

Resignation letter of Jogendra Nath Mandal

My dear Prime Minister

It is with a heavy heart and a sense of utter frustration at the failure of my lifelong mission to uplift the backward Hindu masses of East Bengal that I feel compelled to tender resignation of my membership of your cabinet. It is proper that I should set forth in detail the reasons which have prompted me to take this decision at this important juncture of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent.

1. Before I narrate the remote and immediate causes of my resignation, it may be useful to give a short background of the important events that have taken place during the period of my co-operation with the League. Having been approached by a few prominent League leaders of Bengal in February 1943, I agreed to work with them in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. After the fall of the Fazlul Haq ministry in March 1943, with a party of 21 Scheduled Caste M.L.A.s, I agreed to cooperate with Khwaja Nazimuddin, the then leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party who formed the Cabinet in April 1943. Our co-operation was conditional on certain specific terms, such as the inclusion of three Scheduled Caste Ministers in the Cabinet, sanctioning of a sum of Rupees Five Lakhs as annual recurring grant for the education of the Scheduled Castes, and the unqualified application of the communal ratio rules in the matter of appointment to Government services.

2. Apart from these terms, the principal objectives that prompted me to work in co-operation with the Muslim League was, first that the economic interests of the Muslims in Bengal were generally identical with those of the Scheduled Castes. Muslims were mostly cultivators and labourers, and so were members of the Scheduled Castes. One section of Muslims were fishermen, so was a section of the Scheduled Castes as well, and secondly that the Scheduled Castes and the Muslims were both educationally backward. I was persuaded that my co-operation with the League and its Ministry would lead to the undertaking on a wide scale of legislative and administrative measures which, while promoting the mutual welfare of the vast bulk of Bengal's population, and undermining the foundations of vested interest and privilege, would further the cause of communal peace and harmony. It may be mentioned here that Khwaja Nazimuddin took three Scheduled Caste Ministers in his cabinet and appointed three Parliamentary Secretaries from amongst the members of my community.

SUHWARDY MINISTRY

3. After the general elections held in March 1946 Mr.

H.S.Suhrawardy became the leader of the League Parliamentary Party in March 1946 and formed the League Ministry in April 1946. I was the only Scheduled Caste member returned on the federation ticket. I was included in Mr. Suhrawardy's Cabinet. The 16th day of August of that year was observed in Calcutta as 'The Direct Action Day' by the Muslim League. It resulted, as you know, in a holocaust. Hindus demanded my resignation from the League Ministry. My life was in peril. I began to receive threatening letters almost every day. But I remained steadfast to my policy. Moreover, I issued an appeal through our journal 'Jagaran' to the Scheduled Caste people to keep themselves aloof from the bloody feud between the Congress and the Muslim League even at the risk of my life. I cannot but gratefully acknowledge the fact that I was saved from the wrath of infuriated Hindu mobs by my Caste Hindu neighbours. The Calcutta carnage was followed by the 'Noakhali Riot' in October 1946. There, Hindus including Scheduled Castes were killed and hundreds were converted to Islam. Hindu women were raped and abducted. Members of my community also suffered loss of life and property. Immediately after these happenings, I visited Tipperah and Feni and saw some riot-affected areas. The terrible sufferings of Hindus overwhelmed me with grief, but still I continued the policy of co-operation with the Muslim League. Immediately after the massive Calcutta Killing, a no-confidence motion was moved against the Suhrawardy Ministry. It was only due to my efforts that the support of four Anglo-Indian Members and of four Scheduled Caste members of the Assembly who had hitherto been with the Congress could be secured, but for which the Ministry would have been defeated.

4. In October 1946, most unexpectedly came to me through Mr. Suhrawardy the offer of a seat in the Interim Government of India. After a good deal of hesitation and being given only one hour's time to take my final decision, I consented to accept the offer subject to the condition only that I should be permitted to resign if my leader Dr. B.R. Ambedkar disapproved of my action. Fortunately, however, I received his approval in a telegram sent from London. Before I left for Delhi to take over as Law Member, I persuaded Mr. Suhrawardy, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, to agree to take two Ministers in his Cabinet in my place and to appoint two Parliamentary Secretaries from the Scheduled Caste Federation Group.

5. I joined the Interim Government on November 1, 1946. After about a month when I paid a visit to Calcutta,

Mr. Suhrawardy apprised me of the communal tension in some parts of East Bengal, especially in Gopalganj Sub-division, where the Namahsudras were in majority, being very high. He requested me to visit those areas and address meetings of Muslims and Namahsudras. The fact was that Namahsudras in those areas had made preparations for retaliation. I addressed about a dozen of largely attended meetings. The result was that Namahsudras gave up the idea of retaliation. Thus an inevitable dangerous communal disturbance was averted.

6. After a few months, the British Government made their June 3 Statement (1947) embodying certain proposals for the partition of India. The whole country, especially the entire non-Muslim India, was startled. For the sake of truth I must admit that I had always considered the demand of Pakistan by the Muslim League as a bargaining counter. Although I honestly felt that in the context of India as a whole Muslims had legitimate cause for grievance against upper class Hindu chauvinism, I held the view very strongly indeed that the creation of Pakistan would never solve the communal problem. On the contrary, it would aggravate communal hatred and bitterness. Besides, I maintained that it would not ameliorate the condition of Muslims in Pakistan. The inevitable result of the partition of the country would be to prolong, if not perpetuate, the poverty, illiteracy and miserable condition of the toiling masses of both the States. I further apprehended that Pakistan might turn to be one of the most backward and undeveloped countries of the South East Asia.

LAHORE RESOLUTION

7. I must make it clear that I have thought that an attempt would be made, as is being done at present, to develop Pakistan as a purely 'Islamic' State based on the Shariat and the injunctions and formulae of Islam. I presumed that it would be set up in all essentials after the pattern contemplated in the Muslim League resolution adopted at Lahore on March 23, 1940. That resolution stated inter alia that (I) "geographically contiguous areas are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the Constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign" and (II) "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for minorities in these units and in these regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them." Implicitly in this formula were (a) that North western and eastern Muslim zones should be constituted into two independent States, (b) that the constituent units of these States should be autonomous and sovereign, (c) that minorities' guarantee should be in respect of rights as well as of interest and extend to every sphere of their lives, and (d) that Constitutional provisions should be made in

these regards in consultation with the minorities themselves. I was fortified in my faith in this resolution and the professions of the League Leadership by the statement Qaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah was pleased to make on the 11th August 1947 as the President of the Constituent Assembly giving solemn assurance of equal treatment for Hindus & Muslims alike and calling upon them to remember that they were all Pakistanis. There was then no question of dividing the people on the basis of religion into full-fledged Muslim citizens and zimmies [i][1] being under the perpetual custody of the Islamic State and its Muslims citizens. Every one of these pledges is being flagrantly violated apparently to your knowledge and with your approval in complete disregard of the Qaid-e-Azam's wishes and sentiments and to the detriment and humiliation of the minorities.

PARTITION OF BENGAL

8. It may also be mentioned in this connection that I was opposed to the partition of Bengal. In launching a campaign in this regard I had to face not only tremendous resistance from all quarters but also unspeakable abuse, insult and dishonour. With great regret, I recollect those days when 32 crores of Hindus of this Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent turned their back against me and dubbed me as the enemy of Hindus and Hinduism, but I remained undaunted and unmoved in my loyalty to Pakistan. It is a matter of gratitude that my appeal to 7 million Scheduled Caste people of Pakistan evoked a ready and enthusiastic response from them. They lent me their unstinted support sympathy and encouragement.

9. After the establishment of Pakistan on August 14, 1947 you formed the Pakistan Cabinet, in which I was included and Khwaja Nazimuddin formed a provisional Cabinet for East Bengal. On August 10, I had spoken to Khwaja Nazimuddin at Karachi and requested him to take 2 Scheduled Caste Ministers in the East Bengal Cabinet. He promised to do the same sometime later. What happened subsequently in this regard was a record of unpleasant and disappointing negotiation with you, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Nurul Amin, the present Chief Minister of East Bengal. When I realised that Khwaja Nazimuddin was avoiding the issue on this or that excuse, I became almost impatient and exasperated. I further discussed the matter with the Presidents of the Pakistan Muslim League and its East Bengal Branch. Ultimately, I brought the matter to your notice. You were pleased to discuss the subject with Khwaja Nazimuddin in my presence at your residence. Khwaja Nazimuddin agreed to take one Scheduled Caste Minister on his return to Dacca. As I had already become sceptic about the assurance of Khwaja Nazimuddin, I wanted to be definite about the time-frame. I insisted that he must act in this regard within a month, failing which I should be at liberty to resign. Both you and Khwaja Nazimuddin agreed to the condition. But alas! you did not perhaps mean what you said. Khwaja Nazimuddin did not keep his promise. After Mr. Nurul Amin had become the Chief Minister of

East Bengal, I again took up the matter with him. He also followed the same old familiar tactics of evasion. When I again called your attention to this matter prior to your visit to Dacca in 1949, you were pleased to assure me that Minority Ministers would be appointed in East Bengal, and you asked 2/3 names from me for consideration. In stat deference to your wish, I sent you a note stating the Federation Group in the East Bengal Assembly and suggesting three names. When I made enquiries as to what had happened on your return from Dacca, you appeared to be very cold and only remarked : "Let Nurul Amin return from Delhi". After a few days I again pressed the matter. But you avoided the issue. I was then forced to come to the conclusion that neither you nor Mr. Nurul Amin had any intention to take any Scheduled Caste Minister in the East Bengal Cabinet. Apart from this, I was noticing that Mr. Nurul Amin and some League leaders of East Bengal were trying to create disruption among the Members of the Scheduled Caste Federation. It appeared to me that my leadership and wide-spread popularity were considered ominous. My outspokenness, vigilance and sincere efforts to safeguard the interests of the minorities of Pakistan, in general, and of the Scheduled Caste, in particular, were considered a matter of annoyance to the East Bengal Govt. and few League leaders. Undaunted, I took my firm stand to safeguard the interests of the minorities of Pakistan.

ANTI-HINDU POLICY

10. When the question of partition of Bengal arose, the Scheduled Caste people were alarmed at the anticipated dangerous result of partition. Representation on their behalf were made to Mr. Suhrawardy, the then Chief Minister of Bengal who was pleased to issue a statement to the press declaring that none of the rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Scheduled Caste People would be curtailed after partition and that they would not only continue to enjoy the existing rights and privileges but also receive additional advantages. This assurance was given by Mr. Suhrawardy not only in his personal capacity but also in his capacity as the Chief Minister of the League Ministry. To my utter regret it is to be stated that after partition, particularly after the death of Qaid-e-Azam, the Scheduled Castes have not received a fair deal in any matter. You will recollect that from time to time I brought the grievances of the Scheduled Castes to your notice. I explained to you on several occasions the nature of inefficient administration in East Bengal. I made serious charges against the police administration. I brought to your notice incidents of barbarous atrocities perpetrated by the police on frivolous grounds. I did not hesitate to bring to your notice the anti-Hindu policy pursued by the East Bengal Government especially the police administration and a section of Muslim League leaders.

SOME INCIDENTS

11. The first incident that shocked me took place at a village called Digharkul near Gopalganj where on the false complaint of a Muslim brutal atrocities were committed

on the local Namahsudras. The fact was that a Muslim who was going in a boat attempted to throw his net to catch fish. A Namahsudra who was already there for the same purpose opposed the throwing of the net in his front. This was followed by some altercation and the Muslim got annoyed and went to the nearby Muslim village and made a false complaint that he and a woman in his boat had been assaulted by the Namahsudras. At that time, the S.D.O. of Gopalganj was passing in a boat through the canal, who without making any enquiry accepted the complaint as true and sent armed police to the spot to punish the Namahsudras. The armed police came and the local Muslims also joined them. They not only raided some houses of the Namahsudras but mercilessly beat both men and women, destroyed their properties and took away valuables. The merciless beating of a pregnant woman resulted in abortion on the spot. This brutal action on the part of the local authority created panic over a large area.

12. The second incidence of police oppression took place in early part of 1949 under P.S. Gournadi in the district of Barisal. Here a quarrel took place between two groups of members of a Union Board. One group which was in the good books of the police conspired against the opponents on the plea of their being Communists. On the information of a threat of attack on the Police Station, the O.C., Gournadi requisitioned armed forces from the headquarters. The Police, helped by the armed forces, then raided a large number of houses in the area, took away valuable properties, even from the house of absentee-owners who were never in politics, far less in the Communist Party. A large number of persons over a wide area were arrested. Teachers and students of many High English Schools were Communist suspects and unnecessarily harassed. This area being very near to my native village, I was informed of the incident. I wrote to the District Magistrate and the S.P. for an enquiry. A section of the local people also prayed for an enquiry by the S.D.O. But no enquiry was held. Even my letters to the District authorities were not acknowledged. I then brought this matter to the notice of the highest Authority in Pakistan, including yourself but to no avail.

WOMEN FOR MILITARY

13. The atrocities perpetrated by the police and the military on the innocent Hindus, especially the Scheduled Castes of Habibgarh in the District of Sylhet deserve description. Innocent men and women were brutally tortured, some women ravished, their houses raided and properties looted by the police and the local Muslims. Military pickets were posted in the area. The military not only oppressed these people and took away stuff forcibly from Hindu houses, but also forced Hindus to send their women-folk at night to the camp to satisfy the carnal desires of the military. This fact also I brought to your notice. You assured me of a report on the matter, but unfortunately no report was forthcoming.

14. Then occurred the incident at the Nachole in the District of Rajshahi where in the name of suppression of

Communists not only the police but also the local Muslims in collaboration with the police oppressed the Hindus and looted their properties. The Santhals then crossed the border and came over to West Bengal. They narrated the stories of atrocities wantonly committed by the Muslims and the police.

15. An instance of callous and cold-blooded brutality is furnished by the incident that took place on December 20, 1949 in Kalshira under P.S. Mollarhat in the District of Khulna. What happened was that late at night four constables raided the house of one Joydev Brahma in village Kalshira in search of some alleged Communists. At the scent of the police, half a dozen of young men, some of whom might have been Communists, escaped from the house. The police constable entered into the house and assaulted the wife of Joydev Brahma whose cry attracted her husband and a few companions who escaped from the house. They became desperate, re-entered the house, found 4 constables with one gun only. That perhaps might have encouraged the young men who struck a blow on an armed constable who died on the spot. The young men then attacked another constable when the other two ran away and raised alarm which attracted some neighbouring people who came to their rescue. As the incident took place before sunrise when it was dark, the assailants fled with the dead body before the villagers could come. The S.P. of Khulna with a contingent of military and armed police appeared on the scene in the afternoon of the following day. In the meantime, the assailants fled and the intelligent neighbours also fled away. But the bulk of the villagers remained in their houses as they were absolutely innocent and failed to realise the consequence of the happening. Subsequently, the S.P., the military and armed police began to beat mercilessly the innocents of the entire village, encouraged the neighbouring Muslims to take away their properties. A number of persons were killed and men and women were forcibly converted. Household deities were broken and places of worship desecrated and destroyed. Several women were raped by the police, military and local Muslims. Thus a veritable hell was let loose not only in the village of Kalshira which is 1-1/2 miles in length with a large population, but also in a number of neighbouring Namahsudra villages. The village Kalshira was never suspected by the authority to be a place of Communist activities. Another village called Jhalardanga, which was at a distance of 3 miles from Kalshira, was known to be a centre of Communist activities. This village was raided by a large contingent of police on that day for hunt of the alleged Communists, a number of whom fled away and took shelter in the afore-said house of village Kalshira which was considered to be a safe place for them.

16. I visited Kalshira and one or two neighbouring villages on the 28th February 1950. The S.P., Khulna and some of the prominent League leaders of the district were with me. When I came to the village Kalshira, I found the place desolate and in ruins. I was told in the presence of

S.P. that there were 350 homesteads in this village, of these, only three had been spared and the rest had been demolished. Country boats and heads of cattle belonging to the Namasudras had been all taken away. I reported these facts to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Inspector of General of Police of East Bengal and to you.

17. It may be mentioned in this connection that the news of this incident was published in West Bengal Press and this created some unrest among the Hindus there. A number of sufferers of Kalshira, both men and women, homeless and destitute had also come to Calcutta and narrated the stories of their sufferings which resulted in some communal disturbances in West Bengal in the last part of January.

CAUSES OF THE FEBRUARY DISTURBANCE

18. It must be noted that stories of a few incidents of communal disturbance that took place in West Bengal as a sort of repercussion of the incidents at Kalshira were published in exaggerated form in the East Bengal press. In the second week of February 1950 when the Budget Session of the East Bengal Assembly commenced, the Congress Members sought permission to move two adjournment motions to discuss the situation created at Kalshira and Nachole. But the motions were disallowed. The Congress members walked out of the Assembly in protest. This action of the Hindu members of the Assembly annoyed and enraged not only the Ministers but also the Muslim leaders and officials of the Province. This was perhaps one of the principal reasons for Dacca and East Bengal riots in February 1950.

19. It is significant that on February 10, 1950 at about 10 o'clock in the morning a woman was painted with red to show that her breast was cut off in Calcutta riot, and was taken round the East Bengal Secretariat at Dacca. Immediately the Government servants of the Secretariat stuck work and came out in procession raising slogans of revenge against the Hindus. The procession began to swell as it passed over a distance of more than a mile. It ended in a meeting at Victoria Park at about 12 o'clock in the noon where violent speeches against the Hindus were delivered by several speakers, including officials. The fun of the whole show was that while the employees of the Secretariat went out of procession, the Chief Secretary of the East Bengal Government was holding a conference with his West Bengal counterpart in the same building to find out ways and means to stop communal disturbances in the two Bengals.

OFFICIALS HELPED LOOTERS

20. The riot started at about 1 p.m. simultaneously all over the city. Arson, looting of Hindu shops and houses and killing of Hindus, wherever they were found, commenced in full swing in all parts of the city. I got evidence even from the Muslims that arson and looting were committed even in the presence of high police officials. Jewellery shops belonging to the Hindus were looted in the presence of police officers. They not only did not

attempt to stop loot, but also helped the looters with advice and direction. Unfortunately for me, I reached Dacca at 5 o'clock in the afternoon on the same day, in February 10, 1950. To my utter dismay, I had occasion to see and know things from close quarters. What I saw and learnt from firsthand information was simply staggering and heart-rending.

BACKGROUND OF THE RIOT

21. The reasons for the Dacca riot were mainly five:

(i) To punish the Hindus for the daring action of their representatives in the Assembly in their expression of protest by walking out of the Assembly when two adjournment motions on Kalshira and Nachole affairs were disallowed.

(ii) Dissension and differences between the Suhrawardy Group and the Nazimuddin Group in the Parliamentary Party were becoming acute.

(iii) Apprehension of launching of a movement for re-union of East and West Bengal by both Hindu and Muslim leaders made the East Bengal Ministry and the Muslim League nervous. They wanted to prevent such a move. They thought that any large-scale communal riot in East Bengal was sure to produce reactions in West Bengal where Muslims might be killed. The result of such riots in both East and West Bengal, it was believed, would prevent any movement for re-union of Bengals.

(iv) Feeling of antagonism between the Bengali Muslims and non-Bengali Muslims in East Bengal was gaining ground. This could only be prevented by creating hatred between Hindus and Muslims of East Bengal. The language question was also connected with it and

(v) The consequences of non-devaluation and the Indo-Pakistan trade deadlock to the economy of East Bengal were being felt most acutely first in urban and rural areas and the Muslim League members and officials wanted to divert the attention of the Muslim masses from the impending economic breakdown by some sort of Jihad against Hindus.

STAGGERING DETAILS - NEARLY 10,000 KILLED

22. During my nine days' stay at Dacca, I visited most of the riot-affected areas of the city and suburbs. I visited Mirpur also under P.S. Tejgaon. The news of the killing of hundreds of innocent Hindus in trains, on railway lines between Dacca and Narayanganj, and Dacca and Chittagong gave me the rudest shock. On the second day of Dacca riot, I met the Chief Minister of East Bengal and requested him to issue immediate instructions to the District authorities to take all precautionary measures to prevent spreading of the riot in district towns and rural areas. On the 20th February 1950, I reached Barisal town and was astounded to know of the happenings in Barisal. In the District town, a number of Hindu houses were burnt and a large number of Hindus killed. I visited almost all riot-affected areas in the District. I was simply puzzled to find the havoc wrought by the Muslim

rioters even at places like Kasipur, Madhabpasha and Lakutia which were within a radius of six miles from the District town and were connected with motorable roads. At the Madhabpasha Zamindar's house, about 200 people were killed and 40 injured. A place, called Muladi, witnessed a dreadful hell. At Muladi Bandar alone, the number killed would total more than three hundred, as was reported to me by the local Muslims including some officers. I visited Muladi village also, where I found skeletons of dead bodies at some places. I found dogs and vultures eating corpses on the river-side. I got the information there that after the whole-scale killing of all adult males, all the young girls were distributed among the ringleaders of the miscreants. At a place called Kaibartakhali under P.S. Rajapur, 63 persons were killed. Hindu houses within a stone's throw distance from the said thana office were looted, burnt and inmates killed. All Hindu shops of Babuganj Bazar were looted and then burnt and a large number of Hindus were killed. From detailed information received, the conservative estimate of casualties was placed at 2,500 killed in the District of Barisal alone. Total casualties of Dacca and East Bengal riot were estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 10,000 killed. The lamentation of women and children who had lost their all including near and dear ones melted my heart. I only asked myself "What was coming to Pakistan in the name of Islam."

NO EARNEST DESIRE TO IMPLEMENT DELHI PACT

23. The large scale exodus of Hindus from Bengal commenced in the latter part of March. It appeared that within a short time all the Hindus would migrate to India. A war cry was raised in India. The situation became extremely critical. A national calamity appeared to be inevitable. The apprehended disaster, however, was avoided by the Delhi Agreement of April 8. With a view to reviving the already lost morale of the panicky Hindus, I undertook an extensive tour of East Bengal. I visited a number of places of the districts of Dacca, Barisal, Faridpur, Khulna and Jessore. I addressed dozens of largely attended meetings and asked the Hindus to take courage and not to leave their ancestral hearths and homes. I had this expectation that the East Bengal Govt. and Muslim League leaders would implement the terms of the Delhi Agreement. But with the lapse of time, I began to realise that neither the East Bengal Govt. nor the Muslim League leaders were really earnest in the matter of implementation of the Delhi Agreement. The East Bengal Govt. was not only ready to set up a machinery as envisaged in the Delhi Agreement, but also was not willing to take effective steps for the purpose. A number of Hindus who returned to native village immediately after the Delhi Agreement were not given possession of their homes and lands which were occupied in the meantime by the Muslims.

MOULANA AKRAM KHAN'S INCITATIONS

24. My suspicion about the intention of League lead-

ers was confirmed when I read editorial comments by Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Provincial Muslim League in the "Baisak" issue of a monthly journal called 'Mohammadi'. In commenting on the first radio-broadcast of Dr.A.M.Malik, Minister for Minority Affairs of Pakistan, from Dacca Radio Station, wherein he said, "Even Prophet Mohammed had given religious freedom to the Jews in Arabia", Moulana Akram Khan said, "Dr.Malik would have done well had he not made any reference in his speech to the Jews of Arabia. It is true that the Jews in Arabia had been given religious freedom by Prophet Mohammed; but it was the first chapter of the history. The last chapter contains the definite direction of prophet Mohammed which runs as follows:- "Drive away all the Jews out of Arabia". Even despite this editorial comment of a person who held a very high position in the political, social and spiritual life of the Muslim community, I entertained some expectation that the Nurul Amin Ministry might not be so insincere. But that expectation of mine was totally shattered when Mr.Nurul Amin selected D.N.Barari as a Minister to represent the minorities in terms of the Delhi Agreement which clearly states that to restore confidence in the minds of the minorities one of their representatives will be taken in the Ministry of East Bengal and West Bengal Govt.

NURUL AMIN GOVERNMENT'S INSINCERITY

25. In one of my public statement, I expressed the view that the appointment of D.N.Barari as a Minister representing the minorities not only did not help restore any confidence, but, on the contrary, destroyed all expectations illusions, if there was any in the minds of the minorities about the sincerity of Mr.Nurul Amin's Govt. My own reaction was that Mr.Nurul Amin's Govt. was not only insincere but also wanted to defeat the principal objectives of the Delhi Agreement. I again repeat that D.N.Barari does not represent anybody except himself. He was returned to the Bengal Legislature Assembly on the Congress ticket with the money and organisation of the Congress. He opposed the Scheduled Caste Federation candidates. Some time after his election, he betrayed the Congress and joined the Federation. When he was appointed a Minister he had ceased to be a member of the Federation too. I know that East Bengal Hindus agree with me that by antecedents, character and intellectual attainments Barari is not qualified to hold the position of a Minister as envisaged in the Delhi Agreement.

26. I recommended three names to Mr.Nurul Amin for this office. One of the persons I recommended was an MA.,LL.B., Advocate, Dacca High Court. He was Minister for more than 4 years in the first Fazlul Huq Ministry in Bengal. He was chairman of the Coal Mines Stowing Board, Calcutta, for about 6 years. He was the senior Vice-President of the Scheduled Caste Federation. My second nominee was a B.A., LL.B. He was a member of the Legislative Council for 7 years in the pre-reform regime. I would like to know what earthly reasons there might be for Mr.Nurul Amin in not selecting any of these

two gentlemen and appointing instead a person whose appointment as Minister I strongly objected to for very rightly considerations. Without any fear of contradiction I can say that this action of Mr.Nurul Amin in selecting Barari as a Minister in terms of the Delhi Agreement is conclusive proof that the East Bengal Govt. was neither serious nor sincere in its professions about the terms of the Delhi Agreement whose main purpose is to create such conditions as would enable the Hindus to continue to live in East Bengal with a sense of security to their life, property, honour and religion.

GOVERNMENT PLAN TO SQUEEZE OUT HINDUS

27. I would like to reiterate in this connection my firm conviction that East Bengal Govt. is still following the well-planned policy of squeezing Hindus out of the Province. in my discussion with you on more than one occasion, I gave expression to this view of mine. I must say that this policy of driving out Hindus from Pakistan has succeeded completely in West Pakistan and is nearing completion in East Pakistan too. The appointment of D.N.Barari as a Minister and the East Bengal Government's unceremonious objection to my recommendation in this regard strictly conform to name of what they call an Islamic State. Pakistan has not given the Hindus entire satisfaction and a full sense of security. They now want to get rid of the Hindu intelligentsia so that the political, economic and social life of Pakistan may not in any way be influenced by them.

EVASIVE TACTICS TO SHELVE JOINT ELECTORATE

28. I have failed to understand why the question of electorate has not yet been decided. It is now three years that the minority Sub-Committee has been appointed. It sat on three occasions. The question of having joint or separation electorate came up for consideration at a meeting of the Committee held in December last when all the representatives of recognised minorities in Pakistan expressed their view in support of Joint Electorate with reservation of seats for backward minorities. We, on behalf of the Scheduled Castes, demanded joint electorate with reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes. This matter again came up for consideration at a meeting called in August last. But without any discussion whatsoever on this point, the meeting was adjourned sine die. It is not difficult to understand what the motive is behind this kind of evasive tactics in regard to such a vital matter on the part of Pakistan's rulers.

DISMAL FUTURE FOR HINDUS

29. Coming now to the present condition and the future of Hindus in East Bengal as a result of the Delhi Agreement, I should say that the present condition is not only unsatisfactory but absolutely hopeless and that the future completely dark and dismal. Confidence of Hindus in East Bengal has not been restored in the least. The Agreement is treated as a mere scrap of paper alike by the East Bengal Government and the Muslim League. That

a pretty large number of Hindus migrants, mostly Scheduled Caste cultivators are returning to East Bengal is no indication that confidence has been restored. It only indicates that their stay and rehabilitation in West Bengal, or elsewhere in the Indian Union have not been possible. The sufferings of refugee life are compelling them to go back to their homes. Besides, many of them are going back to bring movable articles and settle or dispose of immovable properties. That no serious communal disturbance has recently taken place in East Bengal is not to be attributed to the Delhi Agreement. It could not simply continue even if there were no Agreement or Pact.

30. It must be admitted that the Delhi Pact was not an end in itself. It was intended that such conditions would be created as might effectively help resolve so many disputes and conflict existing between India and Pakistan. But during this period of six months after the Agreement, no dispute or conflict has really been resolved. On the contrary, communal propaganda and anti-India propaganda by Pakistan both at home and abroad are continuing in full swing. The observance of Kashmir Day by the Muslim League all over Pakistan is an eloquent proof of communal anti-India propaganda by Pakistan. The recent speech of the Governor of Punjab (Pak) saying that Pakistan needed a strong Army for the security of Indian Muslims has betrayed the real attitude of Pakistan towards India. It will only increase the tension between the two countries.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN EAST BENGAL TODAY

31. What is today the condition in East Bengal? About fifty lakhs of Hindus have left since the partition of the country. Apart from the East Bengal riot of last February, the reasons for such a large scale exodus of Hindus are many. The boycott by the Muslims of Hindu lawyers, medical practitioners, shop-keepers, traders and merchants has compelled Hindus to migrate to West Bengal in search of their means of livelihood. Wholesale requisition of Hindu houses even without following due process of law in many and non-payment of any rent whatsoever to the owners have compelled them to seek for Indian shelter. Payments of rent to Hindu landlords was stopped long before. Besides, the Ansars against whom I received complaints all over are a standing menace to the safety and security of Hindus. Inference in matters of education and methods adopted by the Education Authority for Islamisation frightened the teaching staff of Secondary Schools and Colleges out of their old familiar moorings. They have left East Bengal. As a result, most of the educational institutions have been closed. I have received information that sometime ago the Educational Authority issued circular in Secondary Schools enjoining compulsory participation of teachers and students of all communities in recitation from the Holy Koran before the school work commenced. Another circular requires Headmasters of schools to name the different blocks of the premises after 12 distinguished Mus-

lims, such as, Jinnah, Iqbal, Liaquat Ali, Nazimuddin, etc. Only very recently in an educational conference held at Dacca, the President disclosed that out of 1,500 High English Schools in East Bengal, only 500 were working. Owing to the migration of Medical Practitioners there is hardly any means of proper treatment of patients. Almost all the priests who used to worship the household deities at Hindu houses have left. Important places of worship have been abandoned. The result is that the Hindus of East Bengal have got now hardly any means to follow religious pursuits and performance of social ceremonies like marriage where the services of a priest are essential. Artisans who made images of gods and goddesses have also left. Hindu Presidents of Union Boards have been replaced by Muslims by coercive measures with the active help and connivance of the police and Circle Officers. Hindu Headmasters and Secretaries of Schools have been replaced by Muslims. The Life of the few Hindu Govt. servants has been made extremely miserable as many of them have either been superseded by junior Muslims or dismissed without sufficient or any cause. Only very recently a Hindu Public Prosecutor of Chittagong was arbitrarily removed from service as has been made clear in a statement made by Srijukta Nellie Sengupta against whom at least no change of anti-Muslim bias prejudice or malice can be leveled.

HINDUS VIRTUALLY OUTLAWED

32. Commission of thefts and dacoities even with murder is going on as before. Thana offices seldom record half the complaints made by the Hindus. That the abduction and rape of Hindu girls have been reduced to a certain extent is due only to the fact that there is no Caste Hindu girl between the ages of 12 and 30 living in East Bengal at present. The few depressed class girls who live in rural areas with their parents are not even spared by Muslim goondas. I have received information about a number of incidents of rape of Scheduled Caste Girls by Muslims. Full payment is seldom made by Muslims buyers for the price of jute and other agricultural commodities sold by Hindus in market places. As a matter of fact, there is no operation of law, justice or fair-play in Pakistan, so far as Hindus are concerned.

FORCED CONVERSIONS IN WEST PAKISTAN

33. Leaving aside the question of East Pakistan, let me now refer to West Pakistan, especially Sind. The West Punjab had after partition about a lakh of Scheduled Castes people. It may be noted that a large number of them were converted to Islam. Only 4 out of a dozen Scheduled Castes girls abducted by Muslims have yet been recovered in spite of repeated petitions to the Authority. Names of those girls with names of their abductors were supplied to the government. The last reply recently given by the Officer-in-Charge of recovery of abducted girls said that "his function was to recover Hindu girls and 'Achhuts' (Scheduled Castes) were not Hindus". The condition of the small number of Hindus that are still living in Sind and Karachi, the capital of Pakistan,

is simply deplorable. I have got a list of 363 Hindu temples and gurdwaras of Karachi and Sind (which is by no means an exhaustive list) which are still in possession of Muslims. Some of the temples have been converted into cobbler's shops, slaughter houses and hotels. None of the Hindus has got back. Possession of their landed properties were taken away from them without any notice and distributed amongst refugees and local Muslims. I personally know that 200 to 300 Hindus were declared non-evacuees by the Custodian a pretty long time ago. But up till now properties have not been restored to any one of them. Even the possession of Karachi Pinjrapole^[ii] has not been restored to the trustees, although it was declared non-evacuee property sometime ago. In Karachi I had received petitions from many unfortunate fathers and husbands of abducted Hindu girls, mostly Scheduled Castes. I drew the attention of the 2nd Provisional Government to this fact. There was little or no effect. To my extreme regret I received information that a large number of Scheduled Castes who are still living in Sind have been forcibly converted to Islam.

PAKISTAN 'ACCURSED' FOR HINDUS

34. Now this being in brief the overall picture of Pakistan so far as the Hindus are concerned, I shall not be unjustified in stating that Hindus of Pakistan have to all intents and purposes been rendered "Stateless" in their own houses. They have no other fault than that they profess the Hindu religion. Declarations are being repeatedly made by Muslim League leaders that Pakistan is and shall be an Islamic State. Islam is being offered as the sovereign remedy for all earthly evils. In the matchless dialectics of capitalism and socialism you present the exhilarating democratic synthesis of Islamic equality and fraternity. In that grand setting of the Shariat Muslims alone are rulers while Hindus and other minorities are zimmies who are entitled to protection at price, and you know more than anybody else Mr. Prime Minister, what that price is. After anxious and prolonged struggle I have come to the conclusion that Pakistan is no place for Hindus to live in and that their future is darkened by the ominous shadow of conversion or liquidation. The bulk of the upper class Hindus and politically conscious scheduled castes have left East Bengal. Those Hindus who will continue to stay accursed in Pakistan will, I am afraid, by gradual stages and in a planned manner be either converted to Islam or completely exterminated. It is really amazing that a man of your education, culture and experience should be an exponent of a doctrine fraught with so great a danger to humanity and subversive of all principles of equality and good sense. I may tell you and your fellow workers that Hindus will allow themselves, whatever the treat or temptation, to be treated as Zimmies in the land of their birth. Today they may, as indeed many of them have already done, abandon their hearths and homes in sorrow but in panic. Tomorrow they strive for their rightful place in the economy of life. Who knows what is in the womb of the future? When I am convinced that my continuance in office in the Pakistan Central Government is not of any help

to Hindus I should not with a clear conscience, create the false impression in the minds of the Hindus of Pakistan and peoples abroad that Hindus can live there with honour and with a sense of security in respect of their life, property and religion. This is about Hindus.

NO CIVIL LIBERTY EVEN FOR MUSLIMS

35. And what about the Muslims who are outside the charmed circle of the League rulers and their corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy? There is hardly anything called civil liberty in Pakistan. Witness for example, the fate of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan than whom a more devout Muslim had not walked this earth for many years and of his gallant patriotic brother Dr. Khan Sahib. A large number of erstwhile League leaders of the North-west and also of the Eastern belt of Pakistan are in detention without trial. Mr. Suhrawardy to whom is due in a large measure the League's triumph in Bengal is for practical purpose a Pakistani prisoner who has to move under permit and open his lips under orders. Mr. Fazlul Haq, that dearly loved grand old man of Bengal, who was the author of that now famous Lahore resolution, is ploughing his lonely furrow in the precincts of the Dacca High Court of Judicature, and the so called Islamic planning is as ruthless as it is complete. About the East Bengal Muslims general, the less said the better. They were promised of autonomous and sovereign units of the independent State. What have they got instead? East Bengal has been transformed into a colony of the western belt of Pakistan, although it contained a population which is larger than that of all the units of Pakistan put together. It is a pale ineffective adjunct of Karachi doing the latter's bidding and carrying out its orders. East Bengal Muslims in their enthusiasm wanted bread and they have by the mysterious working of the Islamic State and the Shariat got stone instead from the arid deserts of Sind and the Punjab.

MY OWN SAD AND BITTER EXPERIENCE

36. Leaving aside the overall picture of Pakistan and the callous and cruel injustice done to others, my own personal experience is no less sad, bitter and revealing. You used your position as the Prime Minister and leader of the Parliamentary Party to ask me to issue a statement, which I did on the 8th September last. You know that I was not willing to make a statement containing untruths and half truths, which were worse than untruths. It was not possible for me to reject your request so long as I was there working as a Minister with you and under your leadership. But I can no longer afford to carry this load of false pretensions and untruth on my conscience and I have decided to offer my resignation as your Minister, which I am hereby placing in your hands and which, I hope, you will accept without delay. You are of course at liberty to dispense with that office or dispose of it in such a manner as may suit adequately and effectively the objectives of your Islamic State.

Yours sincerely,
Sd./- J.N. Mandal

8th October 1950

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1.1 Text

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