistan on a purely temporary basis.

There was also a great disparity in the occupations of the incoming Kashmiri refugee community. The refugees in Sialkot were not like those who as in Gujranwala, Lahore and Lyallpur could bring skills and capital to urban regeneration after the destruction of partition. Rather they were poor migrants from Jammu and Kashmir who came from lower-middle class and petty landholding backgrounds. They could not replace the former Hindu and Sikh trading classes. No simple population substitution was possible. The majority of the Gujaris of Jammu adhered to their old profession of dairying. The inclination of the majority of the middle-class urban Jammu refugees was towards government services and professions. On 27 December 1951, the central government reserved a special quota for Kashmiri refugees living in Pakistan.<sup>119</sup> The educated amongst them took up government jobs. At one stage, in the mid-1950s, almost all the staff of the Refugee Resettlement Department in Sialkot hailed from Kashmiri migrants under the supervision of

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<sup>118</sup>K. Sarwar Hosan, *Documents on the Foreign Relations of Pakistan: The Kashmir Question* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966), p. 144. The Kashmiri refugees' uncertain constitutional and legal status was by no means unique to Pakistan. In the Indian Kashmir, until recently over three *lakhs* 'West Pakistan Refugees' (WPR)-one-third of them Sialkoties- were not granted the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC). Legally, the migrants were categorized into two sets of migrants; one those who migrated from Pakistan Kashmir and those who came from areas that are now part of Pakistan. The former are called Displaced Persons (DPs) and the latter are 'Sharnartihis' (refugees). While the DPs are state subjects, the Sharnartihis have not yet been granted this right. As the WPR had come from outside Jammu and Kashmir territory, they were not given the PRC. Permanent residents were given to those whose ancestors have been living in J&K for at least 10 years before May 14, 1954. In principle, only those with PRC can buy property, get employment in the State, vote in the J&K Legislative Assembly and are entitled to other privileges. See, Luv Puri, 'Bill Seeking Citizenship for 'West Pakistan refugees' Rejected', *Hindu*, 9 February 2007, [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com), viewed on 20/4/07

<sup>119</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 27 December 1951, p. 4.

settlement officer Arif Mahamod (the younger brother of Ghulam Abbas, the president of the Kashmir Muslim Conference). The migration of the Hindu traders, industrialists and bankers created a gap in certain occupations which could not be filled by the refugees as they had no aptitude for this type of work. The following accounts of Kashmiri migrants provide some insights. Sarmad Mahmud, a migrant from Jammu, provides an interesting remembrance of Jammu region and of the Muslims' overall socio-economic background and conditions.

My family obtained a house immediately after partition because my uncle (Ghulam Abbas) was the president of Jammu branch of the Muslim Conference. But the majority of Kashmiri refugees remained in camps till the Ayub Khan period (1958-1968). All credit for the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri refugees goes to the Governor of Punjab General Azam Khan. He appointed my father as the District Settlement Officer. My father not only knew almost all the Kashmiri refugees, but was also aware about their background. They were mainly petty agriculturalists, Gujars, fruit sellers, army-men, policemen and other petty governmental jobs. My father appointed most of the educated Kashmiris in the Sialkot Rehabilitation Department. Having identified the refugee Kashmiris' property and residences in Jammu, my father issued property claims to them. All the Kashmiris in Darowali *mohalla* were settled because of my father's efforts.<sup>120</sup>

Zarar Hussian, a central government employee, now lives in Sialkot cantonment. His family came from Jammu city in late 1947. He provides an interesting insight into resettlement. He recalls how his father worked as a labourer in a factory, although he had been a successful lawyer in the Jammu city court.

My father was a well-know lawyer in Jammu city court. After our family's arrival in Sialkot, he could not continue this profession because of the absence of clients and sources. We lived without any work many months after partition. At some point, to fulfil the livelihood my father sold the car which we had travelled from Jammu to Sialkot in 1947. Finally, he found a job in the Sialkot Government Uniform Factory, which would make uniforms for the army. With the dislocation of the factory in Jhelum during Ayub Khan's Rule, my father obtained a central government job in Sialkot and this continued till his retirement. Now my brothers, cousins and I are employees of the central government. Having a Kashmiri domicile is an advantage and less competitive

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with Sarmad Mahmud, Sialkot, 15 January 2007.

for obtaining the federal government employment as there is a fixed quota for the Kashmiri population.<sup>121</sup>

There were individual refugee success stories, Bashir Ahmed, for example, a refugee from Karnal, moved into the ice-making business, while Shakoor's family took over a transport business. Khalid Shah, a migrant from Amritsar, who obtained the largest evacuee mansion of Ganda Singh Uberoi, found a niche in the hosiery market, after venturing in various non-manufacturing fields and businesses. 'After partition we continued our family trade of hosiery in the city and two of my brothers owned two different hosiery shops in the city. However, sometime later I started supplying sports goods to other cities such as Daska and Sambrial'.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, a former resident of Amritsar, Iqbal Sathi, now a grocery trader, lives in Karain Pura. He was allotted a shop in Sialkot's Dramawala Chowk. After a variety of jobs, he is currently running one of the most successful grocery stores in the town. One of his brothers owned a medical store in Sialkot's truck bazaar, while another had shifted to Lahore and opened a shop of surgical instruments in Lahore's Nala Gumbad Chowk. While some Punjabi and Kashmiri refugees became retailers, they seldom if ever initiated manufacturing in Sialkot. Few refugees, for example, entered Sialkot's traditionally important sporting goods and surgical industries. Comparatively, Sialkot refugees' entrepreneurial achievements lagged behind those of their counterparts in other major towns and cities of Punjab. This meant that it was local Sialkoties who, either as individual owners or as members of cooperatives, took up the manufacturing production roles abandoned by the Hindus. Khalid Mahmud, a migrant from Karnal, who joined the Uberoi Co-Operative Society in 1968, attests to the absence of refugee entrepreneurs in Sialkot's traditional industries.

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with Zarar Hussian, Sialkot, 15 January 2007.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Khalid Shah, Sialkot, 20 January 2007.

My family came from Karnal in 1947. We had already some relative in Sialkot so we did not stay in the camps. Before joining the Uberoi Co-Operative Society in 1968, I did many different manual jobs. Sialkot's industry was not like this as you find it nowadays. At the time, it was largely home-based. In one room there was home and in other was doing stitching and manufacturing sports goods. In 1947, there was only one big factory in the town that was the Uberoi Sports Goods Limited. The government could not allot this to one businessman. In 1951, therefore, the factory was allotted to twenty-two former labourers of the factory. This factory not only manufactured the sporting goods, but also supplied the raw material to all the home-based workers and in due time collected the goods back for exporting. A main problem was the technique of making the goods coupled with good local link for the regular orders. Who benefited from the migration of Hindus! Those who had experience, information and family background.... Look at the Sublime Industry [presently one of the most successful firms of Sialkot]... Father of the owner of this big enterprise had worked in the city's oldest firm the Uberoi Sports Goods Limited.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the fact, that Sialkot failed to attract refugee workers and entrepreneurs, the city still had its pre-existing skills and traditional production techniques, as the workers had mainly been Muslims. Thus the skilled population of the city utilised the vacuum left by the departing Hindus to their advantage. Most importantly the government's assistance for industrial growth by means of protectionism, fiscal policy, and economic planning was a pivotal factor. Sialkot's post-partition economic development differs from that of such other border localities as Lahore and Amritsar. Ian Talbot has revealed that Lahore despite its proximity to the border retained its economic significance primarily because of its political importance, while Amritsar failed to recover from the loss of markets, access to raw materials and from the migration of its skilled Muslim workers. Like Sialkot it faced economic competition from newly emerging industries, in this case based not in Jullundur but Ludhiana.<sup>124</sup> Sialkot's experience is midway between the booming post-independence economy of Lahore and the sharp decline of Amritsar.

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with Khalid Mahmud, Sialkot, 21 January 2007.

<sup>124</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*, pp. 85-99; Also see Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition* (Delhi: Durga Publications, 1986).



Knitted on kinship, the cooperative societies in Sialkot played a crucial role in encouraging entrepreneurialism and supporting a culture of drive and thrift. Initially, they, working as the interlocutors, filled the gap created by the departure of Hindu middlemen. They supplied not only the raw materials to cottage-based manufacturers, but also in return arranged to export their finished and unfinished products. In this way, at the outset, small units survived without investing much capital. Anita Weiss has provided some perspective on the positive role of co-operative societies in the development of sporting goods. She has pointed out the ‘small groups of biologically-related craftsmen’ relied on one another for ‘family’s survival’ and ‘for the collective survival of the industry....fitting in well with Punjabi culture orientations’.<sup>125</sup> In the long run, however, the cooperative societies could not compete with emerging family firms whose members had pre-partition experience in the industries they now ran. For example, the Uberoi Cooperative Society, by the mid sixties, became bankrupt and its managing director Hakin Din was fired on charges of malpractice and corruption. A directive of the managing director of the society to the Ministry of Industry gave the reasons for bankruptcy as the ‘obsolete’ condition of Uberoi Sports, a ‘lack of interest of the then managers, poor management and lack of promotional and marketing techniques’. It concluded that this ‘pioneer’ and ‘mother institution’ for all the major firms of the city such as Saga Sports, Sublime Sports, Awan Sports and Mir Yousaf Industries could not compete with them.<sup>126</sup> The president of the Uberoi Cooperative Society, Rizwan Malik, during the course of an interview also bemoaned the ‘inflexible rules and regulations’ of *the Manual of Co-operative Societies Laws 1925* for the slow recovery and the poor performance the Uberoi Limited since 1951.

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<sup>125</sup> Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>126</sup> File Name: Proposal for Expansion/Modernization of M/S Uberoi Cooperative Sports Limited, Office of Vice President, Uberoi Building, Paris Road, Sialkot, (n.d), pp. 2-3.

Hakin Din was not solely responsible for the bankruptcy of the Uberoi Cooperative Society. Of course, he was promoted from a foreman to managing director after setting up the society. Basically, many non-professional shareholders entered the cooperative; they did not have interest in it. Thus there was no individual and professional interest for the rapid development of this industry, while the other factories were run by the individuals and family networks [had the pre-existing experience]. They learnt expertise from this firm and succeeded, while the progress of this industry could not improve. Apart from the shareholders' lack of interest, the core reason for the failure of this firm is the co-operative rules and regulations. We had to obey them and could not take risks and initiatives, while the family based firms were more successful because they do not need first to read this Manual of Co-operative Societies Laws to move forward.<sup>127</sup> I think the success of such family enterprises as the Ali trading and F.M Alhai sporting goods are good examples.<sup>128</sup>

Industrial Cooperative Societies in other fields such as the Muhajir Co-operative Society and Pioneer Co-operative Leather and Rubber Industries also contributed little advancement to the industrial development of the city. Ghazanfar Ali of Sialkot's well-known Ali Trading Sports Goods explains the advantages of the private family based firm in the interview extract below.

The Ali Trading is one of the oldest firms of Sialkot. There is general perception in Sialkot that all the sports goods firms of the city are the offshoots of the Uberoi Firm. This is not true. No doubt, the Uberoi [Firm] was the pioneer in sporting goods. However, the Ali enterprise was well established even before partition. After partition, it did not stop a single day despite the fact there was economic shock everywhere in the city. We continued to manufacture sporting goods and fulfilled the demands after meeting the required standard. [At the time], we did not receive any assistance from the state and the banks. After partition the government provided assistance only to the restoration of the Uberoi [Firm]. With the personal efforts of the foreman [Khawaja Hakim] this factory again started working. But the Uberoi [Firm] could not meet us in manufacturing, quality and quantity. The Ali Trading fulfilled the Uberoi's orders. Because of our firm's contribution in the export of sports goods, Ayub Khan [then the President of Pakistan] awarded the Ali Trading Company 'best quality award' in 1967.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *The Manual of Co-operative Societies Laws 1925* (Lahore: 1925).

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Razwan Malik Awan, (Uberoi Building, Paris Road Sialkot), 6 January 2007.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Ghazanfar Ali, Sialkot, 11 January 2007.

Indeed a new merchant-industrial class had begun to gather considerable economic power during the 1950s and 1960s. During the first decade after partition, a few newcomers entered the sporting industries and the departure of Hindus provided new opportunities for the population already associated with this industry. Most of the owners of leading firms of Sialkot described the Ayub Khan's Export Bonus Voucher Scheme as the first major incentive for modern industrial development. In the 1970s and 1980s, further government patronage boosted industry due to the establishment of joint ventures and transfer of technology.<sup>130</sup> In this period, some new communities such as Arains, Sheikhs and Jats with no previous occupational experience and practical skills entered industry. For example, the owners of the now leading sporting goods industries Sublime and Classico are Arains, while Durus Sports is owned by a Sheikh family. Sialkot has become the third largest economic hub in Punjab after Lahore and Faisalabad, but remains dependent on export-led production.

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<sup>130</sup> On Sialkot's industrial development during the 1970s and 1980s see, Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan*.

## Conclusion

This analysis is the first detailed study of both Sialkot's and Gujranwala's post-independence development. It reveals the extent of the refugee impact and how different classes and categories of refugees were accommodated. This has already been explored by Ravinder Kaur in her work on Punjabi refugee settlement in Delhi,<sup>1</sup> but apart from Ian Talbot's pioneering work,<sup>2</sup> little has been written about this for Pakistan refugee resettlement. These case studies add to our knowledge of the aftermath of partition for industrial development in the Punjab.

The Gujranwala case study confirms that the wealthy had an easier time as they had more control over the experience of migration and rehabilitation. Moreover, the state's establishment of satellite towns and refugee colonies mainly catered to the needs of wealthy migrants. In the case of Sialkot, the delay in resettling the Kashmiri refugees in Sialkot resulted not only from local difficulties and over-concentration, but was rooted in the Government policy over the refugee status for migrants. The suffering of the Kashmiri refugees questions the standard view that within the Punjab resettlement and rehabilitation were smooth processes.

The case studies also reveal the complex and contrasting experiences of industrial development in Gujranwala and Sialkot since 1947. For Sialkot's sporting goods industry and Gujranwala's steel industry the pre-existing skills and colonial inheritance were important for the post-1947 recovery. Partition generated new opportunities. With respect especially to Sialkot's sporting goods industry, the city's existing artisans and investors utilised the pre-existing global marketing network to their advantage. In a similar manner, locally skilled *Lohars* in Gujranwala saw an

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<sup>1</sup> Kaur, *Since 1947*.

<sup>2</sup> Talbot, *Divided Cities*.

opportunity to take over as owners in the entrepreneurial vacuum which was created with the departure of the Hindu and Sikh trading class. Though they were initially slow to make any headway, sometimes with the assistance of government they began to gain ascendancy and contributed greatly to the city's economic dynamism.

Partition brought opportunities for both locals and refugees in different sectors of the economy, which is not fully recognised in scholarship. The case study of Gujranwala has revealed that the previously-acquired technical and industrial skills and capital acquired in East Punjab was an important factor not only in individual refugee rehabilitation, but in the city's rapid post-independence economic growth. The refugee entrepreneurs played an important role in the growth of the hosiery and jewellery trades which had barely existed before 1947. These industries depended on the skills, capital, connections and networks of 'trust' amongst the refugee communities. The growth of the iron and steel industry moved apace as local *Lohar* craftsmen filled the entrepreneurial roles of Hindus and Sikhs. Government assistance in transforming and diversifying the local skill base and creating the condition for small scale accumulation among skilled metal workers was also a key element in Gujranwala's economic dynamism.

The Sialkot case study has revealed a different pattern of recovery to that of other cities of West Punjab. Unlike them it did not receive a large number of refugee entrepreneurs. Sialkot's refugees were poor Kashmiris. In the absence of East Punjab refugee entrepreneurs, the local skilled population filled the niches left by the exodus of Hindus and Sikhs. Research on Sialkot also reveals the important effects of the state on economic development whether these were positive, in terms of incentives and protectionism, or negative with respect to the non-devaluation of the rupee in 1949. It also shows that not just in migrants' history, but in the history of business

activity, it was often many years before the dislocation brought by partition could be overcome. The Sialkot Sports Goods Industry which is frequently regarded as a Pakistani economic success story took many years before it surpassed the 1946 production levels. The case study material has also highlighted that the partition crisis could not only cut off industries from former markets and raw materials, but could encourage new regional rivals. With respect to the Sports Goods Industry this was the result of its former owners setting up rival production in Jullundur. This is truly an untold story of partition.

## Conclusion

The aim of the thesis has been to advance the study of the impact of partition and its aftermath at the level of the locality in Pakistan Punjab. This topic has been under-researched, particularly with regard to the issue of economic development. The study of Gujranwala and Sialkot has uncovered the complex and differential patterns of violence, migration and resettlement at the local level. The work has not only added to empirical knowledge of partition and its aftermath, but also has questioned broader understandings with respect, for example, to the relative importance of locals and refugees in post-partition industrial development within Pakistan.

The opening chapter explored the colonial urban development of Gujranwala and Sialkot which has been previously neglected by historians. It revealed that their growth was stimulated by the late-nineteenth century development of the cantonments and civil lines areas. Their trade was encouraged by the development of railway networks. Employment in construction encouraged large scale migration of traditional artisans from the surrounding areas. Urbanization was also encouraged by the growing civic amenities which attracted wealthy Indians who had similar consumption patterns and accommodation requirements to the Europeans. The chapter highlighted the key role of Hindus and Sikhs in the economic and social life of the two cities. It also pointed out that British rule not only brought increased material progress, but also heightened awareness of communal identity. This was stimulated by the improvements in communication, the spread of religious schools and most importantly the response of indigenous religious reformers to the activities of Christian missionaries.

The study has pointed out nonetheless that the cities' partition-related violence was by no means an inevitable outcome of previous communal conflict. There were obvious divisions set by the rigidity of caste system and religion, but these did not create hostility on an extensive scale and communities lived side by side with some degree of harmony for generations. By the later stages of British rule, heightened religious identities had, however, become politicised. The elites' use of religious sentiment in their struggle for power at the national and provincial level ultimately resulted in the division of the Punjab in 1947. The political and community polarisation that accompanied this development formed the backdrop to the violence in the two localities.

The second chapter has addressed the wider issues of violence, migration and resettlement in the Punjab. It has cast doubt on the comfortable supposition that killing was erratic and spontaneous. The violence in both cities commenced at the beginning of March onwards. Therefore the August violence was not a sudden eruption but a culmination of five months of tension and conflict. Clearly, its magnitude and intensity was unexpected, but there had been forewarnings. By August all the makings were in place for emptying the minorities in the Punjab. The collapse of state authority was a precondition for the violence. The crux of the collapse lies in the elites' combat for power, and complacency that they could control violence. The focus of the chapter was also on the West Punjab administration's reactions to violence and responses to the arrival of the refugees and afterwards their resettlement. It also highlighted the tensions between the Centre and province authorities over the management and settlement of refugees and the extent to which priorities changed over the period.



Chapters three and four analysed the chief characteristics and principal perpetrators of the violence in Gujranwala and Sialkot during the 1947 disturbances. The cities' history of violence departs from the standardised portrayal of the partition-related violence in a number of ways. It disputes the stereotypical explanation of the Punjab massacres as being a 'temporary madness' by explaining that clear elements of organisation coexisted with spontaneity. It breaks new ground in that it has sought to point out the prime perpetrators of violence and their motives in the region. While large sections of society were not with the '*hamlahawars*', and neither took part in the violence nor shared their extremist ideology of 'revenge', there was little public denunciation of the raiders. The cases, which form the source material for the chapters, revealed the 'social approval' of the looting and burning of Hindu and Sikh homes and businesses. Further evidence has been produced that the failure to prosecute the guilty intensified the violence. The *hamlahawars*, whether they were Nizamabad *Lohars*, or Sialkot's labourers, acted largely with relative impunity in the pursuit of material benefits.

Until recently, very little specific knowledge was available about the local level violence at the time of 1947 partition, especially with its characteristics and identification of the exact perpetrators. This study represents an important contribution to this with its revelation concerning the role of the *hamlahawars*. It would be interesting to see whether similar situations could be identified elsewhere in the Punjab, although the *lohars*' link with a major centre of production of potential weapons in Nizamabad may be unique. In a similar manner, although the *Chamars*' experience in Sialkot because of its geography had unique characteristics, it would be interesting to see whether similar situations could be identified elsewhere in the Punjab.

The study thus reveals that at the local level patterns of violence took on unique characteristics. Gujranwala because of its strategic situation on the main railway lines and roads became notorious for its well organized attacks on 'refugee trains'. The involvement of *Lohars* in the Gujranwala violence made the communal conflict even more severe in the region. They were not only experts at manufacturing traditional weapons and thus had easy access to them, but many of them, or their relatives were employed in the local railway. In the case of Sialkot, the city's Hindu and Sikh trading class was principally targeted in the inner city because of its wealth and property. Moreover, Sialkot's proximity to the Jammu and Kashmir state was another defining factor in its experience of violence. It subsequently witnessed fitful incursions because of its sudden transformation into a border city. The study has also revealed that the violence within the Dogra ruled state was politically motivated and received official assistance in driving out the Muslim inhabitants. A parallel can be seen here with the situation in Ian Copland's analysis of the state-led violence in the Sikh Punjabi princely states.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, the untouchable *Chamars*' support in Sialkot by the established population and the police authorities questions the persistent explanations in which the wider political context for violence is considered a motivating factor.

While the localities thus had specific characteristics of violence, there were also commonalities. One important characteristic was that violence was politically rather than religiously or culturally motivated. The political aims were not so much tied into wider All-India issues, but were to attain local power and territorial control. In order to achieve this, weapons were stockpiled and volunteers were recruited into paramilitary organizations. These processes began from early March 1947 onwards

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Copland, 'The Masters and Maharajas', pp. 657-704.

and sent out a warning to the politically astute. Some wealthy Hindus and Sikhs in anticipation of future trouble shifted their assets to other places weeks before partition. The deteriorating situation in both cities was accompanied by the increasing unreliability of the police. Indeed there is evidence of individual police officers and constables being directly involved in the violence and looting. Case study material has revealed that most of the violence in both localities was carefully organized. The temptation to loot the Hindus and Sikhs was an important element in the attacks, although they were largely rationalised in terms of the need to 'revenge' Muslim sufferings elsewhere.

In sum, the violence in Gujranwala and Sialkot was not spontaneous, but well organised. There was a host of culpable people involved, ranging from the fundamentalists on both sides, to powerful unscrupulous politicians, officials, soldiers, policemen and railwaymen. The role of the police and of politicians in the violence has parallels with the situation in contemporary India as Paul Brass's work on the 'institutionalised riot system' has revealed.<sup>4</sup>

In chapters five and six, attention turns to the issues of refugee resettlement in Gujranwala and Sialkot. What comes across clearly from the research is the differential experiences of this process arising from not only economic status, but state policy with respect to whether it recognised refugee status for migrants. Regarding the differential experiences of refugees arising from the social and cultural capital that they brought with them, the findings confirm the understandings found in earlier locality-based studies by Ian Talbot, Pippa Virdee and Ravinder Kaur.<sup>5</sup> These case studies of partition confirm that wealth and influence afforded to the rich meant that their experience of migration and eventual rehabilitation was eased by their

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<sup>4</sup> Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*.

<sup>5</sup> For the respective works on Lahore and Amritsar, Delhi, Ludhiana and Faisalabad, Talbot, *Divided Cities*; Virdee, 'Partition in Transition', pp. 156-171; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

ability to control and manage this process. For the less fortunate, the refugee experience was frequently not just a matter of a single dislocation, but of years of upheaval before settling down.

The analysis goes beyond consideration of the individual refugee experience to examine the processes of urban regeneration and industrial development. Clear differences emerge from the Gujranwala and Sialkot experiences. Gujranwala's capacity to deal with the large numbers of refugees was eased by the skills and entrepreneurial activity of the refugee labour. Pre-existing Arain, Ansari and Sheikh communities meant that the city attracted enterprising migrants from these communities who resettled in Gujranwala from Amritsar and Ludhiana. On the other hand, Sialkot because of the geographical handicap of being on the sensitive border of Jammu and Kashmir and Indian Punjab, was much less successful in attracting refugee entrepreneurs. This handicap was overcome to an extent by its strong institutional inheritance and pre-existing skills from the colonial period. However, the process of its regeneration was not in reality as smooth as it may appear with hindsight. This thesis nonetheless emphasizes that despite the upheavals of partition there were continuities with the colonial era regarding urban development in places such as Sialkot. These have not always been fully acknowledged in the past.

Partition brought opportunities for both locals and refugees in different sectors of the economy. These could only be fully seized however by those who had pre-existing skills, whether they were local *Lohars* or refugee Sheikhs and Ansaris. A new artisan-industrial class rose to prominence. With respect especially to Gujranwala's hosiery and jewellery trades, the refugee entrepreneurs brought new skills and capital. While pre-existing inheritances were prerequisites in the development of post-independence Sialkot, partition provided the opportunity for the local artisans to fill

some of the niches created with the flight of Hindu and Sikh trading class. In this sense, Sialkot's patterns of development differed from the experience of Gujranwala and other cities such as Lyallpur, whose expansion depended greatly on a refugee influx of labour and capital. While state assistance in both the case studies was crucially important, the Sialkot Sports Goods Industry which was regarded as a Pakistani economic success story received greater government assistance for industrial recovery.

Both Gujranwala and Sialkot were demographically transformed by the impact of partition, but the conflict between refugees and local was muted because of cultural affinity and pre-existing kinship ties. While some of those who were interviewed talk about the difficulty of intermarriage with locals from other *biraderis*, there were far fewer tensions than those that existed between Muhajirs and urban Sindhis.<sup>6</sup> Refugees in Gujranwala and Sialkot were neither culturally distant from the local population, nor were they in economic competition. In the case of Gujranwala, the migration of Hindus and Sikhs provided opportunities for the local artisans, while the refugee labour brought new enterprises. Local *Lohars* established the iron-works and light metal industries, while migrant entrepreneurs were involved in the hosiery and jewellery trades and businesses of the city. The interviews in chapter five reveal the way in which Muslim refugee workers from East Punjab cities translated their skills into the development of these industries. Their growth however was not state-led but was dependent on the capital and skills brought by the refugees to Gujranwala.

The thesis has introduced a range of new sources to the subject matter. It has in particular revealed the value of Police Records as a historical source for district level examination of partition violence in the Punjab. At the same time it reveals that

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<sup>6</sup> Ansari, *Life After Partition*.

these records, if they can be retrieved, need to be handled with care and read between the lines as they tend to reproduce colonial stereotypes of communal mob violence. Despite the planning and careful organization behind the attacks on Hindus and Sikhs, surprisingly the subsequent Police Reports merely termed them conveniently as ‘communal riot’. The FIRs of the attacks and loot, which form the source material, reveal that they were in many instances reported by the local Muslim and non-Muslim *lambardars*, rather than the victims themselves.<sup>7</sup> Cases were apparently registered for the sake of the record rather than in serious expectation that they would be followed up. For example, in Gujranwala city alone, by 15 August 1947 over 780 FIRs had been registered against *hamlahawars*, however subsequent records show few were pursued and hardly any one was indicted. They were merely noted and now provide sources for the historian. Difficulties of access mean that few scholars have as yet utilised them in their accounts.

The study has also considered the value of first hand accounts not only for the identification of the principal perpetrators of partition violence, but also for the differing experiences of migration and refugee resettlement. For example, the wealthy members of Kazim Shah’s family were able to plan their departure to Delhi and sold or shifted their possessions before leaving for Gujranwala. Similarly, Dr Lal’s family members shifted their assets from Sialkot to Delhi many weeks before partition and observed the partition events in the neighbouring Jammu city. But this was not an option open to artisans such as Abdul Ghufar, some of whose family members were

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<sup>7</sup> In the British colonial hierarchy, the local *lambardars* in the Punjab were the collectors of revenue in the area and, in return, they were hugely blessed with privilege and rewards of land. They were also obliged to report any ‘extraordinary’ activity to the local *thana*. For example, during the 1857 Munity in Sialkot, when the ‘villagers all around’ the cantonments joined the mutineers and plundered the treasury and ‘everything in the Europeans’ houses and the Parsees’ shops’, many *lambardars* were subsequently hanged just because they did not report such actions to the colonial administration. Captain Gregory Rich, *The Mutiny in Sialkot*, p. 68; *Sialkot District*, 1894-95, p. 33, Punjab Archives Lahore.

killed in Patiala and others were forced to abandon all their possessions and flee for their lives. During the course of an interview Ghufar revealed that it was only after spending months in travelling and in refugee camps that he finally reached Gujranwala.

The study also utilised the personal testimonies of locals. These were as revealing as those provided by refugees, especially with respect to the organised nature of the violence in the two cities. First hand accounts by Malik Abbas and Abdul-Islam Butt revealed not only the partisan role of the police in violence, but that of individual workers of the Sialkot Muslim League. Official accounts deny that the Muslim League was involved in such episodes. Similarly, eye-witness accounts from Nizamabad have uncovered the careful organization behind the attacks on the refugee trains and the connivance of local railway drivers. The accounts of both Mohammed Ramzan and Mohammad Ali, for example, revealed the planning of attack on a refugee train which was carrying Hindu and Sikh passengers and the involvement of the driver of the train named Rahamat Kashmiri. Such a level of detail rarely exists in the documentary sources and thus has not previously entered the historical narrative.

Oral sources not only reflect on the by now well-known experience of 'partition from beneath' from the perspective of the refugee 'victim', but also question documentary-based state accounts of rehabilitation. This thesis has revealed that the latter process was not as straightforward as it has been presented and that it was a combination of state support and refugee and local skills that led to industrial growth in Sialkot and Gujranwala. In this respect the thesis is a further contribution to the 'history from beneath' of partition, but one which is not solely preoccupied with the refugee experience. Some of its findings supplement pre-existing locality-based works, as with regard to the differential experiences of violence and refugee

resettlement. In other ways it goes beyond them to look at how locals seized opportunities for loot in the violence of 1947 and more positively sought to exploit new economic opportunities in the face of the departure of the Hindu and Sikh business classes. It is clear that the impact of partition could be as profound for those who did not migrate as those who were uprooted.

These differential experiences of partition were not limited to individuals. Sialkot and Gujranwala faced different sets of problems and opportunities in terms of their industrial life after partition. Sialkot lost its trading and financial class, traditional markets, as well as raw materials. However, the city because of its pre-existing economic base and entrepreneurial drive overcame the handicap of proximity to a volatile international border, together with the emergence of an Indian economic competitor in Jalandhar. Gujranwala with its good communications, pre-existing skills of *Lohars* and the strong presence of refugee entrepreneurs benefited from the 1947 events and experienced rapid economic development after independence. Despite these inheritances and regenerations, the study has shown that the contemporary success of the two cities also depended on timely government interaction and financial assistance. Standard texts refer only to this last point.

While both Gujranwala and Sialkot took some years to recover from the partition-related economic dislocation, they could be presented as ‘gainers’ from the partition events as were the cities of Ludhiana in India and Lyallpur in Pakistan. In one way, Sialkot’s experience of post-independence industrialization stands in stark contrast with the experiences of other cities of the Punjab. This is not only in terms of export-led growth, but the role of locals rather than migrants. Moreover, Sialkot’s post-partition economic development differs from that of such other border localities as Amritsar which have never fully overcome the handicaps of their new geographical



location. The demographic transformation certainly facilitated the upward mobility of economically-backward Muslims. Both skilled migrants and established populations contributed greatly to the economic diversification of the cities. The government support for new ventures providing loans and other concessions was an important factor for such economic mobility. Partition in Sialkot and Gujranwala as elsewhere in North India clearly had its winners and losers.

The thesis demonstrates the insights which can be gained utilising new sources and a locality-based approach to Partition. It cuts through the generalities of standardised accounts and reveals the complexities that attended partition and its aftermath. This approach to partition with respect to Pakistan remains, however, all too rare. New avenues for research have been signposted. Attention has in particular been diverted to the value of FIRs for understanding local level violence. The study has also emphasised the value that can be derived from a comparative locality-based approach. One hopes for more studies of this kind, including perhaps a comparison of the impact of partition on Sargodha and Jhang, or more interestingly on the Princely State of Bahawalpur and Multan district.

## Appendix One

### Sample Questionnaire: Interviews of Partition-related events in Gujranwala and Sialkot

1. What is your name and how old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. What is your Biraderi/zat/caste
4. What is your mother-tongue?
5. What was your ancestral locality?
6. Tell us about your family? i.e. parents, brothers, sisters, father's occupation etc.
7. What were you doing at that time of partition? i.e. studying, working
8. Did you have relations with the people from other religious communities in your locality before partition?
9. Could you describe what the other people were like around your neighbourhood, i.e. were they Hindus/Sikhs/Muslims/Christians?
10. Did you celebrate any traditional festivals (Dewali, Eid) with other religious communities?
11. How were your overall relations with other religious communities/castes people (before the 1947 disturbances and riots began)?
12. Were you afraid as a minority in a majority area around the time of partition? If so, describe the reasons why?
13. Could you tell us about the tensions which grew between the Hindu/Sikh and Muslim community in your area/village/locality? If so, when the riots began and when they peaked?
14. Did you witness anything yourself? If so, could you describe this?
15. Did you or your relatives/locality people participate in the disturbances? If so, could you please describe what happened and who were involved in these events?
16. Did you help other religious communities' people during the disturbances and migration in your locality?
17. How did you feel when Pakistan was formed and who was/were involved in the movement of Pakistan in your locality?
18. Did you expect you would have to migrate in 1947? If so, when did you become aware of the need to migrate? i.e. before the British departure, or after the Boundary Commissions Report announcement, or because of communal violence?
19. Where did you migrate from in India?
20. Did any member of another religious community help you during the riots/migration? If so, How? Were they officials, soldiers, ordinary people?
21. How did you travel across the border? i.e. individually, or in groups, or in caravan, or by train, or airplane?
22. Were you attacked on the way, if so can you describe what happened? Was any family member injured or killed? Was any family member abducted?
23. What possessions did you take with you?

24. Where did you move in Pakistan?
25. Why did you settle in Gujranwala/Sialkot?
26. When you arrived in Gujranwala/Sialkot, did you go to some other place first? Did you first settle in a refugee camp, or with relatives, or in a property evacuated by Hindus and Sikhs?
27. If you were in a refugee camp, how long was it before your family were resettled? What was the name and the location of the camp? Could you describe life as a refugee in a camp?
28. Did you have connections with Gujranwala and Sialkot before partition?
29. How did migration affect you daily life and standard of living?
30. How were your traditions affected?
31. Did the departure of Hindus and Sikhs benefit you? i-e. Did it provide new economic opportunities to set up an own business? How did you start and how long did it take to set up your own business?
32. Does your family still talk about the events of August 1947?
33. Did you put in a 'claim' for compensation? If so, can you describe what happened? i-e. Could you name the locality and the type of the housing? Was the house more or less spacious than the former family residence in India?
34. Are you still living in the same accommodation or locality you first moved into?
35. What was your relationship with local residents after your arrival? Has this changed since then?
36. How have Gujranwala and Sialkot changed since 1947?
37. What work did you do after migrating?
38. How long did it take to adjust to your new life in Pakistan?
39. Did you ever feel that you would return back home?
40. Do you remember your locality in India now?
41. What is your line of business?
42. Did you resume your old family occupation, or was it a new area for you?
43. How did you start?
44. Did you have any business links with the city/locality before partition?
45. Did you have any assistance in starting up your business? i-e. Government loan, private loans, kinship support?
46. Could you talk about what the conditions were like here when you were starting your businesses?
47. What do you attribute your success to?
48. What contribution do you feel refugees/local artisans have made to Gujranwala's and Sialkot's development since 1947?

## Appendix Two

### Rural-Urban Distribution of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan on the eve of Partition

Provinces & States	Rural (figures in <i>lakhs</i> )	Urban	Total
Punjab	27.67	10.96	38.63
Karachi & Sindh	7.81	5.91	13.72
N.W.F.P.	0.70	2.98	2.62
Baluchistan	0.18	0.48	0.66
Bahawalpur State	1.79	0.54	2.33
Khairpur State	0.43	0.12	0.55
Total	38.58		58.62

### Religious Composition of Population in East Punjab, 1941-1951

Community	1941%	1951%
Hindus	30	66
Muslims	53	2
Sikhs	15	30
Christians	1	1
Total	34,309,861	18,719,826

### Land ownership patterns in West Punjab on the eve of Partition

Class of Land	Total Acreage
Owned and cultivated by non-Muslims	2,736,888
Owned by non-Muslims, cultivated by Muslims	2,066,982
Owned by Muslims, cultivated by non-Muslims	180,412
Crown Land	209,531

## Appendix Three

### **Religious Composition of Population in Gujranwala District, 1941- 1951**

<b>Community</b>	<b>1941%</b>	<b>1951%</b>
Muslims	70	100
Hindus	17	0
Sikhs	11	few families
Christians	4	3

### **Religious Composition of Population in Sialkot District, 1941-1951**

<b>District</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1947 (before Partition)</b>	<b>1951</b>
Sialkot	(Figures in thousands 000)		
<b>Muslims/ Non-Muslims/</b>	<b>Muslims/ Non-Muslims</b>	<b>Muslim Refugees/ Settlers</b>	
739.2      667.6	813.1      496.4	358      1,145	
Total	1,190.5	1,309.5	1,480

### **Religious Composition of Population in Sialkot District, 1941-1951**

<b>Tahsils &amp; Districts</b>		<b>1941</b>	<b>1951</b>	
	<b>Muslims %</b>	<b>Hindus/Sikhs %</b>	<b>Muslims%</b>	<b>Hindus/Sikhs %</b>
<u>Sialkot District</u>	62.1	38	100	0
<u>Sialkot Tahsil</u>	61.4	38.06	100	0
<u>Pasrur Tahsil</u>	66.2	33.08	100	0
<u>Narowal Tahsil</u>	54.9	45.1	100	0
<u>Daska Tahsil</u>	66.09	34.1	100	0

## Glossary

<b>anjuman</b>	association
<b>arains</b>	cultivators/vegetable growers
<b>artties</b>	who lend peasants loan and other agricultural products
<b>asar</b>	late afternoon
<b>augwa</b>	abduction
<b>achhuts</b>	untouchable lower caste
<b>bait-ul-maal</b>	Islamic treasury
<b>bania</b>	Hindu trading caste
<b>badmashes</b>	local criminal gangs
<b>biraderi</b>	brotherhood, kinship group
<b>barches</b>	draggers
<b>bellas</b>	forests
<b>brahman</b>	Hindu upper class priest
<b>chak</b>	village
<b>chamar</b>	menial worker, usually with leather and animal hides. Considered unclean/untouchable
<b>chaudhari</b>	the hereditary headman of villages
<b>charpay</b>	a wooden bed, which is covered with netted string
<b>chowk</b>	crossroads, junctions
<b>crore</b>	ten million
<b>dindar</b>	new converts
<b>danda</b>	a wooden stick
<b>dopar</b>	afternoon
<b>Dogras</b>	the term refers to an ethnic group that lived in the south-eastern part of Jammu, ruling Hindu family of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir were Dogras
<b>Dhadhis</b>	milkmen- Gujars
<b>fajur</b>	early morning
<b>fasadat</b>	riot
<b>fauji</b>	military men
<b>gali</b>	narrow alleyway
<b>goondas</b>	criminals, thugs
<b>gurdwara</b>	Sikh temple
<b>Gujars</b>	milk-suppliers; herders
<b>Gurkhas</b>	Gurkhas of Nepal were best known for their history of bravery and strength in the British Indian Army's Gorkha regiments.
<b>hakim</b>	traditional doctor; practitioner of Unani medicine
<b>hajum</b>	crowd, mob
<b>hartal</b>	strike, political protest
<b>hamlahawars</b>	attackers/ raiders/
<b>izzat</b>	honour
<b>jatha</b>	band, armed group
<b>jagir</b>	an assignment or land revenue in lieu of salary
<b>jagirdars</b>	big landholders
<b>jaishes</b>	armed band
<b>jat</b>	agriculturalists

<b>ji</b> had	religious war against unbelievers
<b>juma</b>	Friday prayer
<b>kacha</b>	often referring to a mud-built dwelling
<b>katchi abadis</b>	informal and illegal squatter settlements
<b>kamies</b>	lower classes in village
<b>kanal</b>	measurement of land, 1/20 <sup>th</sup> of an acre
<b>kafirs</b>	infidel
<b>kafla</b>	foot convoys of refugees
<b>kotwali</b>	local police station
<b>kirpans</b>	a long knife, or sword generally kept by Sikhs for self-defence
<b>kulharis</b>	axes
<b>lakh</b>	one hundred thousand
<b>lathis</b>	wooden sticks
<b>lambardar</b>	headman of a village, during the British colonial hierarchy, the local lambardars in the Punjab were the collectors of revenue in the area
<b>lathi</b>	wooden club
<b>lohars</b>	blacksmiths
<b>mella</b>	traditional fair
<b>mandir</b>	Hindu temple
<b>mandi</b>	market/market town
<b>marla</b>	measurement of land, 1/400 <sup>th</sup> of an acre
<b>mirasi</b>	story teller in a village
<b>muhajir</b>	refugee, Muslim who has fled for religious reasons
<b>mohalla</b>	neighbourhood
<b>nala</b>	ravine, river bed
<b>patalay</b>	pans
<b>paray</b>	sitting cotes
<b>palang</b>	a wooden bed
<b>pir</b>	a Muslim saint
<b>qasba</b>	a small town
<b>razaya</b>	quilts
<b>razakars</b>	volunteer fighters.
<b>roti</b>	bread
<b>sandok</b>	wooden big box
<b>sahukar</b>	moneylender
<b>sardar</b>	chief
<b>sepoys</b>	policemen
<b>sirkar</b>	district
<b>suba</b>	province
<b>shalwar kamez</b>	traditional Indian Muslim cloth
<b>shuddhi</b>	Hindu re-purification right, adopted by the Arya Samaj for conversion purposes
<b>sheikh</b>	urban respectable Muslim
<b>thana</b>	police station
<b>thanadar</b>	police officer
<b>tarkhans</b>	artisans, carpenters
<b>tehsil</b>	an administrative sub-division of a district
<b>tola</b>	measurement of weight for gold or silver, just under an ounce
<b>tonga</b>	horse-cart
<b>topi</b>	hats

<b>thikri pehra</b>	night-patrolling
<b>unani</b>	medical system practised in some parts of the subcontinent
<b>zan,</b>	woman
<b>zar</b>	wealth/money
<b>zamin</b>	land/ property
<b>zamindar</b>	peasant /landholders in village
<b>zanaina</b>	women's related
<b>zila</b>	revenue sub-division, district



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