

# *A Brief Review of the Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in Independent India: 1947-48*

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The British government abandoned their Indian empire in August 1947. As a result two sovereign nation states, India and Pakistan, emerged in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>1</sup> The elections of 1945/46 had made it clear that the majority of Indian Muslims were unwilling to support the vision of a united India. As regards the new role to be played by the Muslim leadership, the coming of independence marked the end of a long era in their history. It opened new vistas for the future of the Muslim organizations and new roles for their leaders to play. On the night of 15 August 1947, the eve of independence, Madani, president of the Jami'yyat 'Ulama`-i Hind, addressed a large gathering of students and towns people.

Talking about the status of Muslims in free India and the future course of action of the Muslim minority in India, Madani observed that it was a matter of extreme happiness that "the 200-year old paramountcy of the British has come to an end for which they were so restless." But at the same time he made Muslims conscious in regard to the nature of "their

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1. This article relies heavily on the original Urdu sources. In addition, the following supplementary sources have also been used: V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1957); C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright, *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970); Ayesha Jalal and Anil Seal, "Alternatives to Partition: Muslim Politics between the Wars," *Modern Asian Studies*, 15 (1981); Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985); E.W.R. Lumby, *The Transfer of Power in India, 1945-1947* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954); Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, 2nd edn. (Connecticut, 1972); Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

