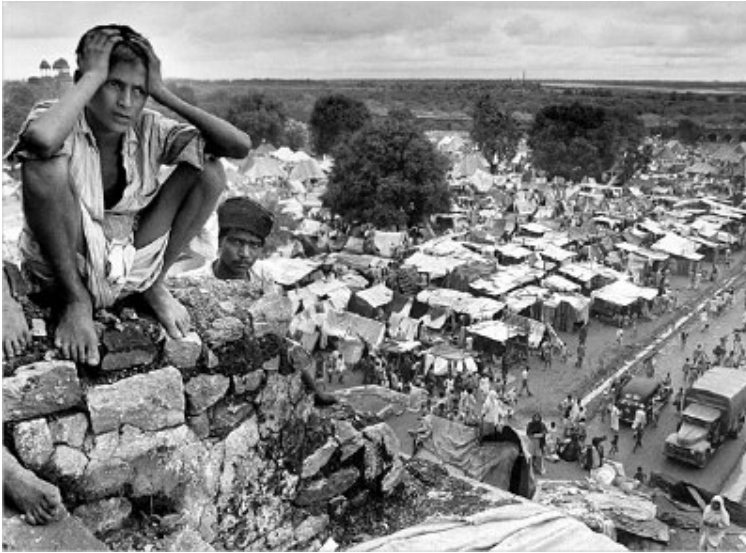


## Faiz on Partition

*(Faiz Sahib's editorial of the Pakistan Times dated August 15, 1947. The original title was: August 15)*



It is August 15 today. The dawn that brought this day into the world also restored to our people their long-lost freedom. Through many bleak decades of political serfdom, millions of us have waited and hoped for this dawn. It has arrived at last and yet, for us in the Punjab, it is not bright with laughter and buoyant with song. It is black with sorrow and red with blood. The heart does not lift to the great diction that has descended on us on this wonderful day and the reality of freedom, compared to the reality of the death and suffering around us, appears insubstantial and far away. While, in the West, the new edifice of Pakistan is emerging above its foundations, in the fire ravaged countryside of the East, the ancient homesteads of our less fortunate brothers are crumbling into ashes: while we are entering into our heritage, they are being turned out of theirs. It is a cruel tradition and our day of joyous thanksgiving is also the day of mourning. To enjoin and to practice a correct reaction to this day therefore, is difficult, and it is equally difficult to preach the pattern of collective and individual behavior that should govern our actions to day and hereafter. The difficulty, however, absolves no one of this duty to himself, to his people; and to the future of the great State that has today come into being. At a time of dire emergency, helplessness is as reprehensible as blind passion and to lose either courage or reason is criminal. Let us, therefore, try to put by our anger and our sorrow and look at things as they are. In Eastern Punjab an undetermined number of Muslims villages have been destroyed, an indefinite number of Muslim men, women and children have been bestially butchered and the killing and destruction, as yet, show no sign of abatement. Our unfortunate country has witnessed other tragedies of a similar nature in recent times but a number of crucial factors which operated in Eastern Punjab, did not exist elsewhere. In the first place the Provincial Governor who has against the will of the majority party in the

Legislative, taken the responsibility for law and order upon him was fully aware of the menace that was developing. His administration were duly informed, both through their own resources and through repeated representations made to them by responsible public men, that one community was making extensive preparations for organized offence while the community marked out as the victim was being reduced to utter helplessness through forcible disarming. The answer of the Governor and his administration to these representations was to abet the arming of the belligerents and to enforce the disarming of their victims more vigorously than before. Secondly, while thousands of men were clapped into jail under various Safety Ordinance for merely suspected "dangerous thoughts". The Sikh leader who went about preaching fire and sword in every hamlet and town were allowed the maximum liberty of action and speech. All the stringent laws banning public meetings, provocative speeches, organisations for violence, etc. suddenly paled into invalidity at the remotest approach of hate-maddened communalists. Thirdly, even though the timing of the tragedy was known well in advance, the civil administration was allowed to go completely partisan precisely at the same juncture and to cap it all the entire Muslim police force stationed in Amritsar was collected and disarmed under false pretences. This last was the most treacherous act of all and its repercussions were frightful and immediate. It is impossible to believe, therefore, that the misfortunes of our brethren in the East were either a visitation of Fate or a calamitous upheaval of unforeseen communal frenzy. It appears to have been, on the other hand, cold-blooded premeditated murder and if the criminals are not made to appear the bar of justice, they will not escape the bar of history. Whatever the place assigned to Governor Jenkins in the annals of the Indian Civil Service, he will long be remembered in the history of the Punjab as either the most incompetent or the most unscrupulous occupant of the gubernatorial chair. How far his policy of setting the people of the Punjab at each other's throats has the tacit support or sanction of the British Government, we do not know, but if the British are still aiming to use the Sikhs as a permanent wedge between Pakistan and Hindustan they could not have found a better player to handle the cards. We regret to have to soil our pen on this day with this sordid tale but it has to be told and it has not yet concluded. Our brothers in the East are today the subjects of another State. We have no desire to cringe or whine before the new administration that has today taken over and we shall not enjoin this course on our brothers. We may not be able to render them any great material help, although we shall do the best we can, but we are fully confident that they will bear up bravely in the ordeal that confronts them and retain their self-respect and their solidarity, however hard these virtues might appear to be in the face of cold, mechanised destruction. Unlike Acharya Kripalani we shall not talk of the hostages of the other community that are among us, as one innocent life is no repayment for another, and one burnt out homestead does not regain its inhabited contentment, if we burn out another. Revenge and retaliation may appear to some as normal and human, frenzy and passion may be mistaken for

love and courage. We have to realize, however, that the only real support that we can render to our people outside Pakistan is to make Pakistan so strong and so powerful that all our neighbours are forced to territories. We cannot even set about this task if we encourage lawlessness and disorder and violence in our midst, whatever the end in view. We have no moment to fritter away in idle destruction, not a sinew, nor a muscle to spare for any task except the urgent tasks of constructing and fortifying the State we have won, after countless years of suffering and privation. Our present sorrow is but a passing phase and must not be allowed to damage our national heritage that is permanent and enduring. Let us enter into our heritage, devoutly and thankfully, even though the steps are stained with blood and the threshold washed in tears.

<http://www.viewpointonline.net/faiz-on-partition.html>

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*Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the ones who think differently*