

Reinvoking the Pakistan of the 1940s: Bihar's 'Stranded Pakistanis'*

PAPIYA GHOSH

Indian Institute of Advanced Study
Shimla

An apt summing up about the Partition is that never before in South Asian history did so few people decide the fate of so many, in northern India.¹ Up until recently,² however, there has been a historiographical silence about the lives and experiences of the people who lived through the time and the identities and uncertainties created and reinforced by the Partition.³

In what was the largest single bilateral flow of people, the Partition saw about six to seven million Muslims moving from the minority provinces of India to Pakistan and nearly eight million Hindus and Sikhs moving from Pakistan to India.⁴ Of the 700,000 *muhajirs* (refugees) headed for East Pakistan the vast majority were Urdu-speaking Biharis.⁵

This paper focuses on the reinvocation of the Pakistan of the 1940s by Biharis who describe themselves as 'Stranded Pakistanis' and have been living since 1971 in 66 refugee camps spread across Bangladesh, awaiting repatriation to Pakistan. Their reinvocation is intended to reinscribe the Pakistani nationhood which they see as having been grossly erased by successive, unresponsive Pakistani governments located in what remains of the national space they see as having created and subsequently defended.⁶ Tied to this reinvocation, I detail another, that of Pakistan's Muhajir Qaumi Movement (hereafter MQM) positing the *muhajirs* as the fifth nationality in a quest more recently, for a province of their own in the now ethnicised terrain of the Pakistani homeland, which they underline was inaugurated by the immense and unacknowledged sacrifices made by their ancestors who were committed to the two-nation theory.

This juxtaposition of the voices of the *muhajirs* from the *aqliat subas* (provinces where Muslims were in a minority, pre-1947) retrieves a retrospective perspective of how the Pakistan movement for a denominational homeland has fared on the ground in the unmoored lives of those who had migrated to East and West Pakistan in 1947.

A couplet oft quoted in *muhajir* circles, as also among *aqliat suba* Muslims who stayed on in India sums up the north Indian Partition experience I explore in this paper:

Nairangié dauré siyasat to dekhié
*Manzil unhe mili jo shareeké safar na thay.*⁷

II

The position taken by the Muslim League in the 1940s flowed from the postulation of a demand for representation parity, independent of numerical considerations.⁸ This was premised on the inherent dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims and its correlate that Muslims could only be represented by Muslims, and not by politically accountable non-Muslims, a position Farzana Shaikh has attributed to a discursive shift made by Jinnah in the aftermath of the Muslim League's poor electoral showing in 1937 from an Islamic to a liberal notion of representation.⁹

The claim that Jinnah made from this position was that Indian Muslims were not a minority, but a majority, albeit in certain areas and were therefore entitled, as were all majorities, to 'real power' [nationhood]. It was in the context of the prevailing constitutional schemes which focused on demarcating the political boundaries of 'Muslim India', and which sought to jettison the labelling of Indian Muslims as a minority by focusing on their composition as a territorially defined majority (in the north-west and the north-east of the subcontinent), that the Muslim League was to formulate its Lahore resolution of March 1940.¹⁰

Ironically however, as we shall see, this discursive shift of Jinnah's was to remain trapped within the paradigm of the colonial numerical bio-politics¹¹ that it was ranged against. The significant difference for the purpose of this paper, however, was that the 'majority'-'minority' categories were now transferred to the provincial status of the Muslim League's supporters, and became the focus of the post-Partition discursivity and politics of *muhajirs* from the *aqliat subas*, which seeks to establish that they had been blatantly sacrificed for Pakistan and then deprived of it by those inhabiting the majority provinces that comprised Pakistan in 1947.¹²

As early as April 1940, the Muslim League's Pakistan movement was stiffly resisted both by the Bihar Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind supported Muslim Independent party as well as the Bihar Provincial Momin Conference led by Abdul Qaiyum Ansari precisely on the ground that it implied the sacrificing of the *aqliat suba* Muslims for the creation of a homeland in the Muslim majority provinces. Within the Bihar Provincial Muslim League, in the aftermath of the horror of the 1946 riot in which about 30,000 Muslims were killed and around which Jinnah clinched his separate homeland demand, there were two rather different proposals for the division of Bihar and subsequently the demand for the inclusion of at least Purnea in East Pakistan, which, however, Jinnah ignored.¹³

As early as the Lahore session it was amply evident that the *aqliat suba* Muslims were going to be excluded from the forthcoming Pakistan.¹⁴ Thus though the constitution sub-committee did consider creating 'independent homelands already having Muslim Majority' (sic) in the *aqliat* provinces of U.P., Bihar and Madras or alternately, 'arranging some migratory zones to which Mussalmans may migrate and thus form a majority in due course of

time', the idea was given up as impractical and unworkable *because* of the low percentage of Muslims involved.¹⁵

On his part Jinnah assured Muslim minorities that the propaganda that they would have to migrate *en bloc* to Pakistan was to be disregarded as insidious and misleading.¹⁶ The Muslim League, he said, was not leaving them in the lurch, for they would be well within their rights to demand all constitutional safeguards. Since they could not in any case improve their own position, the question before them was whether the entire Muslim India of ninety million 'was to be subjected to a Hindu majority *raj* or whether at least the sixty million of Muslims "residing in the areas where they formed a majority were to have" their own homeland'.¹⁷

Jinnah's acknowledgement of the role of Muslim minorities in achieving the ('cherished') goal of Pakistan¹⁸ has been pointedly quoted by them over the years both to underline their post-47 unequal citizenship status and to interpolate a wider reading of the homeland than was conceptualised in 1940.¹⁹ Something of the context in which this happened is evident from the fact that as early as 1948 Jinnah had to spell out that Pakistan did not belong to 'a Punjabi or a Sindhi or a Pathan or a Bengali but to one nation'.²⁰

The Bihari *muhajirs* in East Pakistan held a variety of skilled and semi-skilled jobs as mechanics, artisans, shopkeepers and labourers in the jute industry and the railways.²¹ By contrast the wealthier Biharis had chosen to settle in West Pakistan. It has been tellingly argued that for a variety of reasons, 'but particularly due to their low economic and social status', they were not considered Hindustani or *muhajir* by the West Pakistanis, and were instead referred to simply as 'Biharis in East Pakistan'.²² As Urdu speakers the Biharis had an advantage over Bengalis in managerial positions that required knowledge of Pakistan's official national language, and soon came to be seen as symbols of the Pakistan that the Bangladeshi nationalist movement was up against. Given that many Biharis had supported the Pakistan military and joined the central government's paramilitary forces in 1971 they came to be stigmatised as collaborators. As a result, in several towns Biharis were forced out of their homes or massacred and the Bangladesh government declared them to be Pakistanis who should be returned to their home country.²³ Of the 534,792 Biharis who applied for repatriation only 118,866 were accepted by the Pakistan government. The bulk of those who await repatriation are the less well off who could not buy a prompt passage to Pakistan.²⁴

Led by the Stranded Pakistanis' General Repatriation Committee (hereafter SPGRC) which was formed in 1977, and has branches in all the camps in Bangladesh, the 'Stranded Pakistanis' have labelled themselves differently and simultaneously: as 'refugees' while addressing the UN which denies them that confirmatory status, as 'Muslim Refugees' to draw repatriation and relief intervention from the Islamic heads of state and as 'Atkay pora Pakistanis' to ensure Bangladeshi media coverage.²⁵ For the purpose of this paper it is the discourse intended to retrieve what is perceived as an

inexplicably evasive nationhood that I focus on.

By all accounts 1971 was a watershed in the subcontinental Partition diaspora. Not only did Pakistan cease to be an option for the Indian Muslim, but it occasioned very different recastings in the lives of *muhajirs* to ensure citizenship, nationhood and a homeland after this very major fissuring of the two-nation theory.

Thus the Bihari prefix, even as it carried over in the discourse of the SPGRC and its diasporic support groups, was very self-consciously sought to be overlaid with air-brushed terms such as 'non-locals' in order to establish that it was their post-1947 'ideological' homeland, not the 'ancestral' one left behind that they intended to make a nation of. More pointedly since they are not *muhajirs*/Biharis/'Bangladeshi Biharis' but Pakistanis,²⁶ Pakistan cannot shed them so.

Though the SPGRC projects itself as an un-'political' organisation, it 'ardently' believes in the ideology of (the) Pakistan (movement).²⁷ In fact simultaneously with resolving to do a Vietnamese, by moving shore to shore in hired boats to underline their nationlessness, it recently resolved to consider forming a political party 'to ask the champions of the Muslim League in Pakistan whether (the) TWO NATION THEORY on which Pakistan was achieved still exists or have been vanished' (sic).²⁸

On the face of it the foregrounding of the two-nation theory in the context of the changed politics across South Asia since the 1940s is indeed naive. However, the discursivity of sacrifice emerging from the camp-sites in Bangladesh³⁰ reveals a very 1980s reconstruction of the Partition which is interesting not only because it idealises the Bihari homeland, but because it squarely blames the Muslim League and its Pakistan logic for the double unhomings: of 1947 and 1971 but poignantly, more so for the first. The preoccupation with historicising their East Pakistan experience becomes explicable in the light of the repatriation categories decided on by the Pakistan government in the early 1970s that excluded the 238,000 'Stranded Pakistanis' now living in the camps in Bangladesh.³¹

Though the bulk of the migrations to Pakistan occurred from the districts of Patna, Munger and Gaya which were the worst hit by the riot of 1946,³² this stream of the migrants is very clearly and strategically downfocused.³³ All this is to make the point that before the Partition 'these Beharees were better placed and well provided for in life than the Muslims of the Muslim majority provinces' and therefore need not have moved to Pakistan. Also the Bihar that they were invoked to leave behind is the 'richest province of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent'.³⁴ More specifically, their unyoking from the retrospectively unproblematic Bihar came about because of the politics of the All India Muslim League which sullied their 'intimate relations with the citizens of the Hindu majority provinces' by the stands it took between 1937 and the 1940s.³⁵

What is just as sharply emphasised is that it was in response to the directions of the Muslim League,³⁶ that members of the central services of

undivided India had opted for service in East Pakistan to fill the vacuum created by the migration of their Hindu counterparts to India. Thus more than 50,000 railway employees from Bihar were absorbed in East Pakistan. It is claimed that '99% of the stranded Biharis' in Bangladesh are those optees who were 'betrayed' by those who succeeded Jinnah in that in 1962 their (guaranteed) central service status was changed to provincial service and they were subsequently and on that basis excluded from the categories slated to be repatriated to Pakistan post-1971. This exclusion is seen as nothing short of the betrayal of those Muslims of the minority provinces who had responded to Jinnah's 'clarion call' to get the new nation infrastructurally off the ground, on the assurance that their service status would remain unchanged in Pakistan.³⁷

It is a 'historical fact' that Muslims from the minority provinces had moved to East Pakistan not to earn their living but because they were 'induced to believe' that without their opting to serve the Pakistan Railways the new state would collapse, that the Stranded Pakistani Railway Employees' League (hereafter SPERL) has been emphasising. If they left behind their 'hearth, and homes including landed property', it was because their 'Sentiments and Emotions' had been roused 'in the name of Islam and Islamic brotherhood'.³⁸

Undoubtedly many optees had also migrated to Pakistan for better career prospects and in anticipation of an atmosphere unlike that of Bihar in the aftermath of the 1946 riot. It should also be mentioned that quite a few who opted for Pakistan, changed their minds within the permissible period to rejoin the Indian railways.³⁹ However, it is plausible that the issue of citizenship options was indeed not clear among many migrants, even if we are to be circumspect about some of what follows:

... We had come to Pakistan – a country and not to East Pakistan that was only a province of Pakistan, as the servants of the Central Government of Pakistan with our citizenship right intact and unaffected in our parent land i.e. India but suddenly and without taking any option again [?] from the Railwaymen the Central Government of Pakistan suo moto declared all Railwaymen and their families in Pakistan as the Citizens of Pakistan. The result of such an action of the Government of Pakistan was that our houses, landed properties, assets, shares and other ancestral hereditary rights which we had left behind in India, were declared as Evacuee properties and were taken over by the Government of Bharat, so we were hit hard at both ends. We were lowered in status, denied service benefits and treated as fourth grade citizens and there was no way left for us to go back to our former places of abodes and services.⁴⁰

Though a Pakistani government team assured them in 1983 that they and their dependents are bona fide citizens⁴¹ they continue to live in up to eight in a family in six square feet of camp space.

Their unending camp existence is seen by the SPGRC as flowing from the 'artificial and untenable "categories" for repatriation to Pakistan. This, it sharply points out is ironical because what seems to be conveniently forgotten is that 'in 1971, when it gave a call to these non-Bengalees to come out and join the war for Pakistan's sovereignty, there was no mention of any kind of category that could serve as qualification for the said war. These categories, to say the least of it, lack any moral or legal basis, and the category "West Pakistan origin" sounds particularly cruel and cynical in view of the *history* of the Pakistan movement . . . '42 (emphasis added),

According to the SPGRC successive Pakistani governments have been unserious even about the repatriation categories decided on. What is seen as particularly galling is the 'dishonourable argument that Pakistan has no resources for the settlement of these stranded Pakistanis', given its readiness to extend 'sheltering arms, whatever the cost to any number of refugees from Afghanistan' on grounds of 'religious duty'.⁴³

Thus what the SPGRC has often wondered is, 'why this religious fervour vanishes into the thin air when it comes to sheltering those who suffered and died both in the struggle for the *creation* of Pakistan in the forties and in the struggle for the *preservation* of its sovereignty and territorial integrity in 1971'.⁴⁴ (emphasis added). Its bottom line then is that 'Pakistan' owes the 'Stranded Pakistanis' a complete repatriation since 'it has utilised and exploited them in all its hours of need,'⁴⁵ all three milestones in their unhomings: 1946, 1947 and 1971, are seen as connected with their support for the movement for Pakistan.⁴⁶

IV

Watan thaa to Azadi dhoondta thaa
*Ab azad hoon to watan dhoondta hoon.*⁴⁷

This *muhajir* search for a homeland within the denominational homeland of the 1940s sums up the Partition experience of *aqliat suba* Muslims. Though the MQM agenda is different from that of the SGPRC and the SPREL what is common to them is the need to retain the reinvoication of the Pakistan of the 1940s which in the first place had conceptualised the homeland they moved to.

Of the approximately one million *muhajirs* who settled in Sind by 1951, 85% were Urdu speakers from the pre-1947 provinces where Muslims were the *aqliat*.⁴⁸ Given their close connections in the central government many *muhajirs* congregated in Karachi and other cities in Sind, where they not only found ready employment but were also awarded evacuee property.⁴⁹ Initially the *muhajirs* were dominant in the Muslim League and the government. Not long after however, the party self-destructed and virtually vanished, and with the late 1950s domination of the army in the Pakistani polity, the *muhajirs* came to be edged out by the Punjabis.⁵⁰

While on the one hand the two-nation theory was undermined by the

emergence of Bangladesh and equally the 'stranding' of the Biharis, it also stands questioned by the emergence of ethnic in place of the denominational identities that bulked large in subcontinental politics in the 1940s. The former centres on the demarcation of the political nation (of 1947 and 1971) from the putative ethnicities,⁵¹ which unlike the *muhajirs* have historical roots in Pakistan.⁵²

The articulation of ethnicities has got intermeshed with the 'Stranded Pakistani' question in two senses. Whenever the latter have attempted getting into Pakistan through the Rajasthan border⁵³ and been pushed back, the MQM has done a rewind to the logic of Pakistan and labelled their being denied entry into Pakistan a shredding of the two-nation theory.⁵⁴ At another crucial level, the MQM's positioning of the *muhajirs* as the fifth nationality, in addition to the Punjabis, Pathans, Balochs and Sindhis, hinges largely on the articulation of the need to have a province of their own in order to avert a repeat of the unhoming of the *muhajirin-i mashriqui* Pakistan in 1971.⁵⁵ What after all did the 'Stranded Pakistani' get for having outpaced the army in defending Pakistan is its constant poser.⁵⁶ Instead it is the Afghan refugees who total 3.5 million (as against the 2.5 lakh 'Stranded Pakistanis') who are rampant in Pakistan and allowed to spill over from their official refugee camps in the NWFP and Baluchistan and even allowed to buy property in Sind.⁵⁷

Among other demands, the MQM, which was formed in 1984 and in which *muhajirs* from UP and Bihar predominate, prioritised the settlement of the 'Stranded Pakistanis' as citizens of Pakistan.⁵⁸ Simultaneously, after several ambivalent shifts in the equations between Sindhis and the *muhajirs*,⁵⁹ the MQM has been moving since 1994⁶⁰ towards the creation of a province of their own comprising the southern Sind cities of Hyderabad, Karachi, Mirpur and Thatta.⁶¹

That both the SPGRC⁶² and the MQM⁶³ should have agreed not to insist on the repatriation of the 'Stranded Pakistanis' to Sind province is in itself indicative of an acknowledgement of how deeply the two-nation theory has metamorphosed, as manifest in the various Sindhi *Bihari Roko* (Stop the Biharis) movements. The destination of the first batch of 300 'Stranded Pakistanis' repatriated to Pakistan in January 1993 was thus Punjab where they are to be rehabilitated in a phased manner in 32 districts.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, there were bomb blasts in the Bihari colonies in Kotri and Hyderabad in Sind to coincide with the arrival of this first batch of Biharis after which the whole process seems stalled.⁶⁵ The point that the blasts were making is that regardless of where the 'Stranded Pakistanis' are repatriated to in Pakistan they will ultimately head for Sind, and they needed to be told they were going to be opposed.⁶⁶

The very foregrounding of the Bihari past of the 'Stranded Pakistanis' is linked to the argument that the Sindhi homeland which is of civilisational vintage⁶⁷ is being deluged by *gairmulkis* (aliens) who in pursuance of a 'long term conspiracy' intend to turn the Sindhis into an *aqliat* in their own

homeland.⁶⁸ Also significant is the projection of post-1971 Pakistan as 'new Pakistan' and its fine print: as there is no Pakistan, there are no East Pakistanis to be ferried across.⁶⁹ Benazir Bhutto had at one point even threatened that Sind would cut adrift from Pakistan if the Biharis were settled there.⁷⁰ The bottom line is that the Bihari issue is not Pakistan's concern alone, their destination could be 'any other Muslim country' or else Bihar.⁷¹

As it turned out, it was the Bihari diaspora, outside of the subcontinent that first stepped in internationally to salvage the Biharis from the Bangladesh of the early 1970s, initially through voluntary organisations,⁷² then through the Asian committee of the British Refugee Council⁷³ and subsequently the Makka based *Rabita al Alam al Islam*.⁷⁴

Letters written by Biharis to their relatives in Bihar via the U.K. and U.S.A. about their plight in the aftermath of the Bangladesh movement were published in the newspaper *Sangam* whose editor, Ghulam Sarvar was among those who floated the Bihari Bachao Committee in Patna in February 1972. The resolutions the committee passed suggested that the Indian government take the responsibility for the protection of Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh and allow the 'non-Bengalees' in Bangladesh to return to India, so that the once uprooted were not uprooted yet again.⁷⁵ Some Biharis wanted to and did return to Bihar,⁷⁶ but there were others who in the early 1970s made Bihar a temporary base en route to Pakistan via Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand.⁷⁷ Thus given the history of partitioned families,⁷⁸ Bihar, like other *aqliat* provinces is not quite an ex-homeland.

V

The spread of the Pakistan movement from its 'original core support in Muslim minority provinces' to the Muslim majority provinces that were 'territorially crucial' to the very existence of Partition, was a switch that happened only around the end of the second world war. What firmed this up were the impassioned warnings of the minority province Muslim Leaguers about the likely future in a Congress ruled India.⁷⁹

There is an argument that had the Muslim majority provinces not existed the Muslim League could not have demanded a separate homeland, which in any case was excluding the 60% of the Muslims living outside these provinces.⁸⁰ I need to mention that Jinnah had only hypothetically considered an exchange of population at the Muslim League's Lahore session.⁸¹ It was much later, in April 1947, in the context of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha campaigns to partition Punjab and Bengal and in a bid to forestall the 'dangerous' logic of the breaking up of provinces that Jinnah specified that 'sooner or later' the exchange of population would have to take place. It was something he said that could be carried out by the respective governments whenever it was 'necessary and feasible'.⁸²

The Partition ethnoscape was, however, anything but as neat as Jinnah

would have had Muslim League supporters in the *aqliyat* provinces imagine. Those who moved from Bihar to Pakistan's eastern and western halves, either in the aftermath of the 1946 riot or as service optees were soon to discover what the two-nation theory would fade into and yet how crucial it would continue to be especially post-1971, as a discursive premise from which to attempt a widening of the concept of the homeland envisaged in the Pakistan of the 1940s: to reinscribe an erased nationhood in the case of the 'Stranded Pakistanis' and to create a province for the *muhajirs*, Pakistan's 'fifth nationality'.

NOTES

*I am grateful to the Stranded Pakistanis' General Repatriation Committee (Dhaka, 1989), Prof. Asad Husain (Chicago, 1994) and M.I. Haque and M.S. Hođa (London, 1994) for giving me access to the literature of the SPGRC and their repatriation related correspondence; to the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago and the Wisconsin University Video archives for audio/visual material on the Muhajir Qaumi Movement.

I would also like to acknowledge the responses to two presentations from which this paper has benefited: 'Diaspora by Partition: A Map of the Biharis', Institute on Culture and Consciousness in South Asia, University of Chicago, 19 May 1994 and 'The Unhomings of the Biharis: 1940s-1990s' Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford, 16 June 1994.

1. Mushirul Hasan (ed.), 'Introduction', *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 41.
2. See for example, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture and Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women During Partition' and Urvashi Butalia 'Community, State and Gender : On Women's Agency During Partition', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 28, No.17, 24 April 1993.
3. As has been argued by Gyanendra Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness', in David Arnold and David Hardiman (eds.), *Subaltern Studies* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), Vol. VIII, pp. 194, 205-6, 221. Also see Urvashi Butalia, *Seminar*, August 1994, p.14.
4. Myron Weiner, 'Rejected Peoples and Unwanted Migrants in South Asia', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 28, No. 34, 21 August, 1993, p, 1737. Both India and Pakistan kept their borders open until 1952, when a mutual passport system was introduced. See Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke and Sergio Agwayo, *Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 132.
5. Omar Qureshi, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: Muhajir Nationalism in Sind', January 1994, University of Chicago. I am grateful to the author for his unpublished paper.
6. See appendices 1-2.
7. I owe this to M.A.M. Gilani, Patna. The lines roughly translate as: witness the quirks of politics: the destination arrives for those who have not even undertaken the journey. The reference is to Muslim majority provinces that

- comprised Pakistan.
8. Farzana Shaikh, 'Muslims and Political Representation in Colonial India: The Making of Pakistan', in *India's Partition*, p. 87
 9. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-6.
 10. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.
 11. The phrase is borrowed from Arjun Appadurai, 'Number in the Colonial Imagination', in Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 333. Appadurai explores the colonial roots of the politics of community and classification in contemporary India as manifest in the creation of 'a polity centred around self-consciously enumerated communities'. His acknowledged inspirations are Benedict Anderson and Sudipta Kaviraj.
 12. A representative example is Mohammad Ibrahim, *The Spirit of Modern Politics* (Rangpur: Nasim Khan, Chief Patron, Stranded Pakistani General Repatriation Committee, 1984), pp. xv, 39, 47, 72 and 75. The author is an ex-general secretary of the Munger District Muslim League and member of the All India Muslim League Council. This trope is also ever present in the newsletters of the SPGRC and the discourse of the MQM.
 13. See Papiya Ghosh, 'The 1946 Riot and the Exodus of Bihari Muslims to Dhaka' *International Symposium on Dhaka: Past Present, Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991); 'Contesting the Sharif: The Momin Conference-Muslim League Interface', presented at a Seminar on Caste and Class, Joshi-Adhikari Institute of Social Studies, New Delhi, 4 April 1992; 'The Discourse and Politics of *Qaum, Mazhab and Biradari* in 1940s Bihar', presented at a workshop on 'Northern India and Indian Independence', Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi, 9 December 1993.
 14. Contrary to the argument in Imtiaz Ahmad, 'Pakistan and the Indian Muslims', *Quest*, No, 93, January-February 1975, p. 40 to the effect that there was a certain amount of fuzziness on this issue and in Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India 1936-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 56 that the League had concentrated on getting Pakistan without ever telling the minorities what their position would be in it.
 15. Ikram Ali Malik, comp., *Muslim League Session 1940 and The Lahore Resolution (Documents)*, (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1990), pp. 381-9. In the case of Bihar the committee examined the proposal of converting the districts of Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Santhal Parganas, Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Saran and Patna as well the adjoining districts of Gorakhpur and Basti in UP into a Muslim zone for the purposes of migration in the future. But the proposal was given up because the Muslim percentage was 'obviously so low as only 13%'.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 335-6.
 18. See for example, *The Muslim Refugee: A Monthly Review of the Stranded Pakistanis*, 14 August-September 1988, p. 3 and February-March 1992, cover blurb.
 19. A case in point is S. Rahmatullah. *A Paper on Rehabilitation and Integration of Refugees in East Pakistan*, submitted to Ayub Khan, President, Pakistan and Pakistan Muslim League on the occasion of the meeting of the Pakistan Muslim

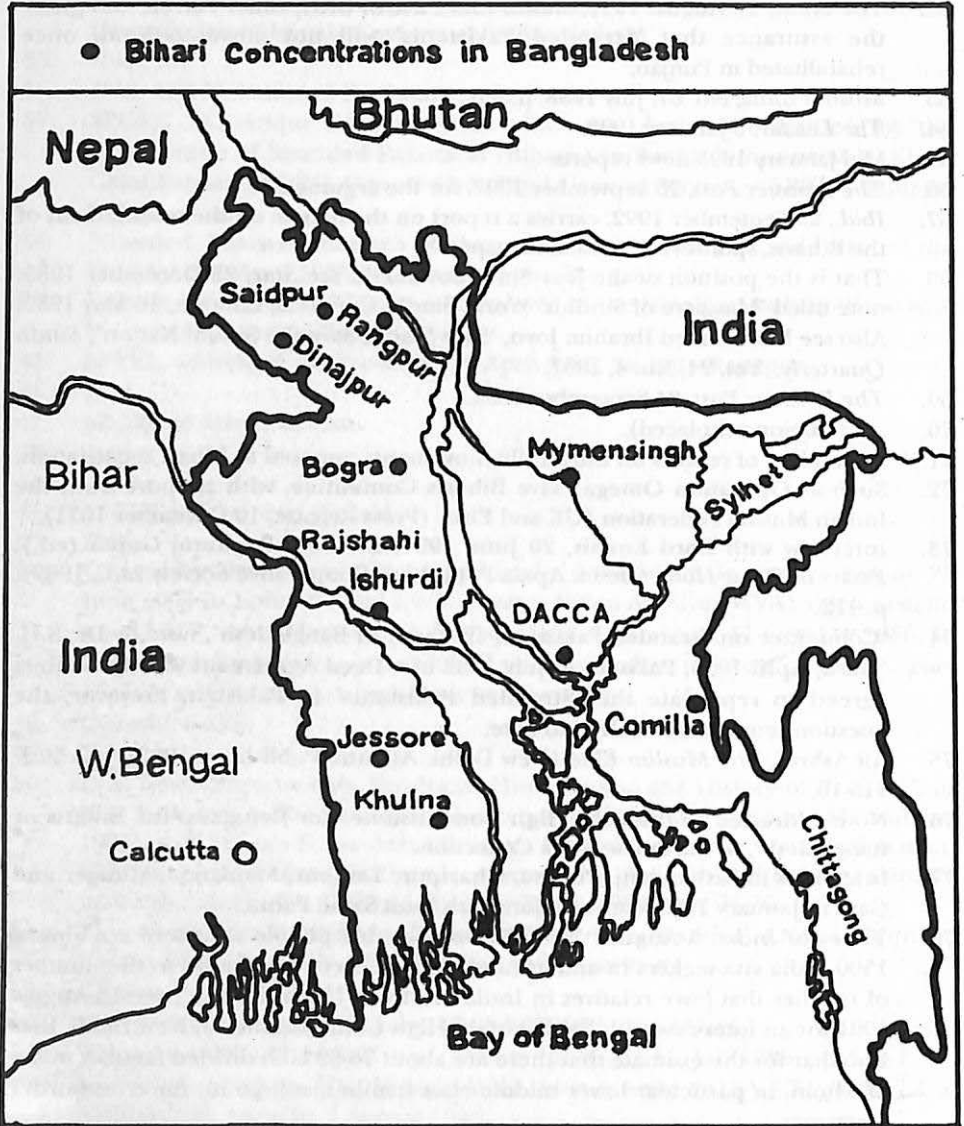
- League Working Committee, held at Rawalpindi, 17 November 1967 (Dhaka: Mohammad Abbas, Publicity Secretary, East Pakistan Integration League, 1967) p.23 : "Evidently, without contemplating a wholesale transfer of population, there was to be a homeland not only for the Muslims of the Provinces in which they were in the majority but also for the Muslims of the provinces in which they were in the minority. Reading between the lines of the Resolution, the demanded homeland was to give equal citizenship to such Muslims of the Hindu majority provinces as would be forced to migrate to it . . . Refugees therefore are CITIZENS, NOT ALIENS.'
20. *Morning News*, 23 March 1948, speech at Dhaka.
 21. Weiner, *op.cit.*, p. 1739; *New York Times*, 15 March 1973; also see Ibrahim Jalees, 'A Grave Turned Inside-out' in Alok Bhalla (ed.), *Stories About the Partition* (New Delhi: Indus, 1994), vol. II, p. 147: 'During the riots of 1947, rich Muslims of Patna, their relatives, dependents and mistresses, had fled in aeroplanes for safety to Pakistan. Poor Muslims like Abdul Waheed and Ayesha, taxi-drivers, small traders, iron-smiths, cobblers, barbers, washermen, masons and others, had slowly crawled towards Pakistan in overcrowded trains'. This story covers both the 1947 and 1971 uprootings of the Biharis.
 22. Qureshi, *op.cit.*
 23. Weiner, *op.cit.*, p. 1739.
 24. Rt. Hon David Ennals, MP, 'The Biharis in 1981' in Ben Whitaker *et al.*, *The Biharis in Bangladesh* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1982), p. 30; *The Muslim Refugee*, February-March 1992, p. 10
 25. SPGRC literature spanning the early 1980s into 1994.
 26. 'We are neither Biharis nor Mohajirs', Mohammad Shukruddin, Secretary General SPGRC, *The Herald* (Karachi), January 1990. p. 52, p. 51 makes a reference to Benazir Bhutto calling them 'Bangladeshi Biharis'.
 27. *Introducing Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee* (Geneva Camp, Mohammadpur, Dhaka: SPGRC, 19 February 1993).
 28. 'Proceedings and Resolutions of 3rd Meeting of SPGRC Supreme Council held at Town Hall, Saidpur on and from 6th-7th September, 1993'.
 30. A more recent and representative example is SPGRC Memo, 27 November 1993 to Abdul Matin Chowdhry, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Mustafizzur Rahman, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, signed, M. Nasim Khan, Chief Patron, SPGRC, 'from the pandal of hunger strike in front of National Press Club.'
 31. According to the Simla and Delhi agreements in 1973 and 1974, the Pakistanis agreed to accept the following categories of Biharis – (a) those born in West Pakistan, (b) former military personnel, (c) central Government employees, (d) divided families, and (e) hardship cases.
 32. Confirmed in various interviews conducted in the districts mentioned and in Purnea in January 1995.
 33. See in particular, Syed Hussain Imam, *The Sad Plight of the Biharis From 1971 to 1983: An Appeal to the President of Pakistan And All the Heads of the Muslim States of the Islamic World* (Karachi: Mohammad Anisur Rahman, 1993), p. 5. The cover describes the author as the 'oldest parliamentarian in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent', an ex-president of the Bihar Provincial Muslim League and the All India Muslim League. This second reprint (the first was in 1979) is by the East Pakistan Sufferers Welfare Association, Karachi.

34. Enclosure Ref. No. SPGRC/786/Rep/F/83: Comprehensive Statement about 2,50,000 Pakistanis in Bangladesh, otherwise called Beharis since 16.12.71, with Ref. No. SPGRC/786/Rep/F/83 of 27 July 1983 to the delegates of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Bangladesh.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, and Mohammad Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, p. xvi.
37. SPGRC TO Atiqur Rahman, Bani-e-Tahreek, Action Committee for the Repatriation of Stranded Pakistanis (Biharis) in Bangladesh, signed N. Khan, Chief Patron, SPGRC, Geneva Camp and General Secretary, SPREL, Saidpur, Rangpur, n.d.
38. Stranded Pakistan Eastern Railway Employees' League, Address of the President, 20 April 1985, Saidpur-Rangpur, Bangladesh.
39. Interview with Jasimuddin, an ex-employee of the Jamalpur Railway Workshop, Munger, 17 January 1995.
40. SPREL, address of the President, 20 April 1985, Saidpur- Rangpur.
41. *Ibid.*
42. SPGRC to Atiqur Raman.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. SPGRC literature in general.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Quoted by Altaf Hussain, the MQM leader in self-exile, in an interview on 23 June 1994 in London. Also see Wisconsin Video Archive (WVA) video cassette no. SA-167, Altaf Hussain at a *Mohajir Jalsa*. Hyderabad, 31 October 1986. In this speech he elaborates 'aur jab chaalees sal yahan rah ke guzaarein to pata chala ki wahi watan thaa, yeh mera watan nahi hai. . . .'
48. Qureshi, *op.cit.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. D.A. Low, 'Introduction: Provincial Histories and the History of Pakistan', in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 2; Hassan N. Gardezi, 'Religion, Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: The Question of Class' in Douglas Allen, (ed.), *Religion and Political Conflict in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press., 1993), pp. 74-76.
51. The distinction is made by Benedict Anderson, 'Exodus' *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 1994, Vol. 20, No. 2 p, 326, in another context.
52. Gardezi, *op.cit.*, p. 75.
53. See 'Death in a Desert', *Sunday*, 19-25 July 1992 for a report.
54. 'Biharis not Wanted in Pakistan', *Muslim India*, No. 67, July 1988, pp. 330-1.
55. Subtext of speech by Altaf Hussain WVA video cassette no. SA. 170, *Jalsah i Am*, *Nishtar Park*, Karachi, 8 August 1986.
56. Interview with Altaf Hussain.
57. Qureshi, *op. cit.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. Sarah Ansari, 'Political Legacies of Pre-1947 Sind', *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, p. 190.
60. 'Sind: Divide and Rule?', cover story *Newsline* (Karachi), March 1994, p. 27; *The Statesman*, 16 September 1994.
61. Sagarika Ghose 'Pakistan's Emerging Identity Crisis', *Times of India*, 9 November 1994; see *Hindustan Times*, 27 December 1994 for a report on the

demand to divide Karachi into two towns called Jinnahpur and Quaid-e-Bad along *muhajir* and non-*muhajir* lines.

62. *The News*, 23 August 1991, Nasim Khan the SPGRC, Chief Patron, has given the assurance that 'Stranded Pakistanis' will not move to Sind, once rehabilitated in Punjab.
 63. *Muslim India*, No. 67, July 1988, p. 331.
 64. *The Leader*, 3 January 1993.
 65. Mid-January 1993 news reports.
 66. *The Frontier Post*, 25 September 1992, for the argument.
 67. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1992, carries a report on the debate on the resettlement of the Biharis, sponsored by the newspaper.
 68. That is the position of the Jeay Sind movement, see *Star*, 22 December 1983; note titled 'Massacre of Sindhis' World Sindhi Congress, London, 16 May 1989; Also see Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo, 'Save Sindh, Save the Sindhi Nation', *Sindh Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1991.
 69. *The Frontier Post*, 24 September 1992.
 70. . . . (citation misplaced).
 71. A sampling of reports on the Sindhi movements opposed to Bihari repatriation.
 72. Such as Operation Omega, Save Biharis Committee, with support from the Indian Muslim Federation (UK and Eire) (Press Release, 10 December 1971).
 73. Interview with Lord Ennals, 20 June 1994, London; Raghuraj Gupta (ed.), *Essays of Surur Hoda* (Delhi: Apala Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1989), p. 112.
 74. 'Committee on Stranded Pakistanis (Biharis) in Bangladesh', note by Dr. S.H. Sharif, April 1990, Pakistan in July 1988 in a Deed Agreement with the Rabita agreed to repatriate the 'Stranded Pakistanis' to Pakistan, however, the question remains unresolved to date.
 75. Ali Ashraf, *The Muslim Elite* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers. 1982), pp. 50-1, 115-16.
 76. Note addressed to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees 'Re: Biharis in Bangladesh', in the Surur Hoda Collection.
 77. Interviews in Kishanganj, Purnea, Ghazipur, Tarapur, Manianda, Munger and Gaya in January 1995; conversations with Reza Sami, Patna.
 78. *Times of India*, 5 August: 1994 'Knowledgeable people say there are almost 1500 India visa-seekers in and around Karachi every day thanks to the number of families that have relatives in India mostly in UP and Bihar'; see 13 August 1994 for an interview with the Pakistani High Commissioner in New Delhi, Riaz Khokhar for the estimate that there are about 70-80 lakh divided families many of whom, in particular lower middle class families, still go in for cross-border marriages.
- For Altaf Hussain's foregrounding visa and postage rate problems faced by the divided families, see WVA video cassette no. SA 167.
79. D.A. Low, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-11.
 80. Anita Inder Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 56.
 81. Malik, *op.cit.*, p. 335.
 82. Mountabatten Papers, NMML, Roll 13, File 114B, Annexure 'A' to 9th Misc. Meeting, Statement by Jinnah, 30 April 1947.

APPENDIX I*



*Derived from Ben Whitaker, *The Biharis in Bangladesh* (Minority Rights Group, London, 1972)

APPENDIX II

Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh*

| <i>Camp & Location</i> | <i>Number of People</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Mohammadpur and Dhaka city | 40,664 |
| 2. Adamjee Nagar | 7,710 |
| 3. Narayanganj | 1,506 |
| 4. Mirpur, Section X | 10,086 |
| 5. Mirpur, Section XI | 28,836 |
| 6. Murapara camp, Sec, XII, Mirpur | 4,324. |
| 7. Kurmi Tola Camp, Sec, XII, Mirpur | 3,770 |
| 8. Block C & D, Sec, XII, Mirpur | 7,260 |
| 9. Mymensingh | 14,998 |
| 10. Rangpur | 14,998 |
| 11. Saidpur | 53,647 |
| 12. Dinajpur | 6,899 |
| 13. Bogra | 5,433 |
| 14. Ishurdi | 10,107 |
| 15. Rahshahi | 7,057 |
| 16. Khulna | 7,381 |
| 17. Khalipur | 16,624 |
| 18. Giatalla | 2,235 |
| 19. Jessore | 5,435 |
| 20. S.B. Nagar, Chittagong | 9,376 |
| 21. Haliashahar, Chittagong | 9,503 |
| 22. Firoz Shah Colony, Chittagong | 2,554 |
| 23. Raufabad Colony, Chittagong | 2,536 |
| TOTAL | 258,028 |

Note: While there are officially 66 camps, some are in the same tract, but are still administered separately.

*Derived from *2,50,000 Pakistanis Stranded in Bangladesh* (International Council for Repatriation of Pakistanis from Bangladesh, New York, April, 1988).

Breakdown by Sex and Age

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. Families | 39,779 |
| 2. Males | 127,976 |
| 3. Females | 130,052 |
| 4. Adults | 152,743 |
| 5. Minors | 105,285 |
| 6. Males under 18 years | 64,668 |
| 7. Males 18 to 40 years | 40,763 |
| 8. Males 40 to 60 years | 18,097 |
| 9. Males above 60 years | 4,448 |

Note: No breakdown of age groups of females available.

This survey has been accepted by both the Governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan as the official figures with an accuracy fluctuation of 5 per cent.