

Jenkins' Deliberations on Communal Conflict with the Leaders of Punjab: 1946-47 (Part-II)

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Incendiaries at Lahore in May

Bhim Sen Sacher informed Jenkins about the destruction caused by arson in Lahore. Akbari Mandi, Chune Mandi, Chauhatta Basti, Bhagat Singh Basti, Kucha Kagzian and Pipal Vehra had been burnt down. The fire brigade could not cope with those vast and dispersed areas. If someone tried to extinguish the fire he was shot at by the police. Bhim Sen Sacher suggested that the only way to save Lahore was to impose martial law in the city. He hoped that the Governor would take that step immediately.⁶⁴

Jenkins thanked Lala Bhim Sen Sacher and Gokul for their letters informing him about Lahore. Jenkins explained that fire brigade had done a good job in spite of constraints and difficulties. He believed that all communities had access to incendiary materials, and could use it without detection by traversing joined roof-tops. Throwing fire-balls from one house to another was wreaking devastation. Checking trouble of that kind was not an easy job, but searches were carried out and culprits were arrested.⁶⁵

Jenkins' meeting with Tara Singh

Jenkins had a meeting (WHEN) with Master Tara Singh who came to see him. Jenkins inquired from him about his talks at Delhi with Mountbatten. Tara Singh did not answer that question and replied that the only solution of Punjab problem was that Hindus and Sikhs should wipe-off Muslims from their majority areas and similarly Muslims should do vice-versa. That was the only solution of the Punjab problem.

Jenkins then inquired about the Lahore and Amritsar disturbances. Master Tara Singh said that police was actively helping

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⁶⁴ Rukhsana, *Disturbances in Punjab*, 186. Bhim Sen Sacher wrote a letter to Sir Evan Jenkins dated 18 May 1947. Also in *Jenkins Papers*, MF. no. 1616, 312.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 313-14.

Muslims. When Jenkins further questioned him, he said that he himself saw two boys looting shops in Amritsar and policemen standing by watching them. He mentioned other incidents of atrocities committed by Sikhs against Muslims in Sikh majority areas. The police dared not stop those atrocities. Master Tara Singh was clear about the fact that police was helpless in that mass communal disturbance and politicians were witless in such circumstances.

Jenkins accused Tara Singh of instigating disturbances in Punjab. He told him that he was responsible for creating an atmosphere in which no one trusted the police. Tara Singh agreed and said that he too had no confidence in the police and he had advised others as well not to trust the police.

Master Tara Singh requested Jenkins to help the Sikhs in Punjab. Jenkins told him about the boundaries of Sikh areas. Tara Singh was not satisfied with that; both talked about communal issue and believed that there seemed no end to that discussion. Tara Singh was very clear about one thing though — he could not be friendly with the Muslims.

Tara Singh wanted an agreement with Muslims to allow non - Muslims a passage to relocate to areas where they were in a majority. Jenkins told him that it was a gigantic task and it was not that easy to work that out immediately. Tara Singh was skeptical about the Boundary Commission and could foresee chaos in Punjab.

Jenkins did not feel comfortable with Tara Singh's eccentric notions. He wrote:

Master Tara was quite amiable but incoherent and obstinate as usual. Before he left I drew attention to the violence in some of his statements and asked him to do his best to keep his community quiet. It is lamentable that at this juncture the affair of the Punjab should be so largely in the hands of this eccentric old man.⁶⁶

Here it can be observed that Jenkins had an air of superiority. He could not appreciate Tara Singh's practical suggestion to relocate populations, which could only be done by the government of the province headed by Jenkins. But Jenkins in full view of the communal mayhem could not make arrangements to smoothly relocate populations to their majority safe-zone areas.

⁶⁶ Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, 893-94. Jenkins wrote in his notes dated 19 May 1947 that Master Tara Singh came to see him that day between 4 to 5 p.m.

Buta Singh (MLA from Lyallpur) met Jenkins⁶⁷ with his companions Sardar Santokh Singh, Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia, R.B Labh Chand Mehra, R.B.Prakash Chand Mehra, Lala Keshab Chandra and Mr. G.R.Sethi of Amritsar. The points put forward by him (Buta Singh) were about Amritsar district staff that had failed to win the confidence of the public. The Chowk Prag Das incident on 11 April could have been avoided if the D.C. and the S.P. had been properly advised by their subordinates. Amritsar police was openly siding with Muslim League. A League flag was flown for some time at the divisional head quarter and the house of a Sikh where there was a police picket burnt down with police inside. Jenkins interrupted him and said that he knew about both the cases. In the first, the flag was not hoisted on the police station, but on a neighbouring gate-way. The officer who had allowed that had been punished. In the second case, an inquiry was held. Jenkins understood that the fire was accidental. Police and troops were not always careful tenants of houses requisitioned for them. No attempts seemed to have been made to make arrests or open investigations in cases of arson. Jenkins referred to his Lahore experience and maintained it was unlikely that the average arson case could be traced at all. However, the visitors blamed the police for obstructing the fire brigades.

The old practice had been for the additional district magistrate and the *kotwal* to belong to different communities. It was a great pity that this practice had been abandoned. There was no safe entrance to Amritsar city. The Hall Bazar which was once considered very safe was now dangerous due to communal violence. One safe gate was required with full security arrangements so people might move without fear of arson.

Sardar Buta Singh was annoyed by the ridiculously small amount of fine imposed on the Daimganj area for the murder of seven non-Muslims only at the rate of Rs.20/- per ration card. The murder was committed within a very short distance of the police station, and that had shaken public confidence. Jenkins asked his visitors about partition. Sardar Buta Singh said that if the British government announced a

⁶⁷ *Police Abstract of Intelligence Punjab*, note of Jenkins of interview with Buta Singh and others, dated 19 May 1947, 272, advocating Sikhs territorial claims and preaching the necessity for offence against Muslims, training Sikh suicide squads (*Shahidi Jatha*), securing arms and ammunition for anti-Pakistan activities. Youth in villages were taught *gatka* (stick or bamboo) fighting in some villages. All economic activities with Muslims were boycotted, where Sikh had their influence.

partition and enforced it, then all would be well taken. However, if they left the matter to the Punjabis, then there would be chaos.⁶⁸

A deputation comprising Lala Dev Raja Sethi MLA., S.Dalip Singh Kang MLA, Ganesh Dutt and Kundan Lal Lamba met Jenkins. They were concerned about the refugee's safety who were moving from Muslim majority areas to non-Muslim areas.

Non-Muslims leaving Muslim majority areas

There was great apprehension in Jhang, a big town, about the *thanas* (police stations) with their small strength of police force. Non-Muslims had left Jhang in large numbers. Muslim villagers had armed themselves. Non-Muslims at Meghiana, Shorkot and Chiniot feared and believed that Muslims would massacre them before any help arrived. The Lyallpur story was the same as the magistrate was a Muslim and the police force mostly comprised Muslims. Jenkins sympathized with the delegation and told them that he would send a battalion to Lyallpur and Jhang to protect the non-Muslims there.

The delegation then asked him about the partition plan. Jenkins told them that it would broadly be based on population basis. He emphasized that partition would be a national disaster and communities must go to great lengths and make the greatest possible sacrifice in order to hold the province together.⁶⁹

Liaquat Ali Khan met Jenkins; he discussed the general situation of Punjab and told Jenkins that Muslims did not agree with certain particulars in the partition proposal. Jenkins asked him what those particulars were. He replied that the League could not agree to the partition of Bengal or Punjab. Jenkins responded that in that case the outlook was not promising. The Muslims wanted the whole of Punjab; the Sikhs would yield only two-fifth of it; and the Hindus would follow the Congress leaders. There was a 'civil war' atmosphere in Punjab and all communities were fatalistic and hysterical. Liaquat Ali Khan giving his suggestions complained that the Muslims felt aggrieved as they were not the aggressors, but the present administration in the Punjab was bitterly hostile towards them. Only two of the magistrates employed in Lahore city were Muslims. British officers were rough and discourteous in their dealings with Muslims. Jenkins replied that he worked on facts and not on party propaganda. The official figures for deaths caused by the disturbances since 4 March till 20 May 1947 was 3410. Jenkins believed the correct figure including Rawalpindi deaths, that were not yet

⁶⁸ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, 284-85.

⁶⁹ *Jenkins Papers*, MF .no. 1616, dated 22 May 1947, 339-40.

registered, was around 3600. Jenkins estimated that in that total figure the number of Muslims was not more than 500. Similarly, the loss of Muslim property was probably 10 to 15 per cent. Jenkins emphasized that it was difficult for him to believe that Muslims were not aggressors — even in Lahore's renewed rioting the number of Muslim casualties was less than one-third of total deaths recorded. He said that he had done his best to preserve communal balance in posting magistrates, and he had no doubt that police did the same in posting police officers. As regard British officers, Jenkins was sure that they were being fair. In fact many of them were greatly shocked by the Rawalpindi massacre.

Liaquat Ali Khan stressed that the administration must deal strictly with Sikhs. They had missed their chance of forming the ministry with Muslim League in the spring of 1946. Jenkins took a different view and tried for a mid-way approach and asked Liaquat Ali Khan to understand the Sikh point of view. They might be unreasonable and difficult but then they were really the aggrieved party. The League had never apologized for the Rawalpindi massacre and continuous incidents of arson in Lahore and Amritsar. The Muslims were making reconciliation impossible. Jenkins insisted that if Punjabis wanted to avoid partition then all parties must be prepared to make sacrifices. It was no solution to say that Sikhs were headstrong and unreasonable. This allegation against the Sikhs had some truth three months previously but not after that. He pondered that in ten years time the present dispute would have lost its bitterness and probably seem trivial. Then he asked Liaquat Ali Khan how he would solve the problem. Liaquat Ali Khan replied that the right solution was the one that caused the least trouble.

Jenkins told Liaquat Ali Khan that the British too did not want to get involved in a communal civil war. Liaquat Ali Khan retorted that the British could not evade their responsibilities. Jenkins responded by asserting that the Muslim League had hardly anything for the non-Muslims in Pakistan's Punjab and the non Muslims rightly claimed a home in India. Liaquat Ali Khan replied that a "truncated Pakistan was a Congress device for the ultimate suppression of the Muslims and that all India and Punjab partition was not in our agenda".

Jenkins narrated that it was a jejune record of a long and rambling talk. Its main points were: (a) The determination of Muslim League to reject partition; (b) complacency of the Muslim League about Muslim atrocities. Jenkins tried to bring Liaquat Ali Khan's attention on that aspect of the communal disturbances; (c) hostility of the Muslim Leaguers to Hindus and Sikhs; (d) dissatisfaction of the Muslim Leaguers with the then administration; and (e) the advice of HMG that law should be enforced ruthlessly. Also Liaquat Ali Khan was very upset

about the communal composition of the army. After this depressing exchange of views, Liaquat Ali Khan's fears of an impending civil war grew. He told Jenkins that he might meet him [Jenkins] the next day after his visit to Amritsar.⁷⁰

Baldev Singh, the Defence Minister, discussed the Boundary Commission with Jenkins. He said that three political party leaders must be taken into confidence on the Boundary Commission plan. Baldev believed that Jinnah would not co-operate with the partition plan. He had his doubts about the political parties' (Congress, Muslim League and Akalis) views and attitudes towards the Boundary Commission.

Jenkins explained to him about the immediate situation and it seemed to deal only with greater Lahore area where more men were needed. Regarding deployment of troops, Jenkins gathered that Baldev Singh did not know the difference between a brigade and a division. Sardar Baldev Singh demanded that those involved in arson incidents, that is the Muslims, should be heavily fined. Jenkins regretted the administrative steps in Rajgarh and other areas where Muslims admitted their excesses against non-Muslims. Yet Jenkins thought that it was easy to talk about excessive measures than to take them. Jenkins explained the Hitlerian method which could be applied i.e. to take hostages and then shoot them and Jenkins thought he could improve upon his method by shooting all the members of the high command. Jenkins did not, however, recommend any action of that kind, which treated the innocent and guilty alike. Jenkins explained that they had few targets in Lahore city and the police seldom had an opportunity to fire effectively. Sardar Baldev Singh appealed for martial law. Muslims believed that the Sikhs were collecting weapons and the Sikhs believed the same about Muslims, but these rumours were product of fear.⁷¹

In his day meeting with Jenkins, Liaquat Ali Khan discussed the concerns of the Muslims. He informed Jenkins that Mr. Harding, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, was regarded as a *persona non-grata* by the Muslims. Jenkins defended Harding as a very competent police officer. The Amritsar investigating staff had insufficient Muslims, and though Mr. Harding inspired confidence, his assistants did not. Jenkins said the I.G. Police might discuss that point with him. Whenever mass arrests took place, the main targets were Muslims as in the case of an inquiry regarding the stabbing of a Sikh in Amritsar. Muslims and Sikhs

⁷⁰ Ibid., 367-70. Liaquat Ali Khan met Jenkins, 25 May 1947. See also Carter, *Politics Punjab*, 213-15.

⁷¹ Ibid., 371-75. Baldev Singh parley with Jenkins on 26 May 1947. For details see Carter, *Punjab Politics*, 215-18.

were arming themselves for the final round of riots. In Faridkot an official car was being used for distributing arms. Jenkins told Liaquat that all communities were arming themselves. The Muslim League was no different. The latest Order in Amritsar under section 13 of the Punjab Safety Act, 1947 prohibited the carrying even of *lathis* [staffs] by people in the rural areas. Muslims considered that discriminatory as the Sikhs were allowed to keep *kirpans*. Jenkins' remarked that it was unwise of Muslims to kill a Sikh at Taran Taran. In response to Liaquat's suggestion that Muslims should be adequately represented while stationing troops for public safety, Jenkins said that there were a fair number of Muslim troops deployed in Punjab and assured that due care had been taken to have a fair proportion of Muslims in the troops. Jenkins could not convince Liaquat Ali Khan that the Muslim League had made very serious blunders in Punjab from the end of 1942 onwards. Liaquat said that Punjab was viewed as a part of India and it was impossible for the Muslim League to take any other line. Jenkins pointed out that the Muslim League was unable to define what Pakistan would be like. The attitude of the Muslims towards the other Punjabis was condescending as implied in a statement which said the Hindus and Sikhs would receive 'generous' treatment. The Sikhs were particularly sore. Liaquat Ali Khan explained that no condescension was intended. Jinnah had made it clear that in Pakistan all citizens would be equal. Liaquat Ali Khan at this meeting looked worried about future events. He was subdued compared to his stance of the day before. He said that newsmen had asked him whether he would be able to control the situation and he had refused to reply. Jenkins thought that Liaquat was quite right and he hoped he would make no statement to the press about their talks.⁷²

Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot wrote an urgent letter to Jenkins dated 30 May 30 1947, in which he mentioned Jullundur, where a Hindu police officer was openly helping Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) with men and materials. Even military officers were helping the RSS, he alleged. The Gurkha (Hindu) force was also in the district and there was no Muslim regiment stationed there.

Mamdot reported that different heads of institutions were active in RSS and they were slaughtering Muslims mercilessly. Mamdot demanded that such communally affiliated officials should be replaced. He told Jenkins about the plight of the Muslim minority in Kangra. Their existencce was in danger as the Hindus were being incited to clear the

⁷² Ibid., MF.no.1616, 376-80. Liaquat Ali Khan met Jenkins at 5.00 p.m. on 26 May 1947.

district of the Muslims. Mamdot requested Jenkins to provide security to the Muslims of Kangra. He requested Jenkins to let him know about the arrangements so Muslim League workers could safely escort them to protected Muslim areas.⁷³

Jullundur division

Hoshiarpur: The entire officialdom in the Hoshiarpur district was non-Muslim including the deputy commissioner, superintendent police, deputy superintendent police, session judge, principals of schools, colleges, even revenue assistants. Non-Muslims were being issued licences to keep firearms to target Muslims.

Ferozapore Dist: Here too the entire administrative staff including the deputy commissioner, sessions judge, the sub divisional officer etc. comprised Hindus or Sikhs. All non-Muslims had been armed to kill and harass Muslims.

Iftikhar Mamdot called on Jenkins and pointed out that in different divisions of Punjab — Jullundur, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan — all administrative posts were occupied by Hindus and Sikhs and they were all hostile towards their Muslim subjects and subordinates.⁷⁴ They talked about the political situation in Punjab for about eighty minutes. The main points discussed were Incendiaries, Transfer and Complaints against Police, Jenkins was worried about incendiaries caused by riots. He compared them to the German blitz on London during the Second World War. They talked about complaints of a communal nature against police. Jenkins thought police had played its role very well during those taxing times and mentioned their long hours of duty.⁷⁵ Jenkins thanked Mamdot for his undated letter in which he had asked for large scale transfer of communal minded officials and rearrangement in police department and redeployment of military forces for security purposes. Jenkins said that at that juncture it was impossible to contemplate wholesale transfers in the civil service or restructuring in police or military. But he promised that he would do everything possible to maintain peace in the province. Jenkins complained that at present he was receiving very little help from political parties including the League.⁷⁶

⁷³ Zafar, *Disturbances in Punjab*, 214-15.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 216-220.

⁷⁵ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, 288-91. Jenkins notes about a meeting with Nehru dated 30 May 1947 at 11:00.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 298. Letter of Jenkins to Mamdot dated 30 May 1947.

Sardar Swaran Singh saw Jenkins that afternoon at his own request. He reiterated the usual communal complaints at great length. The important points discussed in that meeting were as follows.

- Jenkins told him that through several sources he had confirmed that the Sikh leadership, including Swaran Singh himself, was exceedingly bellicose. Swaran Singh denied that report but Jenkins told him that he used multiple sources before forming an opinion or making any statement. Swaran Singh then categorically said that the policy of the Sikhs was not to make trouble and to co-operate with authorities wholeheartedly.
- Swaran Singh then showed a letter to Jenkins alleging that Muslims wanted to kill Tara Singh. He demanded security for Tara Singh. Jenkins returned him the letter and said that it was rubbish and he should not mention their talk to anyone else.
- Swaran Singh talked at length about partition. He asked about other leaders' views about partition. Jenkins told him that he had met a number of leaders and it seemed that Muslims would follow their established lines but in the end it would be more accommodating, though Jenkins doubted they would support any partition plan, even as a temporary measure. Jenkins thought that they all had to wait and see. Though he was against Punjab partition, he wanted everyone, including the Sikhs, to have their share. Swaran Singh expressed the desire that the vacancy resulting from the resignation of Sir Abdur Rahman should go to a Sikh. However, Jenkins did not answer that request and only responded that the chief justice had not discussed the matter of resignation with him.
- Sikhs had evacuated Gujar Khan and he complained that legal proceedings against rioters were slow. Jenkins told him that the procedure was slow as they were short of jail accommodation. Swaran Singh asked Jenkins if he had told Jawaharlal Nehru that Sikhs had collected 50 lakh rupees in their war fund. Jenkins clarified that he had told Nehru that that was the sum the Sikhs intended ultimately to collect. Swaran Singh then told him that all that the Sikhs could collect was two lakhs and fifty thousand rupees.
- Jenkins suggested that the *Nihangs* (suicidal squad) should not be allowed to carry spears. Swaran Singh said that the Sikhs would co-operate with the administration in that regard and furnish a list about the *Nihangs*.
- The deployment of troops in Lahore was mentioned and it was alleged that he (Jenkins) had told somebody that troops could not be deployed in the walled city. Jenkins said that that was nonsense; what he had said to Nehru and others was that the actual placing of

the troops was a matter to be dealt with by the military commander, and in fact Sardar Swaran asked for troops to be posted at Baghbanpura.

- Sardar Swaran Singh said that something ought to be done to prevent torture at police stations and suggested visits to under trial prisoners by high judicial officers. But Jenkins replied that it was not a good idea.
- Swaran Singh left a note of Bakshi Sir Tek Chand with Jenkins regarding the principles of compensation. Jenkins doubted whether the principles of 1919 were applicable then, however, he believed that the inspector general police and home secretary might see that note.⁷⁷

Hindus dominance and 3rd June Plan

In the central Punjab diehard Hindus celebrated Jinnah's failure, which meant that he had had to accept a truncated Pakistan. They bitterly criticised the Congress for having conceded even that much to the Muslim League.⁷⁸ The Sikh leaders were satisfied after attending meetings immediately preceding the 3rd June plan, in which Hindus had succeeded in cornering the Muslim League to accept a truncated Punjab. Subsequently, Master Tara Singh and Kartar Singh (MLA) paid another visit to Delhi in the second week of June; they were disappointed at the attitude shown by the Congress high command to the Sikh Plan for a sovereign state. Congress leaders were believed to have told the Sikhs that the idea was wholly impracticable.⁷⁹

Gurgaon turmoils

Baldev Singh wrote to Jenkins that he had received several requests for military escort for small groups of Hindus evacuated from Muslim areas in Gurgaon where the inhabitants were predominantly members of the opposite community. The situation in Gurgaon was still very serious and they had to be evacuated. That was normally done through the deputy commissioner, but he was not helpful in that respect.⁸⁰ Jenkins replied to Baldev Singh that he was pleased to know that more troops were involved to quell the rioters in Gurgaon. Jenkins clarified the position of

⁷⁷ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, 299-300. Note of Jenkins of his interview with Swaran Singh dated 31 May 1947.

⁷⁸ *Police Abstract*, Para 430, 327.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Para 431, 327.

⁸⁰ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 237-38. Baldev Singh wrote a letter to Jenkins on 7 June 1947.

the deputy commissioner who Jenkins believed had done very well considering his limited resources. Jenkins clarified that district officers were over cautious with relief workers because they were involved in distribution of arms and ammunition from the stores to the rioters. In that respect Jenkins gave the example of Lahore and two incidences occurring at Gurgaon. Jenkins believed that genuine demands of the relief workers would be definitely entertained by the deputy commissioner. However, Jenkins warned that evacuation took place only when people of that area requested for that.⁸¹

Mamdot's astonishment on Sachdev's appointment as partition commissioner

In a letter to Jenkins, Mamdot expressed his surprise after having read in the newspaper that Sachdev had been appointed Partition Commissioner at the Partition Office and an expert committee had been charged to deal with partition matters in Punjab. He thought it was "most astounding" that such an arrangement had already been made without prior consultation and approval of the leaders of the parties and added that Muslim League could not approve it. He urged the early setting up of a supervisory Partition Committee and stressed the importance he attached to adequate representation of Muslim interests in the Partition and Expert Committee.⁸²

Mamdot wrote to Jenkins that he was afraid he could not agree with his viewpoint on the proposals thus formulated, that the communal complexion of the official machinery which was to prepare the necessary data for the Partition Committee was of no importance or consequence. Punjab, or in fact the whole of India, was to be partitioned between Muslims and non-Muslims on the basis of religion forming the main basis of the plan at that stage. It seemed to him, therefore, of utmost importance that the composition of the bodies of official experts, who were not merely to present but to prepare necessary facts and figures for the Partition Committee, should be representative and satisfactory from the point of view of both the parties. There need to be, he thought, no difficulty in securing that if the personnel were chosen in consultation with the parties concerned.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid., Vol. V, 238. Jenkins reply to Baldev Singh dated 12 June 1947 for his letter of 7 June.

⁸² Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XI, 269. Mountbatten Papers in a letter of 8 June 1947 the Khan of Mamdot expressed his surprise.

⁸³ Ibid., 269-70. Nawab of Mamdot wrote to Jenkins on 10 June 1947.

Communal groups concerns for partition

A meeting was held at the Governor House, Lahore on 10 June 1947. The following persons were present in the meeting on Punjab partition preliminaries: Governor Jenkins, Khan Iftikhar Husain Khan of Mamdot, Lala Bhim Sen Sachar and Sardar Swaran Singh. The governor opened the meeting with a brief explanation of problems relating to partition at the centre and at Punjab provincial level. He said that the centre would be concerned with the determination of two new dominions. In the Punjab, the government thought that it would resemble a large business negotiation. The powerful administration first of all must decide the future division of Punjab. This powerful administration must be the controlling body. This controlling body must consist of leaders of the three parties i.e., Congress, Muslim League and Panthic party. It must be autonomous, with full authority to take decisions. The governor described it as "Partition Committee". Lala Bhim Sen Sacher asked what would be done in the event of deadlock in the Partition Committee. The governor replied that deadlock would be decided by an Arbitration Committee.⁸⁴

The Nawab of Mamdot, Sardar Swaran Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar mentioned the meeting held on the 16 June at the Governor House, Lahore, and the points discussed on which they had reached an agreement, that the Partition Committee, besides the governor, would consist of four members, two nominees of Muslim League, one of the Congress and other one of the Panthic Party. The parties would have full liberty with regard to the choice of their nominees whether from within or outside of Punjab. The governor would preside over the meeting. They would not be decided by votes; and in case of disagreement, parties would set up agreed machinery for the settlement of disputes. It was agreed that a Steering Committee would consist of Mr. M.R. Sachdev and Syed Yaqub Shah of finance department of government of India. It was agreed that there was no need to add a third member to that committee. It was also agreed that as soon as the Steering Committee assembled, it should form the nucleus of the Partition Committee Secretariat in addition to steering the Expert Committee. Likewise there was agreement that when members of the Steering Committee assumed office, the office of the Partition Commissioner could be declared superfluous, and that part time official advisers to the members of the Partition Committee could be attached to the Steering Committee.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Kirpal Singh ed., *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947* (Delhi: National Bookshop, 1991), 109-110. Monday 10:00 a.m. 16 June 1947.

⁸⁵ Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, XI, 454-55. 17 June 1947, Letter 233.

Jenkins had discussions with Lala Bhim Sen Sachar (MLA) and Swaran Singh (MLA) about the law and order situation. They were particularly against Magistrate A.G. Cheema because he had used the police against Hindus and he had used abusive language while talking with Hindu women. Jenkins clarified that he had documentary proof that Mr. Cheema was a competent magistrate and what had been said about him in the High Court was untrue; he had not used foul language with Hindu women. Some other policemen might have used harsh words but not the concerned officer; it was all concocted. In fact each community was blaming the opposite community.⁸⁶

Malik Firoz Khan Noon met Jenkins and talked to him about the future of Punjab; he desired to have Jullundur Division within Punjab. Jenkins said that, that could only be done by the Boundary Commission. The H.M.G contemplated a division based on district majority and that could not be modified. Jenkins noted that changes that Firoz Khan Noon desired were so large that they could not be achieved.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon handed him a petition from Khushab people about their collective fine. He requested that Muslims detained at Yol and elsewhere be freed. Jenkins thought that he was pretending about not knowing what had happened at Kulu. According to Jenkins, Firoz Khan Noon talked about Mamdot, Daultana and Shaukat in slighting terms. Among other things he mentioned to Jenkins that Quaid-i-Azam wanted to retain British officers in the service of Pakistan. He considered them to be preferable to Hindus. At the same time he agreed with Jenkins that it would be difficult to run a province with a considerable non-Muslim minority without a fair number of non-Muslim officials. Firoz Khan Noon questioned Jenkins what he thought of Muslim I.C.S. officers and he replied that they might suffice to run a province, if substantially reinforced from the P.C.S- but in his opinion, it would be difficult to staff the Pakistan Secretariat.⁸⁷

Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot wrote a letter on 21 June 1947 to Jenkins acknowledging the receipt of an invitation for all parties' leaders meeting. Mamdot assured Jenkins that he and his party had always been eager to restore peace and tranquility in the province, but their efforts failed because of intransigence of other parties. Mamdot requested Jenkins for permission to have free and open discussion with him along with his colleagues before calling the all parties leaders meeting. He

⁸⁶ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 239-40. On 19 June 1947 Jenkins wrote a note of his interview with Lala Bhim Sen Sachar and Swaran Singh.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 240. Note of Jenkins of Interview with Firoz Khan Noon, dated 20 June 1947.

reminded Jenkins of their last discussion on Gurgaon where the disturbances were the worst in the whole province. He demanded that the meeting should focus its discussion on that to avert a repetition.⁸⁸

As on 21 June 1947, Jenkins met Mamdot and his friends Daultana and Shaukat Hyat, they went over the old Muslim League grievances and mentioned in particular the problem of refugees in Gurgaon and Amritsar; the food problem in Amritsar; the alleged misconduct of certain sub-inspectors of police after the *Sabzi Mandi* incident that morning, the refusal of a curfew pass to Amir-ud-din, the Mayor of Lahore; the need for exemption in respect of carrying arms by party leaders; and the harshness and unpopularity of Mr. Taylor, the D.C. of Campbellpur (Attock).

Jenkins said that he would look into the situation in Gurgaon. He made a separate note about Amritsar refugees. Jenkins dismissed the complaint about curfew passes and carrying of arms by party leaders. However, they might be provided with police escort, but Mamdot thought that would be beneath the dignity of a leader. Jenkins told his visitors that he thought Mr. Taylor had done his best in a difficult situation. Then they discussed the arson and killings and Jenkins made it clear that it was difficult to apprehend the culprits. He had urged the party leaders earlier as well to take effective preventive measures, since he believed that only public opinion could stop the disturbances. He then urged them to do so again in their own interest.⁸⁹

No trust move against governor Punjab

On 21 June 1947, the Punjab Muslim League Assembly Party passed a resolution expressing lack of confidence on Sir Evan Jenkins in view of his 'partisan attitude' and requesting the governor-general to withdraw Jenkins, because "during these decisive days which will affect the destiny of our people for many generations to come "a non-partisan man is needed on this important post. They need an impartial man at the helm of affairs". The meeting appointed a sub-committee consisting of Malik Firoz Khan Noon, Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Maulana Daud Ghaznavi to visit Mr. Jinnah and acquaint him with the feelings of Punjabi Muslims towards the governor.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., 241. Mamdot Letter to Jenkins dated 21 June 1947.

⁸⁹ Ibid. Note of Jenkins interview with Mamdot, Daultana and Shaukat Hyat Khan dated 21 June 1947.

⁹⁰ *The Statesman*, 22 June 1947 (Col.3), 9. Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XI, 569.

Jenkins advice to the two new Punjab premiers

Jenkins in the meanwhile was concerned about the arson and killings in Amritsar and Lahore. He believed action by the police or the army alone could not bring peace. The real remedy was to bring about a change in public opinion. He believed that only political parties could bring about that change. Jenkins paid no attention to press statements issued by politicians. He insisted that politician must meet disgruntled and disorderly elements among their supporters. He warned the two would be premiers of the about to be created new provinces that if they did not heed his advice they would find themselves in a very difficult situation as the formation of the new provinces was around the corner.

The three leaders (Mamdot, Sardar Swaran Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar) agreed with Jenkins' suggestions to hold meetings within their own parties and deliberate up on the strategy that they should adopt. They desired that British officers should be relieved of their duties and replaced by selected Indian officers. Jenkins narrated that the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere but there was not yet very cordial cooperation between the parties.⁹¹

After the meeting with the party leaders, Jenkins met Lala Bhim Sen Sachar and Sardar Swaran Singh that afternoon. They stayed with Jenkins for some time. Lala Bhim Sen Sachar and Sardar Swaran Singh spoke about the alleged misconduct of A.G. Cheema and the law and order situation in the city. Jenkins accused the political parties of corrupting the services for their own ends. In the past people wanted officials to be fair and the task of the district officer, particularly of the British officer, was comparatively easy. Now no one, it seemed to him, wanted fairness, and district officers who tried to be impartial were criticized. Sardar Swaran Singh who was a fair-minded person said that there was a good deal of truth in that statement. As regards Mr. Cheema, Jenkins told his audience that certain reports and enquiries about him were in progress.⁹²

Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot and Sheikh Sadiq Hassan meeting with Jenkins, 30 June 1947

Mamdot was critical of the search operation at Misri Shah and demanded for the release of all detainees. He thought it was targeted against Muslims. Jenkins clarified that detainees would not be released in haste and the search was not against Muslims. Nawab Sadiq Hassan was

⁹¹ Ibid., 567-69.

⁹² Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 244-45. Note by Jenkins of separate talks with Sachar and Swaran Singh, 23 June 1947.

concerned with the distribution of wheat in Amritsar. He insisted that government had not formulated any clear policy for wheat distribution by Muslim League. Jenkins clarified that government had allowed distribution and had stipulated that the unemployed persons and refugees must be gathered in a camp. Jenkins spoke to Nilkanthrai Mohanlal Buch about that on the telephone. Sadiq Hassan complained that Muslims of Amritsar were displeased with Jenkins because he had declined to meet a deputation of the Muslims from there. The entire business of Amritsar was in the hands of non-Muslims.

Meanwhile, peace efforts in Amritsar failed because the Sikhs refused to co-operate. Muslim Leaguers insisted that search operations would nullify the peace efforts between the communities. Mamdot suggested that in order to speed up disposal of cases, the communal ones should be referred to non-official committees representing all the three communities who should decide which case should be dropped and which case should be pursued. Jenkins made no comment on that, as he preferred to discuss that with the I.G. Police.

Moreover, Mamdot pointed out that non-Muslims were hatching conspiracies and arms were being brought freely from NWFP. Mamdot emphasized that Muslim League attached great importance to the protection of the canal headworks. Jenkins replied that he was aware of that. He drew Jenkins' attention to the transfer of valuable instruments from the I.B Laboratories to Nangal. Jenkins said that, that would make no difference since any instruments that belonged to the laboratories would be common property and would be handled by the Partition Committee. Jenkins, however, mentioned that he would refer that to the concerned chief engineer.

Mamdot stressed that two Muslims should be included in the security committee. Jenkins replied that the committee did not work through voting. However, personally he had no objection to add a Muslim, but the point might be discussed in the committee next day.⁹³

Jenkins' minutes dated 30 June 1947

Mamdot told Jenkins on 30 June 1947 in a meeting that day that a couple of days previously, a meeting of Hindus and Sikhs had been held at the Saraswati Insurance Company. It was stated at the meeting: (i) that the present peace effort was only a limited cease-fire; and (ii) that every effort be made to replace the arms and explosives lost in the Shahalmi Gate fire. Ten persons, six Jats and four Sikhs were sent to NWFP with

⁹³ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 245-46.

Rs. 2 lakhs to buy arms. This information was passed on to concerned authorities.⁹⁴

Mamdot and Jenkins' peace concerns

Mamdot wrote to Jenkins on 2 July that he had come to an agreement with Indian leaders to maintain peace in the province. They had worked on those lines and there was considerable improvement in the peace situation of the province; they had gone around and told people to respect their pledges with the governor and maintain peace in their areas. Mamdot was shocked that after doing all that, curfew was declared in the Muslim Abadi "Misri Shah" where no communal riots had occurred. Mamdot said that large army and detachment of police had been stationed there to search the locality. Mamdot argued that during recent riots in Lahore the provocation always came from non-Muslims. It had been Hindus/Sikhs who took the initiative to start the trouble.

Mamdot was critical of the British targeting Muslim *abadis* and *mohallas*, putting them under curfew without water and food supplies and giving free hand to non-Muslims to store hand grenades and fire-arms. Muslims, nevertheless, were co-operating with the governor and maintaining peace in Punjab. Mamdot maintained that such policies of administration were belittling leaders in the eyes of their followers. He said no search had so far been carried out in the *mohallas* and *abadies* of the aggressors, who were well-equipped with explosives, hand-grenades and fire-arms. They were also not interrogated by the special staff.

Mamdot warned Jenkins that if British policies did not become sympathetic towards the Muslims, he would spurn the hand of co-operation. Mamdot insisted that if parity was to be maintained it would be advisable to have two Muslim members in Security Council instead of only one. He said that all repressive measures against Muslims had to cease. In case if any such measures were to be taken, they should be taken only after consultation with the Security Council. There should be a complete parity of Muslim and non-Muslim officers. Mamdot was told by an informer that special staff has been brought into existence under the immediate supervision of the D.I.G (CID), in the Lahore mental hospital. The special staff, he contended, consisted of non-Muslims, were preponderous, they tortured, tormented and used cruelest methods to

⁹⁴ Ibid., 247. Vol. V, note by Jenkins of separate talks with Sachar and Swaran Singh dated 23 June 1947. Also see Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XI, 822-24.

extort false statements from the Muslims who were arrested and taken there.⁹⁵

In a letter to Jenkins, Mamdot wrote that he should tell the public why he (Mamdot) had left the security council, and also to release to the press the correspondence that took place between them.⁹⁶ Jenkins replied that he disapproved of Mamdot's intention to publish what he wrote to him (Jenkins) on 2 July.⁹⁷

Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava a member of Legislative Assembly talked to Jenkins about the Partition Committee meeting that discussed the refugee problem in Rawalpindi. He discussed with Jenkins about refugees residing at Wah and what would be their fate after August 15. Jenkins told him that those issues had to be dealt politically and not administratively.

At this point Jenkins seems to be shirking his responsibilities since partition was inevitable and he should have arranged for the secure transfer of population from one part of Punjab to the other. In a way one can conclude that Jenkins was also responsible for the massacre of Punjabis. Jenkins thought that the way out for him as governor was to let the two Punjab governments sort out the issues mutually. Interestingly, the two chief ministers of Punjab were non-existent at the time as power was transferred after 14 August 1947.⁹⁸

Jenkins and Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh

Jenkins wrote that the above mentioned two leaders had come to meet him on 11 July 1947. They wanted to know about the arrangements after 15 August. Jathedar Mohan Singh of the Sikh community claimed that Jenkins was solely responsible for the future of Sikhs and that he must help them out. Jenkins made it clear to the Sikhs that he was not in a position to get justice to the Sikhs; it was up to the Boundary Commission which was appointed by the Governor General. It was ultimately up to the Governor General to decide. Jathedar mentioned the same solution that Giani Kartar Singh had talked about — transfer of population to avoid bloodshed. Strong distrust of the Congress was apparent throughout his statement. When Jenkins indicated that the Sikhs would secure premiership or governorship, Jathedar said that concessions

⁹⁵ Jenkins Papers, MF. no.1616, 405-07.

⁹⁶ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 247. Mamdot letter to Jenkins, dated 5 July 1947.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 248.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 248. Jenkins notes on his talks with Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava.

of that kind had no value and he was sure that Hindus would see to that, that Sikh influence from such high posts was gradually eliminated.⁹⁹

He wrote that Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh had specifically spoken about three matters that were closely connected to the partition. One concerning payment for a *jagir* or *muafi* attached to Kot Bhai Than Singh in the Attock district that successive deputy commissioners had recommended for its resumption. The case was pending when the coalition ministry resigned. Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harman Singh wanted the case to be decided by 15 August. Jenkins advised they must wait for the formation of the new government of West Punjab, but they could raise the matter in the Partition Committee or when a meeting was convened between the party leaders. The other matter concerned the future of the refugees at the Wah Camp who needed to be transferred safely to East Punjab. Here again Jenkins thought that the decision must be made by the Partition Committee or by the party leaders. The third issue related to the protection of Gurdawaras in Rawalpindi, particularly Panja Sahib, Choa Sahib Rohtas, and Narali Sahib. Jenkins said he could not take the responsibility after 15 August which would pass to the new government in another sovereign country.

Jenkins thought that he had cleared his position to Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harman Singh regarding the responsibility of all matters passing on to the new governments, when Jenkins and other British officers would be out of it.¹⁰⁰

On 12 July 1947 Gopi Chand Bhargava, in his meeting with the governor, discussed the situation in Gujranwala which was bad despite speeches by party leaders. The demonstrators or public at large did not care about the orders of the deputy commissioner or the superintendent of police. He referred to the outrage at the railway workshop on 10 July and said that non-Muslims should stop working. To normalize the situation, he suggested that resort to indiscriminate arrests should be avoided. Railway trains carrying refugees should be guarded particularly those leaving Gujranwala, Lahore and Amritsar.

Bhargava was also worried about the administration of Eastern Punjab. Jenkins advised him to discuss that with the new government. Jenkins was aware that the next few weeks would be very difficult and he wanted that order be maintained so the new governments might have the best possible start.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol.XII, 11 July 1947, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, 250-51.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 251-52. 12 July 1947, narrating Gopi Chand Bhargava apprehension.

Sikh plans to hold massive rally (*diwan*) at Nankana Sahib on 27 July

Sikh leadership announced plans to hold a massive rally on 27 July at Nankana Sahib through a poster that carried the names of 22 MLAs and other Sikh leaders including Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh; but it was not certain who the actual organisers were. Although public meetings were prohibited throughout Sheikhupura district, and that meeting could not be called a religious gathering to be exempted. It was indeed a political meeting that was being held to impress the Boundary Commission and the general public with the enthusiasm of the Sikhs for their boundary claims. The poster was widely distributed among villagers with request to come in *jathas*. The leaders hoped to be arrested; if no arrests were made they would announce a further programme of their meetings.

To stop the gathering government deputed the commander, Lahore area, to Sheikhupura district with a force consisting of a brigade and one squadron of 18 Cavalry and the 3 Baluch Regiment. That force was to be under the command of 23 Brigade and would be in addition to the Gurkha Company then stationed at Nankana Sahib/Sheikhupura. It had to be in position by the morning of 25 July. The inspector general of police had ordered the following restrictions:

- (a) Stop bookings by rail to Nankana Sahib and adjacent stations;
- (b) control posts on main roads giving access to Nankana Sahib;
- (c) control posts at convenient places on the railway lines; and
- (d) patrol villages to discourage attendance.

The Lahore Area Commander had intimated to Jenkins personally that troops would assist in these arrangements as per requirement, e.g. there were troops available at Lyallpur as well.¹⁰²

In a telegram Jenkins informed Mountbatten that “this meeting had been advertised, and outlined the measures he proposed to take to prevent it. He added that an actual organizer is almost certainly Giani Kartar Singh and explained that Sardar Swaran Singh been informed that the meeting was illegal and it would be dealt with unless stopped.”¹⁰³

Record of interview between Jenkins and Sardar Swaran Singh

Jenkins arranged a meeting on 25 July 1947 with Sardar Swaran Singh (MLA) that evening and questioned him about Nankana Sahib Diwan on

¹⁰² Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XII, 309-10, dated 23 July 1947.

¹⁰³ Ibid. tel.189—G of 23 July, Sir E. Jenkins informed Lord Mountbatten. *Mountbatten Papers* official correspondence Files: Punjab situation in, Part II (b).

27 July. The Sardar was clearly evasive, and said that it was not an officially sanctioned meeting. He did not believe that it would command a very large attendance. Jenkins warned him of communal clashes, if Muslims saw Sikh jathas moving to and fro in their villages, it was certain they would clash. Jenkins cautioned Swaran Singh to call off that meeting and ask other leaders to avoid clashes with Muslims. He clarified to Swaran Singh that the Sikhs could not back out of Sardar Baldev Singh's statement, as a member of Partition Council, that the Boundary Commission's award would be accepted, whatever it might be and would be enforced.

They both had discussion on the boundary issue. Sardar Swaran Singh was anxious to have whole or part of Montgomery (now Sahiwal) district and Nankana Sahib. Jenkins explained that there would not be much deviation from the "notional" boundary. He said if the Sikhs had made no extravagant claims and had simply stated their case for the transfer to the East of some colony land, they might possibly have secured some sympathy from the Boundary Commission; as it was, Jenkins thought they must dismiss from their minds any idea of large territorial gains. He made it clear that the Boundary Commission had nothing whatsoever to do with him, and it was not his business to advise the members to make any recommendations.¹⁰⁴

Gopi Chand Bhargava wrote to Jenkins on 26 July 1947 that the situation in Lahore required military pickets to be posted at strategic points and that military should patrol the bazaars and areas where stabbing had taken place. He knew there were nine stabbing cases in Amritsar. There were three cases in Lahore. It was rumored a bomb was thrown on a mosque and five shops were set on fire in Bazar Hatta.

Bhargava reminded Jenkins that when he last met him [Jenkins] he had told him that military pickets would be installed and troops would patrol the whole area. It was also said that this would begin to function from August 1st 1947. But as so far no pickets had been placed, he requested to expedite the arrangement.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

From the above discussion about Jenkins' interaction with the leaders of the three communities, it can be easily gathered that the governor was aware of the intensity of the communal conflict but he had neither the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Vol. XII, 354. Record of interview between Sir E. Jenkins and Sardar Swaran Singh, dated 25 July 1947. Record of interview between Sir E. Jenkins and Sardar Swaran Singh, 354, dated 25 July 1947.

¹⁰⁵ Carter, *Punjab Politics*, Vol. V, 254-55.

will nor the power to resolve it. At times his own partiality towards the Sikhs seems quite evident. Though he exhorted Indian leaders to act with sagacity and not to fan communal tension, this proved a futile exercise since the atmosphere that was brewing before and after the elections (1945-46) was all based on communal identities. It had gained momentum after the Second World War when it became obvious that the British would leave India. From the day, the British announced their programme of leaving India, political movements started moving with torrential speed. Jenkins was unable to check leaders who started communal agitation on 3 March 1947, when Tara Singh openly announced that they would exterminate Muslims from Punjab. Jenkins' administrative machinery took no action against instigative utterances of Sikh leaders on the pretext that doing so would aggravate the volatile situation in the Punjab. It can also be deduced from this study that the transitory period was tough on all communities; the sudden disappearance of mutual trust had unleashed unimaginable evil; everyone was eager to grab, not realizing what they were losing. The implication of that greed to occupy property after ousting the other communal group underscored the blindness of the crude, uncivilized process. On top of that, the administrative failure to check arson and murder created such misgivings between the Hindu and Muslim communities that the two countries still suffer from distrust though more than seventy years have passed. Lastly, it is hard to explain why Jenkins who was so opposed to partition of Punjab could not put his weight behind the Muslim demand for keeping Punjab united.