The Long Partition and the Many Faces of Violence

Prachi Ratra, Anjali Gera Roy

Indian Institute of Technology, India

Introduction

Although the gravity of the violence and its traumatizing effects have been a subject of intense debate in Partition studies, violence, as a conceptual category, remains comparatively unexplored due to its axiomatic relationship with Partition.[1] Unlike trauma, which has been subjected to rigorous theoretical analysis (Menon & Bhasin 1993; Butalia 1998; Das 2007; Kakar 2008), only a few scholars have attempted to define violence[2] as a category or to trace its history on the Indian subcontinent (Pandey 2003). Since the idea of a composite culture and harmonious communities prevailing on the subcontinent was contradicted by the illegitimate outbreak of violence on the eve of Partition, Partition historiography is aimed at either justifying, eliding, or disclaiming it altogether (Pandey 2003: 3). When forced to acknowledge the outbreak of Partition violence, Partition historiography invokes pathological theories of violence that represent violence as an aberration in an otherwise peaceful community employing metaphors of internecine war and fratricide. Historians have proffered a number of explanations that locate Partition's violence in civilizational difference, economic disparities, the clash of powerful personalities, the British divide and rule policy, and so on that still remain contested (Gilmartin 2015). Since the foundational violence of the nation's birth completely overturns the professed ideal of non-violence underpinning the celebratory national narrative of Independence, the sole choice is to regard it as someone else's history, not *our* history at all (Pandey 2003). In view of the scale and intensity of violence witnessed during Partition that puts into question the founding narrative of the Indian nation propped on Gandhian ideologies of non-violence, the historian is confronted with the difficult paradox of documenting an event involving genocidal violence using the objective tools of history while at the same time denying it. Unlike imperialist and nationalist historiography that separated Partition from violence, Partition, for survivors, as Gyanendra Pandey (2003) puts it, was violence. In addition to explanations offered for violence, the ways through which various forms of violence, direct, structural, and cultural, expressed themselves need a more detailed engagement with violence as a conceptual category.

However, the specter of violence continues to haunt the subcontinent, which is memorably captured in Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar's metaphor of 'the long Partition' in her book *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (2010). Arguing that Partition was not a single event that fractured people's lives, Zamindar posits the idea of Partition as an ongoing process that had crucial repercussions and shaped history. According to her, 1947 is not the fixed moment that altered reality but its impact extended to the 1950s with a large-scale displacement of proportions that could not be imagined by the state.[3] Borrowing Zamindar's metaphor of 'the long Partition', this paper aims to show how Amitav Ghosh breaks Indian nationalist history's silence on the violence of Partition through recovering untold, forgotten, repressed stories of ordinary people in small localities and neighborhoods in *In An Antique Land* (1994), "The Ghosts of Mrs Gandhi" (1995), "The Fundamentalist Challenge 1995" (2005), and "In The Reign Of The Headless Horse" (2002).[4] Ghosh brings to light recurring incidents of communal violence, migration, and displacement in India following the 1947 Partition, such as the 1964 Bengal riots, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the 1992 Ayodhya riots, and the 2002 Gujarat riots, based on his personal memories that enmesh with those of ordinary people.

Recovering Unknown Stories of the Violence: 1947, 1964, 1984, 1992, 2002

Following the binary logic of the communal polarization after Partition, Partition scholars have largely focused on the forced displacement of Hindus and Sikhs to India and Muslims to Pakistan. But the traumatic experience of those who remained behind, like Muslims in India or Hindus in Pakistan, has been overlooked. Thousands of Bihari Muslims in India were subjected to violence that forced them to leave India to save their lives (Sinha-Kerkhoff 2004). A news report mentions "Jamshed Alam [. . .] born to Bihari Muslims who had to flee to East Pakistan from India" because of the violence committed against Muslims in Bihar (Halder 2015). This is corroborated by Devendra Sinha, a Partition survivor who witnessed the violence in Patna, Bihar:

> We'd [he and a few other people] gone to Munger and Bhagalpur where the riots had affected the areas very badly. We went there and talked to the village people, to the angry Muslim families and the attacked families. Families would stay indoors for days and days away from their relatives because of the scare [. . .] Many good, talented people even left for Pakistan afterward.[5]

In *In an Antique Land*, Ghosh underlines the violence ordinary people faced during Partition by providing telling details about the family's

cook who "was from one of the maritime districts of East Pakistan and he [the cook] had come to work with us [Ghosh's family] because he had lost most of his family in the riots that followed Partition and now wanted to emigrate to India" (1994: 167-68). He also brings to light the mass displacement that followed Partition violence driving characters like Khalil and Saifuddin in *The Shadow Lines* out of their homes. Saifuddin is described as "a nice man, very well spoken and polite; he was from Motihari in Bihar. He'd come to East Pakistan with nothing at all, other than a large family, and he managed to set up a thriving little business" (2011: 139).

The 1964 riots began as a result of the Hazratbal incident (Das 2017: 1148). On 27 December 1963, Prophet Mohammad's strand of hair enshrined in Hazratbal in Jammu and Kashmir was found missing, uniting Kashmiris in their collective grief. However, it rapidly took a religious turn when the Pakistan government portrayed the 'theft' as a sign of the Indian government's failure to protect its Muslims. Although no incidents of violence were reported from Kashmir itself, the violence spread to parts of East Pakistan even after the recovery of the relic. A 'Black Day' was reportedly observed in East Pakistan on 3 January 1964 and subsequently in several places on both sides of the border (The Indian Commission of Jurists 1965: 28, 29). If Hindu houses were looted and burned in districts in East Pakistan's Khulna and Dhaka, Muslims were attacked by Hindus in India's Calcutta during the communal violence.

The 1964 riots caused large-scale migrations underlining the porous nature of the eastern borders. In June 1964, 506,224 people migrated from East Pakistan to West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura (*Keesing's Contemporary Archives* 1964: 20185). In 1964, Sona Rani Dutta lived in Khulna with her husband, a sweet-meat shop owner in Khulna Bazar. Her testimonial account of the riots she witnessed was recorded as follows by The Indian Commission of Jurists,

> When Muslims started attacking people tried to run away for safer places. She also went away and returned after about 5 or 6 days and learnt on enquiring that her husband had been killed. Muslims used to tell Hindus that if good looking Hindu girls are not given to them, looting, arson, abduction and conversion would take place. She refers by name to four girls giving their ages, saying that the girls were abducted during disturbances and none was returned. She then started on her way to India, without any valid documents and she mentions that on the way the party which was proceeding towards the Indian frontier was attacked by about 15 to 20 Muslims. The party robbed them of everything and forcibly took away one girl of the age of 15.[6] (1965: 69)

Ghosh, who was an 8-year-old child when his father was posted in Dhaka on a diplomatic appointment, narrativizes his witnessing of the 1964 violent riots in *In an Antique Land*. The recall of his childhood memories helps him recover other untold stories of the riots deeply etched on people's memories:

> . . . mob of hundreds of men, their faces shining red in the light of the burning torches in their hands, rags tied on sticks, whose flames seem to be swirling against our walls in waves of fire. As I watch, the flames begin to dance around the house, and while they circle the walls the people gathered inside mill around the garden, cower in huddles and cover their faces. I can see the enraged mob and the dancing flames with a vivid, burning clarity, yet all of it happens in utter silence; my memory, in an act of benign protection, has excised every single sound. (1994: 168)

Through inscribing his family stories into the violence of Partition and of subsequent outbreaks of communal riots, Ghosh fills up the lacunae in nationalist histories that repress people's memories of violence:

> It was then [at the moment of finding a pistol under his father's pillow] that I realized he [father] was afraid we might be killed that night, and that he had sent me to the bedroom so I would be the last to be found if the gates gave way and the mob succeeded in breaking in. (1994: 169)

Ghosh emphasizes the loss of lives and homes as a consequence of the 1964 riots in both *The Shadow Lines* and *In an Antique Land*.[7] Ghosh remembers people who had "little bundles of clothes and pots and pans spread out beside them" intermittently arriving in the garden of his house in Dhaka (1994: 166). During the 1964 riots, "the garden was packed with people, some squatting in silent groups and others leaning against the walls, as though in wait" (1994: 167). The people seeking shelter in his house were those Hindus who had chosen to remain in East Pakistan after Partition and were targeted by Muslims when the riots broke out. The child narrator of *In an Antique Land* is able to comprehend the reason for their visits only in retrospect as an adult:

> . . . and I was too young to work out for myself that they were refugees, fleeing from mobs, and that they had taken shelter in our garden because ours was the only 'Hindu' house nearby that happened to have high walls. (1994: 167)

Ghosh visits the archives as a young university student in Delhi to verify his hazy memories through searching media reports and is surprised to find a few perfunctory mentions of the riots during which Hindus in Dhaka were systematically attacked and their houses burnt in brief columns tucked away in the inside pages of Indian newspapers. Ten thousand people were estimated to have been killed in Dhaka alone (*The True Picture* 2019). Another media coverage mentions "assaults on Hindus, arson, and looting" and borrows the *New York Times'* description of Raya bazar as "a town in some front line" (*Keesing's Contemporary Archives* 1964: 20185).

Ghosh also highlights the presence of 'the long Partition' in his non-fictionalized account of the 1984 riots in "The Ghosts of Mrs Gandhi" (1995). Attacks on Sikhs began in October 1984 when Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards with Delhi

being one of the worst-hit cities. Ghosh recounts his traveling from Delhi University by a bus carrying a sole Sikh passenger that was stopped by a mob—which was "no ordinary crowd: it seemed to consist of red-eyed young men" who "were armed with steel rods and bicycle chains" (1995)—searching for Sikhs. During the 1984 riots, Sikhs were not safe even in their houses since they were systematically burned. Mr. and Mrs. Bawa, the Sikh neighbors of Ghosh's friend Hari Sen in whose house Ghosh was forced to spend the night after his terror-filled bus ride, were initially under the illusion that they would not be harmed because they had played no role in Indira Gandhi's assassination and condemned Sikh militancy as much as the Hindus did. But the elderly couple was proved wrong when the mob invaded their middle-class enclave. The Sikh couple would have been subjected to violence, and their house would have been set ablaze, possibly with them inside, had they not taken up Mrs. Sen's offer of taking shelter in her house, or their cook lost his nerve when the mob inquired about the Sikh occupants of the house. The PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties) and PUDR (People's Union for Democratic Rights) Report notes: "Not one of these [the victims of the 1984 riots] were willing to consider returning to their original homes after the brutal massacre they had lived through" (2005: 29). Das's account of a female survivor who lost her husband and three sons in the 1984 riots shows that the Sens's and Ghosh's anxieties about the Bawas' safety were not unfounded:

> Some people, the neighbors, one of my relatives, said it would be better if we hid in an abandoned house nearby. So, my husband took our three sons and hid there. We locked the house from outside, but there was treachery in people's hearts. Someone must have told the crowd. They baited him to come out. Then they poured kerosene on that house. They burnt them alive. When I went there that night, the bodies of my sons were on the loft - huddled together. (cited in Ghosh 1995: par. 37)

Ghosh compares the violence of 1984 to that of Partition to portray the riots as a ghastly genocide. He states that he never imagined that the history of "mass slaughter" associated with Partition would ever be repeated but recalls that the violence in Delhi reached "the same level of intensity" during the 1984 riots (1995). The violence against Sikhs came as a complete surprise for Ghosh since Sikhs in Delhi had hitherto never been subjected to communal violence. Initially, Ghosh assumed that the violence against Sikhs would be curtailed since the nation's capital was "equipped" to perform the "drill associated with civil disturbances" (1995). However, the state's complicity came home to him when he realized that no action was taken by the government to curb the violence even several hours after its eruption.

The year 1992, again, marked a colossal chapter in the history of India's communal violence. It demonstrated that the wounds of Partition were far from healed. In 1992, the Babri Masjid Mosque in

Ayodhya was demolished by "an organized mob of at least 75,000 Hindus [. . .] using hammers, rods, and shovels" (*Harvard Divinity School* 2018). Ghosh, in "The Fundamentalist Challenge 1995", discusses the violence of the event:

> On December 6, 1992, several thousand Hindu supremacists tore down a four-hundred-year-old mosque in Ayodhya, claiming that the structure was built upon the birthplace of their mythical hero Sri Rama. The Indian government, despite ample warning, was culpably negligent in not taking action to prevent the demolition. Thus, through CNN, the whole world witnessed the destructive frenzy of a mob of Hindu fanatics attacking an archaeological site, in the service of an utter delusion. (After all, a legendary world-bestriding hero can only be diminished if his birthplace comes to be confined to a circumscribed geographical location.) (2005: 123)

It was believed that Mir Baqui (from Babur's court) demolished a Ram temple to construct the mosque in 1528 (Panikkar 1993: 63). In 1949, an idol of Lord Rama was installed inside the mosque, which led to further tensions over the ownership of the space between Hindus and Muslims (Panikkar 1993: 63). These tensions were further aggravated by one of the co-founders and a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Lal Krishna Advani's *rath yatra*[8] from Somnath to Ayodhya from September to October 1990. Scholars have emphasized the impact of Advani's *rath yatra* in its adept borrowing of Hindu symbolism (Ahmad 1993; Panikkar 1993; Kakar 2008). The journey was strategic—Somnath serves as "the greatest symbol of defeat and humiliation for the Hindus" and the site of the "chosen trauma" for the Hindus (Kakar 2008: 67-68).[9] Ayodhya, similarly, was strategically selected as "the birthplace and capital of the kingdom of Lord Rama and thus the site of the Hindu's chosen glory" (Kakar 2008: 69). This *rath yatra* provided an impetus to the already existing religious tensions. The growing political nature of the situation and Advani's speech led to the "heightening of this [religious conflict] atmosphere" (Panikkar 1993: 70). Following this, the Babri Masjid was demolished on 6 December 1992, by Hindus.

Abdul Wahid, a survivor of the 1992 riots, corroborates the large-scale violence that people experienced,

> Our joint family was living in the Tehri Bazaar area, just behind Ram Janam Bhoomi police station. Around 6 pm on December 6, 1992, about a 100 karsevaks [religious volunteers] attacked our house. I was ten years old at the time, I remember my mother held my hand and ran but by then the mob had entered our house. The mob first killed my elder brother Mohammad Sadiq (15) then my relatives Mohammad Jameel (50), Mohammad Shamsuddin (60), Mohammad Salman (25), Shaukat [space added] Ullah (50) and his son Toni (14) were killed. I hid in the outskirts of Ayodhya that night and the next day we found all the dead bodies. (cited in Khan 2017: par. 5)

The re-enactment of "the mythical fight" with Ayodhya as a sacred site (Panikkar 1993: 70-71)[10] and its subsequent demolition led to riots

across the nation as well as in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Ghosh discusses the violence that marked the 1992 riots:[11]

> The destruction of the mosque was followed by tension and general unrest, in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as India. In India this quickly escalated into violence directed against Muslims by well-organized mobs of Hindus. Riots broke out in several major cities, and within two days four hundred people had died. The overwhelming majority of the dead, as always in these situations in India, were Muslim. There is evidence that in many parts of the country the police cooperated with and even directed Hindu mobs. Within six days, according to the official reckoning, about twelve hundred people had died. Reports from all over the country attest to the unprecedented brutality, the unspeakable savagery, of the violence that was directed against innocent Muslims by Hindu supremacists. (2005: 123)

The ripples of this violence were felt again when a "second wave of anti-Muslim violence" erupted in Surat and Bombay (Ghosh 2005: 123). To describe the violent nature of the 1992 riots, Ghosh cites a report by a Dutch observer:

> In a refugee camp which I visited, a small boy, hardly six years of age, sits all alone in a corner staring in front of him. Before his eyes he has seen first his father and mother murdered by the mob, then his grandfather and grandmother, and in the end three of his brothers. He is still alive but bodily not unscathed with 16 stitches in his head and burns on his back. The men who did it thought he was dead when they had finished with him ... Page after page of my diary is filled with this sort of atrocity. Women between seven and 70 were up for grabs by male gangs roaming around the localities ... People were also thrown into the flames and roasted alive. A high-ranking official told me how he had seen furniture coming down over the balcony from the opposite multistoreyed apartment building: mattresses, chairs, and then to his horror small children as well. (2005: 123-24)

The Muslim population of Gujarat was targeted a decade later during the 2002 Gujarat riots. On 27 February 2002, a train fire caused the death of fifty-eight Hindu pilgrims in Godhra, Gujarat, who were returning from Ayodhya. It was alleged that the train was set ablaze by Muslims. This led to an outbreak of violence against Gujarat Muslims. Women were raped and "they [Hindu mobsters] poured kerosene down their [Muslims'] throats and those of their children and threw lit matches at them" (*Dawn* 2016) in the riots that lasted for three days. However, violence in Ahmedabad continued unabated for three months and attacks on Muslims continued until the year after. The 2002 riots are often described as a "massacre of dozens of Muslims in Gujarat" (*Dawn* 2016). Naseebbahen Mohammedbhai Sheikh, one of the 2002 riot victims, "had lost an incomprehensible total of 26 members of her family in the massacre, including her husband, her 12-year-old daughter, her parents, and almost every living relative in her parents' and her husband's home except one brother and a son" (Mander 2017: par. 4).

Ghosh's non-fiction essay titled "In the Reign of the Headless Horse" (2002) deals with the 2002 Gujarat riots. He calls the riot one

of the "subcontinent's annals of horror" where innumerable Muslims were slaughtered. He critiques the state's role in instigating violence and "demonising an entire community" (2002) during the communal riots. Ghosh describes the 2002 riots as:

> [acts] of hideous and inexcusable violence was used as an alibi for a programme of mass murder [. . .] the police and the army stood by while mobs of red-eyed men roamed the streets of the city, armed not only with knives and swords, but also with electoral rolls and lists of minority-owned houses and businesses. (2002)

Ghosh's portrayal of the 1964,1984,1992 and 2002 riots epitomizes Zamindar's metaphor of 'the long Partition,' where religious discords continue to haunt the contemporary world and keep manifesting themselves in the form of riots. The alienation of the Sikhs from the Hindus that began after the desecration of the Golden Temple by the Indian security forces (Operation Bluestar) culminated in the labeling of the Sikhs as terrorists after Indira Gandhi's assassination. The othering of the Muslims during the 1992 riots is also reminiscent of Partition violence, where one sect of the society was viewed as *other* and their lives were believed to amount to nothing. It is estimated that 200,000 people were left homeless and several of them never returned to their homes (Dawn 2016). The horrifying description of violence is reminiscent of communal violence that continues to haunt us and shape the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in India. Ghosh unravels how the reiteration of the 'Hindutva' rhetoric triggered the violence that left thousands of people homeless is uncannily reminiscent of Partition. For people who become victims of communal violence, Partition keeps lurking, and as an event, it is not a finished business. Asserting that "if [he] had a religious identity at all it was largely by default" (1994: 37), Ghosh unambiguously condemns communal violence. However, the continual history of communal violence is countered by the reassuring stories of ordinary people coming to the rescue of the targets of violence.

Affirmation of Humanity

Indian nationalist histories describe instances of communal violence as "momentary madness" (Pandey 2003: 120) in which people get "carried away by a religious madness" (Dehlavi cited in Pandey 2003: 187). Due to the nationalist histories distancing themselves from violence, history also omits acts of humanity committed by people during times of communal violence. However, as Alok Bhalla argues, several gestures by people "even during the dark years of Partition" reinstate one's belief in a shared humanity (1999: 3119). Bhalla recalls instances of people who "were willing to risk giving aid" in the face of violence that violated the "sense of a common humanity" (1999: 3119,

3120), including his family that offered protection to a Muslim trader who was chased by a mob and sought refuge in his house.

Ghosh contests Indian nationalist histories that either try to locate the moment when Hindu-Muslim relations turned hostile or focus on "the causes of tragedy" (Bhalla 1999: 3120). By retelling people's histories as an alternative to the limited perspective that nationalist histories provide, Ghosh foregrounds occasions when people risked their lives to rescue those trapped in places marked by violence.

Ghosh excavates several stories of people helping the 'other.' In *The Shadow Lines*, Jethamoshai, a Hindu, provides shelter to Muslim refugees Saifuddin and Khalil, who had to flee India during Partition. Tridib attempts to save Jethamoshai and Khalil from the mob during the 1964 riots and ends up losing his life. These instances refute the "compelling narratives" of national histories that constructed the myth of civilizational differences between Hindus and Muslims (Bhalla 1999: 3120). During the 1964 riots, a similar situation was observed when people from both communities helped each other. In *In an Antique Land*, the narrator's father provides succor to Hindu residents fleeing the mob, risking his own and his family's lives. The mob attack is prevented in turn through the intervention of the narrator's father's Muslim friends who "alerted" the police (1994: 169). This shows how people saved the 'other' religious community during communal riots. Despite the religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims that nationalist histories refer to, people's histories demonstrate acts of humanity that are visible irrespective of this rift. Jahan Ara, living in Calcutta during the 1964 riots, recounts:

> There was a Hindu family near here [. . .] The man and his wife had just had a child [. . .] When things got really serious, he came to my father and said, "Khan Saheb, my child was born after so many years, after so much effort. You must save my child!" I am not sure what I understood of the situation, since I was so young. Anyway, they came to our place at night. We were living in Park Circus itself, yes. So [. . .] my father told them, "Do not worry. As long as I am alive, the rioters cannot touch you." (cited in Sarkar 2006: 147)

With the current political situation of the nation, the rhetoric of the civilizational divide between Muslim and non-Muslim communities is revived through the invocation of the Partition metaphor. This portrayal ensures an erasure of the peaceful coexistence of the communities and their shared culture from the nation's collective memory. Ghosh counters this 'abuse' of memory by underlining the stories where humanity prevails over religious differences.

During the 1984 riots, humanity accompanied every outbreak of violence. Ghosh highlights these acts of humanity. A female co-passenger in the bus Ghosh was traveling in after Indira Gandhi's assassination had the presence of mind to prevent the lone Sikh passenger from being intercepted by the angry mob by making him lie

down in the aisle. Not only the bus driver but also the passengers firmly and unanimously denied the presence of any Sikh on the bus, "all the passengers were shaking their heads and saying, no, no, let us go now, we have to get home" (Ghosh 1995). The gentle Mrs. Sen, supported by her son Hari Sen, insisted on providing refuge to Mr. and Mrs. Bawa despite knowing that "Hindus or Muslims who had sheltered Sikhs were also being attacked; their houses too were being looted and burned" (1995). When the Nagrik Ekta March was at the risk of being attacked by the mob, the female protestors in the group "turned to face the approaching men, challenging them, daring them to attack" (1995). Similarly, women in Hyderabad warded off a mob during the 2002 Gujarat riots reinstating Ghosh's belief that "civil society in India is finding new weapons with which to combat state-sponsored violence" (2002). Bir Bahadur Singh, a victim of the 1984 riots, recounts:

> When the trouble began [. . .] Manohar Gupta [a friend], he came and stood in front of my shop when the attackers came. He said to them this is my shop [. . .] Three days he kept us with him in his house. He gave us a divan, and he made us rehearse what we would do if there was trouble. (cited in Butalia 1998: 231)

These acts of humanity and heroism go undocumented in nationalist histories that present 1947 as the "threshold" (Zamindar 2010: 4). Ghosh unravels these acts of kindness that affirm one's belief in humanity. He builds on people's histories to show how people support others during communal riots irrespective of their concrete religious identities. Since this version of events escapes nationalist histories, Ghosh revisits and revises it through people's histories to bring to light incidents that affirm a humane side of the people and goes beyond a selective use of memories to present a monolithic vision of religions and helps in the 'unforgetting' of the communal harmony through mnemonarratives.

Conclusion

The erasure of violence from Partition historiography that focuses on high politics (Dwarkadas 1958; Moore 1983; Wolpert 1984; Jalal 1994) modifies the collective memory in which the violence is no longer remembered. But the memory of Partition and its violence needs to be remembered since its erasure will ensure that the same violence will be re-performed (Portelli 2014: 44). Partition, as a founding event, was traumatic and its memories remain suppressed and 'forgotten,' but their 'unforgetting' is made possible by Ghosh. Despite Ghosh's writings serving as a reminder of Partition horrors, the continuous clashes between Hindus and Muslims in India that led to communal violence attest to the reality of the long Partition, where the

animosity between Hindus and Muslims continues to dominate their interactions in the present. The fissuring of Hindu-Sikh relations after Operation Bluestar was completed by the anti-Sikh riots that followed Indira Gandhi's assassination and turned the Sikhs into the new others of the nation. However, the continual history of communal violence is countered by the reassuring stories of ordinary people coming to the rescue of the targets of violence.

Notes

1. Gyanendra Pandey's analysis of the way Partition survivors conceptualized violence as martyrdom, an act of revenge, as something that happened *outside* while preserving the purity of the community shows that the matter-of-fact tone in which the most heinous acts of violence were narrated resulted in constituting violence as *not* violence (1997). Looking at the relationship between violence and community, Pandey, arguing that narratives of particular experiences of violence go towards community making in the history of any community, suggests that violence constitutes and reconstitutes the subject (2003: 5).

2. This violence is both physical and psychological. According to Veena Das, the trauma of Partition, that is, the trauma of violence experienced, is "frozen"; the wound that violence leaves on the person cannot be healed with time (2007: 88, 101). Das further elaborates on the relationship between witnessing violence and its subsequent trauma. This trauma can be seen when people speak about their witnessing of violent events; the breakdown of language is caused by trauma. While physical violence is visible, psychological violence is invisible.

3. For Zamindar (2010), 1947 marks the beginning of a long process that continues far beyond 1947. She explores the policy-making activity that was carried out by the state to dictate and modify the very criteria of being a 'citizen.'

4. The texts are chosen based on their relevance due to the communal violence that broke out in north-east Delhi on 23 February 2020 after the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), which was read with the National Register of Citizens (NRC). *In an Antique Land* deconstructs the notion of a homogenous identity that is antithetical to the propaganda of the Hindutva ideology. "The Ghosts of Mrs Gandhi," "The Fundamentalist Challenge 1995" and "In the Reign of the Headless Horse" invoke 'the long Partition,' where communal politics continues to plague the nation.

5. Devendra Sinha interviewed by Ayushi Astha. This personal interview was conducted for Anjali Gera Roy's project "After Partition: Post-memories of the Afterlife of Partition 1947," sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

6. Dutta's narrative of violence and abduction of young women was reiterated by Shobha Rani Ghosh whose family had fled Barishal before the 1947 Partition apprehending the outbreak of violence,

> We came here (India,West Bengal) much before the riots. We came because - as I told you - the Muslim boys used to taunt us when we walked past them on the road. They used to humiliate us by saying "bhalo bisna (bed/bedding) ken, Hindu meyeder biye kore shoaaite hobe tto" [Buy new linen! You will have to marry Hindu girls and sleep with them]. We gradually became terrified at these gestures and thought if a riot was really to take place then what would we do? And we were getting to hear that there would indeed be riots. And then we also saw people from our neighbouring areas leaving. We would not know where they were going until they boarded the van [vehicle] and then they would say that they were leaving for India. Then, we thought how we could stay back when there was no one to be trusted. If the Muslims were to attack us, then we would become helpless. Then, we also boarded the vehicle [did not specify the type of vehicle]. Do you know what we took with us? A stone hand spice grinder (sheel-nora) (Personal Interview by De Dutta, December 2010). (De Dutta and Gera Roy 2013)

7. The death of Tridib, the central event of *The Shadow Lines*, occurs in Dhaka. Tridib, Jethamoshai, and Khalil are murdered by a frenzied mob. The image invoked by the manner in which they are killed testifies to the violence that victims of communal riots undergo. It highlights the loss of property and lives that is either repressed in nationalist history or reduced to statistics. It represents a type of mania where people seem to have lost sanity: "They'd cut Khalil's stomach open. The old man's head had been hacked off. And they'd cut Tridib's throat, from ear to ear" (Ghosh 2011: 251). This violence of the 1964 riots was mirrored in the city of Calcutta.

8. The *rath yatra* was a political rally organized by the BJP.

9. Somnath used to be the richest temple in India in the eleventh century when it was invaded by Mahmud (Kakar 2008: 67-68). Kakar defines 'chosen trauma' as "an event which causes a community to feel helpless and victimized by another and whose mental representation becomes embedded in the group's collective identity" (2008: 69).

10. Kakar also brings forth the use of Mahabharata symbolism in the *rath yatra* (2008: 66-67).

11. Ahmad refers to the violence as a "communal orgy" (1993: 21).

Works Cited

Ahmad, Aijaz. "Culture, Community, Nation: On the Ruins of Ayodhya." *Social Scientist*, vol. 21, no. 7/8, 1993, pp. 17-48, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3520344. Accessed 17 September 2021.

Bhalla, Alok. "Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 34, no. 44, 1999, pp. 3119-28, www.jstor.org/stable/4408572. Accessed 29 June 2021.

"Bloodbath Against Non-Muslims in Undivided Bengal – The Story That Needs to Be Told." *The True Picture*, 24 December 2019, https://www.thetruepicture.org/bengal-violence-caa-atrocities-against-non-muslims/. Accessed 16 April 2021.

Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence*. Penguin, 1998.

"The Dacca Riots- Mass Flight of Hindus and Tribal Peoples from East Pakistan." *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, July 1964, pp. 20185-86, http://web.stanford.edu/group/tomzgroup/pmwiki/uploads/1310-1962-xx-xx-KS-a-JZW.pdf. Accessed 10 April 2021.

Das, Mayurakshi. "Calcutta Cauldron: City-life during the January 1964 Riots." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 78, 2017, pp. 1147-54, www.jstor.org/stable/26906193. Accessed 1 May 2021.

Das, Veena. *Life and Words: Violence and The Descent into The Ordinary*. U of California P, 2007.

De Dutta, Sharmistha, and Anjali Gera Roy. "Fluid Borders and Continuous Displacement: Partition Stories from Talbagicha, Kharagpur." *Globalization: Australian Asian Perspectives*, edited by Cynthia Vanden Driesen and T. Vijay Kumar, Atlantic Publishers, 2013, pp. 245-66.

"Destruction of Ayodhya Mosque: Hinduism Case Study-Violence and Peace." *Harvard Divinity School*, 2018, https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/religion-context/case-studies/violence-peace/destruction-ayodhya-mosque. Accessed 10 May 2021.

Dwarkadas, Kanji. *Ten Years to Freedom*. Popular Prakashan, 1958.

Ghosh, Amitav. *In an Antique Land*. Vintage Books, 1994.

---. "The Ghosts of Mrs Gandhi." *Amitav Ghosh*, 17 July 1995, https://www.amitavghosh.com/essays/ghost.html. Accessed 15 April 2021.

---. "In the Reign of the Headless Horse." *Outlook India*, 13 May 2002, https://magazine.outlookindia.com/story/in-the-reign-of-the-headless-horse/215518. Accessed 17 May 2021.

---. "The Fundamentalist Challenge 1995." *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times*, Houghton Mifflin, 2005, pp. 113-27.

---. *The Shadow Lines*. John Murray, 2011.

Gilmartin, David. "The Historiography of India's Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2015, pp. 23-41, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43553642?seq=1. Accessed 13 September 2020.

Halder, Daipayan. "The Bihari's Bong connection." *India Today*, 2015, https://www.indiatoday.in/books/story/the-biharis-bong-connection-276052-2015-12-07. Accessed 1 July 2021.

"How India's 2002 Gujarat riots unfolded." *Dawn*, 2016, https://www.dawn.com/news/1265474/how-indias-2002-gujarat-riots-unfolded. Accessed 2 July 2021.

The Indian Commission of Jurists. "Recurrent Exodus of Minorities from East Pakistan and Disturbances in India." Govt. of India, 1965, https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/India-minorities-East-Pakistan-fact-finding-report-1965-eng.pdf. Accessed 17 March 2021.

Jalal, Ayesha. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge UP, 1994.

Kakar, Sudhir. *Rumours and Religious Riots*. Oxford UP, 2008.

Kaur, Ravinder. "Distinctive Citizenship: Refugees, Subjects and Post-Colonial State in India's Partition." *Taylor and Francis Online*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2009, pp. 429-46, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/.10.2752/147800409X466272. Accessed 11 March 2022.

Khan, Arshad Afzal. “In 25 Years Since the Ayodhya Massacre, No FIR Lodged, No Cases Registered.” *The Wire*, 2017, https://thewire.in/communalism/ayodhya-massacre-no-fir-lodged-no-cases-registered.

Mander, Harsh. “2002 Gujarat Riots: The woman who lost 25 members of her family in the 2002 riots and went on to help other widows.” *Scroll*, 2017, https://scroll.in/article/830268/the-story-of-a-woman-who-lost-25-from-her-family-in-the-2002-riots-and-went-on-to-help-other-widows. Accessed 2 July 2021.

Menon, Ritu, and Kamla Bhasin. “Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women during Partition.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 28, no. 17, 1993, pp. 2-11, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4399640?seq=1. Accessed 10 July 2021.

Moore, R. J. “Jinnah and the Pakistan Demand.” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 17, no. 4, Cambridge UP, 1983, pp. 529-61, http://www.jstor.org/stable/312235. Accessed 1 May 2022.

Pandey, Gyanendra. “Community and Violence: Recalling Partition.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 32, no. 32, 1997, pp. 2037-38+2041-45, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4405734?seq=1. Accessed 6 April 2021.

---. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India*. Cambridge UP, 2003.

Panikkar, K.N. “Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya.” *Social Scientist*, vol. 21, no. 7/8, 1993, pp. 63-78, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3520346. Accessed 1 May 2021.

People’s Union for Civil Liberties, and People’s Union for Democratic Rights. “Who are the Guilty?” *PUCL-PUDR*, 2005, https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/d9b7c8/pdf. Accessed 7 April 2021.

Portelli, Alessandro. “On the Uses of Memory: As Monument, As Reflex, As Disturbance.” *Economic Political Weekly*, vol. 49, no. 30, 2014, pp. 43-47, https://www.epw.in/journal/2014/30/oral-history-special-issues/uses-memory.html. Accessed 2 July 2021.

Sarkar, Mahua. “Difference in Memory.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2006, pp. 139-68, www.jstor.org/stable/3879331. Accessed 13 March 2021.

Sinha-Kerkhoff, Kathinka. "Voices of Difference: Partition Memory and Memories of Muslims in Jharkhand, India." *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2004, pp. 113-42.

Wolpert, Stanley. *Jinnah of Pakistan*. Oxford UP, 1984.

Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. Columbia UP, 2010.