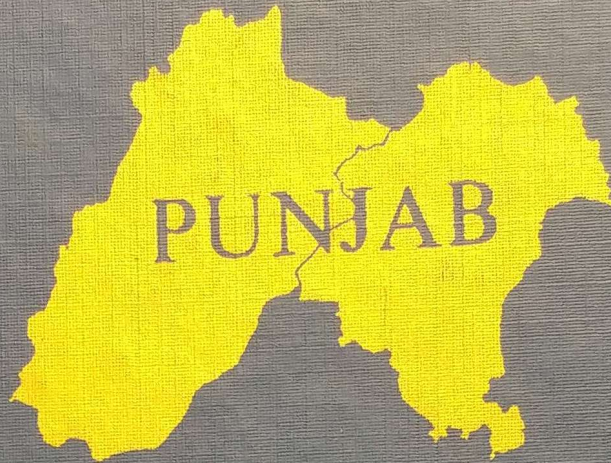




The partition of the Punjab

1947



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THE PARTITION OF THE PUNJAB 1947

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ARGUMENTS OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: I propose to confine my observations to the limited question, namely, the special claims of Qadian to be included in the Western Punjab. Sir Muhammad Zafrullah, the senior counsel on behalf of the League, will address you the main arguments on the basis of geographical, economical and other factors urged by the counsel on behalf of the non-Muslims. It is no doubt true that Gurdaspur also is one of the districts which has been seriously debated upon. But there are certain aspects which are common to the Ahmadiyya community and the Muslim League, and I propose to leave them as I have already indicated for the senior counsel, Sir Muhammad Zafrullah, who will address you on behalf of the Muslim League.

Now the terms of your reference, as I read them, are that the Boundary Commission is instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of the Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so it will also take into account 'other factors'. Reading in the context my respectful submission is that I am only indicating that the primary intent and the intention, judged in the context is that the basic feature on which this demarcation of boundary is to be effected is the majority population. Everything else is subordinate to that consideration and ancillary to that consideration. On that basis I proceed to speak on the claims of Qadian to be included in the Western part.

The foremost consideration is that Qadian falls in the contiguous area of a Muslim majority population. For that purpose I would respectfully refer you to the map which accompanies the memorandum submitted on behalf of the Ahmadiyya community¹. You will be pleased to see from that map that Batala tehsil is marked green and Qadian falls in it. There is a contiguous green colour showing the majority Muslim population area and the tehsil of Batala is there. Working it out, whether on the basis of tehsil or *zail*, thana or *qanungo* circle, it falls in the Muslim majority area. These are the well known divisions of the administration of the province. In the map you see that working it out on any of these

¹ Vol. I, p. 428.

units as basis, you will find that Qadian falls in the contiguous area of a Muslim majority population. From whatever angle this question is approached, you will irresistibly come to the conclusion that it falls in the Muslim majority area. That being the basic consideration, my respectful submission is that one need not proceed further. That would be the final word on this subject. But there are other considerations too.

The tehsil of Ajnala and the tehsil of Narowal are contiguous to the tehsil of Batala. A further factor which I shall place before you is that out of all the tehsils in the district of Gurdaspur, the majority of Muslims are concentrated in the tehsil of Batala. In the tehsil of Batala the percentage of Muslims is 55.6, in the tehsil of Narowal it is 54.93 and in the tehsil of Ajnala it is 59.46. These are official figures and you will be pleased to see that these two tehsils which are contiguous to the tehsil of Batala have a Muslim majority population. On this basis, if the contiguous area is to be demarcated on the basis of adjoining tehsils—though administratively they fall in other districts—on this basis no other conclusion is possible than that Qadian, which is in the tehsil of Batala, is a Muslim majority area. You will be pleased to see that a good deal of your time was taken up by counsel opposite considering 'other factors'. I wish to make it quite clear that the primary basis of consideration is population and my honourable friends opposite have been banking not on contiguous majority areas but...

MR. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD MUNIR: Are you aware of the method of approach of the other side that the area which you claim is not a majority Muslim area? Have you got anything to say on that point?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: My submission is that I can very well understand if a small portion of the other community wedges in—or if a small area of a particular community wedges in—a very small area could be ignored and I can very well understand if a ring is made about a very large area of the population, it is a different thing altogether. There is another method of approach of collecting together every area so as to see that that constitutes Muslim majority area.

MR. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD MUNIR: I think you have not followed the method adopted by the other side.

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: I was not here then.

MR. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD MUNIR: They have excluded three bits which constitute Muslim majority areas, one of them being Qadian, the others being the towns of Batala and Fatehgarh Churian and they say if you exclude these three Muslim majority areas the remaining tehsil will be a non-Muslim majority area.

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: My submission is that if these three areas are to be excluded, you should employ a uniform method before you proceed to decide whether it is a Muslim majority area or a non-Muslim majority area. I submit that whether you treat a thana as a unit or a *qanungo* circle as a unit or a *zail* as a unit or a tehsil as a unit we must know what is the basis. But it is not possible for us to believe...

MR. JUSTICE DIN MUHAMMAD: Will you place before us an illustrated map tomorrow?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: Coming to the other factors you will be pleased to see that what the Sikhs claim, as I understood it, is this. A great deal was made of certain shrines, particularly Nankana Sahib shrine and the shrine at Amritsar, that Nankana Sahib is the birthplace of Guru Nanak and that there are other shrines at Amritsar and at Srigobindpur. These historic shrines are enumerated in the Sikh Memorandum¹, paragraph 56, page 52, and they say:

For the Sikhs, the tract commanded by the Upper Bari Doab Canal has got a very special significance. The Sikh religion centres round the Golden Temple of Amritsar and its tank. Guru Ramdas first settled near the tank about 1574² and obtained a grant of the site with 500 *bighas* of land from Akbar in 1577². The tank was called Amritsar, the tank of nectar or immortality; though others derive the name from Amar Das, the predecessor of Ram Das. Arjun the next Guru, built the temple and the foundation grew in religious and political importance, until, on the retirement of Ahmad Shah from India, in 1762, the temple rose from the ashes in which he had left it, and Amritsar became the acknowledged capital of an independent community. The Akal Bunga at Amritsar facing the Golden Temple is the seat of spiritual authority for the Sikhs and the seven storeyed tower known as Baba Atal built

¹ Vol. I, pp. 381-382.

² The reference is to the Christian Calendar.

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¹ Vol. I, pp. 381-382.

² The reference is to the Christian Calendar.

rather more than a century ago commemorates the memory of a son of Guru Hargobind. A metalled road connects Tarn Taran with Amritsar which is 14 miles to the north. Tarn Taran is the chief town in the Amritsar Manjha or upland tract, but its importance is entirely religious, and centres round the sacred tank said to have been dug by Arjun, the Fifth Guru of the Sikhs, which is 300 yards square, with a paved walk running round it. Ranjit Singh greatly revered the temple at Tarn Taran which was originally built in 1768, and overlaid it with plates of copper gilt...

Again:

Regarding Gurdaspur it is recorded at page 59 of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, Volume II*, that the "chief historical importance of the District, however, lies in its connection with the rise of the Sikhs. Dera Baba Nanak on the Ravi preserves...

(The Commission rose at 4.00 pm to meet again on Saturday, 26 July 1947.)

26 JULY 1947

(The Commission resumed its hearings in the High Court buildings at Lahore, on Saturday, 26 July 1947 at 10.00 am.)

ARGUMENTS OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY—Contd.

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: Yesterday when you rose for the day I had made the submission that, as I read the terms of reference, the basic conception is that it is on the basis of majority population that demarcation is to be effected. I had made a further submission that whatever the unit of distribution, whether you take it as the tehsil or the *zail* or the thana or the *qanungo* circle, Qadian falls within the majority population area of Muslims.

So far as other factors are concerned, I have made the submission that on behalf of the Sikhs certain schemes have been preferred on the basis of certain shrines which are situated at Nankana, Amritsar and Sri Hargobindpur. I may make a submission that even in the debate of the House of Commons, reference has been made to the shrines. Whatever its value it is for you to determine but I submit that if on the basis of shrines this question is approached, you will be pleased to see that, so far as Qadian is concerned, it has certain distinguished features which would justify my making this submission that the claims of Qadian are of foremost importance and should receive your first consideration. You will be pleased to see that Qadian is the place of the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. He claims to be the promised Messiah and the Mahdi of the later days. His claims withstood opposition but in a short while people from far and near rallied round his standard. He climbed by following in the footsteps of the Master Prophet Muhammad—Blessings of God be

upon him—and reached this spiritual eminence. The life activities of the holy founder of the movement were directed from this place. People from every end of the globe clustered round him to seek spiritual light and to gain religious knowledge. The last remains of the holy founder of the movement also are buried in this place. Eminent and distinguished members of the community, because of their devotion, sacrifice, and service to Islam, also lie buried there. The learned in religious literature are there to impart religious instruction. The Central Ahmadiyya Organisation has its headquarters at Qadian. The central treasury of the Ahmadiyya community, where lakhs and lakhs of rupees by voluntary contribution are sent, is located at Qadian. There is a Missionary College which caters to the needs of the community so far as religious instruction goes and above all the dynamic personality of the head of the Ahmadiyya community, the second successor to the promised Messiah, lives there and members of the community flock there to hear learned discourses and to gain spiritual uplift. You will thus be pleased to see that Qadian is a living centre of the entire Ahmadiyya community. It is a living centre to which all people, who live in different parts of the globe look for religious and spiritual knowledge. They all refer to Qadian for all their spiritual, cultural, moral and religious needs.

MR. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD MUNIR: What is the number of the community?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: Half a million.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: Were they separately enumerated in the last census?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: No distinction of Ahmadiyya was made in the last census. The only distinction which was recognised was that if someone described himself as a Shia, he was described as such but if he gave any other description as Hanafi, then he would be classed as such. On the occasion of the annual gathering more than fifty thousand people flock to Qadian. The railway tickets could be an indication to that effect. More than fifty thousand attend the annual gathering.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: Fifty thousand are in the British Punjab and how many are elsewhere?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: A million all told and that is a very modest estimate. As I shall be presently submitting, people living

in different countries claim to be members of the Ahmadiyya community.

MR. JUSTICE DIN MUHAMMAD: There is some misunderstanding about your figures. You said that half a million Ahmadiyya belong to the Punjab and half to areas outside the Punjab. You said that fifty thousand attend the annual gathering.

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: That is a fact which could be verified by reference to the railway authorities.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: How do you get on that figure when the census records do not show the number?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: If fifty thousand people attend Qadian on the occasion of the annual gathering, that is an indication of what the number of the community should be.

This community has a universal appeal that it is an international movement in Islam and I will now place before you certain opinions expressed by various people bearing on the Ahmadiyya community. The first quotation which I place before you is from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Volume 12, pages 711-12. I will not read the whole but a part of it.

The Ahmadiyya community—Missionary activities not only in India, West Africa, Mauritius and Java, but also in Berlin, Chicago and London. Their missionaries have devoted special efforts to winning European converts and have achieved a considerable measure of success.

Then Craven in *Muslim World*, Volume 21, Serial 2, page 510 :

This leads to discussion of the Ahmadiyya, the Muslim counterpart of Hindu or...they are marked by devotion, zeal and sacrifice that calls for general admiration.

Dr. Murray in his book *Indian Islam* at page 223 makes the following observation :

The Ahmadiyya are at present the most active propagandists of Islam in the world.

De Lacy O'Leary in his book *Islam at the Cross Roads* on page 105 makes the following observation regarding the Ahmadiyya :

Mission preachers have been sent to different parts of India and

it is said, to Syria, Egypt and England. But the Ahmadiyya movement in England does not aim at taking converts, though it invites them. It is making a very definite effort to improve the attitude of the English people towards Islam and to secure for it a fair and just hearing, a purpose which must command sympathy even from those who are actively engaged in Christian missionary work among Muslims, for the removal of misrepresentation and misunderstanding can only be a gain to both sides in controversy.

Then again Sir Thomas Arnold in his book *The Islamic Faith* on pp. 70-71 makes the following observations :

The bulk of his [*Ahmad's*] followers is to be found in the Punjab but they carry on an active propaganda and have missionaries in England and Germany, in British colonies, and other parts of the world, and have succeeded in winning converts not only among other Muslims but also among Christians.

Professor H.A.R. Gibb in his book *Whither Islam* at page 214 makes the following observations :

This religious movement through its own dynamic force has attracted wide attention and secured followers all over the world. It is named after its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of the town of Qadian in the Punjab.

On page 287 he says :

In Java as well as in Sumatra, and partly in competition with Mohammadiyah, the Ahmadiyyah movement has been making itself felt during the last few years... The doctrine of the Ahmadiyyah is of a highly ethical character and it directs itself particularly towards the intellectuals.

Then W. Wilson Cash in his book *Expansion of Islam* on page 222 says as follows :

...This sect, is among the most enterprising in missionary efforts in Muhammadans...

Basil Mathews in his book *Young Islam on Trek* at page 136 makes the following observations :

Their [The Ahmadiyya Community's] small numbers are no indication of the influence of the movement.

So my object in placing these references before you is not what I speak of myself but what is others' estimation of the activities and position of Ahmadiyya movement in Islam and I submit that it has a position of distinction. In visualising the importance I may place before you that the first and the foremost distinction is that it is a living energetic centre which is controlling and directing the activities of the members of the Ahmadiyya community all over the world. I am placing these simple facts now but when I come to discuss the three Sikh shrines, the distinction will be pretty obvious. You will be pleased to see what great admiration and sense of reverence the members of this community have for their holy founder. This can be estimated by another fact. In 1900 there were hardly 2 scores of men in Qadian which was then a village and had absolutely no features to recommend itself. There were no facilities of communication etc., and no one could envisage that this was going to be a big and flourishing town.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: When was that sect founded?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: It was founded in 1889. I was making this submission that there were hardly 2 scores of people in Qadian in 1900. But people from far and near, giving up their original homes, migrated to this place to sit at the feet of their master to acquaint themselves with the religious instruction for their spiritual uplift. Today Qadian claims not less than 15,000 people, out of whom 90 per cent are the members of the Ahmadiyya community. I make this distinction advisedly because people on account of great religious attachment to their centre gave up their homes and came to this place. You will be pleased to see that at the present moment there are people in Qadian from Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, U.Ps., C.Ps., Hyderabad Deccan, Madras, Bombay, Sind, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Mauritius, Indonesia, Turkey, Syria, China and even from England. People from these countries at the present moment have moved to Qadian, some of them temporarily, to seek religious instruction and a vast majority of them have given up their original homes and made Qadian their home.

Not only that—the universality of the appeal made by the holy founder can be estimated by another factor, and it is this that the

Ahmadiyya community has established its branches in the United States of America, in Canada, Argentina, England, France, Spain, Italy, Syria, Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan, China, Ceylon, Mauritius, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Abyssinia, Sudan, Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. In some of these foreign countries, there are hundreds of local branches. It shows that though this community is not numerically strong, it undoubtedly occupies a recognised international position.

Now, sir, at this stage I wish you to turn to the claim preferred by the Sikh community on the basis of their shrines. So far as that claim is concerned, Nankana Sahib is sacred to them because it is the birth place of Guru Nanak, Sri Gobindpur is sacred to the memory of the third Guru and Amritsar is important for its associations with the fourth Guru. In spite of all these claims—I may make it clear that I do not propose to dispute their claim on the ground of their religious sentiments—if you look to the population of these places, the population of the Sikhs in Amritsar is only 15.03%. In Nankana Sahib, which is the birth place of Guru Nanak, they number only 5,437 out of 13,000¹ and Sri Gobindpur is just a village with no peculiar feature to recommend its importance. No doubt these are all sacred places but the Sikhs do not receive any spiritual inspiration from these places.

SARDAR DARBARA SINGH: I strongly protest against what has been said by Sheikh Bashir Ahmed. By saying that the Sikhs do not receive any religious inspiration from these places he has injured the feelings of the Sikhs. I wish to emphasise that all these places are the holy shrines of the Sikhs and the Sikhs receive religious instruction from these places.

MR. JUSTICE DIN MUHAMMAD: He is not injuring the feelings of any community. He is only drawing an inference from the paucity of Sikhs in Amritsar and Sri Gobindpur.

SARDAR DARBARA SINGH: In his zeal to stress his point, he has certainly injured the feelings of the Sikh community.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: It is for the Commission to judge the force of his argument.

SARDAR DARBARA SINGH: I strongly voice my protest against what he has said.

MR. JUSTICE DIN MUHAMMAD: Your protest has been record-

¹ The correct figures are 5,427 and 12,981 respectively.

ed. I would ask Sheikh Bashir Ahmad not to draw any inference but simply quote facts and figures.

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: The Ahmadiyya community has 745 branches and out of these 745 as many as 547 lie in Pakistan. In other words as many as 74 per cent of the branches of our community come in the area which falls in Pakistan. As you know, sir, the money which comes in the central treasury is in the nature of voluntary contribution and the vast majority of those contributors, in fact 3/4th of the entire people who contribute to our central exchequer, fall in Pakistan. The economic stability of the community also requires that Qadian should fall within the area of Pakistan. Besides that, 15,000 acres of land purchased by the Central Ahmadiyya Organisation lie in Pakistan and the property of the members of the community many many times over also lies in Pakistan.

Now I come to the literature of the Ahmadiyya community. Needless for me to say that all the literature of the community is in Urdu and therefore so far as the members of the community are concerned, it is of vital importance that their connection with the Urdu literature should be a living connection. In the Indian Union the language which has been evolved has nothing in common with Urdu and we understand that the script that they are going to adopt is the Hindi script. This is of vital importance because the Ahmadiyya community will have to learn Hindi for their economic prosperity and to seek service and if they do that, that would mean their spiritual death or at least their spiritual stagnation. If on the other hand they stick to Urdu, that would seriously affect their economic prosperity. My submission therefore is that for their economic stability and religious literature the Ahmadiyya community should be within Pakistan.

MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH: What is the position of the Ahmadiyya community as regards Islam?

SHEIKH BASHIR AHMAD: They claim to be Mussulmans first and Mussulmans last. They are a part of Islam.

It is a well known fact that the main objective of the Ahmadiyya community is to spread the message of Islam to every nook and corner of the world and in order to achieve that objective it is essential that our community should not be placed in the situation where difficulties would be created for the propagation of their

religion. As you well know, in the Indian Union one particular sect of the Hindu community, the *Sanatanist*, is against conversions and it will be naturally very difficult for us to achieve our objective, namely, the bringing of every individual under the banner of Islam and I make bold to say that this will never be tolerated by the Ahmadiyya community.

There is another important matter to which I would like to draw your attention at the present stage. In the terms of reference of the Commission, you will find that there is a definition as between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslim is a negative definition which excludes all those who do not subscribe to the faith of Islam and therefore so far as the terms of reference of this Commission are concerned, it is the solidarity of the Muslim community which is primarily to be considered. I am making this submission advisedly. There is no class of people who subscribe to the nomenclature of non-Muslims. There are people following different faiths in India; Parsees, Christians, Hindus, etc., etc. Non-Muslim is a convenient expression to describe them all. The basis of your terms is that you have been called upon to demarcate the Muslim majority areas and the non-Muslim majority areas. The only community which can claim solidarity is the Muslim community. Sikhs do not figure separately, they are included in the term "non-Muslims". The only community whose preservation is intended under the terms of reference is the Muslim community. Religion is the basis of this division. Qadian has become a living international unit of the Islamic world. Therefore this unit has to decide whether it should go to the Indian Union or Pakistan and it is Pakistan that we have decided to join.

The second consideration which I wish to place before the Commission is that when Pakistan is established, it will have very close relations with the outside Islamic world. There will be greater facilities for us in Pakistan and the interests of the community will be better safeguarded there. Therefore my respectful submission is that on that ground also the claims of the Ahmadiyya community merit your first consideration.

My last submission is this that no doubt our Sikh friends rendered meritorious services to the British Government, but they, for the services they had rendered, were compensated by the grant of land in the canal colony areas. Yet the Ahmadiyya community is

in a position to make this statement that even on the point of services rendered to the state, considering their numerical strength, it stands foremost in that direction. A reference to Appendix 3¹ would indicate that even in the last Great War about 199 members of this community held the King's Commission and they held very high and responsible positions. So on points of services also the Ahmadiyya community can stand with any other community. As a matter of fact its claim must receive foremost consideration. I am in a position to declare that the Ahmadiyya community has never asked for rewards and in fact has never been given any. Its ideology is that you must cooperate with the government that is established by law and it is in deference to that ideology that we served the state and we shall continue to do so. What I submit is that our Sikh friends want that their economic prosperity should not be adversely affected and they have given in support figures of income tax, etc. I say that is wrong, that is not an index of their economic prosperity, but it is due to the services they have rendered and they have had enough reward for their services. But if they want to make that prosperity a ground to demarcate any other portion of land for the benefit of other people, my submission is that it would be too much. With these words I finish the case of the Ahmadiyya community.

ARGUMENTS OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLAH KHAN: It is no matter either of pride or of pleasure to be assisting in the proceedings which, whatever decision the Commission comes to or the Chairman arrives at, is bound to divide the province that one has always regarded as one's own. True, it is a matter of honour to have been selected by the only Muslim political organization in India to represent the case of Muslims before this Commission. I shall try to discharge that duty as best as I can but I do say that not only under a deep sense of responsibility but also under a deep load of sorrow.

I shall revert to the historical causes such as have been alleged to have led to the decision to partition the province later when I come to deal with the case said to be made out by my friend on

¹ Vol. I, p. 464.