both India and Pakistan, there would be hostages who would be held responsible for the security of the minority community in the other State. The idea of retaliation as a method of assuring the rights of minorities seemed to me barbarous. Later events proved how justified my apprehensions were. The river of blood which flowed after partition on both sides of the new Frontier grew out of this sentiment of hostages and retaliation.

[From Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988), 146–153, 156–158, 163–166, 168–172, 177–179, 185, 196–198, 200–203, 214–216.]

BEGUM SHAISTA IKRAMULLAH: A MUSLIM LEAGUE VIEW OF PARTITION

Jinnah did not leave the kind of intimate record or account of the events leading to Partition and independence that several congressmen left. Among the few valuable Muslim League accounts is that of Begum Shaista Ikramullah (1915–2000) in *From Purdah to Parliament*. Writing some years after Partition, Begum Ikramullah presents the view of an active and intelligent Muslim Leaguer devoted to Jinnah. Her account may be compared with that of Azad.

Begum Ikramullah came from a distinguished Muslim family of Bengal; she was the only daughter of Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, doctor and politician, and was the niece of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, chief minister of Bengal in the crucial years 1946–1947. Begum Ikramullah was prominent in the politics of Pakistan in the decade after independence. She was well educated, having earned a doctorate at London University with a thesis on the development of Urdu literature. Drawn into politics after her marriage to civil servant Mohammad Ikramullah in 1933, she worked with the Muslim League Women's Sub-Committee. She was closely associated with Fatima Jinnah in setting up the Muslim Women Students' Federation. Students and women were very active in the growth of Muslim League support among Indian Muslims in the 1940s. Begum Ikramullah was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, and later served in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

Though from Bengal, she was an Urdu-speaking Muslim who tried to balance and understand the political demands from the eastern as well as western wings of Pakistan. After independence, her husband served as foreign secretary and as ambassador to several countries. She served in Pakistan's United Nations delegation, participated in the drawing up of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and later was ambassador to Morocco. One of her daughters married into the Jordanian royal family and another, Salma, a barrister, married Rehman Sobhan, a leading economist of Bangladesh.

CHERISHED ENCOUNTERS WITH JINNAH

The Muslim League had been reorganized in 1937 under the presidency of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah but it was still weak. It had not captured sufficient seats even in the Muslim majority Provinces to form a 100 per cent Muslim League

Government, but in each of the Provincial legislatures it was the largest Muslim party; yet when the Congress Ministries were formed in the seven Provinces not one League member found a place in any of them. A Muslim was taken here and there but the Muslims contended that the man thus chosen was a nominee of the Hindus and not their true representative. But weak though the Muslim League was in 1937 it was a mistake for the Congress to ignore it as completely as they did. Of course they did not know that the dynamic personality of Mohammad Ali Jinnah was going to transform that loosely organized ineffectual body into a well-knit, superbly disciplined, organization which in seven brief years was to formulate a demand, gain support for it and achieve what it set out to get. They cannot be blamed for not foreseeing this, one of the greatest miracles of modern times, but they were wrong to ignore the aspirations of the Muslims, because they were not then strong enough to present their case forcefully. In not a single province did Congress try to come to any understanding with the Muslim League Party. But that was not the only instance of their ignoring Muslim sentiments. The heady wine of power went to the head of the Congress Ministries. They passed laws forcing Muslim children to attend government schools which in their tone were completely Hindu, to salute the Congress flag, to sing the *Bande Mataram*. Petty Hindu officials harassed Muslims everywhere. A hundred and one small pin-pricks and irritations cropped up daily; unimportant in themselves, they were like the proverbial leaf which indicated the way the wind was blowing, and the indication in this case was that it was blowing toward Hindu imperialism and Hindu domination which would attempt to exterminate eight hundred years of Muslim influence and culture. Alarm and panic swept through the Muslims and resulted in the strengthening of the Muslim League. It also resulted in great bitterness, so that when the Congress Ministries resigned in September 1939, the Muslim League ordered a "Deliverance Day" to be celebrated throughout the length and breadth of India.

That is why New Delhi of 1940 was different from that of '33. India had come a stage nearer independence and, because of that, Indians were less eager to ape their rulers. This difference I was to feel almost immediately on my arrival. The second change, namely the growing rift between the two communities, I was not to be aware of for some little while yet. In my three years' absence from India, though bits of news had come to me and every now and then I read an article in some Urdu magazine protesting against Congress attempts to stamp out Urdu or stating the injustices Muslims were suffering under Congress rule, I had not realized its extent.

It was a very trivial incident that brought home to me how Hindu communalism had grown in the last few years. A Hindu friend of mine objected to my using the word "Begum" as it underlined the fact of my being Muslim. . . . It certainly had no communal intention, and Hindu objection to it showed the extent of their narrow-mindedness.

But the event that was to change the course of my life was yet to occur. In October, 1941, my father came from England on leave and came to stay with me

in my house in New Delhi. One morning he said to me, "I am going to see Mr. Jinnah. You come along with me."

"Oh, I don't think I will," said I. "I believe he is very rude and snubs everybody."

"Don't be silly," said my father. "That is just Hindu propaganda. I want you to meet him."

So I went rather reluctantly and apprehensively. . . .

My father had certain proposals which he wanted to discuss. He felt that, as Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, he might be able to bring about some sort of understanding between the British Government and the Muslim League. Quaid listened to what Father had to say very attentively and began to explain his point of view. And then, before I knew what I was doing, I was asking Quaid questions and he was answering them!—not impatiently or brusquely but kindly and in great detail. Quaid-i-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the President of the All India Muslim League, the leader of the majority of the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, reported to be arrogant and dictatorial, was allowing a completely inexperienced, unimportant young person to argue with him and was taking the trouble of meeting her arguments! The wonder of it did not strike me for the moment as I was carried away [with] the fascination of listening to Quaid.

Now, after nearly twenty years, during which I have met some very great statesmen, I still maintain that to listen to Quaid and not be convinced was not possible. It was not that he overruled you, it was not that he did not reply to your argument, but that he was so thoroughly, so single-mindedly, so intensely convinced of the truth of his point of view that you could not help but be convinced also. You felt that if a man with an intellect so much superior to yours believed this, then it must be right. Call it hypnotism or what you will, that is the effect he had on me. . . . He had it on all who came in contact with him. . . .

I always mention this [low attendance at Muslim women's conferences], for it shows how little interest in politics there was amongst women in February '42 and how quickly and rapidly political consciousness grew, for in March, 1947, when in this self-same hall we organized a meeting of the Muslim League Women's Sub-Committee which Quaid-i-Azam honoured by coming and addressing, the hall was packed to capacity. . . .

The Conference lasted three days and followed the usual procedure. Subject committee meetings were held, resolutions passed, and speeches made. . . . None of us had really pushed the idea of Pakistan to its logical conclusion. The demand for Pakistan was an assertion of our separate, independent, religious, and cultural existence. We feared and objected to the assimilation being attempted, for we were proud of our culture and wanted to keep it intact. We wanted political power to enable us to preserve it. If we could have been assured that our religion, language and culture would be respected, that it would be possible for us to live our own way of life, then we would not have forged ahead

and fought for political independence, which we did not originally seek. . . . We merely wanted safeguards. . . .

But it was dawning on our leaders that if we wished to preserve our culture, then we must have a country of our own to enable us to do so. And that is why, after only three years as President of the Muslim League, Quaid-i-Azam had already put forward the resolution that the Muslim majority continuous areas should form a separate sovereign state of Pakistan. The Lahore Resolution, as this epoch-making resolution was called, had been passed in March, 1940, that is six months after the Second World War had begun, and it was now February '42.

However, to the majority of Muslims Pakistan was an idea rather than a reality, something they thought was their inviolable right but which they had not yet decided to exercise. The most ardent of Muslim leaders at this stage still hoped that it would be possible to come to a compromise which would enable Muslims to continue as a separate cultural entity within a wider political framework. Quaid-i-Azam himself favoured this. I definitely remember him telling me at that first meeting we had with him that the Canadian Constitution would probably be the best solution for us, and the fact that for seven years after the passing of the Pakistan Resolution he agreed to discuss and negotiate with the British and Congress and more than once almost came to agreement, is further proof. That an agreement was not reached is not because of Quaid-i-Azam's intransigence but because of the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of the Congress. . . .

There was no doubt in our minds that we stood in danger of the annihilation of our culture and that if we wanted to preserve it and our separate entity we had to organize ourselves into an effective body. This the Muslim League was enabling us to do, and therefore was daily succeeding in getting more and more support.

The Conference came to an end after the passing of the resolution supporting the demand for the establishment of Pakistan and for the preservation . . . of Urdu, and some other resolutions concerned exclusively with students' affairs. . . . It was the beginning of political consciousness amongst Muslim women, and, as such, was of great importance. For me personally it was an achievement. I had . . . single handed[ly] organized and called an All Indian Conference. . . .

In April, 1943, the All Indian Muslim League held its Annual Session in Delhi. This was one of the most important sessions of the League since the passing of the Pakistan Resolution. . . . The Muslim League had grown tremendously in importance. . . . It was only Quaid-i-Azam's leadership that had managed to steer it clear of pitfalls and dealt with each crisis in a manner which made it come out at the end stronger than before.

Congress had followed the resignation of its Ministries by launching a fully-fledged direct movement against the British.

The 1942 disturbances, as they were called, were really an abortive rebellion. They did not succeed because the British took prompt and drastic measures, but despite that they caused tremendous loss of life and property. . . .

The Muslim League kept itself aloof from this movement and was criticized by Congress, and by the nationalist Muslims as well, for not taking part in what was, from their point of view, a war of liberation. Quaid-i-Azam kept the League aloof and prevented it from getting involved in violence because he did not think it was strong enough to withstand the repercussions that would have followed. Congress could and did; for it had been organized forty years ago. It was now sufficiently entrenched to risk taking direct action and its leaders being arrested without running the risk of completely going to pieces. But the League could not; it was still at the stage of being welded together. Had its leaders been put in gaol in 1942, or I should say its leader for it only had Quaid-i-Azam, it would have broken up. He realized that for the League to plunge into action before it was strong enough internally would be suicidal. The oft-flung accusation that he was frightened of going to gaol weighed nothing with him, for he was a man who was swayed by neither praise nor blame. . . . Had he not been such a man he could not have done what he did, that is—to quote him own words: "make a disorganized mob into a disciplined nation."

To achieve this end it was necessary not only to keep the Muslim League from precipitate action but also to restrain some of its prominent members from taking independent uncoordinated action. While he did not think the League was ready for direct action he was not in favour of whole-hearted co-operation in the war effort because he felt that the Muslim point of view was not receiving the consideration it deserved from the British. This involved him in direct conflict with prominent Muslim Leaguers among whom was Mr. Fazlul Haq, the Chief Minister of Bengal. His refusal to resign from the Defence Council when asked by the League to do so caused the first serious crisis in its ranks. . . .

My husband had not seen Quaid for two years, when we had all lunched at his place. But at the end of the Simla Conference, when I went to say goodbye to Quaid, he came to pick me up and met Quaid again. He discussed the cause that had led to the failure of the Simla Conference, and I remember his looking very thoughtful and preoccupied as we stood at the door of the Hotel Cecil waiting for our rickshaw to be called. Then looking at the hills, remote and silent witnesses to human conflict and turmoil, he said: "You're right. He really means to have Pakistan." "Of course, he does," I said indignantly.

That was so but it was not because Quaid disregarded other people's points of view or forced his opinion on them, he did not. . . . He had what few people possess in this world, an absolutely single-minded conviction. It somehow had the effect of removing all one's doubts. To say that he was a dictator and forced Mussulmans to accept his idea of Pakistan is ridiculous because he had no arbitrary powers—only the force of his own personality. . . .

During those years in Delhi, my life was full of varied interests and activities. . . . That I would ever have to leave this city which I loved in its every mood, as one does a person, I never even dreamt. The frontiers of Pakistan had not been defined and it never entered our heads that Delhi would not be included within it. How sure we were that Delhi was ours and would come to us can best be illustrated by this incident. We were having a picnic on the terrace at Humayun's Tomb one afternoon, when my sister-in-law remarked: "Do you think you will get Delhi if Pakistan is established?" My husband replied pointing to the domed and turreted skyline of Delhi: "Look at it—whom do you think it seems to belong to?" and Dina could not deny that the essentially Muslim character of its architecture seemed to proclaim that Delhi belonged to the Muslims. And so it did, in every way, except population. . . .

The failure of the Simla Conference in the summer of 1945 caused tension and bitterness. Elections, following in 1946, further intensified this—one could feel it everywhere. Social relations between Hindus and Muslims which, up till now, had been free and easy, became increasingly strained. . . . Thinking men of every party were beginning to get alarmed.

And everyone began to realize the urgency of coming to an agreement soon. Now that the election results had clearly and unmistakably shown the Congress and the Muslim League to be the two political parties claiming the allegiance respectively of the Hindus and Muslims, Britain had to . . . reconcile their claims, so that a transfer of power might be possible.

For this purpose a Parliamentary Delegation composed of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Mr. A. V. Alexander came out, bringing with them what came to be known as the Cabinet Mission Plan. The subsequent division of the Indian sub-continent was based more or less on the proposals contained in this plan, though, at this stage, it was still hoped that it would not be necessary to follow it. But by conceding the maximum amount of autonomy to the Provinces, within a united framework, the claims both of Congress and the Muslims League would be met. And for a brief period that hope looked like being realized. . . .

But this . . . hope was very short-lived. On the 9th June, I attended the League Council meeting. The next morning I left for Calcutta, for my father was very ill, and from now on, for the next year, while the dramatic struggle of the people of India was reaching its climax, I went through a period of great personal anguish and suffering. . . . For this year in the history of India and Pakistan can truly be called a black year. The short-lived agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League had come to naught and thus resulted in the long pent-up tension and hatred breaking out into terrible communal riots all over the country. Calcutta, my home town, where my father lay ill, was the scene of the first of the terrible riots that were to break out in India with increasing ferocity during the next few months. My cousin, Shaheed Suhrawardy, was the Prime

Minister of Bengal at this fatal hour and this made us, the members of his family, somehow feel more responsible for what was happening. . . .

Once again we are too near the events . . . to take a really objective view of the horror that began on the 16th August, 1946; it lasted for four whole days, but the effects lasted for months, and in fact, can even be said to have lasted until today.

This briefly is what had happened since the 9th June, 1946. Congress had repudiated the agreement reached in Simla. It began by Pandit Nehru's statement in the Press on the 12th July that he had accepted nothing but the convening of a Constituent Assembly, to which the British would transfer power and then get out, after which all questions would be decided by the majority vote, which meant by the Hindus, as they were in absolute majority. It meant that none of the provisions regarding the division of power between the provinces and the Central Government could be taken as binding. That meant that the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab, Bengal, Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan could not expect to be virtually autonomous, as proposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan, but could be subject to the Central Government in every detail. This statement of Pandit Nehru was preceded and followed by statements by other Congress Leaders. It created a wave of distrust among the Muslims, who reiterated the demand for Pakistan, saying that they could never hope to have a fair deal within a united framework. . . .

It seemed after all we would not get our rights through negotiation and would have to be ready for action. This was the gist of most of the speeches delivered in the Bombay session, and it was decided to hold a Direct Action Day when the future plan of action of the League was to be explained to Muslims all over the country.

It was on Direct Action Day that the Calcutta riots broke out, and the Congress has always tried to fasten the blame for this on the Muslim League, but as far as I can judge the matter dispassionately I feel that this is not true. In fact, nothing was planned for Direct Action Day except large-scale meetings all over the country, and it was while the Muslims of Calcutta were attending such a meeting that the riot broke out, *not in* the area of the meeting, but in the areas of the unprotected homes of these people. And the carnage that took place during these first few hours, where women and children fell as completely helpless and defenceless victims, was greater than the subsequent retaliatory attacks by the Muslims on the predominantly Hindu areas. . . .

It made me realize what a terrible responsibility we take on ourselves when we champion a cause and ask people to be ready to sacrifice and die for it. How few of us realize, as these words glibly pass our lips, what it actually costs people in blood and tears. . . .

There is no doubt that the increasing lawlessness in India alarmed the British, but it was not this that made them decide to quit India. There had been rioting and civil disturbances in India before, and they had managed to quell

them and remain here. But something else had happened . . . which made the British realize that the time had come for them to leave. This was the I.N.A. trials and the reaction they had [in] the length and breadth of India. . . .

I cannot remember what the prosecution case was, I know that it was a brief one, after which Desai got up and opened the case for the defence . . . As he ended his speech with the words, "If it be treason to try and break the shackles of foreign rule, then these men are traitors; if it be treason to adopt whatever means presents itself to free one's country from hated foreign rule, then these men are traitors; if it be treason to work to free one's country from bondage, then these men are traitors, and not only these men, all of us are traitors. All of us, every man, woman, and child in India, are today working for the same end."

There was such tension in the atmosphere that one could almost feel it. Desai had expressed what, rightly or wrongly, was felt about the I.N.A. by everybody in India. . . .

Pakistan was established on the 14th August, 1947. My baby was barely three weeks old, and it was impossible for me to travel. I longed to be in Karachi and to take part in the joyful celebrations that were taking place there, but I could not do so. . . .

The next day was the 15th August, the day of the Indian Independence. Since the Calcutta riots, things had never been normal in Calcutta, and for the last few weeks as the day of the Independence drew near, tension had reached fever pitch. It was rumoured that Hindus meant to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims on the day. This was no idle rumour, there was concrete proof that a large-scale disturbance was being planned. That it did not take place is almost a miracle, and this miracle was brought about by the superhuman efforts of Gandhi and my cousin Shaheed Suhrawardy.

Gandhi was proceeding to Noakhali, to be there in case fresh rioting should break out. He had to pass through Calcutta to go to Noakhali. My cousin . . . said to him that it was Calcutta and not Noakhali he was needed at. . . . By staying here Gandhi could stop a flare-up. Gandhi said he would agree to stay on and do what he could, provided my cousin agreed to work with him.

Agreeing to work with Gandhi meant, of course, agreeing to work in his way. In this case, it meant going and staying in a mud hut in the poorest and most badly affected part of the town, eating vegetarian food and following the routine that he followed. This must have entailed a lot of discomfort for a person like my cousin who was used to a very different sort of life, but so great was his desire to prevent another holocaust that he agree to these conditions and carried them out meticulously for over a fortnight. It also meant facing much physical danger; several attacks were made on his life, and his car was blown up by a hand grenade, but he persisted in the task he had undertaken.

Gandhi and Shaheed Suhrawardy started their crusade for peace together on the 11th August. They went to different parts of the town and held meetings in which they exhorted people to be worthy of the new independence that was

coming to them, and asked Hindus to treat Muslims as their brothers and asked Muslims to think of Hindus in the same way. They sent volunteers in lorries shouting peace slogans all over the city, and somehow managed in three or four days to ease the tension and bring out an upsurge of goodwill. For on the 15th August, the day that was dreaded, Hindus and Muslims instead of killing each other fraternized together and celebrated the coming of independence joyfully. It was a wonderful achievement and I am proud of the part my cousin played in it. . . . He showed courage, boldness and most of all, a real concern for the people's welfare.

This act of my cousin was misconstrued by his enemies and eventually cost him his career in Pakistan, though in actual fact this was . . . a great service to the newly established State of Pakistan. . . . If he had not acted in the way he did, riots would have broken out in Calcutta also, in which case Pakistan would have had to cope with an influx of refugees on both its fronts. . . .

We had been given a house in Clifton, a suburb of Karachi. . . . I went into Karachi to look at the city which was now going to be my home. I saw the flag fluttering from the Government House and realized that it was now inhabited by Mr. Jinnah. I, who for years had avoided calling at Government House, immediately went in and signed my name in the visitors' book with a flourish. I beamed at the policeman and the A.D.C.s, for all these appurtenances to the British Raj had now become the symbols of our own sovereignty. We were now a nation and a state, the realization went to my head like wine. . . .

But there was no time to indulge in ecstasy or joyful celebrations, for the price paid for Pakistan was very great indeed: no less than five million people had been uprooted, many thousands of whom had been killed, their houses looted and their womenfolk raped. Now they trekked their way to the newly established State. This had begun twenty-four hours after Pakistan came into existence, and before the State was more than a few days old it had to face the alarming task of absorbing five million people. That it could do so was a miracle. . . .

What the world has not understood yet is why it came about. Why should one hundred million Muslims in India have decided to carve out a state for themselves at the cost of such terrible suffering? This has not yet been understood by the world at large, for no one has taken the trouble to understand the particular psychology of the Indian Muslims. . . .

I have often heard people say: "Isn't it remarkable that in the brief period of seven years, Jinnah put forward the idea of Pakistan, had it accepted by the people and sanctioned by the British?," but that is not so. It is true the demand for Pakistan was made only seven years before it was established, but this demand only gave concrete expression to the dream of the Indian Muslims to have "a local habitation and a name." This dream they had cherished since 1857. . . . But I must go back farther than that in order to explain it all.

Muslims had come to India as conquerors and for eight hundred years had ruled the country. During this period, they had settled down and married and