

**The Separation of Burma from India in 1937: A Study of Its
Impact on the Hill Tribes of the India-Burma Frontier**

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***Abstract:**The 1937 separation of Burma from India, often overlooked as a partition, significantly impacted indigenous hill tribes on the Indo-Burma frontier. This paper examines how colonial administration divided these tribes, focusing on the Zo people, and argues that this 'forgotten' partition created transborder communities in the India-Myanmar borderland. These communities, now straddling newly formed international boundaries, faced unique challenges to their socio-political and cultural identities. Furthermore, the divergent post-colonial trajectories of India and Myanmar further exacerbated these divisions, as differing governance structures and development policies reshaped the lives of the Zo and other hill tribes on either side of the border. This paper will draw on archival sources and ethnographic studies to illuminate the long-term consequences of this 'forgotten' partition on the Indo-Burma frontier, highlighting the enduring legacies of colonial boundary-making in shaping contemporary ethnic and political dynamics.*

***Keywords:** Colonialism, Crown Colony, Indo-Burma Frontier, Hill Tribes, Partition*

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Introduction

Just before the final decision was taken for the Partition of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a member of the Congress, warned Lord Mountbatten, 'If the country was divided in such an atmosphere there would be rivers of blood flowing in different parts of the country and the British would be responsible for the carnage.'¹ Unmoved by Azad's warning, Mountbatten responded, 'If there should be the slightest agitation, I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in the bud.'² When the dismemberment of the union of India was carried out by the British on 14-15 August 1947 against the backdrop of simmering communal violence it was followed by the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of innocent Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as millions stumbled fearfully across the 'shadow lines' separating two post-colonial

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nation-states.³ Exposing the unpreparedness of the British, Leonard Mosley says 'in March 1946, there was not a single paper in the official archives in Delhi preparing the ground for what would have to be done if partition should come'.⁴ Whether the British government in India was prepared to tackle the consequences of Partition or not is one thing, but what is apparently clear is that the Partition of India has been presented as a 'unique event' that came like a 'tectonic earthquake' in dominant historiography which give special attention to Punjab and Bengal as if other parts of today's South Asia beyond its purview.

Of late, there has been growing interests among scholars to see India's 'Northeast' as a post-colonial region created by the partition of the subcontinent⁵ or 'a creation of partition'.⁶ Willem van Schendel argues the 'separation' of Burma from India in 1937 as the 'first partition' of the Indian subcontinent, the second and third being 1947 and 1971 respectively.⁷ Though Schendel's argument was a clear departure from conventional understanding of Partition, it raises the relevance of 'other' events in Partition studies.

Writing on the Partition of the African continent, A.I. Asiwaju gives two perspectives: 'the perspective of the modern African states, which are mostly successors to the colonial entities created in consequence of the European partition, and, the perspective which relates to the attitude in particular African culture areas or ethnic groups which were more immediately affected by the political surgery by being split into two or more colonies and, later, independent African successor-states'.⁸ Drawing from Asiwaju's this paper seeks to examine to what extent colonial policy towards the Indo-Burma frontier was a 'political surgery' that split the same ethnic community into different nation-states in the postcolonial times. The paper argues that colonial mapping and territoriality not only destroyed the ethnic solidarity of the indigenous people it also paved the way for the division and fragmentation of an indigenous space and population in the postcolonial period.

This paper is a case study of the Indo-Burma borderland with particular emphasis on the Zo people who have been divided into different nation-states by the international border. Better known as Chin, Lushai and Kuki in colonial parlance the Zo people predominantly live in the southern half of the Indo-Burma borderline stretching from the Manipur frontier in the north to the Arakan frontier in the south. The erstwhile Chin-Lushai Hills have been today known as the Chin state of Myanmar, the state of Mizoram, and the southern part of Manipur in India. Kindred tribes of the Zo are also found, albeit in small numbers, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. The fact that today the Zo people have been divided in Burma, India and Bangladesh is a living testimony of what the colonial and postcolonial borders had done to them. It is quite unfortunate that the Zo people of these countries have not been seen as a common ethnic group because of the international borders. This paper is an attempt to see the Zo through the lens of Partition.

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Expansion of the British Indian Empire in the Indo-Burma frontier

Surrounded on all sides by Manipur, Assam, Bengal and Burma, the hill tracts inhabited by the Zo people in the Indo-Burma frontier remained 'unadministered' or independently ruled by their chiefs until it was annexed by the British in the late nineteenth century. No power, either the kingdom of Manipur or the Ahom dynasty in Assam, or the Konbaung dynasty of Burma, had ever exercised control over the Zo people. But in the late nineteenth century the British finally surrounded the Zo people on all sides following its annexation of Upper Burma. Since then, they began to see the strategic importance of what they used to refer the Chin-Lushai Hills. As a result, series of military campaigns had been launched towards the hill tracts starting from 1887-88 onwards with the underlying objective to establish communication between Burma and Bengal. Thus the year 1892 marked a watershed in the history of the Indo-Burma frontier in general and the Zo people in particular. That year in January the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal called the Chin-Lushai Conference at Fort Williams to discuss issues related to future civil and military administration of the new-acquired Chin-Lushai Hills. The Conference was attended by colonial civil and military officers from Assam, Bengal and Burma. It was an attempt to amalgamate the three temporary administrative units' viz., Chin Hills, North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills, each under the jurisdiction of Burma, Assam and Bengal respectively, possibly under Assam.

On 29 January 1892 the Conference was closed with the adoption of five Resolutions. The first stated that the majority were of the opinion that it was very desirable that the whole Chin-Lushai hills should be brought under one administration, preferably under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. However, in view of the Burma Chief Commissioner Sir Alexander Mackenzie's determined opposition to the idea, the Conference in its second resolution decided that this step should not be taken immediately. At any rate, not before the difficulties of communications and of supplies and transport were sorted out and all operations in the Chin-Lushai hills concluded.⁹

The recommendations of the Conference were discussed during May-June that year by the Government of India. Opinions within the Government seemed to have been divided. The Viceroy Lord Lansdowne, who was in favour of amalgamation, viewed:

It has always seemed to me possible that eventually the new district thus created might include everything to the west of the Myittha Valley and of the valley which runs northward from it towards the frontier of Manipur.

However, due to the strong opposition of Charles Crosthwaite, formerly Chief Commissioner of Burma, a member of the Council amalgamation of the three units was not recommended but for North and South Lushai Hills. Thus, the Chin Hills was to stay with Burma whereas North and South Lushai Hills shall be amalgamated as a district under Assam.

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This whole process of colonial annexation and reconfiguration of the Indo-Burma frontier was nothing but a ‘political surgery’ of Zo indigenous space or ‘culture area’. Soon administrative borders had been delineated and the entire Chin-Lushai Hills was mapped. The Chin Hills-Manipur boundary was demarcated in 1894, which awarded a large tract of the Chin Hills to Manipur just to appease its Maharaja at the expense of the Zo territories, followed by the Chin Hills-Lushai Hills border in 1901. The Chin Hills Regulation was adopted in the Chin Hills in 1896 which established ‘indirect rule’ in the frontier hills. This regulation was later extended to the Lushai Hills and other hill areas. Unfortunately, the entire development of colonial mapping and territorial reconfiguration of the Indo-Burma frontier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s has never been seen from the perspective of the indigenous people who felt it was the beginning of systematic dissections or partition of their territorial space.

Reconfigured frontier

In pursuance of the resolutions of the Viceroy’s Council in 1892 for the amalgamation of North and South Lushai Hills, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, William Erskine Ward (1891-96) stressed the need for transfer of the Chittagong Division as a whole prior to the transfer of South Lushai Hills to Assam. He argued that the transfer would enable the government to create separate services for Assam in different branches of administration; that the districts of Chittagong Divisions would also gain from the transfer as they would receive close attention of the government in a small province like Assam. He even wanted to suggest inclusion of Dacca and Mymensingh districts to Assam.¹⁰

In January 1896 when the government of India called for opinion of the governments of Bengal and Assam on the question of transfer cited above, there was no unanimity of opinion. Moreover, two Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal held different views on the subject. Alexander Mackenzie (1895-97), who had during his stint as the Chief Commissioner of Burma strongly opposed the amalgamation of the Chin-Lushai Hills under a single administration, said no special advantage would accrue to the division from its transfer to Assam. Conversely, Charles Cecil Stevens, the officiating Lieutenant-Governor (1897-98) felt transfer should not come into effect till the communication between Assam and Chittagong had been made perfect.¹¹

In Assam, Ward’s successor Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton (1896-1902) had a different view on the same issue. He termed the proposal ‘ill-advised’ and strongly opposed to it. He argued that the history of Chittagong was inseparably wrapped up with that of Bengal and the Bengal method of administration pervaded every portion of the divisions and ‘it was better on all grounds that Bengal districts should remain with Bengal’.¹² This argument convinced Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, and accordingly the Viceroy’s Council adopted a resolution on 29 April 1897 that Chittagong Divisions including native state of Hill Tipperah shall not be transferred to Assam but South Lushai Hills be transferred forthwith to that province.

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Thus, in 1898 the Lushai Hills District was created under Assam. But the Viceroy's Council resolution for transfer of the Chittagong division and North Arakan Hill Tracts to Assam remained unfulfilled. This whole question of transfer and amalgamation of territories evoked long debates among colonial officers. But it was Lord Curzon who pushed his policy forward and finally carved out a Lieutenant-Governor's province in the name of Eastern Bengal and Assam, in 1905. Curzon's hand was strengthened by sections of the Muslim and British colonial officers who lobbied hard for the partition of Bengal. Interestingly, this brought back the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Lushai Hills district under one administration. But it was not without opposition.

It may be pertinent to mention that the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which was also home to a large number of Zo people, became a separate independent district in 1860. In 1900 the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, also called the Hill Tracts Manual, restructured the administration and formed three circles: the Chakma, the Bohmong and the Mong. Each circle was placed under the jurisdiction of a tribal chief who was responsible for collecting revenues and managing internal affairs. Corresponding to the three circles were three subdivisions under the supervision of subdivision officers who were responsible to the deputy commissioner of the district. Government officials were restrained from interfering in the socio-political affairs of the hill tribes. In 1920 the Hill Tracts Manual of Chittagong Hill Tracts was amended which declared the district as an 'excluded area'.¹³

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms recognised the hill areas as 'Backward Tracts' where the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1919 were made inapplicable. These areas include: In Burma, the Federated Shan States, the Shan States of Hsawngsup and Singkaling Hkamti, the Chin Hills District, the Somra Tract, the Pakokku and Arakan Hill Tracts, the territory of Hkamti Long and the Kachin Hill Tracts of the Myitkyina, Bhamo and Katha districts, were declared 'Backward Tracts' and excluded from the authority of the Burma Legislative Council in respect of legislation, of the voting of expenditure, and (except with the sanction of the Governor) of interpellation or discussion.¹⁴ In Assam the 'Backward Tracts' includes the Lushai hills, the Naga hills, the Garo hills, the North Cachar hills, and the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia hills. Also included were the Lakhimpur frontier tract, the Balipara frontier tract, and the Sadiya frontier tract.¹⁵ A distinction was, however, made between those tracts which were wholly excluded from the Reforms and those which were subjected to varying degrees of exclusion or partially excluded. The tracts which were completely excluded were not given any direct representation to the legislatures; nor were the legislatures allowed any jurisdiction over them. The Governor-in-Council was made solely responsible for their administration.¹⁶

As the Government of India Act 1935 recommended for the separation of Burma from India, a constitution for Burma which was, accordingly, outlined in Part XIV and Schedules X to XV of the Government of India Act 1935 was, in the words of one authority 'given body in the Government of Burma Act, 1935, and spirit in the Instrument of Instructions from His Majesty to the Governor'.¹⁷ The nomenclature 'Backward Tract' was changed into 'Excluded

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Areas' without affecting its status. Thus, the hill areas remained outside the scope of the new Constitution precisely for the same reasons that had led to their exclusion from the Reforms of 1923. In Burma the hill areas were called 'Scheduled Areas' and remained outside Ministerial control.¹⁸ Similar policy was followed by in the 'Excluded Areas' and 'Partially Excluded Areas' of Assam.

That the 'separation of Burma from India' in 1937 was a deathblow to the ethnic solidarity of the Zo people. It is important to examine the politics behind the recommendation of the Simon Commission which said 'Burma should be separated from India immediately.'¹⁹

The Politics of the 'Separation' of Burma from India in 1937

On 1 April 1937 British Burma had been detached from the British Indian Empire. The newly created British Burma became directly responsible to the British Parliament in London. The Secretary of State for India became the Secretary of State for both India and Burma, with a separate Under-Secretary for Burma at the head of the Burma office. The government of Burma was headed by the governor appointed by the Crown, a council of ten ministers responsible to the legislature for all matters within the scope of its authority, and a legislature with two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. In addition the governor was allowed to appoint three councillors who represented him in the legislature. However, the authority of the legislature did not extend to the 'Scheduled' or 'Excluded' Areas.²⁰

The 'separation' of Burma from India in 1937 was not without politics. An indepth study of colonial sources told us that there was growing interest among the colonial officers in Burma to separate Burma from India that ultimately found its expression in the Simon Commission's Report. F. Burton Leach argues that the earliest proposal for separation came from the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce in 1884 seeking the Chief Commissioner in the financial and general interests of the country.²¹ In 1913, Sir George Scott wrote in the introduction to Joseph Dautremer's book: 'Burma ought never to have been joined on to the Indian Empire'.²² J. S. Furnivall also said, 'Separation had been advocated intermittently for fifty years or more by British business interests, chiefly because they expected to have greater influence under the Colonial Office than under the Indian Government'.²³ In due course many high ranking British officials also, largely through local patriotism, had come to favour separation.²⁴ Sir Spencer Harcourt Butler, who served as the Lieutenant-Governor and later as Governor of Burma for about seven years (1915-17; 1922-27) argued: 'Burma became a province of India by the accident of conquest', while another Lieutenant-Governor Sir Reginald Craddock (1918-22) termed it was 'a political accident'.²⁵ F.S.V. Donnison says it was 'the accident of contiguity'.²⁶ Burma's official argument may be sum up in one line: Burma had never been an integral part of India.

Combined colonial-businessmen lobby paid off as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report which excluded Burma from the scope of the Indian Constitutional Reforms.²⁷ D.G.E Hall says the protest 'which suddenly arose in Burma...took everybody by surprise'.²⁸

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Largely informed by the views of Burman officials the Simon Commission believed that there had been for many years an 'undercurrent of discontent' because of its remote position and its alien and relatively small population. Other issues cited in the Simon Commission Report includes: representation of Burma is too weak to exercise any influence in the Assembly. Burma's representation in the Central Legislature as fixed by allotting to it two members in the Council of State (one chosen by the Burma Chamber of Commerce and the other elected by the 'undivided' general constituency) and four elected members (one for the European seat) in the Legislative Assembly. The constitutional anomaly lay in the fact that out of the 145 members composing the Assembly, the whole representation from Burma consists of these four elected members and one nominated official. The report also said economically, Burma's interests sometimes diverge very considerably from those of India and militarily, Burma paid heavily for defence²⁹

In spite of the strong lobbying of the Burman officials, the idea of 'separation' was not supported by the Burmans, at least initially. They strongly protested the exclusion of Burma from the Reforms under the Act of 1919 by raising some 2000 pounds and dispatched three representatives to London to lodge their protest. Though the Burmans were not politically fully organised at this stage, the nature of their protest speaks a lot. 'Burmese nationalism', Frank N. Trager observes, 'did not spring up suddenly in 1919. What changed was the mode of expression'.³⁰ Poongyi U Ottama who was one of the anti-separatist leaders issued a statement on 10 September 1931 which clearly asserted:

Geographically she (Burma) is of India rather than of any other country; for the mountain-ranges standing between India and Burma- the Arakan Yomas- are behind the borderline. The historical connection of India with Burma by sea and land dates to the earliest times; Madras and Bengal have supplied dynasties of Burmese kings, priests and peasants; the south-Indian expansion give Burma even her script, Lord Buddha his religion, Indian architects their style of architecture, glorious specimens of which still exist among the hoary ruins of (romance –studded) Pagan.³¹

That the more the Burma government pressed for separation the more suspicion developed by the Burmans fearing that if Burma were to be separated from India she would drop out of the stream of constitutional advance. This was made very clear by Donnison who argues 'the very fact that the British Government of Burma was pressing for separation roused the suspicions of the Burmese, political circles attributing this to an intention to deny further constitutional advances to Burma'.³² The suspicion kept growing as the question of separation became an election issue in the 1932. The unanimity with which the Government of Burma, Big Business and the European Press declared in favour of separation further stimulated Burmans' suspicion.³³ As the government and the capitalist interests became more insistent on separation its repercussions was heavily felt on the relations between Burmans and Indians. Politically active Burmans were now turning to Indians for guidance and support in their common opposition to the British Government, and Burmans and Indians had

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sometimes joined forces in the Legislative Council. Furnivall rightly put it, 'Burmans dislike of Indians was replaced by their distrust of Europeans'.³⁴

In the 1932 elections, a group under Ba Maw contested the election as Anti-Separationist League whereas the '21 Party' campaigned for the separationist policy. There was a third group whose members were supporters of the British government. They represented the powerful minorities in Burma; the British, Indian, and Chinese business communities, Christian Karens, and Eurasians. There was also some Burmans among the leaders like Sir J.A Maung Gyi, Sir San C. Po, Sir Lee Ah Yain, Sir P. P. Ginwala, J. E. Dubern, Sir Oscar de Glanville, and Dr Alan Murray. The group was first known as the Progressive Party, and later as the Independent Party, popularly known as the Golden Valley Party. They supported separation in 1932 but virtually eliminated as a political force in the 1936 elections.

The election resulted in favour of the Anti-separationist nationalists albeit they could not command a majority in the Legislative Council since the government had virtually determined on separation. In fact, the Anti-separationists aimed, as a matter of tactics, was to defer separation until after Burma had derived the maximum political advantage from continued, albeit terminable, association with India. At the end of the day 'all factions among the nationalists, however much they debated its merits would accept a new political arrangement that would take Burma out of the Indian Empire'.³⁵

Final decision was made by the British Parliament in 1935 by passing the Acts of India and Burma 'after the Burma Legislative Council had on three separate occasions refused to give a clear indication of their preference between the two alternatives offered to them, Parliament definitely decided on separation.'³⁶To Donnison, 'separation was 'forced' upon Burma and accepted with a sigh of relief: there was no audible criticism'.³⁷

What is quite interesting to note is that in India the Muslims conveniently used the proposed separation of Burma from India to justify their demand for Pakistan. In his four page leaflet issued in July 1935, C. Rahmat Ali, who claimed to be the 'founder of the Pakistan National Movement', argued: 'While Burma is being separated from Hindoostan, it remains a mystery to us why Pakistan...is to be forced into the Indian Federation'.³⁸ In 1939, another eminent Muslim of the Punjab, Nawab Sir Muhammad Shah Nawaz, cited the case of Burma as a precedent in his proposal to divide India into five 'countries' all of which would be federations in themselves. Nawaz, however, did not accept the separatist doctrine of Pakistan school.³⁹

The 'Crown colony' proposal and the hill peoples

Towards the end of the British rule, when the talk of transfer of power was in the air, some British civil servants and other interested quarters began to toy with the idea of a 'Crown Colony' consisting of all the contiguous hill areas of Burma and Assam. In his *Note*⁴⁰ in 1941, the Governor of Assam Robert Reid argued that the future of the indigenous hill peoples would be decided by the British parliament and that 'it cannot be left to the Indian political

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leaders with neither knowledge, nor feeling for these areas'.⁴¹In short, what Reid had truly proposed was a 'Crown colony' in between independent India and Burma. R. Coupland's writing on the 'British obligations' has an interesting reading of the proposal:

There is one major area which seems to call for special treatment – the hill tracts on the eastern frontier of Assam. They adjoin similar hill tracts on the north-west frontier of Burma. The inhabitants of both areas are alike in race and culture. They are not Indians or Burmans, but of Mongol stock. In no sense do they belong to the Indian or Burman 'nation'. They constitute a single problem. The relations of one area with the future free India will be similar to those of the other area with the future of free Burma.⁴²

How sound or promising the 'Crown colony' proposal might be, also given the timing, the idea did not appeal to the tribal mind. Amalendu Guha argues, 'It succeeded, however, to the extent of kindling an urge for autonomy and political participation and, above all, nurturing the seeds of suspicion in tribal minds against their more developed neighbours in the plains'.⁴³ Post-war political upsurge among the different tribes in the North East clearly explain why. Arrangements were being made to form district-level political bodies in which the tribal elite could participate. In the Khasi Hills, MacDonald Khar-Kongor formed Hills Union with members drawn from different hills. It raised the demand for a separate hills state within India. In 1946, a Khasi-Jaintia political association was found with the backing of the *Syiems* (local chiefs). It raised the demand for a federation of the Khasi areas with adequate cultural and political autonomy within a sovereign Assam. In the Mikir Hills, the first political organization, the Karbia Durbar was formed in early 1947 with an aim to consolidate Mikir areas into a single administrative unit and an extension of the franchise. Way back in 1945, the Naga Hills District Tribal Council was officially sponsored with the objective of uniting the multilingual Nagas. It was later reorganized as the Naga National Council (NNC). Later Phizo led the NNC. He took deputation to Delhi with the suggestion that Nagaland would automatically become sovereign after the British withdrawal.⁴⁴The purpose of the formation of the Mizo Union in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) in January 1946 was to protect the interest of the Mizo people in the event of the British departure from India. The Mizo Union adopted a memorandum on 22 April 1946 which urged for the consolidation of all Mizo areas into a single administrative unit and its self-determination within Assam. On 20 July 1947 the United Mizo Freedom Organisation was formed to propagate secession of all contiguous Mizo areas from India and their union with the Mizo areas in Burma.⁴⁵ Like the other tribes the Mizo Union also rejected the 'Crown Colony' proposal on the ground that it will give a more difficult task in Mizoram headed by feudal elements.⁴⁶ The rejection of the 'Crown colony' proposal by the tribes of Northeast India clearly reflects their desire not to be directly or indirectly associated and connected with their colonial masters and their 'agents'. At any rate, this whole question of colonial policy towards the hill peoples was not without an underlying objective, as Yasmin Saikia aptly sums up: 'The colonial goal was to create a

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population in the frontiers loyal to the interests of the British Empire. But in doing so, they distanced these people further from the rest of India'.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The 'transfer of power'⁴⁸ to two successor states in 1947 was followed by largescale crossed-migration of peoples, particularly of Bengal and Punjab, across the new political boundary on religious line. Perhaps, Yasmin Khan aptly says 'The story of "transfer of power" used by both the outgoing imperialists and the incoming nationalist powers have been so effective, well disseminated and uncompromising that it has obscured the meaning of freedom at the time'.⁴⁹ Interestingly, however, the end of the British rule in India did not bring any change in the demographical set up of the Indo-Burma borderlands in particular and Northeast India in general. 'The case of migration', Anindita Dasgupta argues in the case of migration after the Sylhet Referendum, 'was caused by "psychological pressure", a fear of what could happen if they stay back'. She further asserts that 'it was the migrants who actively decided when to move and where to go'.⁵⁰ But not even such things called 'psychological pressure' were to be seen in the Indo-Burma frontiers, particularly among the Zo people. However, as argued in the foregoing discussion, the partition of the Zo people had been already taken place before 1937, albeit within the British administration. The fact that the creation of British Burma from British India in 1937 cemented the borders and the existing border has been inherited by postcolonial India and Burma in 1967 sealed the fate of the fragmented people. S. K. Chaube rightly observes, 'The 'Kuki-Chin solidarity over the southern part of Hill Tipperah, the Chittagong Hill Tract and the Lushai hills was broken...'.⁵¹ For the Zo people, the 'separation' of Burma and India 1937 was more decisive in terms of ethnic fragmentation than 1947. Unless one looks at the historical trajectory of colonial frontier policy and its impact on the indigenous populations, it will be hard to see the 'political surgery' of the Indo-Burma frontiers.

Notes and References

¹ Quoted from Maulana Azad's *India wins freedom*, in Leonard Mosley, *The last days of the British Raj*, London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1961, p. 129.

² Mosley, *The last days*, pp. 129-30.

³ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy*, London: Routledge, 2011, p. 188.

⁴ Mosley, *The last days*, p. 130.

⁵ Subir Bhaumik, 'North-East India: The evolution of a Post-colonial region', Partha Chatterjee ed. *Wages of Freedom: Fifty years of the Indian Nation-State*, New Delhi: OUP, 1998, p. 310.

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⁶Willem van Schendel, 'The dangers of belonging: Tribes, indigenous peoples and homelands in South Asia', Daniel J. Rycroft and Sangeeta Dasgupta ed. *The politics of belonging in India: Becoming adivasi*, New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 32.

⁷Willem van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*, Anthem Press, London, 2005, p. 27.

⁸A.I. Asiwaju ed. *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic relations across Africa's international boundaries, 1884-1984*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 1985, pp. 1-2.

⁹*Ibid.*, No.32, Resolutions, FortWilliam 29 January 1892. The other three resolutions were:

1. The first thing to be done for the control of this tract is to improve the communications between the important places such as Cachar and Aijal, Aijal and Lungleh, Aijal and Manipur, and the posts situated respectively on the eastern and western side of the tract. The opening out of these lines is a work of pressing importance. The necessary commissariat staff should also be provided to arrange for transport and supplies, till the tract is able to provide them for itself.

2. The Conference is of opinion that the boundaries of the new administrative area should be, generally speaking, the boundaries of the tract occupied by the savages newly brought under British control, but the details of those boundaries can only be settled after consultation with local officers.

3. The Conference is agreed that North and south Lushai, with such portions of the Arracan Hill Tracts as may hereafter be determined, should be placed under Assam at once on condition that-

(1) complete transport and commissariat equipment for supplies from Chittagong to South Lushai, and from Cachar to North Lushai, are provided; and (2) funds are granted for road and telegraph from Aijal to Lungleh.

¹⁰H.K. Barpujari (ed.) *The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol V (Modern Period: Yandabo to Diarchy 1826-1919 A.D.)*, Guwahati: Publication Board Assam, 1993, p. 247.

¹¹Barpujari, *History of Assam*, pp. 247-8.

¹²Barpujari, *History of Assam*, p. 248.

¹³Syed Aziz-al Ahsan and Bumitra Chakma (eds.), 'Problems of National Integration in Bangladesh: The Chittagong Hill Tracts', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, no. 10, October 1989, p. 962.

¹⁴ISC, Vol. XI, p. 559.

¹⁵ISC, Vol I, p. 75.

¹⁶Before the Reforms of 1919, almost all of these areas were "scheduled districts" under India Act XIV of 1874. They were subject to special laws and administrative procedure secured either by enactments for individual tracts or by notifications under All India Statutes.

¹⁷F. S. V. Donnison *Burma*, New York 1970, p.114

¹⁸Hugh Tinker (Ed) *Burma The Struggle for Independence 1944-1948* Vol I, See introduction. These areas which amounts to 40% of the land area of Burma and 15 % of its total population, was placed under the exclusive control of the Governor, "in his discretion", also *ibid*, Ch 7, pp.101-122

¹⁹ISC, Vol. II, p. 188.

²⁰Furnivall, *Colonial Policy*, p. 168.

²¹F. Burton Leach, *The Future of Burma*, Rangoon: British Burma Press, 1936, p. 45.

²²Joseph Dautremer, *Burma Under British Rule*, London, 1913, p. 10.

²³Furnivall's *Colonial Policy and Practices*, p.166.

²⁴Furnivall's *Colonial Policy and Practices*, p.166.

²⁵Sir Reginald Craddock, *The Dilemma in India*, London: Constable & Co. Ltd, 1929, p. 126.

²⁶F.S.V. Donnison, *Public Administration in Burma: A study of development during the British connexion*, New York, 1953, p. 72.

²⁷*Indian Statutory Commission(ISC)*, Vol XI, p. 565.

²⁸D.G.E.Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1955, p.626.

²⁹ISC Vol. II, p. 181-2.

³⁰Frank N. Trager, *Burma From Kingdom to Republic: A Historical and Political Analysis*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1966, 47.

³¹Uttoma, The case against the separation of Burma from India.

³²F.S.V. Donnison, *Public Administration in Burma: A study of development during the British connexion*, New York, 1953, p. 73.

³³Furnivall, *Colonial Policy*, p. 166.

³⁴Furnivall, *Colonial Policy*, p. 167.

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³⁵ Frank N. Trager, pp. 49-51.

³⁶ Sir Hugh Stephenson, 'Some Problems of a Separated Burma', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 35, Issue 3, 1938, p. 400.

³⁷ Donnison, p. 73.

³⁸ R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem: Report to the Constitutional Problem in India*, London: Oxford University Press, 1944, p. 200.

³⁹ Coupland, *The Indian Problem*, p.203. Five countries: 1. The Indus Regions, 2. Hindu India, a central block comprising all that is not covered by the other 'countries', 3. Rajistan, containing the States of Rajputana and Central India, 4. The Deccan States, mainly Hyderabad and Mysore, and 5. Bengal, without its present Hindu districts but including parts of Assam and a number of disconnected States.

⁴⁰ David Reid Syiemlieh, *On the Edge of Empire: Four British plans for North East India 1941-1947* (New Delhi: Sage, 2014).

⁴¹ David Reid Syiemlieh, 'Burma: Flirting with Reid's Plan', in Milton Sangma ed. *Essays on North East India* (New Delhi: Indus publishing company, 1994), p. 227.

⁴² Coupland, *The Indian problem*, p. 164.

⁴³ Amalendu Guha, *Planter raj to Swaraj*, p. 324.

⁴⁴ Amalendu Guha, *Planter raj to Swaraj*, p. 326.

⁴⁵ Amalendu Guha, *Planter Raj to Swaraj*, p. 327.

⁴⁶ Amalendu Guha, *Planter Raj to Swaraj*, p. 328.

⁴⁷ Yasmin Saikia, *Framented Memories: Struggling to be Tai-Ahom in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 51.

⁴⁸ P. N. S. Mansergh says 'the use of the phrase... may be thought to indicate British recognition of the nature of a departure from dominion precedents and of the political realities behind it.' In his 'Some reflections on the transfer of power in plural societies', C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright ed.in, *The Partition of India: Policies and perspectives, 1935-1947*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Yasmin Khan, *The great Partition: The making of India and Pakistan*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2007, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Anindita Dasgupta, 'Denial and Resistance: Sylheti Partition 'Refugees' in Assam', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2001, pp.53-4.

⁵¹ S. K. Chaube, *Hill politics in Northeast India*, New Delhi, Orient BlackSwan, 2012, p. 83.