

POPULATION EXCHANGE

Jinnah Wanted Hijrat for all Muslims in India

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Why this Book?

IN 2003, I presented a volume called *Unfinished Agenda of the League* to Mr LK Advani at a special meeting held at the basement hall of the India International Centre Annexe. While acknowledging the book from the podium, he called it a new discovery. He did not hesitate to admit that he had, until then, not heard of an exchange of population. He was nearly 20 years old at Partition and was still at Karachi. Soon he became a *pracharak* of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh; yet, the subject was not discussed at the *bouddhiks* delivered at the *shakhas* he had attended. The late Devendra Swarup, a senior professor of history at Delhi University complimented me immediately and said that the book had been approved by the party boss. What more could a writer desire?

The book was self-published and did not get widely distributed, nor did it attract any debate or discussion. I have felt all these years that the subject needed to be put out again for more readers. The current century, as it began, seems progressively like the 20th century with similar minority demands despite the government at Delhi favouring, if not also pampering the Muslims. The Constitution of free India, released about two years after 15 August 1947, incorporates fundamental rights including Articles 25 to 30, which make the minorities almost superior to the majority and whose priorities are listed only as Directive Principles of Policy and not as fundamental rights. Yet Article 14 proclaims all citizens of India to be equal. Seven decades of Independent India are one crowded catalogue of contradictions and conflicts.

It is not widely known that Articles 25 to 30 owe their origin to communalism. The Constituent Assembly was elected in January 1946. On 13 December of the same year, Jawaharlal Nehru, as head of the interim government, moved, what was called, an Objective Resolution, whose aim was to appease the Muslim League in the hope that it would not press for partition. Remember, that no final decision had been taken on the grant of independence to India till 20 February 1947.

As it happened, the endeavour to appease the League failed, the country was divided and a Muslim homeland came into being. It is useful to recall that the Constituent Assembly had been elected on the basis of separate Muslim constituencies, then called separate electorates, and 85 per cent of the voters had voted for the League, whose single point manifesto then was Partition.

Cabinet Mission

Dr BR Ambedkar in his book *Thoughts on Pakistan* had written that between 1920 and 1940 there was a civil war between Hindus and Muslims. Fighting was mostly in the form of riots in many cities and towns of India. In March 1940, the Pakistan Resolution was passed at the Lahore session of the Muslim League. Inevitably, tempers did not cool thereafter. The 1940s was the most riot ridden decade which witnessed some of the most barbaric killings in human history.

As part of the run up to the partition of the country in 1947, on 9 February 1946, Sir Feroz Khan Noon, later to become a prime minister of Pakistan, happened to address the Muslim members of the Bihar legislative assembly at Patna. In the course of his speech, he said that if the Hindus came in the way of Muslims going to Pakistan, the latter would re-enact the violent orgies earlier perpetrated by Chengez Khan and Halaqu Khan. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was equally keen on the emigration of Muslims from Hindustan to the coming Pakistan, as were seven other top leaders of the Muslim League. Jinnah had written to Viceroy Lord Wavell pleading for an exchange of populations.

Dr Ambedkar had responded to the Pakistan Resolution in his book which was published early in 1941. He had endorsed Jinnah's proposal in principle with comprehensive arguments