

Adnan Tariq \*

**Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: Refocusing on the Great Fire of Shah Almi Bazar and the real exodus**

**Abstract:**

Lahore had been a victim of brutal communal riots since the end of Khizr Ministries on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. All these episodes of violence remained of mutual acts of violence in which all communities took participate as per their strength. This wave of violence had caused much damage to the cosmopolitan of Lahore. Still there was hope that somehow stoppage of all the bloodshed would enable the city to restart its previous peace full atmosphere once again. However, unfortunately that hopeful assumption had rather caused the opposite impact on the city of Lahore. That hope of normalcy returning had pushed the communalist rioters to turn all their efforts into the some of the vicious acts with their ultimate and detrimental outcome in the city and for the city of Lahore on the future cosmopolitan identity. *Present article is an effort to connect the purpose and impact of the Great fire at financial and trade hub, Shah Almi Bazar which resulted into an immediate push for the non-Muslim to leave the city.*

**Introduction**

This paper will find a major shift in argument as the course of circumstances had changed dramatically. Now the riots had started to shift into one-side acts' aiming at purging the city of its non-Muslims population. Muslims had finally reached at the stage where they just need to purge the remaining segments of non-Muslims. That was the real transformation in the helm of affairs. Now it was changing into to pervasively 'one-side acts of violence.' by focusing that very aspect, our chapter will construct the relevant argument that in which circumstances and how came the largest community had put together some of the massive acts of violence against Hindus of Lahore. Those acts had casted their impact on the remaining segment which were thinking that even in Muslim dominated Lahore, they could survive a co-existence. Thus, it became final in terms of circumstances and results, not to have non-Muslims in Lahore. The large part of non-Muslim population had left the city. Then what was the major significance in this phase, which enforced certain sections of Muslims to purge the city with non-Muslims. The understanding of that query forced our study to move into the dimension of newly emerged requirement of the violence. It will bring into analytical narrative all the policies adopted by authorities to maintain peace in Lahore. Nevertheless, all those policies were not able to cope the situation and resulted into utter failure. The centralized role of the mob-in-action was responsible for all the directions, violence had been taking in Lahore. The outcome of this chapter is to explain the complete purgation of non-Muslims from the city. In that regard our study will evolve its own thesis statement evolving through the thematic description of all the happening since that post Shah Almi phases. In that regard Ishtiaq Ahmad has produced his own version of story.<sup>1</sup> In which he has presented a modified version of ethnic cleansing as far as the city of Lahore is concerned. Paul Brass also declared it as the outcome of the theory of 'Retributive Genocide.'<sup>2</sup> Hansen seems to be of the opinion that all the final episode in respect of violence were actually not Genocide but 'genocidal acts' of violence.<sup>3</sup> That compromised usage was due to the non-involvement of the state but the existence of planned and organized character of the violence.

**Planning and the Real Purpose Behind**

---

\* Dr Adnan Tariq, Assistant Professor, Department of History Government Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore

## Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: JRSP, Vol. 58, No 2 (April-June 2021)

This changed scenario started in its defining moment with the burning of *Shah Almi* market. The *Shah Almi* market was the most important Hindu-Space in Lahore. Almost all the notable Hindu families from Lahore were running their trade-business over there. In addition, the residential localities, comprising of many Mohallas, were densely Hindu majoritarian.. Thus during the violence in Lahore, the value to hit that specific locality was connoted with specific socio-political meaning. After the end of the first wave of violence, which had been studied in the previous chapter, we came across a newly emerged strategic sense modifying the course of violence. That sense was to bring some detrimental direction in the desire to purge the city of Lahore with its not-wanted elements.

By the mid of June non-Muslims retaliation and vengeance had resulted into some of the planned acts of violence. In an immediate retaliatory move, *Shah Almi* was the focus of Muslims to get on it. It was more than a pinch-nerve center for the Hindus of Lahore.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we see some efforts to attack on that citadel. However, it was very difficult to attack on *Shah Almi* gate and market as well. Because the whole locality was walled and segregated with the iron barricades. *Shah Almi* Gate was a stronghold of the Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore. Its narrow streets barred with iron gates afforded protection against Muslim League offensive. The bazar was narrow and if the worst came to the worst, a few determined young men could defend it at both the ends.<sup>5</sup> It was very difficult, even to think about how to enter in it. The *Lachman Das*, aka, *Lache Shah*, the most notable trader from *Shah Almi* had boasted that. "Who will dare to burn the *Shah Almi* gate, I will give my daughter hand to him."<sup>6</sup> In an earlier effort of 18 June, a poor effort was tried to be put into place to burn the *Shah Almi* from inside. Another group was thinking same to burn down the '*Shah Almi*' did that failed attempt. They were not prepared sufficiently to do that in their own. Those relevant high officials had some know how about those individuals who were thinking or had put some effort at their own earlier.

Thus, when some of the high officials (in personal capacities) had set out to do that and provide sufficient support, all those earlier individuals were called and make part of that larger scheme as second independent group. *Fida Muammad Kardar*, who as very active in those days of Lahore. Though he was not a part of that plan to burn the *Shah Almi*, but still has close connection with the main culprits had disclosed about the existing of that second plan in detail in his book and also in an interview to the researcher. According to *Kardar*, he along with a group of Muslims boys were active in arson acts and attempted to set shalom bazar in fire at least for once. When they had decided finally to put some more mature effort, they had contacted *MG Cheema* and informed then about their plan. It is quite evident that, due to the secrecy Cheema had not informed them the complete plan. Albeit he had engaged them all in his plan by allowing them to do what they want to do at their own. However, at the same time he had made them conscious some of the limitations and secret modifications. According to *Fida Muhammad Kardar*, "One day a meeting was held in my house in which it was decided to set the whole *Shah Almi Bazar* on fir. We had informed *Muhammad Ghani Cheema* of our plan. He had given his consent and support to our plan. We had arranged some boys from *Mochi Gate* and *Sheranwala Gate*. Then in our first plan, we have tried to enter into the *Shah Almi gate*. Somehow, we reached inside the *Shah Almi Bazar* but could not be able to succeed to set the fire and returned. Then after a few days, we had attempted another time but failed."<sup>7</sup> However, that effort died down as a few shops, houses caught on fire with little damage. As police reached on the spot, and fire brigade had overcame the fire before it reached on high level.<sup>8</sup>

Second attempt counts detrimental not only in its immediate horrendous impact but also in the far-reaching change brought out in the future of cosmopolitan Lahore. That attempt was made on the middle night between 20 and 21<sup>st</sup> June 1947. An intelligent plan prepared by some of the big guns of Lahore high authorities. First Class Magistrate *M.G.Cheema* and Sub-inspector *Syed Dildar Husain Shah* were the main characters who arranged that incident. MG Cheema was the ringleader and brain behind all this. Dildar Husain shah selected and collected all the boys who had made this to happen. He also arranged the required material to burn the *Shah Almi* market.<sup>9</sup> The plan was divided in to two parts. In first part, one party was to attack on *Shah Almi* from the main side of its huge gate. In that, a group of 12 boys was formed. All these boys were form the *Sheran Wala Gate*, a massive Muslim locality. In the main ground of '*Sheran Wala Muslim School*,' all those boys were assembled and told what to do and how to do. According to the second plan to further proceed the course of action, another team of around 12 boys had come through outer canal outside Gate. In that effort *Abdul wahab*, *Meraj Din*, *Pehelwan Baraf wala*, *Aslam* and some other boys succeeded in that attempt and reached at the outer side of *Shah Almi Gate*. At that time, a small

canal of *Mian Mir* had passed through the *Sheran Wala* gate to the main gate. All these boys were to swim through that canal secretly to make their reach at the main gate of '*Shah Almi*.' Such secrecy was because, at the main gate of *Shah Almi*, Hindus boys were posted with automatic guns. In addition, it was very easy for them to shot dead any person from the from side very easily. *Ghulam Murtaza But* from *Kashmiri Gate* has told in detail about that plan along with his role.

*At that time, a SHO Syed Dildar Husain Shah had dared to plan it out. That 'Shah Hawaldar' had arranged different boys from Sheranwala gate and from other walled city localities. He congregated all of us in a 'Tabela'(orchard) in Sheranwala Gate, now it is converted into Sheranwala school, and made us understand the complete plan how to set the whole bazar of Shah Almi on fire. It was a group of thirty-boys. Shah house was also situated in the Sheranwala Gate. That was time of 'Asar.' Shah had provided us kerosene oil and match boxes which were very rare in those days. He kept that kerosene in his house. Almost all the boys were from Sheranwala Gate. Two or three were from Bhatti and 'Lohari' gate. After one-hour consultation, we had developed a consensus plan about how to do it. At that time, a small canal was laying outside the Shah Alami gate. It was all through the the walled city of Lahore. Some of the boys had swim through the canal secretly to reach at the main gate of the Shah Almi Gate. 5/6 boys reached in this way to the main gate of Shah Almi. Then remaining boys reached at the either sides of that gate secretly. When those canal boys reached at the gate, they climbed at the upper portion of the gate. In that effort, one of our boy, Kala was killed in a fire. However, 'Kala' had done his job, as he was the man who started that fire. Meanwhile all of us reached over the spot on carts. We had set fire on the lower portion of the gate, which spread very quickly. That was huge fire. Even we could not have anticipated the gravity of that fire. Shah Almi gate had remained set on fire for up to three to four days at least.<sup>10</sup>*

According to the second plan to further proceed the course of action, another team of boys had to attack from deep inside the *Shah Almi Mohalla*. First, they reached at central point of *Shah Almi Bazar*. At that, time curfew was in place and nobody was out. Thus, escaping from many eyes that group had started their work and set the commercial area on fire from the *Chowk Matti* area, where Hindus residents were situated. Soon the whole area of *Shah Almi* was set ablaze In that second part, the scheme was to attack the *Shah Almi Bazar* from the deep inside, the central locality point where commercial and residential areas were mixed and connected with the other parts of walled city. That connectivity with inner-walled city had made a rather feasibility to approach the *Shah Almi Bazar* from inside, as it was not tightly barricaded. *Muhammad Shafiq* from *Shish Mahal Ghati* inside *Bhatti Gate* has told about that second plan in details.

*"In our Mohalla Arain clan was living, young boys from that Arain clan from our Shish Mahal Ghati had played an important role in those days. Shah Alami gate was set on fire by us. We were the group of 12 young boys from Shish Mahal Ghati. We six person were only from our family. Remaining were from the related areas. The name of those boys were Siddiq, Shafiq, Zafar, Hafeez, Lateef. We took four tin-box filled with kerosene oil and with big spoons to throw the oil on pointed targets. That kerosene oil was made available from a Hindu shop after breaking it. We had matches as well to light that oil to set the fire on. That was the 'Asar' time of the day when we started our plan to enter the Shah Almi Bazar. Curfew was in promulgation and we decide to reach in Shah Almi Bazar not through the main road. Rather it was the inside small and narrow streets inside the walled city through the Shish Mahal Ghati to the central point inside Shah Almi Bazar. From outside Shah Almi Bazar was locked and gated locality. It was such kind of locality that even in off-curfew times impossible to enter into that bazar. Hindu traders of Shah Almi Bazar had arranged tight security measures for the protection of that bazar. Therefore, it was the only way to reach inside Shah Almi Bazar through the narrow and inside lanes of walled city. In the meanwhile, some boys from the 'Anghi Haveli' also joined us. Now it was a group of 12 boys. Those boys from 'Anghi Haveli' were well aware of the details of the passages towards the central area of Shah Almi Bazar. After reaching at the decided point of central Shah Almi Bazar we started our action. We set ablaze almost all the central bazar of the Shah Alami Gate. It took around*

*two hours to complete mission. When we were about to finish our mission, we reached at the point of exit that is at 'Jora Mori.' As we had made a mistake that while setting the fire we had set that very area from where we had entered the Shah Almi gate. Thus, we had to make our exit from the Jora Mori lane. From 'Jora Mori' we went to a nearby confidant Muslim. Here we took some rest. He served us with two glasses of milk for every boy. It was 'Gujjar' house. After taking some rest and relaxing, we waited for a while for the opening of curfew and then we returned our houses. The actual fire in Shah Almi was from inside that was our great job which we had done in a big way. Those who claim to set the Shah Almi gate on fire from outside was not not a job up to the level of our job. Outside fire had just remained up to the exterior of the Shah Almi.<sup>11</sup>*

In that huge fire, different localities inside *Shah Almi, Pari Mahal, Koocha-e-babiyan, Koocha-e-Moti Panda, Bazar Machi Hatta*, all were set ablazed. Almost 80 percent of the Shah Almi Hindu area was burnt to ashes.<sup>12</sup> The burning down of a large number of shops in the Shahalmi Gate and almost the whole of *Paper Mandi* and *Kucha Havagaran* caused the loss of over one crore. Buildings on both sides of the bazar were entirely gutted and have collapsed. The two bazars, which were the main centers of supplies of various kinds of requirements of daily life and where transactions worth lakhs of rupees were made daily, were turned into ashes.<sup>13</sup> The fire brigade arrived late and even after arrival did not render any effective aid for a couple of hours because water was not available from the Corporation tube well, which was found to be not working properly because of, some burnt fuse. The two fully equipped private fire engines sent by the *Gowalmandi* Hindus and the Muslim police who took the honorary workers into custody prevented Sikhs (Gandhi Square) to help in fighting the fire from doing so. It was alleged though no proof could be offered, that the practice of the Corporation fire brigade, which was then entirely manned by non-Hindus, was to throw petrol instead of water on the burning fires.<sup>14</sup> *Shah Almi Gate* fire gave a new interpretation of the Curfew. People whose houses were set on fire were prevented from coming out into the open street because of the curfew. For this very incident, *Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru* had written letter to Mountbatten and complained about the happening in Lahore in respect of fire at *Shah Almi Bazar* and about the alleged conduct of the high officials. He alleged that police did not let the non-Muslims to extinguish fires at the pretext of curfew orders.<sup>15</sup> Lary Collins and Lapiere had narrated in their book about the emotional breakup of Nehru while listening the news of that great fire in Lahore in utmost despair. The level of his emotional reactions was enough to show the actual meaning that great fire had casted over the future of cosmopolitan Lahore.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Aftermaths of Shah Almi fire; New wave of Arson and Violence**

*Shah Almi* incident was accompanied by a new wave of arson. Now there were not any more acts of random arson, rather a complete socio-politics was infused in that wave, connived by notables and silent assistance of officials in their personal capacities. That huge scale of incendiarism was not aimed at killing maximum numbers of non-Muslims. All those attempts of fire was aimed at creating maximum panic among the non-Muslims of Lahore with the purpose to make them too scared to leave the city of Lahore. We can find so many accounts in which a reported case mention a fire, successful or just attempted, with no dead body or burn case inside. We also found that majority of the burnt house were already empty. As their house fellow had left the city very before the reaching of communal atmosphere up to vulnerable level. That wave of new arson, characterized with new intensity and new theme. In the *pre-Shah Almi fire*' time, any group or persons did not thematically design those incidents of arsons. However, with the burning of *Shah Almi*, a new setting of action had developed in which some of the notables were involved as well to perpetrate several of arson acts. We can conceive this new sense behind that new arson wave. Within one week after *Shah Almi* fire, 391 houses were set ablaze. Such intensification of arson was not a result of any kind of extra- provocation but a kind of winning sentimentalism among the Muslim quarter of the Lahore.<sup>17</sup>

The second feature was to create a huge panicky in Lahore for the non-Muslims. The Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore were completely demoralized after this action and the city began to be emptied by tens and thousands of people day and night. In Lahore, the Muslims wanted to scare away the non-Muslim element in the population.<sup>18</sup> 'The campaign was intended to make Lahore too hot to hold the Hindus and Sikhs.' The only feasible and cheap way to do this was to convert the city into a series of arsons. In that emerged requirement, it was not held necessary to kill the non-Muslims. The intention of our wide planning's was

## Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: JRSP, Vol. 58, No 2 (April-June 2021)

not to kill a large numbers of Hindus or Sikh. Rather it was aimed at making them harassed enough to leave the city in panic. And to get protection from them as they were having far more sophisticated weaponry as compared to Muslims.<sup>19</sup> Another strong proof was the absence of the dead bodies out of these fires. For this study, more than three hundreds written and oral accounts were studied. In addition, out of these accounts, hardly two or three, accounts were containing the mentioning of burned death in some particular kind of incidents. Out of more than one thousand FIRs studied for this research, only one report mentions the dead bodies in case of arson.

*Roop Chand son of Lala Tarlok Chand Arora from Mohni road, employee of Amritsar income tax office had registered a fir that my brothers and me had been living in the Mohni road. I was in Amritsar due to my job. I was informed telephonically that my house had been burnt down and my brothers and parents were burned in this incident of brutality. I came back to Lahore to see the matter and found out that my parents and brothers will were killed in that house fire. I have found out a lot blood inside the house near the dead bodies, which were burned badly.*<sup>20</sup>

It is not to suggest here that Muslims did not burned anybody inside house with intentional effort. It was the situation in which most of the non-Muslim, Hindus were the larger part of propertied class, had started to left the city since the start of violence in March. The majority of the houses, hit by arson were already empty. In addition, Muslims wanted to fire them with another emerged purpose. It was to create space for the incoming Muslims, particularly from Amritsar. It was evident from various accounts that Amritsar Muslims in Lahore had created an amplified element to boost the arson activities. It is not important whether they had themselves involved in those acts or not. However, the local Muslims had played their role while waging that enlarged wave of arson to create space for the refugees. While arson was rampant, the spontaneous street stabbing was also accompanying it with the same scale of augmentation. Psychological warfare was also accompanied it as Muslims of Lahore had secretly planned to circulate wrong information's in many forms. One such form was to dispatch fake post cards mentioning the atrocities committed by Muslims on the Hindus of Lahore. All those post cards were addressed to Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore and depicted men and women being killed and raped with a message printed on the back of the postcards telling this had been happening to our brethren in the city. If the remaining had not let the city, it would be the same fate for those.<sup>21</sup> In that intended chaotic condition, non-Muslims were made realized that their further stay was quite impossible. That new wave of massive arson was accompanying many more acts pervading towards those corners of the city where, so far, Hindus residents were living. Due to the widest scale of arson, those Hindu quarters were made completely cut off from the remaining city in their working. Business was suspended. Bus services were stopped. Railway platforms were crowded with waiting lines. The supply of food and other necessities broke down and house-wives were without milk, fruit. The District Magistrate had provide omnibuses, especially those that run through dangerous zones, with police guards. An air of bitterness and tension, enhanced by the appearance of barbed wire street barricades and police pickets throughout the city. British troops rounded up a group of men—mostly Hindus—from the narrow lanes surrounding the fire-razed area inside the *Shah Alami* Gate after bombs had been thrown at a magistrate.<sup>22</sup> Large sections of Lahore were nothing but skeletons of buildings and Streets in the burned areas were covered with bricks from collapsed walls. Numerous narrow bazaars were impassable. Predictions were being made freely that the settlement of the boundary between the Pakistan and Hindustan sections the the Punjab will be accompanied by new violence.<sup>23</sup> Capt. Robert Atkins, from *Gurkha* Regiment had narrated his journey to Lahore with his first look at the city in the words,<sup>24</sup>

*“Riding in his jeep over the hump-backed railway bridge leading into Lahore, Capt. Robert Atkins counted half a dozen great geysers of sparks gushing into the air above the city's darkened skyline. One image sprang to his mind; the blazing skyline of London on the night of the Great Fire Raid in 1940. Behind Atkins rode the 200 men of his company of 2/8 Gurkhas, advance element of the column of 200 trucks and 50 jeeps bringing his entire battalion to Lahore. Part of the Punjab Boundary Force, Atkins and his exhausted troops had been rushing to Lahore since dawn.”*

## Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: JRSP, Vol. 58, No 2 (April-June 2021)

Lahore was being deprived of its non-Muslims sections swiftly. Still then there were many non-Muslims in Lahore waiting for the any uncertain course of future for them. That was the crucial time in Lahore for the both rival communities. As Muslim wanted, the non-Muslims leave the city. While they were still in significant numbers in Lahore. In that messed up situation, we see the different meanings adopted by violence in Lahore. Arson acts had reached new peak due to the newly emerged fact that some segments of non-Muslims wanted to remain in the city. This was further testified by various accounts verifying the same desire. On June 28, a week after *Shah Almi* burning, Master Tara Singh had issued a statement that he was of the considered opinion that non-Muslims of the Western Punjab should continue to stay on in their present homes.<sup>25</sup> Later on, in the month of August, just before the actual partition, Gandhi had proclaimed in Lahore in a public meeting that, "If you think Lahore is dead or is dying, do not run away from it but die with what you think is the dying Lahore."<sup>26</sup> The statement given by Gandhi in Lahore had casted negative impact on the non-Muslims of Lahore. Who were not in much ambiguity about their stay in Lahore any more. However, that statement resulted into the negative impact on that mindset aiming at purging the city completely. Coming of Gandhi with his public statement had stirred that atmosphere against non-Muslims. A new feeling emerged, which was antipathy to the working mind of crowd mentality in Lahore. In that unambiguity regarding the course of action, still in full swing, it was not possible to find any sort of social-contractual-truce for the rival communities in Lahore. thus in that atmosphere, apart from the statements of *Gandhi* and, *Tara Singh* and some other notable Hindus about the Hindus of the Lahore not to leave the city also caused another level of ambiguity. Sikhs as a community also had not desired to leave the city even up to the end of the partition announcement. Their presences in several of the *Gurdawara* and various other major places in Lahore clearly manifest that sense. That confusion brought out due to the political consideration of the leadership and the contrary reality of the ground resulted into the lingering of the violence in the city by both sides.

Another important development in the *post-Shah Almi* period exhibits was the starting/happening of many mob attacks on the non-Muslims. The first half of the partition violence in Lahore, including all the phases, had not seen mob violence, except in the very first phase (4<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> March). However, as an ultimate result of the *post-Shah Almi* atmosphere, mob were started to develop into actions. Many such case were not only reported but also police had reported at their on that how came they tried to disperse one particular mob from attacking. Especially in the month of August, we see many such incidents with amazing consistency. Many of the incidents involving crowd were happened in the locality between *Mochi Darwaza* and *Shah Almi* area. However, other areas had also seen certain such incidents. Police had not done away any action to control that horrendous tendency developing in the public spell. First of that kind of attack was made inside *Mori Gate*, on '*Koocha-e-Kharak Singh*.' It was Hindu majority *Mohalla* and almost all the houses were empty except a few. A mob comprising Muslims from adjacent *Mohalla* had attacked on that *Mohalla* at night. In that attack no casualty was reported but the damage was done in the shape of wide spread arson on many houses.

*Lala Ram Din, sub inspector Lohari division has reported that when I was patrolling around Chowk Chakla inside Lohari Gate, Madan Lal Arora had informed me that 'Khocha e Kharak Singh' inside Mori Gate had been under attack by a mob with petrol bombs, acid bombs, kerosene Bombs,etc. They had set on fire many houses of Hindus in the area. When I rushed towards the described area, I found the scene rampant with the attackers and large-scale arsonage.i had tried my best to disperse the mob and put the fire to an end.*<sup>27</sup>

That new activation of mob is not meant the resurgence of the riots in Lahore. As the riots involved mobs from both sides at the same time. These were actually the violent expressions of the mob finding situation in their favor as partisanship of police force along with circumstantial favor was with them. There were a few mob actions in violence across the city. They were not well organized; rather just joint assemblage of the culprits to express their violent tilt with more explicit actions. The end-result of that 'mob-in-violent-action' was not much damaging both in terms of casualties or any other intensity. Those were the hyper-social expressions of those joint crowds generated due to the winning sentimentalism, which could be fulfilled by killing even one person by a big crowd. Another account shows that a group had attack on the evacuee family caravan.

## Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: JRSP, Vol. 58, No 2 (April-June 2021)

*Lal kishen Damar has registered a fir that I am resident of Dholanwall and today morning when I was going to 'Chungh' with my family. That a group of fifty persons, Muslims, had attacked on my family and me with knives and 'Kulharis.' They killed Barkat Ram and Hans Raj and injured other persons who were with me. I also got serious injuries on my right thigh. Siraj Din, Jilal, and Chiragh Din Arain from Pakki Thatti were among the attackers whom I can identify. Other person were from Pakki Thatti, Kharak, and Saidpur. I can identify them. All of them escaped when they saw a car coming from other side. They take away a gun from Barkat Ram and one suitcase also snatched away from us.<sup>28</sup>*

This exercise to exorcise non-Muslim was such massive that it had engulfed the whole of the city in short span of time in the days followed by the *Shah Almi* incident. Many of the Muslims, Parsees and Christian had started to mention at the doorstep that they were not Hindus or Sikhs. Specially in some sections of the *Model Town, Muzang* and *Cantonment* where those well of Christian and Parsee were living those days. Many Muslim residents of Lahore had also begun to paint green Islamic crescents on their gateposts to protect their houses from angry Muslem mobs. 'On *Lawrence Road*, a Parsee businessperson, member of a small religious sect unaffected by the communal frenzy, painted a message on his gatepost. Its words were an epitaph for Lahore has lost dream of goodwill. Muslems, Sikhs and Hindus are all brothers,' it read, 'but, O my Brothers, this house belongs to a Parsee.'<sup>29</sup> It shows the level of panic leading towards the complete purgation. Two staff reporters of the *Hindustan Times* were in the Lahore on 15 and 16 August. Describing the situation in Lahore on 15 and 16 August, the report said that the administration had disappeared and fully armed gangs had taken over the streets.<sup>30</sup> The special correspondent of The *Hindustan Times* Punjab Newsletter reported that in the preceding ten days over 3,000 people had been killed in Lahore alone.<sup>31</sup>

### Conclusion

Despite the third June announcement, when it had become clear that province is about to divide, there were still two wishful thinking on the side of non-Muslim. One was about the believe that Lahore could still be a part of the Indian Punjab and other one was about in the contrary case, non-Muslims would be part of the Muslim Lahore. However, it could not be substantiated very profoundly the second assertion could have been the real case. As the circumstances has shown that such kind of conception could not be possible in the wake of ongoing bloodshed in the city. However the still resistant quarter of the city were sending grey message that non-Muslims in Lahore were not going to migrate completely as the final decision was yet to come. Their presences in the *Shah Almi* area had offended Muslims criminals along with some of the dignitaries from the officials. Thus, the destruction of the huge market was planned to demolish not only the biggest citadel of Hindus in Lahore but also preparing the message to the other silent quarters of the city to leave the city as soon as possible. We see a major transformation of violence from the previously held riots to the newly incepted one-side act of ethnic cleansing. The arson was the main hallmark of violence during that phase, usually happened in almost all the empty houses as all the non-Muslims had left the city before the actual start of that violence except some sections in the walled city, *Cantonment* and *Model Town*. This study moves from the actual start of the exodus with meaning behind that phenomenon, to the causal analysis of the failure of the civil machinery to, at least, arrest the situation. Civil and military authorities had tried its most to stop the purging of the non-Muslims from the city but of no avail. The demand of martial law had been raised many a time from different corners, but Governor had always declined to do that on the pretext that the Martial Law neither could not be imposed with proclamation nor could be fruitful in random street acts. The inevitable turn of the violence series could also be checked only with the deployment of the military troops. Moreover, we often came across many such incidents where police and military troops had participated in violence along with communal lines. Thus, it was the lower cadre of the troops engulfing in the circumstantial controlled situation. Fire brigade could also not done its job according to the needs of the situation, as not everyone in the arson area was assisting the civil authorities. If they were not assisting the culprits then they also not handed the helping hand to the civil authorities even by not informing about the fire in time to the concerned fire department. The mob mentality was raging all over the city by the ending time. Officers both of local and British origin were expressing helplessness in the misconduct of their subordinates. It was quite a situation running on the

## Violence, Lahore and Partition of India: JRSP, Vol. 58, No 2 (April-June 2021)

circumstantial forces—the pivotal part of which was extended by the ‘Mob’ in the streets of Lahore, though scattered or assembled, no matter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ishtiaq Ahmad, *Forced Migration and Ethnic Cleansing in Lahore in 1947: Some First Person Accounts*, in ‘*People on the Move*’ ed., by Ian Talbot. (Karachi: OUP, 2000),

<sup>2</sup> Brass, Paul, “*The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946-47*,” in *The dependence of India and Pakistan: New Approaches and Reflections*, ed. Ian Talbot (Karachi: OUP, 2013),

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, Anders Bjorn, *Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab 1937-1947* (Delhi: India Research Project Publication Date: 2002)

<sup>4</sup> Given how little mentioning that great incident had received at the hands of the government authorities. We come to surprise when we read the fortnightly report of governor in which he had depicted that great incident in a way he was depicting some of the other routine arson case. Governor had not mentioned that incident in a way as it was supposed to be. The Sabzi Mandi outrage led immediately to the Shahalmli Gate burnings and to a large number of stabbing outrages by Muslims. (IOR) R/3/1/176, *Jenkins to Mountbatten*. Governor House Lahore, March 25 June, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> Fida Muhammad Kardar. *Serai Moti Ka Qaidi* (Lahore: Brite Books, 2003), 88.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> FIR.no.189, Note Book no.2, 19 June 1947, Thana Gawalmandi, Lahore.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ghulam Murtaza But Kashmiri, Sheranwala Gate, Lahore. 1930

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ghulam Murtaza But Kashmiri, Sheranwala Gate, Lahore. 1930.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Muhammad Shafiq, Shish Mahal Ghati, Bhatti gate, Lahore. Age 94 ye

<sup>12</sup> Kardar, 88.

<sup>13</sup> A.N. Bali, *Now It can be told* (Jullandar: The Akashvani Prakashan, 1948), 30.

<sup>14</sup> Bali, 30

<sup>15</sup> Apart from newspaper reports, people have come from Lahore to see me today and they have told me that when houses were set fire to, the residents of those houses rushed out into the streets and lanes and the police for breach of the curfew order fired at these people. Most of these fires occurred at the time of the curfew. I am told that the District Magistrate has ordered that people should keep open the doors of their houses and lanes so as to allow refugees from burning houses to enter other houses. because if they remain in the streets during curfew hours, they will be fired at by the police. *TOP*, Vol. XI, p. 561.

<sup>16</sup> Fly from Lucknow’s sacred staff. At 17 York Road, Jawaharlal Nehru had just finished washing the sannyasin’s ashes from his face and sat down to dinner when his telephone rang. His daughter Indira and his guest Padmaja Naidu could hear him in his study shouting to make himself heard over a bad line. Both women gasped when he returned. He slumped ashen in his chair, clasping his head in his hands, unable to speak. Finally, he shook his head and looked at them, his eyes glistening with tears. His caller had been telephoning from Lahore. Collins, Larry & Dominique Lapierre. *Freedom at Midnight; The Epic Drama Of India’s Struggle For Independence* (London: Harper Copllins, 1997), 336.

<sup>17</sup> *New York Times* (New York) Jun 23, 1947. A week proceeding to Shah Almi fire, 141 houses were set ablaze and three days followed by Shah Alami, 250 houses were set ablaze. Such intensification of arson was not a result of any kind of extra- provocation but a kind of winning sentimentalism among the Muslim quarter of the Lahore.

<sup>18</sup> (IOR), R/3/1/91, *Lahore Disturbance 1947-Comparison with 1942 Rebellion*, Note by John Eustace. 29 July 1947, Lahore.

<sup>19</sup> Mian Amir-ud-Din, *Yad-e-Ayyam* (Lahore: Maktaba-e-Anjuman-e-Humayat-e-Islam, 1984), 90

<sup>20</sup> Fir no.333, Note Book no. 21, 22 August 1947, Thana New Anarkali.

<sup>21</sup> The Central Post Office was flooded with thousands of postcards addressed to Hindus and Sikhs. They depicted men and women being raped and slaughtered. On the back was the message: ‘This is what has been happening to our Sikh and Hindu brothers and sisters at the hands of the Moslems when they take over. Flee before those savages do this to you.’ They were part of a campaign of psychological warfare being conducted by the Moslem League to create panic among Sikhs and Hindus. Collins, Larry & Dominique Lapierre. *Freedom at Midnight; The Epic Drama Of India’s Struggle For Independence*. (London: Harper Copllins, 1997),

<sup>22</sup> *New York Times* (New York) Jun 23, 1947; Tonight, on the eve of the Punjab Assembly’s verdict on partition, Lahore, capital city of nearly 1,000,000 people, was completely at a standstill after a week-end of

rioting in which 250 houses were gutted. Twenty fresh fires were reported and tonight the heart of the Hindu quarter was still smoldering after a disastrous fire at dawn. Business was suspended. Bus services were stopped. Railway platforms were crowded with waiting lines. The supply of food and other necessities broke down and housewives were without milk, fruit, British troops rounded up a group of men—mostly Hindus— from the narrow lanes surrounding the fire-razed area inside the Shah Alami Gate after bombs had been thrown at a magistrate.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times* (New York) 24 June, 1947. There is an air of bitterness and tension, enhanced by the appearance of barbed wire street barricades and police pickets throughout the city. While the situation is calm now predictions are being made freely that the settlement of the boundary between the Pakistan and Hindustan sections the the Punjab will be accompanied by new violence

<sup>24</sup> Riding in his jeep over the hump-backed railway bridge leading into Lahore, Capt. Robert Atkins counted half a dozen great geysers of sparks gushing into the air above the city's darkened `skyline. One image sprang to his mind; the blazing skyline of London on the night of the Great Fire Raid in 1940. Behind Atkins rode the 200 men of his company of 2/8 Gurkhas, advance element of the column of 200 trucks and 50 jeeps bringing his entire battalion to Lahore. Part of the Punjab Boundary Force, Atkins and his exhausted troops had been rushing to Lahore since dawn. Unfortunately, while 55,000 men had been designated for the force, the Indian Army had been able to get less than 10,000 of them at the eve of independence. Collins, Larry & Dominique Lapierre. *Freedom at Midnight; The Epic Drama Of India's Struggle For Independence* (London: Harper Collins, 1997),

<sup>25</sup> CMG(Lahore) 28 June, 1947, Master Tara Singh said that he was of the considered opinion that non-Muslims of the Western Punjab should continue to stay on in their present homes. API

<sup>26</sup> CMG(Lahore) 8 August 1947. Replying to a question by Dr. Lehna Singh, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress & Committee, 'Die with dying Lahore: do not run away from it,' declared Mahatma Gandhi in Lahore that, 'If you think Lahore is dead or is dying, do not run away from it but die with what you think is the dying Lahore. Replying to a question by Dr. Lehna Singh, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress & Committee,

<sup>27</sup> FIR.no.382.Note Book no.3.13 August 1947Thana Kotwali,Lahore.

<sup>28</sup> FIR no. 197. Note Book no.3 15 August 1947,Thana Ichhra,Lahore.

<sup>29</sup> Collins, Larry & Dominique Lapierre. *Freedom at Midnight; The Epic Drama Of India's Struggle For Independence* (London: Harper Copllins, 1997),

<sup>30</sup> Two staff reporters of the HT were in the Lahore on 15 and 16 August. Describing the situation in Lahore on 15 and 16 August, the report said that the administration had disappeared and fully armed gangs had taken over the streets. More than 100 people were killed on 15 August.<sup>20</sup> The HT Punjab Newsletter reported that in the preceding ten days over 3,000 people had been killed in Lahore alone. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Reporting the Partition of Punjab 1947* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2006), 342.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.