

***An Aspect of the Pakistan Movement:
Muslim League's Civil Disobedience
Movement against the NWFP Ministry of
Dr. Khan Sahib (20 February -
4 June 1947)***

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Various studies and works on the politics of NWFP and its role in the Pakistan Movement have been published but due attention has not been paid to the Muslim League's agitation against the Congress Ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib immediately after its installation. I consulted the NWFP Secret Police Reports of this period which present totally a different story by which not only the provincial government of Dr. Khan Sahib was reduced to the position of non-functioning but the Central Government at Delhi was also shaken. The Muslim League agitation became so tense that the demonstrators did not even care for Section-144 and there were reports of mob agitation. The writ of the provincial government was challenged. The basic demand of the Muslim League was either to force the resignation of the ministry or force the government to order fresh elections. The Viceroy along with Lady Mountbatten visited Peshawar on 27-28 April and assessed the situation. Mountbatten persuaded Gandhi and Jinnah to issue calls for calmness in NWFP province. The government was compelled to such an extent that they became ready to hold fresh elections by dismissing the provincial government as proposed by the NWFP Governor but as Mountbatten was not ready to take decision without prior consultation with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who when consulted, advised differently. Nehru

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advised in opposition to NWFP's Governor's advice. Instead Nehru advised that instead of solving the NWFP issue the government should solve the whole issue of partition. For this purpose Mountbatten went to London on 18 May 1947 and when he returned towards the end of the month he finalized 3 June 1947 Plan with the approval of Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah and other leaders. By this referendum was to be held without dismissing the NWFP Government. So the Frontier Muslim League decided to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement on 4 June 1947.

In order to make the readers aware of the true picture of this agitation I have cited extensively from NWFP Secret Police Reports and the *Times of India* (Bombay) as the details available in these sources are not available in others.¹

As a result of the elections of 1946 Congress Ministry in NWFP was installed headed by Dr. Khan Sahib as the Chief Minister. The Muslim League did not accept this Ministry and it started the Civil Disobedience Movement against this Ministry on 20 February 1947. The Movement lasted until the announcement of 3 June 1947 Partition Plan by which a referendum was to be held in NWFP in order to chalk out a course of action of its inclusion in Pakistan or United India.²

On 21 February 1947 an unruly mob consisting of Muslim League supporters forced its way into the garden of the residence of Dr. Khan Sahib, the NWFP Chief Minister, and broke windows, tore down a flag-post and Congress flag and held a meeting in which the Congress Government was strongly criticized.³ Next week's secret report of Intelligence stated:

The Muslim League Civil Disobedience campaign against the Congress Ministry in the NWFP is developing on lines familiar to those who were in this province in 1930, 1932, and 1942 with the difference that instead of Congress providing the demonstrators and the target being the British Government, the Muslim League now picket courts, and break the prohibiting orders under section 144 C.P.C. in their attempts to overthrow the Congress Government in this province. It is as yet premature to attempt to gauge the true strength of the agitation it has now spread to most districts in the province and up to date there has been no lack of volunteers willing to court arrest. The news of the downfall of the coalition Ministry in the Punjab has naturally caused jubilation amongst Muslim League supporters, who claim that the Frontier province alone remains as an

1 *Times of India*, 20 February 1946.

2 *Times of India*, 6 June 1947.

3 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 25 February 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

obstacle to the achievement of a united block of provinces in North-Western India which would provide a firm basis for Pakistan.⁴

Thus the movement, as a matter of fact, was geared up because of the British Prime Minister Mr. Attlee's announcement in British Parliament on 20 February 1947 that India would be given freedom by June 1948. The NWFP Muslim League had a number of complaints against Dr. Khan Sahib's Ministry and the main grievance was that this Ministry had adopted a repressive policy not only towards the Muslim League in particular but towards the Muslims of the NWFP in general. When on 2 March 1947 Sardar Khizr Hayat Tiwana's Ministry in the Punjab resigned as a result of the anti-Khizr Movement by the Punjab Muslim League, the movement in NWFP gained Momentum. As a matter of fact Major (R) Khurshid Anwar, Naib Salar-i-Ala of the AIML National Guards came to NWFP from Punjab on 28 February and he remained in the NWFP up to 24 April.⁵ His presence in NWFP geared up the Movement as he was helped "by other underground leaders".⁶ The demand of the Muslim League was that the Congress Ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib should be dismissed and fresh elections held. But the British Government was reluctant to do this. This did not mean that the Government was not shaken up by the disturbances in the NWFP.

On 10 March the situation in Peshawar deteriorated when the Muslim crowd blocked the railway line near Peshawar, tampered with the track and stoned the troops when asked to disperse, said the NWFP Government press release.⁷ Seventeen stopping Cars took place in the afternoon, three of which proved fatal. An assistant sub-inspector of police, who was fired at was lying in a precarious condition in the hospital. Because of this serious situation the District Magistrate imposed 12 hour curfew for three days in Peshawar from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Reports of stabbing also came from Nowshera and Pabbi. All telegraph and telephone lines were cut in Peshawar. Troops were called and curfew was also imposed in Abbotabad, Haripur, Havelian, Mansehra, Baffa and Shankiari. Thus the situation deteriorated further.⁸

4 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 4 March 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

5 Syed Wiqar Ali Shah, *Muslim League in NWFP* (Karachi: Royal Book Co., 1992), p.135.

6 *Ibid.*, p.135.

7 Nripendra Nath Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan-June 1947 (Calcutta: 16-1 Komedan Bazar Lane), p.231.

8 *Ibid.*

With the passage of time the movement got momentum. On 12 March five cases of stabbing in Peshawar were reported by which the atmosphere in Peshawar continued to be tense. Reports of forcible conversion, arson and burning of places of worship in Matani area in Peshawar District and in a few other places in Hazara District also came. However, in various parts of other districts of the NWFP the movement was “conducted peacefully”.⁹ On 13 March the Committee of Action of AIML in its meeting held in New Delhi deputed Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Member, Committee of Action, and Siddiq Ali Khan, *Salar-e-Ala*, AIML National Guards to visit Peshawar to study the situation in the NWFP.¹⁰ On 16 March two Muslim League processions were taken out in Peshawar City. There were similar processions in Abbotabad and some other towns of the Hazara district. There was also picketing of liquor shops in Kohat and Bannu districts.¹¹

Dr. Khan Sahib bravely faced this situation. In a press conference on the morning of 16 March he described the Muslim League Civil Disobedience Movement in the Frontier province as “unconstitutional”. He also said that “it was misnomer to call it Civil Disobedience”.¹² He also said that the question of his resigning or calling for fresh elections did not arise at all.

During his visit to Peshawar, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, addressing a press conference on 18 March 1947, said that the main object for starting the Muslim League Civil Disobedience Movement in NWFP was to redress certain grievances of the Frontier Muslims “against the abuse of powers by the Government which has become intolerable”. “The abuse of power which started before the last general elections”, Sardar Nishtar continued, “were not only confined to the last general elections but also affected the day-to-day working of the Government”.¹³ There was constant interference with the judiciary, cases were withdrawn from the courts at the advanced stage, and referred to the ‘*jirga*’ or the Council of Elders under the Frontier Crimes Regulations. There was also clear discrimination in the distribution of cloth, sugar and oil.¹⁴ He demanded that an impartial enquiry into the recent Peshawar firing should be held.¹⁵

9 *Times of India*, 14 March 1947.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Times of India*, 18 March 1947.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Times of India*, 19 March 1947.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif was very active in this movement. He addressed most of the meetings organized by the Frontier Muslim League in various districts. The situation heightened on 28 March when Pir of Manki was arrested which resulted into “serious break of rioting in Mardan”.¹⁶ In protest on 4 April “Pir of Manki Day” was observed in Peshawar and other cities of NWFP. On this day the demonstrators tried to force their way to the Peshawar Jail but the administration tactfully averted this move.¹⁷ The number of arrested persons had increased to the extent that “the jails were full to over-flowing, and arrangements had to be made for temporary accommodation for political prisoners.”¹⁸ By the end of April approximately 5000 political prisoners were in the Frontier Jails.¹⁹

Pakistan Day was observed on 23 March in Peshawar. In this connection a procession was organised by the Muslim League in Peshawar City but was dispersed by the police near the Edwards Gate. Most of the shops of the followers of the Muslim League were closed but the shops in Karimpura owned by Hindus and Sikhs remained open and they were seen freely moving in the city.²⁰ The movement continued to grow in the whole of Frontier. By April 1947 the situation became very alarming.

On the morning of 14 April a procession from the Peshawar Muslim League Office started which later divided itself into different groups. One party proceeded towards the High Court and the Post Office and caused damage to the buildings. The other groups went into the City and set fire to shops and residential houses in different parts of the town.²¹ Serious disturbances broke out in Dera Ismail Khan where numerous fires were raging. Troops and Constabulary was called from Bannu and Manzal to assist the military and police. Curfew was imposed to restore law and order situation.²²

16 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 1 April 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

17 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 8 April 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

18 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 15 April 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

19 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 29 April 1947, NDC Library, Islamabad.

20 *Times of India*, 22 March 1947.

21 *Times of India*, 16 April, 1947.

22 *Ibid.*

By this movement the Central Government became very much perturbed. For the purpose of restoring peace in the Frontier, the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten called both Gandhi and Jinnah to the Viceroy house in Delhi on 15 April.²³ The Viceroy convinced both these leaders to call upon their followers in NWFP to remain peaceful and not to use force to gain any political objective. Resultantly a joint statement in the form of communiqué was issued on the same day by Gandhi and Jinnah which stated:

We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims. We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder but also to avoid, both in speech and writing, any incitement to such acts.²⁴

Despite these calls the movement in NWFP continued to grow. Rather it became further severe. The Muslim women agitators in veil also joined the agitation. Muslim League women demonstrators in veils entered the local station of All-India Radio on 22 April and broke glass pans and flower-pots and damaged office files. They also hoisted the Muslim League flag on the building. Telephone wires were also reported to have been cut near Bannu, Kohat, and Tank. Telegraph wires were also found damaged near Nowshera. Muslim League followers demonstrated in front of the car of Dr. Khan Sahib, the Chief Minister while he was passing through Bannu on his way back from D.I. Khan where he had gone to see the riot-torn areas. The Muslim League agitators also organized procession in Abbottabad, Bannu, and Kohat and picketed law courts at Bannu, Abbotabad, Hangu, Mardan, Nowshera and Mansehra. In Peshawar two processions were organised — one by men— and another by women: The latter staged a demonstration in front of Dr. Khan Sahib's residence.²⁵

The NWFP Intelligence Report for the week ending 29 April 1947 reported in the following manner about the grave political condition in Peshawar and other cities of NWFP.

“The Muslim League agitation against the Ministry continued throughout the week in most districts.

23 *Times of India*, 16 April 1947.

24 *Times of India*, 16 April 1947.

25 *Times of India*, 23 April 1947.

“In Hazara District, courts were regularly picketed in Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Haripur, and in addition, processions were taken out at these places, and also at Havelian, in order to break the ban. The chief speakers at the Abbottabad mosque were Qazi Muhammad Azam and Maulvi Abdur Rahman of Kakul and Abdur Rahim of Chuna Kari, who delivered speeches every day after the midday prayers. Maulvi Abdur Rahman and Abdur Rahim spoke in an irresponsible way, giving a garbled version of the action of the local district authorities against the Muslim League. On 25 April, an audience of about 2,000 collected to receive Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Viceroy’s Executive Council Member for Post and Communications, when he visited Abbottabad.

“On Friday the 22 April, a very large procession moved through the Abbottabad bazaars. On the same day, 50 Muslim ladies, including Begum Kamalud Din and Miss Jalaud Din, went to Haripur and later on moved to the Haripur Central Jail, where with the assistance of a ladder, they scaled the jail wall, and hoisted a Muslim League flag. Political prisoners inside the jail greeted this performance with Muslim League slogans and shouts.

“On 25 April Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, addressed a public meeting at Haripur, and later at Havelian, where a large audience assembled. On arrival in Abbottabad, he was taken in a procession to the *Idgah*, where he said that he was pained to hear of existing conditions in Hazara District, which were due to the present Congress Ministry. He expressed his belief that they were close to the achievement of Pakistan, asked for more recruits for the Muslim National Guards, and said that he would bring the grievances of the Muslim League to the notice of local officials. On 24 April, a Hindu Deputy Superintendent Jail was assaulted by political prisoners, and consequently Army was called to meet the situation on 25 April.

“In Mardan District, routine picketing on a small scale continued at the courts in Mardan and at the Tehsil court Swabi. The picketing in this district was reported to be half-hearted.

“In Peshawar District, processions were taken out on most days to break the ban under section 144 Cr.P.C. On numerous occasions, women also formed processions, and on 21 April, they staged a demonstration in front of the house of the Chief Minister. On 20 April volunteers picketed all railway stations from Taru Jabba to Khairabad. On the same day, they issued “Pakistan” tickets from the Peshawar Cantonments railway station booking office.

“On 22 April, a procession formed by women went to the district courts and hoisted a Muslim League flag on the court of the City

Magistrate. Speeches were made urging Pakhtuns to oust the Ministry. On their return journey, the members of the procession entered the All-India Radio Station garden and smashed window panes, flower pots, and damaged some office records. Numerous meetings were held. A very large crowd gathered on 23 April in the Cunningham Park (Presently Jinnah Park), and later a procession was formed, which succeeded in forcing its way into the City and moved past the "Martyrs Memorial" in the Qissa Khani Bazar: the police tear-gassed this procession on two occasions. A procession, composed of women, was also taken out on the same day. Malik Feroz Khan Noon visited the Islamia College on 24 April and urged the students to achieve Pakistan, and criticized the Ministry which he described as one which worked at the bidding of Hindus. He also addressed a large meeting on 25 April in the Mahabat Khan mosque, and in the course of his speech, exhorted those present to get ready for fresh elections.

"In Kohat District, one procession was taken out each day in Kohat City to defy the ban on processionists under section 144 Cr. P.C. Five persons were arrested daily and the processions usually dispersed peacefully. On 25 April, Malik Feroz Khan Noon addressed a large meeting at Kohat and advised Pakhtuns to cast their votes in favour of the Muslim League in the elections, which he alleged, would be held in the near future, and which would decide their future destiny. The picketing of courts continued at Kohat and Hangu, and 136 temporary arrests were made at Kohat, and 22 persons were sent to Jail

"In Bannu District, picketing continued at Lakki, but not at Bannu, as the courts had been closed under the orders of the District Magistrate. One hundred and sixty-four arrests were made and 39 persons sent to jail. Numerous processions and meetings were held.

"On 18 April, a procession, composed of both Hindus and Muslims, marched through Lakki, and the Hindus announced that they would support the Pakistan demand. In the evening, a very large audience attended a meeting with Chaudhri Meng Raj of Lakki as President. A resolution was passed by the Hindus present stating that since they had been the "Hamsayas" of Pakhtuns for many years, they supported the Pakistan demand, and demanded that Master Choto Ram, M.L.A. (Congress), should either support the Muslim League, or resign from his seat, as Hindus had no confidence in him. Muslim speakers expressed their thanks to the Hindus for adopting a realistic attitude. On 21 April, Dr. Khan Sahib was proceeding to Dera Ismail Khan by car, and while passing Bannu, local Muslim League supporters staged a small demonstration, abused the Premier, and stoned his car. On 22 April,

certain Muslim League leaders were due to be transferred to Peshawar Jail in connection with political negotiations, but this was not known to the main body of political prisoners, who badly damaged a station wagon which had been brought to the Jail to transfer the prisoners.

“The communal situation continued to remain unsatisfactory in the Dera Ismail Khan District, where an added complication was the activity of tribal territory gangs who had been attracted to the district by the prospects of loot owing to the communal riots.

“The exodus of Hindus and Sikhs continued from most districts, and the Superintendent of Police, Kohat, reported that as a result of a census of Hindus held in Kohat City on 24 April, it revealed that the Hindu population consisted of only 155 as compared with the population of 6,178 in 1941. On 17 April, two empty shops, belonging to Hindus, were set on fire at Hangu, but the fires were rapidly extinguished by the police and Frontier Constabulary.

“In Bannu, the situation remained very tense owing to the news of the collection of tribal gangs on the borders of the district. The Bannu bazaar remained closed with the exception of a few shops, and the local schools and college were closed for a fortnight. On the night of 18 April, Bannu City was heavily sniped from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. and again slightly sniped on the night of 19 April. Hindus and Sikhs residing in villages in Bannu District were reported to be moving to Bannu City.”

“The situation in Dera Ismail Khan District continued to remain most disturbed. A convoy of Hindu and Sikh refugees from village Paroa which was proceeding to Dera Ismail Khan escorted by police on 22 April was attacked by a gang and eight Hindus, one Foot Constable, and one Muslim were killed and 17 Hindus injured. The casualty figures up to 20 April for Dera Ismail Khan District, excluding Dera Ismail Khan City and Tank, were reported to be:-

(a)	Killed	Hindus	54
		Muslims	14
(b)	Wounded	Hindus	9
		Muslims	5

“Those Hindus who had been converted to Islam forcibly, and had been evacuated to Dera Ismail Khan were reconverted to Hinduism. On 21 April, the Superintendent of Police, who was moving with a Column in the Paharpur Area, encountered an armed mob of Marwats, and one shot was fired on the police party, who in reply wounded two of the mob and arrested six. Kulachi village was raided by Mahsuds on the night of 22 April, and shops and houses were looted and burnt. One Hindu was

killed in a temple and one wounded, and one Muslim killed. The evacuation of Hindu refugees from Tank to Dera Ismail Khan continued throughout the week.”²⁶

The British Central Government was moved by these happenings to the extent that on 22 April the Viceroy announced in New Delhi that he will visit the NWFP on 28 April so that he can acquaint himself of the latest developments of the situation in the NWFP arising from his meeting with the Governor and the Premier of the Province in New Delhi last week.²⁷

Before this the Viceroy had full briefing from Sir Olaf Caroe, the NWFP Governor. On 16 April a meeting in the Viceroy House Delhi was held presided over by Viceroy and attended by Nehru, Liaquat, Sardar Baldev Singh, Field Marshal Sir C. Auchinleck, Sir Caroe, Lord Ismay, Sir E Mieville, Abell, and Capt. Brockman.²⁸ In this meeting Liaquat Ali Khan said that “the trouble in the NWFP and elsewhere was due to the fact that H.M.G. had announced that they would hand over power in June 1948 without making a decision to whom power was to be handed over. The result was bound to be discord between parties and that each party would do their utmost to be in power in the Province when the terminal date was reached”.²⁹ Sir Caroe expressed his desire to hold fresh election in NWFP, but Mountbatten, instead of holding elections, proposed to solve the whole problem of Muslim concern in British India.³⁰ Nehru was of the view that the elections would generate further “disturbance” in the provinces.³¹

Before going to the Frontier, the Viceroy wanted to get help of Jinnah to restore peace and order in the NWFP. For that purpose Jinnah was invited to Viceroy House on 23 April where he had his three-hour meeting with Lord Mountbatten. After the meeting Jinnah declared that “as a result of my talks with His Excellency, I feel that he is determined to play fair. The fact that he is going to the Frontier is a clear indication of his earnestness to examine the situation personally and remove the

26 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence* (Secret) Vol. XXXXIII, No.17, 29 April 1947, Peshawar, NDC Library, Islamabad.

27 *Times of India*, 23 April 1947.

28 Nicholas Mansergh, and Penderel Moon (Eds), *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, March - 30 May 1947, Vol.X, 22 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1981), pp.286-92.

29 *Ibid.*, p.288.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

root causes of the trouble”.³² As a result of this meeting the Frontier Government announced these measures:

1. To release unconditionally all political prisoners as soon as conditions permit;
2. Government’s non-interference with the freedom of expression of political opinion or with peaceful meetings, but processions and picketing cannot be permitted until normal conditions return.³³

On 24 April Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and Malik Feroze Khan Noon, the League leaders, visited Peshawar Muslim League Office. They were going to meet Pir of Manki Sharif and other League leaders who were in jail.³⁴ Addressing the students of Islamia College, Peshawar, Noon declared that Frontier Ministry will remain in office for a week or two and a referendum is expected to be held in Frontier.³⁵ He also expressed the hope that in the fresh elections the Pathans will give verdict in favour of Pakistan. Our demand is not for fresh elections but a free election and that can only be done when the present Congress Ministry goes away and Section 93 is established.”³⁶

Lord and Lady Mountbatten visited Peshawar on 28-29 April 1947. The Flagstaff House, the residence of the Area Commander of Peshawar, was fired at on the night of 28 April by an unknown culprit from outside the cantonment barbed wire perimeter. The culprit also threw six bombs. There was no casualty, but slight damage was caused to the building. The Frontier Government also reported raids by tribesmen on the town of Kulachi and village of Gomal, in D.I. Khan district. The gangs looted, and set on fire shops and houses. Three raiders were killed as a result of action by civil armed forces. Political circles in Peshawar believed that the scene of negotiations in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Frontier had shifted to Delhi, where the imprisoned leaders have been permitted by the Viceroy to meet Jinnah. The jailed Muslim League leaders who met the Viceroy on the morning of 29 April were reported to have decided not to call off the movement. The leaders discussed the situation arising out of the Frontier Government’s recent announcement of the release of political prisoners and their talks with Viceroy at Government House on 28 April. Their demands were not met

32 *Times of India*, 25 April, 1947

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Times of India*, 26 April 1947.

36 *Times of India*, 26 April 1947.

by the proposed steps. They expressed their full confidence in Jinnah and directed the War Council of the Frontier Muslim League to apprise him of the latest political situation. In his talks with the Muslim League leaders at Peshawar on 28 April the Viceroy received a request from them that they should all be lodged in one jail so that they could meet and be free to consult with each other and that a representative or group be allowed on parole to go to Delhi for consultation with Jinnah. The Viceroy agreed with their demands and asked the Governor to make arrangements accordingly.³⁷

After the departure of Lord Mountbatten from Peshawar, Mehr Chand Khanna, Finance Minister of the Frontier Government at a press conference on 29 April announced that during the Muslim League movement in the Frontier about 400 persons were killed, 150 stabbed, 300 forcibly converted and 50 of them kidnapped, and 1600 houses were burnt or damaged.³⁸

The NWFP Police Secret Report for the week ending 6 May 1947 is reproduced in order to show the height of the civil disobedience movement of the Muslim League in Peshawar and other cities/areas of the NWFP.

“In Hazara District, the Muslim League agitation showed no signs of abating, and picketing of courts occurred at Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Haripur resulting in considerable interference with court work. Processions were also taken out at various places to break the ban on processions. The Abbottabad mosque continued to remain the centre of Muslim League agitation, and on each day of the week meetings were addressed after the midday prayers by Qazi Muhammad Azam, Maulvi Abdur Rahim of Chuna Kari and Abdur Rahman of Kakul. The size of the audiences varied, but on 28 and 29 April, a large number of persons collected to say their prayers and listen to the speeches. On 29 April, a large crowd of Muslim League female supporters assembled in anticipation of a visit by Lady Mountbatten. As she did not arrive, a procession was formed which marched to the district courts, pulled down the Union Jack and hoisted a Muslim League flag. This performance was repeated at the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner. On receipt of false news that two members of the procession had been assaulted at the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner, an excited crowd came to the spot and behaved in an objectionable manner. The Deputy Commissioner interviewed a few of them, and satisfied them that the news of the assault

37 *Times of India*, 30 April 1947.

38 *Times of India*, 30 April 1947.

was false. On 27 April, a small procession, consisting of women from village Sirya, Police Station Kot Najibullah, went to the Central Prison, Haripur, and succeeded in hoisting a Muslim League flag on the Prison. On 1 May, another procession again repeated this performance.

“A large number of Muslim League supporters went from Mardan District to participate in the Muslim League demonstration at Peshawar on arrival of His Excellency the Viceroy. Picketing on courts continued at Mardan and Swabi, but was not effective. Malik Feroz Khan Noon addressed meetings on 26 April just outside the municipal limits of Mardan, and at Lund Khovar. The speeches were delivered in Urdu and translated into Pashto. He criticised the Khan brothers of selling Muslim rights to Hindus and asked the electorate to vote for the Muslim League if elections were held again. A meeting of Muslim League female supporters was held at the house of Muhammad Afzal Khan of Mardan on 2 May at which speeches were delivered, taunting the Mardan men for lack of courage.

“The chief event in Peshawar District was the visit of His Excellency the Viceroy. The Muslim League had decided to demonstrate to him the strength of the Muslim League movement in this province, and ordered a complete hartal to be observed in Peshawar City on 28 April, and summoned supporters from various parts of the province. Many of them collected in Peshawar on 27 April from Mardan, Malakand Agency, and various parts of Peshawar and Kohat Districts. A huge crowd assembled in the Cunningham Park near Peshawar Fort (Bala Hisar Fort) on the morning of 28 April, a number of those present wearing green uniform and carrying Muslim League banners. A large number of purdah women were also present: another very large crowd assembled near the Peshawar aerodrome but were induced to disperse. It was the reported intention of the gathering near the Fort to demonstrate before the Viceroy at any cost, but fortunately His Excellency decided to view the gathering from the railway bridge over the Grand Trunk Road. After the Viceroy had left, those present were addressed by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Member for Post and Communications in the Interim Government, Malik Feroz Khan Noon, and Major (R) Khurshid Anwar, Assistant Organiser of the All India Muslim National Guard and resolutions were passed, expressing no confidence in the Congress Ministry, demanding the dissolution of the Ministry, and holding of fresh elections, and accusing the Ministry of interference with the Muslim religion and nepotism and favouritism. On 29 April, when His Excellency the Viceroy was returning from Landi Kotal, the students of the Islamia College raised the usual pro-Pakistan slogans as he passed, and again on 30 April, a number of women demonstrated in favour of

Pakistan near the Lady Reading Hospital when Lady Mountbatten was visiting the hospital.

“The Muslim League continued its programme of breaking the ban u/s 144 Cr. P.C. in Peshawar City throughout the week, and picketing of courts took place on various days at Peshawar and Nowshera. On 26 April, Malik Feroz Khan Noon addressed a large audience at Pabbi, and appealed to Redshirts to join the Muslim League. A provocative speech was made by Majid Afzal of Lahore on 24 April at Nowshera, in which he advocated the use of violence by Pathans. His speech was criticised by Jamroz Khan of Badrashi, who emphasized the necessity of remaining peaceful. Majid Afzal has since been arrested u/s 40 F.C.R.

“At Kohat, the Muslim League held no public meetings during the week and there was no picketing of the courts, but a procession was taken out daily in Kohat City, to break the orders under section 144 Cr. P.C. On 2 May, the Kohat Town Hall and municipal offices were picketed, and again on 3 May, all the octroi posts were picketed. A large number of Muslim League supporters, both of men and women, went to Peshawar on 28 April to attend the Muslim League demonstration. On 29 April, Muslim League volunteers interfered with the work of the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Kohat, who was holding his court at Karak.

“Picketing continued at Lakki, and Bannu, and 173 volunteers were arrested of whom 73 were sent to jail. On 27 April, a very large audience attended a meeting at Lakki, at which Sheikh Niaz Muhammad moved a resolution, recommending that Sikhs should be forbidden to carry “Kirpans” or else Muslims should be permitted to carry swords. On 28 April, members of a procession who were accompanying picketers stoned the P.W.D. office at Bannu, breaking window-panes and doors.

“Members of the R.S.S. Sangh continued to hold rallies in Bannu City during the week. At a meeting of the Hindu-Sikh Minorities Protection Board held at Bannu on 1 May, speakers advised non-Muslims not to leave Bannu until a decision had been arrived at by His Excellency the Viceroy on the Frontier political problem.

“Communal tension was reported in Haripur, Hazara District, where local Muslims accused members of a detachment of a Jat Regiment for being responsible for various minor cases of arson and attempted arson. A few cases occurred at Abbottabad of explosions of country-made bombs, without any casualties being inflicted.

“Three shooting incidents occurred in Peshawar City as a result of which two Sikhs were fatally wounded. Five explosions took place without any casualties occurring.

“In Kohat District, a cyclostyled Urdu pamphlet has been distributed issued by the “*Toofani Group*” announcing that an armed ‘*Lashkar*’ from tribal territory would raid Kohat. This appeared to be an attempt to intimidate the non-Muslim population.

“A large number of Mahsuds from tribal territory moved towards Bannu District in the hope that Bannu City would be looted, and that they would be also to lend a hand, but were eventually persuaded to return to tribal territory, through the cooperation of leading Mahsuds. On the night of 25 April, Bannu City was ineffectively sniped. On the same date, a country-made bomb exploded in the Bannu City and its defence wall caused some damage. On the night of 30 April, a bomb exploded under a railway track two miles from Bannu, and the railway line was slightly damaged. The gates of Bannu City remained closed throughout the week, and special defensive measures were taken.

“The exodus of Hindus and Sikhs continued from most districts and the communal situation remained unsatisfactory. In Dera Ismail Khan District, the evacuation of Hindus from various villages to Dera Ismail Khan continued, and it was reported that approximately 9,000 refugees had assembled at Dera Ismail Khan. Numerous reports were received of the movements of tribal territory gangs, and on the night of 28 April, both Kulachi and Gomal were raided. At Gomal, houses and shops were looted and two temples, one shop and two houses were burnt, and two Hindus were killed. At Kulachi, the raiders succeeded in entering the town and were engaged by Police and Frontier Constabulary, but succeeded in burning a temple, two Serais, three shops, and four houses. Two Hindus were killed, and two Mahsud raiders shot dead and one wounded. On its return to tribal territory, the gang was again pursued by Frontier Constabulary, Military and South Waziristan Scouts, as a result of which one raider was killed, one wounded, and twelve Mahsuds and seven local bad characters were arrested. On the night of 3 May, Paniala village was raided, probably by local Marwats, who burnt one shop and two houses and looted five houses and thirty-five shops.

“The casualty figures up to 25th April for Dera Ismail Khan District were reported to be:-

Place	Killed		Injured	
	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus
Dera Ismail Khan City and Cantonments	5	14	28	17
Sadar Sub-Division	10	69	3	25
Tank Sub-Division	13	10	4	4

Total:	28	93	35	46
Force at Head Quarters			7 including S.P., D.S.P. 6	
(a) Regular Police	–	–		
(b) Additional Police	–	–		

“On the night of 28 April, unknown offenders fired two country-made rocket type projectiles at the house of the Peshawar Area Commander from a small hillock outside the perimeter wire, and also fired a number of rifle shots at his house. No casualties were caused. The offenders left behind them a projectile of a peculiarly destructive type, the fuse of which had failed to burn properly.”³⁹

In response to the agreement with the Viceroy, the Muslim League deputation from the NWFP consisting of Pir of Manki Sharif, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Sami Jan Khan, Mian Abdullah Khan and Arbab Noor Mohammad Khan arrived in Delhi by air from Peshawar on the evening of 2 May 1947.⁴⁰ These leaders were released on parole to meet Jinnah in Delhi.⁴¹ They had a meeting with Jinnah on 3 May 1947 and apprised him of the latest situation in the Frontier.⁴² The deputation again met Jinnah on 4 May in which Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar were also present.⁴³

Political circles in Delhi believed that Viceroy returned from the Frontier Province fully impressed with the gravity of the situation. Fresh elections or a referendum to ascertain the wishes of the people of Frontier Province were the two alternatives discussed in political quarters. For this purpose the Viceroy met Gandhi for 90 minutes in Delhi on 4 May followed by two and half hours meeting with Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan at the Viceroy House.⁴⁴ On 5 May the Viceroy had meeting with Dr. Khan Sahib who was called from Peshawar and with Gandhi and Nehru. The Viceroy is believed to have impressed upon them to settle the political issue of Frontier Province with Jinnah.⁴⁵ For this purpose Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Qazi Atullah Khan arrived in Delhi from Peshawar on the morning of 6 May-1947 and discussed the problem of the Frontier Province with Gandhi. Meanwhile the Frontier

39 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence* (Secret), Vol.XXXXIII, 6 May 1947, Peshawar, NDC Library, Islamabad.

40 *Times of India*, 3 May 1947.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Times of India*, 4 May 1947.

43 *Times of India*, 5 May 1947.

44 *Times of India*, 5 May 1947.

45 *Times of India*, 6 May 1947.

Muslim League deputation continued its discussion with Jinnah for the third day.

As a result of these parleys Gandhi and Jinnah had a marathon meeting at Jinnah's library in the later's bungalow in Delhi which lasted for two hours and forty-five minutes in which they tried in vain to convert each other to the reproductive view points—Gandhi arguing the inadvisability of dividing India and Jinnah reasoning the inevitability of establishment of Pakistan.⁴⁶ The meeting started at 5:30 p.m. and lasted upto 8:15 p.m. when Gandhi came out from Jinnah's house escorted by Jinnah's Secretary. Outside Jinnah's house there were about 100 pressmen, camera-men and spectators waiting for the outcome of the meeting. The following communiqué was read by Jinnah's Secretary to the pressmen:

We discussed two matters — one was the question of division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan. Mr. Gandhi does not accept the principle of division. He thinks that division is not inevitable, whereas, in my opinions, not only Pakistan is inevitable but it is the only practical solution of India's political problem. The second matter which we discussed was a letter, which we both have signed jointly appealing to the people to maintain peace, and we both have come to the conclusion that we must do our best in our respective spheres to see that appeal of ours is carried out, and we will make every effort for this purpose.⁴⁷

At the conclusion of the reading of the communiqué Jinnah appeared on the porch and thanked and bade good night to the press correspondents, but declined to answer any question.⁴⁸

In the afternoon of 6 May, Lord and Lady Mountbatten left Delhi for Simla. Earlier Viceroy's emissary Sir Eric Mieville called on Jinnah carrying message from Mountbatten with regard to the Frontier Province issue.⁴⁹

While declaring that he is unable to disagree with decision of the Frontier Muslim League leaders taken on 1 May not to call off the movement against the Congress Ministry of NWFP, Jinnah, in a statement issued on 7 May from New Delhi, made a fervent appeal to all the Muslims, particularly the Leaguers, to do everything in their power to remain peaceful. "We must recognize", Jinnah continued, "that the question of the Frontier in all its aspects is now before His Majesty's

46 *Times of India*, 1 May 1947.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Times of India*, 1 May 1947.

49 *Ibid.*

Government.”⁵⁰ Lord Ismay was in the U.K. in this connection. The question was expected to be settled in “a few weeks”.⁵¹ He also declared: “Our fight is not against the Hindus or the Sikhs. We are fighting for a true verdict of the people of the province to be obtained by fair and free methods. It is against all canons of morality and civilization and the teaching of Islam that we should harm the weak... I pray to God that during the few weeks that are ahead of us pending the final announcement both sides will do their best and save people from destruction of life and property”.⁵²

The Civil Disobedience Movement led by the Frontier Muslim League continued. The Intelligence report for the week ending 13 May 1947 is reproduced here so that real picture emerges.

“There has been little change in the progress of the Muslim League agitation against the Congress Ministry, but on occasion the volunteers have varied their tactics and have unexpectedly picketed railway stations.

“In Hazara District, courts were picketed at Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Haripur and processions were taken out at these places, and in addition, Havelian. On 3 May, a fracas took place between Muslim League political prisoners of Peshawar and Hazara Districts, confined in the Haripur Central Jail. At Abbottabad, meetings were addressed daily in the mosque by Qazi Muhammad Azam and Maulvi Adbur Rahim of Chunakari and Abdur Rahman of Kakul, who abused the Congress Ministry and criticized the action taken by local district authorities. On 7-May, a women’s procession was taken out in Mansehra.

“In Mardan District, the Muslim League have varied their tactics and have picketed the railway station, Mardan, where on 3 May they were responsible for the loss of cash, and the issue of unauthorized tickets. On 8 May, the railway station and P. W. D. Rest House at Hathian were picketed, and a case file which was being dealt with by a Canal Magistrate, was torn. At Swabi on 5 May, picketers entered the court of the Sub-Judge and damaged a case file. Miss Mumtaz Shah Nawaz of Lahore addressed a women’s meeting held at Mardan on 7 May, and rebuked the men of Mardan for not permitting their women folk to join the agitation.

“At a meeting held at Adezai, Peshawar District, on 2 May, Umar Gul Afridi, declared that Pandit Nehru and his henchmen

50 *Times of India*, 8 May 1947.

51 *Ibid.*

52 *Times of India*, 8 May 1947.

were responsible for disturbances in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province. He advised those present to boycott non-Muslims, and to compose their differences with Redshirts. Miss Mumtaz Shah Nawaz addressed a number of meetings at Tangi, Utmanzai, Umarzai, and in the Peshawar City Muslim League office. Men's and women's processions continued throughout the week in Peshawar City, and picketing of courts and railway stations at Peshawar and Nowshera and the Tehsil at Nowshera took place on various days. An unauthorized news sheet, entitled "*Sada-i-Pakistan*", appeared regularly, containing pro-Muslim League propaganda and attacks on Congress.

"In Kohat District, a number of meetings were held, the most important being at Kohat on 5 and 8 May, at which Fida Muhammad, brother of the Pir of Manki, Malikul Rahman Kayani, and Mian Abdullah Shah, of Hazara condemned the Congress Ministry, especially for the dissolution of the Kohat Municipal Committee, alleging that this had been done because it had refused to permit gates to be erected in Hindu Mohallas, and because the Committee had called the library the 'Jinnah Municipal Library'. The picketing of courts continued during the week, 117 volunteers being detained, of whom 7 were sent to jail. Daily processions were taken out in the city, as a result of which 33 volunteers were sent to jail. The agitation aroused by the supercession of the Kohat Municipality resulted in picketing of Octroi posts on 4 and 5 May, and an ineffective attempt to damage the Town Hall by explosives on the evening of 4 May. On 9 May, a letter was read out in the Haji Bahadur Mosque, alleged to have been written by Malikul Rahman Kayani, in which he stated that he had absconded to tribal territory, and would carry on the movement from there.

"In Bannu District, picketing of courts took place on most days at Lakki and Bannu. On 3 May, picketers broke window-panes and furniture in the court of the Political Tehsildar, and Senior Sub-Judge. Members of a procession damaged a petrol pump and broke street light bulbs. On 4 May, a large number of Bhattanis reached Lakki in the hope of loot, but numerous arrests were made by the police, and the situation was restored. On the same day, a large Muslim League meeting was held, at which the chief speakers were Shah Nawaz Khan and Niaz Muhammad."

The civil disobedience was at its height during the week ending 20 May 1947 in all the cities of NWFP. The intelligence report of this week is reproduced as follows:

“There has been no diminution in the strength of the Muslim League agitation against the Congress Ministry in this province, and in Mardan District, which until now had been comparatively quiet, a sudden burst of activity took place.

“In Hazara District, the courts at Mansehra, Abbottabad, and Haripur were picketed on most days, and the Magistrates were not able to work effectively. Processions were taken out at Abbottabad, Havelian, and Haripur in order to break the ban which is still in force. Two processions, composed of females, were reported, one at Abbottabad and one at Haripur. Demonstrators also interfered with the running of trains. At Abbottabad itself the main mosque continued to be the centre of Muslim League agitation, and meetings were held each day after the mid-day prayers, and were addressed by Qazi Muhammad Azam, Maulvi Abdur Rahim of Chunakari and Abdur Rahman of Kakul. On one occasion, Maulvi Abdur Rahim objected to the arrests being made inside the mosque, and said that in future resistance would be offered. After the Friday prayers, speakers objected to the times of the curfew orders owing to their interfering with the saying of prayers. A “Hartal” was observed on 12 May in protest against the arrest of Punjab volunteers, which had been effected on the previous day, inside the Jumma Mosque at Abbottabad.

“In Mardan District, the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires continued, and on two days in the week, railway stations at Hathian and Parkho were picketed. No damage was done to railway property, but the demonstrators issued “Pakistan” tickets. On 16 May, most of the *Patwarkhanas* in the Swabi Tahsil were raided, and revenue records were damaged, whilst the furniture of the Canal Rest Houses at Shahbaz Garhi, Gohati and Jaggan Nath was broken. The office of a Zilladar at Mardan was raided, and some of the records were tampered with. Nine Muslim League meetings took place during the week, and at a meeting at Katlang on 12 May, Jaffar Khan, Redshirt “General” stated that he and his supporters had transferred allegiance to the Muslim League. Two meetings of Muslim League female supporters took place in

Mardan on 10 and 14 May, while on 16 May, a small procession succeeded in moving for a short distance through the Mardan area.

“Numerous meetings took place in Peshawar City and rural areas, and on most days processions were taken out to break the ban on processions in Peshawar City. The firing was commemorated by a large meeting held in the Cunningham Park (Jinnah Park) on 10 May, at which speeches were delivered by Maulvi Abdullah of Charsadda, Abdul Qadir of Peshawar City, Shamas Khan of Kheshki and Aga Chan Shah. On 12 May, Muslim League volunteers picketed the Nowshera Telephone Exchange and chained the door from inside, which had to be forced open by the police. On 16 May, a number of Muslim League female agitators succeeded in entering the Central Telephone Exchange, Peshawar Cantonments, and occupying the seats used by the operators. A Muslim League flag was also flown over the building. The demonstrators were finally induced to leave the building.

“Muslim League supporters at village Utmanzai are said to have reacted to the formation of the Zalmi Pakhtun Party by starting to organize a “Ghazi Pakhtun” party with the intention of opposing the Zalmi Pakhtuns.

“The issue of an unauthorized news-sheets, called the “*Sada-i-Pakistan*”, continued in Peshawar City, in which was published a daily bulletin of pro-Muslim League news. The “Pakistan Radio” broadcast the Muslim League version of events in the Frontier Province on some evenings.

“Numerous meetings were held in the Kohat District, at which speakers emphasized the necessity for continuing the struggle against the Ministry, and support for the Muslim League in the event of the Ministry being forced to resign. In the course of their speeches, Congress supporters were criticized for inciting tenants to refuse to give the produce of the land to landlords. Similarly, the formation of the Zalmi Pakhtun party was condemned, and it was demanded that if Congress did not dissolve the party, the Muslim League should be permitted to arm themselves on similar lines. Speaking at Dam Killi, Niazbat of Khujaki insisted that Congress supporters who carried arms at meetings should be ordered to

cease doing so. A very large audience attended a meeting on 12 May at Kohat, at which the Congress Government was condemned for expelling Begum Kamalud Din from the Kohat District. The agitation during this week in Kohat was marked by the active part taken by women. Processions in Kohat City invariably included several hundred women, and children were removed from schools in order to make them take part in the demonstrations. On one occasion, a party of women demonstrators actually entered the girls school, drove out the girls, and broke all the windows. During the week, 229 persons were detained in Kohat for picketing courts and 34 were sent to jail.

“In Bannu District, peaceful picketing of courts continued at Bannu and Lakki. Two hundred and seventy-three picketers were arrested, out of whom 115 were sent to jail. Two Muslim League meetings took place.”

Jinnah's expectations proved true and Lord Mountbatten flew to London on the morning of 18 May 1947 ostensibly with a new plan for the transfer of power to Indian hands.⁵³ Though the Viceroy kept his draft plan secret but was believed in certain quarters that the partition plan has been proposed by Mountbatten in consultation with Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Sardar Baldev Singh. It was also assumed that the partition of provinces and division of the country “will be almost straightaway in the first week of June.”⁵⁴ Thus instead of solution of the Frontier problem by removing the Congress provincial Ministry, the British Government, in agreement with the Congress leaders, went to solve the whole problem of division of India. This signified the impact of Frontier problem on the Central Government rather on the whole of the British Government. Mountbatten returned to India after getting approval of the plan which he had proposed in consultation-with the Indian leaders.

On 3 June 1947 the Partition Plan was announced by Mountbatten on Indian Radio. Nehru and Jinnah also followed him to announce their acceptance of the Partition Plan. Jinnah accepted in the hope that AIML Working Committee will also accept the

53 *Times of India*, 19 May 1947.

54 *Ibid.*

plan. By this plan Referendum was to be held in NWFP to ascertain people's verdict whether they wanted to join Pakistan or remain in the Indian Union.⁵⁵ This referendum was to be held "under the aegis of the Governor-General in consultation with the Provincial Government".⁵⁶

As a result of this announcement, the members of the Frontier Muslim League War Council met in Peshawar on 4 June and decided that the Frontier Muslim League Civil Disobedience Movement has been called off with immediate effect.⁵⁷ Khan Muhammad Aslam Khan, President of the Peshawar City Muslim League announced:

Following orders from Quaid-i-Azam the War Council of the Frontier Muslim League has passed a resolution to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Frontier Province. All Muslim League prisoners in the Frontier jails have been instructed that on coming out of the jail they should work for the referendum to be held shortly on the issue whether the Frontier Pathans want to join Pakistan or Hindustan.⁵⁸

Thus the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Frontier Province was called off but the fact remains that it was this movement which forced the British to decide the issue of Pakistan though in somewhat tricky manner. In this connection the secret police report from Peshawar said: "Muslim League supporters throughout the province on receipt of the news of the British Plan for transfer of power to Indian hands, and the grant of Pakistan, even though in a somewhat modified form. Political prisoners on their release from jails were welcomed by their supporters and on occasions, taken in processions, and greeted with fusillades in the air".⁵⁹ In its meeting held on 14 June 1947 the Frontier Muslim League held in Peshawar formally approved the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement.⁶⁰

55 *Times of India*, 4 June 1947.

56 *Ibid.*

57 *Times of India*, 6 June 1947.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 10 June 1947, NDC, Islamabad.

60 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 17 June 1947, NDC, Islamabad.

Afterwards this movement turned into the shape of propagating in favour of Pakistan. Thus the ground was prepared for the Referendum in NWFP which was held on 6 July 1947. Result of this referendum was announced on 20 July in which 286,370 out of 292,118 votes polled voted for Pakistan. In the last general elections 375,989 persons voted.⁶¹ The Redshirts boycotted the referendum but they arranged a number of meetings throughout the province convincing the people not to take part in the voting. Despite this the people voted for Pakistan. As a result of this referendum the Congress Ministry was expected to resign but they refused to do so.⁶² However, after the Creation of Pakistan, the Congress Ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib was dismissed by the Governor of NWFP on 22 August and the Muslim League Ministry headed by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan as Premier of NWFP was formed.⁶³

61 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 22 July 1947, NDC, Islamabad.

62 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 29 July 1947, NDC, Islamabad.

63 *NWFP Police Abstract of Intelligence*, Vol. XXXXIII, Peshawar, 26 August 1947, NDC, Islamabad.