



Udham Singh Nagoke: The Vanguard of *Akal Fauj* during Punjab's Partition

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In the years leading up to the partition of India in 1947, Punjab was marred by escalating communal tensions, marked by a simmering conflict among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The demand for a separate Muslim state, Pakistan, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League, had gained momentum.¹ The Muslim crowds chanted fervently, expressing slogans such as '*Lar Kar Lenge Pakistan*'; '*Mar Kar Lenge Pakistan*'; '*Dena Hoga Pakistan*'; '*Pakistan Kayam Karo*, etc.² In the last week of March 1947, the Muslim League stepped up its activities to meet the demands of Pakistan and celebrated "*Pakistan Day*" on March 23, 1947. Their motive behind the plan to celebrate "*Pakistan Day*" was to advertise the Pakistan scheme throughout the Punjab province. The establishment of the "Muslim League National Guards" by the Muslim League proved to be a major obstacle to the national integrity.³ In such circumstances, communal violence and riots surged, causing immense suffering and displacement. On the other hand, the Sikhs, constituting a significant part of Punjab's population, found themselves caught in the crossfire of this religious divide.⁴ The Sikhs grappled with a range of issues related to their distinct identity, land ownership, adequate political representation, and communal harmony. During this time, the Sikh leaders, such as Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Tara Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, Darshan Singh Pheurman, and others, played pivotal roles in advocating for Sikh interests and safeguarding their rights amidst this turmoil.

On January 30, 1947, a meeting of the Panthic Pritinidhi Board was held in Amritsar, and Udham Singh Nagoke, Baldev Singh, Swaran Singh, Tara Singh, Kartar Singh, and many other leaders of the Akali Dal were the attendees. They deliberated on the crucial matter of ensuring the safety of Hindus and Sikhs in the face of communal violence incited by the Muslim League. One of the main matters discussed in the meeting was the question of the formation of a Hindu-Sikh state in the areas where Muslims were in the

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¹ Vasant Moon (ed.) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and speeches, Vol. 8*, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, The Government of India, New Delhi, January 2014, pp. 7, 10, 11.

² Gurbhachan Singh Talib (compl.), *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1950, pp. 39, 40.

³ J.S. Grewal, *Master Tara Singh in Indian History Colonialism, Nationalism and the Politics of Sikh Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2017, p. 243.

⁴ Records of Partition of India of SGPC (1946-47), Vol. 2, File No. 16, Serial No. 52, *Memorandum Hand over to Sir S. Cripps*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, pp. 1, 2, 3, 4.

minority. In February, a serious attempt was made to form a private Sikh army.⁵ To accomplish this, the Sikhs were summoned to reorganise the Sikh volunteer organisation and prepare themselves to combat the Muslim League's agitation while protecting the people from communal violence.⁶ Thus, a Sikh Volunteer Organisation, the *Akal Fauj*, was formed. Udham Singh Nagoke was a key figure in the *Akal Fauj*. Udham Singh, along with his associates, visited many places in Punjab. The Sikhs responded with an assurance that they would make the *Akal Fauj* a large army as soon as possible.⁷

The Sikh leaders, including Udham Singh Nagoke, advocated for Sikh rights and autonomy in the Punjab region during this tumultuous period, characterized by communal tensions among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Udham Singh Nagoke, along with other Sikh leaders like Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, were deeply concerned about the future of Sikhs in a partitioned India and sought to safeguard their land and people. Consequently, they believed in taking a more assertive stance to protect Sikh interests and secure Sikh-majority areas in the event of partition, as the situation worsened day by day. Udham Singh Nagoke and Master Tara Singh were vocal proponents of Sikh rights and autonomy in Punjab, and their speeches and actions consistently reflected their determination to safeguard Sikh interests. The call for the establishment of Sikh regiments and resistance against Muslim dominance was a direct result of their efforts to protect the Sikhs.

Udham Singh Nagoke was a good orator. He also made speeches containing similar appeals that were made at an Akali Diwan in the Amritsar district. He, along with his associates, Ishar Singh Majhail and Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke, the President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, held many Diwans in various places of Punjab. They also made speeches on the occasion of the *Amavas* Fair at Tarn Taran and appealed to the Sikhs to join the *Akal Fauj* to guard their homeland.⁸ There was no doubt that Udham Singh Nagoke and other Akali leaders' speeches aroused a considerable number of Sikhs, and many Sikh volunteers joined the *Akal Fauj*. In February 1947, the Chief Secretary of Punjab's fortnightly review stated that "*the Sikhs were continuing to advance their plans for the formation of the Akal Fauj and that, in doing so, in public and in private, the Sikh leaders were making no secret of the fact that this Sikh army was being formed to fight Muslim League aggression.*"⁹

The other ten *Akali Diwans* were held during the last week of February 1947. On the other hand, the most important annual conference was held at Bachhauri in the Hoshiarpur district on February 22 and 23, 1947. Udham Singh Nagoke also attended this conference and appealed to the Sikhs. He emphasized that it was a pivotal moment for the community and urged them to unite and enlist in the Akali regiments. A meeting in Amritsar on February 27 was organised by the city and district *Akali Jathas*. On this occasion, Udham Singh Nagoke, Swaran Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, and Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke were the main speakers. Udham Singh Nagoke, Ishar Singh Majhail, and Mohan Singh Nagoke made speeches emphasising the need

⁵ Ian Copland, *State Community & Neighbourhood In Princely North India c.1900 1950*, New York, 2005, p. 129.

⁶ Ali Raza, *Revolutionary Past: Communist Internationalism in Colonial India*, Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 174.

⁷ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South*, Routledge, 2002, p. 478.

⁸ *The Tribune*, Lahore, January 31, 1941, p. 8.

⁹ Government of West Punjab, *Note on the Sikh Plan*, Lahore, 1948, p. 6.

to organise themselves and enlist in the *Akal Fauj*.¹⁰ His efforts for the *Akal Fauj* greatly influenced the Sikhs. Then the Sikhs enlisted themselves in the *Akal Fauj* in large numbers and were prepared to make any sacrifice for their homeland.¹¹ Master Tara Singh was the main speaker at Amritsar, where he repeated his fear of the civil war. On February 26, 1947, the Upper Bari Doab Circle Canal Committee organised another meeting attended by 3,000 people. The ostensible purpose of the meeting was to demand more water to irrigate more land. However, the speakers, including Udham Singh Nagoke and Ishar Singh Majhail, also appealed to the Sikhs to prepare for the fight against Pakistan and protect their homeland.¹² The reorganisation of the *Akal Fauj* proceeded with speed and vigour. By the end of February, provincial appointments of commanders and assistant commanders had been made in Lahore and Rawalpindi, respectively.

The Sikh leaders, in particular Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, and Ishar Singh Majhail, revealed their feelings in more ferocious and uncontrolled remarks than they had previously given. On March 2, 1947, Master Tara Singh addressed the people at the Dera Sahib Gurdwara in Lahore. He also addressed the Sikhs, emphasising the necessity of their autonomy in Punjab and urging them to prepare for civil war.¹³ He told the Sikhs that there could never be any compromise between the Hindus and Muslims and that the Sikhs needed to start planning and making preparations now to wrest the Punjab from the Muslims after the British left India. On the same day, Jathedar Mohan Singh and Udham Singh Nagoke addressed the 5000 Sikhs in Amritsar and urged them to set up the *Akal Fauj* regiments throughout the Punjab province and to enlist the Sikhs in large numbers in the Sikh Volunteer Organisation.¹⁴ After two days, in Amritsar, the Hindu speakers led by Keshab Chandra and the Sikh speakers led by Udham Singh Nagoke, Ishar Singh Majhail, and Sohan Singh Jalal-Usman made a hysterical appeal to the audience, estimated at over 20,000, to unite to oppose Pakistan. At that time, Udham Singh Nagoke began his address by repeatedly shouting "*Pakistan Murdabad*", and said that the Sikhs would not rest until the idea of Pakistan was eradicated from Muslim minds. He urged everyone present to make the commitment to this effect before the *Akal Takht* on March 8th, during the *Hola Mohalla* festival. On the other hand, Master Tara Singh urged the Sikhs to "*live or die*" for their homeland, as well as reaffirming the Sikh determination to resist "Muslim dominance" and the formation of a combined "the Sikh-Hindu Anti-Pakistan front".¹⁵ Giani Kartar Singh, Gopi Chand, and the three Hindu and Sikh members of the Coalition Ministry's recent cabinet were also members of the council.

As a result of the Sikh leaders' speeches in Amritsar and Lahore, as well as similar speeches elsewhere, including at Lyallpur (7,000 audiences), where the District Commander of the *Akal Fauj* and the President of the District Congress Committee declared their opposition to any form of Pakistan, at Sheikhpura (1,500 audiences), and at Jullundur (3,000 audiences), where Udham Singh Nagoke and Ishar

¹⁰ B.S. Danewalia, *Police and Politics in the Twentieth Century Punjab*, Delhi, 1997, p. 102.

¹¹ Prithipal Singh Kapur, *Jiwan Master Tara Singh*, Amritsar, 1968, p. 51.

¹² Government of West Punjab, *Note on the Sikh Plan*, pp. 6, 7.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 8, 9.

¹⁴ B.S. Danewalia, *Police and Politics in the Twentieth Century Punjab*, p. 122.

¹⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South*, p.511

Singh Majhail exhorted the Sikhs to be ready for all sacrifices. The annual *Hola Mohalla* fair at Anandpur Sahib (Hoshiarpur district) was held from March 5 to March 8, 1947.¹⁶ The speeches that the Sikh leaders delivered were of an extremely violent and exciting nature. The audience at the main Akali conference varied from 4,000 to 15,000 people. The conference was presided over by Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke, the president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee. Udham Singh Nagoke and Ishar Singh Majhail, both prominent members of the Shiromani Akali Dal, were among the notable speakers. The audience was told that the British, in alliance with the Muslim League, were on a campaign to exterminate Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab and establish Pakistan.¹⁷

The fall of Malik Khizr Hayat Tiwana's government on March 2, 1947, marked a turning point in Punjab politics.¹⁸ The incident sparked violence in the Punjab province with riots in Lahore and Amritsar that quickly spread to Multan Division as well as to other parts of Punjab.¹⁹ So, on March 3, 1947, Governor Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins held a meeting with Khan of Mamdot²⁰ to form his ministry in Punjab.²¹ As a result, other non-muslim parties expressed dissent against the Governor's idea of forming a government on the basis of communal or factional dominance. At that time, Udham Singh Nagoke, along with Ujjal Singh, Swaran Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, Master Tara Singh, Dalip Singh Kang, Giani Kartar Singh and others raised the slogans of "*Pakistan Murdabad and Sat Sri Akal.*" They also raised the slogan of '*Katke Deyage Apni Jaan Magar Nahin Dewage Pakistan*'.²² After this meeting, the Governor of Punjab Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins submitted a report on the situation in Punjab to the Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell, on March 3, 1947.²³

On March 4, 1947, the Muslims of Amritsar started preparing to attack the Hindus and Sikhs. On that day, the Muslim police opened fire on a procession of Hindu-Sikh students. On the same day, the Sikhs and Hindus held a public meeting in Amritsar, in which Udham Singh Nagoke, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Ishar Singh Majhail, etc., were also present. In this meeting, the resolution of not tolerating communal violence in Punjab was reiterated as the situation worsened day by day. But the Muslims tried to beat down the Hindu-Sikh opposition, especially the Sikhs, in Amritsar, with the aim of demoralising them. Amritsar was deliberately selected by the Muslim League due to its significance as the religious capital of the Sikhs, as they aimed to weaken Sikh morale and potentially dismantle it.

¹⁶ Chhanda Chatterjee, *Sikh Minority and the Partition of the Punjab 1920-1947*, New Delhi, 2018, p. 202.

¹⁷ Gurbhachan Singh Talib (compl.), *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, pp. 141, 142, 143.

¹⁸ Government of India, Relief and Rehabilitation Facts Finding Branch, *Killing, Arson and Loot in Rawalpindi*, pp. 28, 29. Digitalized by Panjab Digital Library, www.panjabdigilib.org.

¹⁹ Penderel Moon (ed.), *Wavell the Viceroy's Journal*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, pp. 425, 426.

²⁰ Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot was born on 31 December 1906. He was one of the supporters of the Pakistan Movement in British India. He also succeeded his father in politics as President of the Punjab Muslim League between 1942 and 1944. On August 15, 1947, he was appointed as the first Chief Minister of West Punjab in the newborn country Pakistan and later as the Governor of Sindh. He died on 16 October 1969 in Lahore., Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 85.

²¹ Gur Rattanpal Singh, *Illustrated History of the Punjab (1947-1978)*, Chandigarh, 1979, p. 127.

²² *Ibid*, p. 128.

²³ Penderel Moon (ed.), *Wavell the Viceroy's Journal*, p. 426.

Nothing happened on March 4, 1947, although the atmosphere in Amritsar was very tense. The Hindus and Sikhs did not expect that they would be attacked collectively by Muslims. The Muslims, on the other hand, were fully prepared for a large-scale attack, besieging the entire city to destroy the Hindu-Sikh areas and evict the inhabitants. Arms and gasoline were stored in large quantities by the Muslims as preparations. They formed squads for robbery, stabbing, and arson for general assaults and raids. This attack was planned during the March 3, 1947, meeting of the executive committee of the Amritsar Muslim League. During these attacks, Darbar Sahib, the religious centre of Sikhs, was targeted by Muslims.²⁴ At that time, Udham Singh Nagoke and his comrades, as the commanders of the *Akal Fauj*, were busy to defend the rights of the Sikhs. They held conferences and meetings on a regular basis to protect their community. They were aware of the interests of the Muslim League, but they had no idea of this conspiracy.

On March 5, 1947, Udham Singh Nagoke and other Akali leaders announced that a public meeting should be held in the evening to oppose the Muslim League's demand to establish Pakistan in Punjab. But the Muslim goons attacked a group of Akali leaders with bricks and stones at *Chowk Moni* and killed a Sikh named Bhai Mangal Singh. The news of this barbaric act spread throughout the town, and Hindus and Sikhs started closing their shops. On the other hand, the groups of Muslims practically closed the city to outsiders and made it impossible for those inside to get out. The *Hall Bazar* of Amritsar, the main commercial centre of the city and the most important route to and from the railway station and Harmandir Sahib, was filled with large armed Muslim mobs on both sides.²⁵ A large number of Hindus and Sikhs were killed in this first attack. By five o'clock, dozens of Sikh dead were brought to the government mortuary, but many were not identified. In *Hall Bazar*, almost all the shops were owned by Hindus and Sikhs, and it was a thriving commercial centre. The surrounding population was almost entirely Muslim. This bazaar was looted fearlessly and on a large scale by Muslim mobs. A large number of shops were burned after looting.²⁶

Udham Singh Nagoke was present in the office of the Shiromani Akali Dal when he learned about this attack. Then he reached the *Hall Bazar* of Amritsar with the *Jatha* of *Akal Fauj*.²⁷ When Udham Singh Nagoke reached there with his companions, they confronted the Muslim goons and threw them out of the *Hall Bazar*. After that, Udham Singh Nagoke came to know that the Muslims were attacking and looting in *Chowk Farid* as well. Then, he reached there with the *Jatha* of *Akal Fauj* and protected the people from these attackers.²⁸ During the night, the Hindu and Sikh neighbourhoods turned into a living nightmare due to these attacks. The Muslim parties used to set fire to the houses of Hindus and Sikhs while raising Islamic slogans. The sound of firing by the Muslim attackers was heard throughout the night.

²⁴ Gurbhachan Singh Talib (compl.), *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, pp. 145, 146.

²⁵ Sohan Singh Sheetal, *Punjab da Ujarha*, Lahore, 2012, pp. 38, 39, 40.

²⁶ Giani Kartar Singh Kalas Walia, *Khooni Holiya*, Gurmat Sahit Bahwan, Amritsar, 1947, p. 48, 49.

²⁷ Diljit Singh Pannu, *Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalalusman Abhinandan Granth*, Amritsar, June 2, 1974, p. 12.

²⁸ Giani Kartar Singh Kalas Walia, *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, p. 53.

ਦੱਖਣ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਰੌਲਾ ਇਕ ਜਥਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਚੜਿਆ

ਦੌਰਾ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਫਿਰਕੇ ਕਰਨ ਖ਼ਾਤਰ ਉਧਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਕੇ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰ ਚੜਿਆ

ਓਹਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਲਿਆ ਸਿੰਘ ਡੇਢ ਕੁ ਸੌ ਹਰ ਗੱਲੋਂ ਹੋਕੇ ਖਬਰਦਾਰ ਚੜਿਆ

ਮਾਰਕੀਟਾਂ ਬਚਾਈਆਂ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘਾ ਇਹ ਜਦੋਂ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਭਬਕਾਰ ਚੜਿਆ

On March 6, 1947, news reached the office of the Darbar Sahib Committee that the attackers had surrounded *Roriya wali Gali*, Amritsar and set it on fire. Then, Udham Singh Nagoke and Ishar Singh Majhail with the *Jatha* of *Akal Fauj* went to Gurdwara Sri Ramsar and asked Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman to take the *Jathas* to *Roriya Wali Gali*.²⁹ When Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman reached the washermen's street, the Muslims started pelting bricks and firing bullets. Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman's party fought against these invading Muslims for some time. When Udham Singh Nagoke found out that Jathedar Sohan Singh had been struck by the Muslim attackers, they rallied their team and fought against them. After this, Udham Singh Nagoke and his companions came to know that some members of the Muslim League were going to attack the Darbar Sahib, so they foiled this attack as well. Thus, on the night of March 5 and the day of March 6, Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Tara Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, Darshan Singh Pheruman, and Sohan Singh Jalal Usman, along with many other Sikhs, protected the people of Amritsar and Darbar Sahib without caring about their lives.³⁰ However, due to the lack of prior information about the attack, there was still a lot of loss of life and property in Amritsar.³¹

This incident further spread more communal tension throughout the Punjab. So, to strengthen the *Akal Fauj*, the *Jathas* were reinforced by mounted men, ex-military, and Indian National Army men equipped with firearms. They tried to establish close relationships with the neighbouring states for the future event. The Akali leaders toured the area to make sure that all of the necessary preparations had been made. Ishar Singh Majhail proceeded to Sialkot, where other Akali workers had been busy touring rural regions and enlisting 500 members for the Shahidi Jatha. In this way, Udham Singh Nagoke and Master Amar Singh Dosanjh went to Jullundur and Phagwara, respectively, to organise their own party cells. Amritsar was the major focus of Sikh preparations. Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman organised 400 Hindu-Sikh city youths on April 24, 1947, who were deputed the next day in batches of 25 near the Chauk Pragdas mosque in preparation for a clash with the Muslims.³² After three days, a meeting of 400 Akali and other Sikhs of the Amritsar district was organised, which included Udham Singh Nagoke, Colonel Niranjana Singh (of the Indian National Army), Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman, and many notable Sikh leaders.³³ During this meeting, Udham Singh Nagoke left the stage and gave no view about the militant programme of the Akalis, as he followed the policy of non-violence and peace. He did, however, emphasize the need to respond to Muslim attacks as a means of self-defence, rather than advocating for violence or declaring civil war. He consistently maintained that they took up arms solely for self-defence and not to incite violence. On the other hand, Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalal Usman instructed his followers to collect any kind of weapons, legal or illegal, and replace old *Jathedars* with young ones who would be prepared to fight against these Muslim attacks.³⁴ He also advised them on the formation of village *panchayats* in every village to handle ordinary issues and disputes, the

²⁹ Sadhu Singh Hamdard (compl.), *Abhinandan Granth Ishar Singh Majhail*, Jalandhar, January 5, 1977.

²⁹ *Akali Patrika*, Lahore, August 16, 1937, p. 43.

³⁰ Giani Kartar Singh Kalas Walia, *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, pp. 54, 55.

³¹ Diljit Singh Pannu, *Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalalusman Abhinandan Granth*, p. 14, 15.

³² Gurbhachan Singh Talib (compl.), *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, p. 157.

³³ Chhanda Chatterjee, *Sikh Minority and the Partition of the Punjab 1920-1947*, p. 203.

³⁴ Government of West Punjab, *Note on the Sikh Plan*, pp. 17, 18.

preparation of lists of youths ready to die for the *Panth* and expediting subscriptions to the Fifty-lakh Fund. Villagers were told outrightly to be prepared to fight the Muslims.

It was feared that the Viceroy of India's partition plan would allocate only twelve districts of Punjab to the Hindu-Sikh communities. On May 15, 1947, a meeting of prominent Sikhs of Gujranwala, Sialkot, Montgomery, Lyallpur, and Sheikhupura districts was held in Sheikhupura. In this, a committee was formed under the direction of Giani Kartar Singh, Sant Singh Arup, Harcharan Singh Bajwa, Hukam Singh Barrister, and Man Singh, M.L.A., to operate in the five districts and create the anti-Pakistan front under the direction of the Akali High Command.³⁵ At this time, Udham Singh Nagoke visited the districts of the Malwa region to spread the ideology and purpose of the *Akal Fauj*. As a result of his visits, 57 Sikhs were enlisted in the Shahidi jatha at Muktsar and another 500 at Kotkapura. There were also reports that Sikh leaders made efforts to acquire weapons and transfer individuals to safeguard the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar. For this purpose, the Sikhs were transported from various States, particularly Jind and Faridkot, into the Amritsar and Jullundur regions.

On May 27, 1947, Udham Singh Nagoke, in a statement, said that the Sikhs had lost faith in the sincerity of the British government due to their brutal policies.³⁶ Mohamad Ali Jinnah and his followers achieved their goal of creating a so-called "new country," Pakistan, in the western districts of the Panjab. The Partition of Punjab would give birth to a lot of difficulties that would be endured by the Sikhs of Punjab.³⁷ At that time, nothing could satisfy the Sikhs because the division of the province had been declared by the British government.³⁸ According to the Indian Independence Act of 1947, the country became independent from the British rule and the British sovereignty ended. This was the result of the freedom struggle waged by freedom fighters like Udham Singh Nagoke for a long time, who dedicated their entire lives to the freedom of the country. But this freedom came at the cost of the partition of the country, with the creation of two independent states, India and Pakistan, along with the shifting of political borders and the division of other assets.³⁹ On August 14 and 15, 1947, at midnight, sovereign independent Pakistan and India came into existence legally.

On September 30, 1947, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Home Member of the Dominion of India, held a conference with Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Tara Singh, Jathedar Sohan Singh Jalalusman, and other Sikh leaders at Amritsar in which he convinced them of the need to create a suitable atmosphere to check the attacks on convoys of Muslim refugees. Udham Singh Nagoke, along with other Sikh leaders, endorsed Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel's opinion.⁴⁰ Because they also subscribed to the view that the molestation of Muslim

³⁵ *Akali Jodha*, Patiala, May 29, 1947, p. 2.

³⁶ *Ranjit*, Patiala, May 28, 1947, p. 4.

³⁷ Ganda Singh, *A Dairy of the Partition Days 1947*, Reprinted from the Journal of Indian History, Vol. XXXVIII, Parts I and II, Serial Nos. 112-13, April and August 1960, p. 232.

³⁸ *Ranjit*, Patiala, May 28, 1947, p. 3.

³⁹ *The Punjab Gazette*, Lahore, August 13, 1947, pp. 25, 26, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, H.M.'s Personal Sections*, File No. 172/48-P.S, 1947, National Archives of India, New Delhi, p.1. <https://indianculture.gov.in/>.

women should stop forthwith.⁴¹ To solve the problems of the refugees, on October 4, 1947, Udham Singh Nagoke appealed to the *Shahidi Dal* of *Akal Fauj* and other Hindu and Sikh organizations to allow the Muslim refugees to proceed safely to Pakistan.⁴² On October 6, 1947, he also appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs of the East Panjab to allow safe passage to the outgoing Muslim convoys to avoid retaliation. He wanted to solve the problem of the looting of refugee caravans. So, he continuously appealed to the Hindu and Sikh organisations so that the ongoing troubles could be dealt with easily. He said that it was the bounden duty of all the members of the *Shahidi Dal* and the Hindu and Sikh societies to give a befitting demonstration of their unity of purpose by ensuring the safety of the outgoing Muslim convoys.⁴³ He also said that they should join together to allow Muslims to migrate from this side safely and securely and direct all their attention towards bringing their people here. They should provide them with food, clothing, and shelter. Then they would thus be safeguarding their country against any further devastation.⁴⁴

Udham Singh Nagoke played a pivotal role in the *Akal Fauj*, a Sikh Volunteer Organization formed during the tumultuous period leading up to the partition of India in 1947. This organization aimed to protect Sikh autonomy and the well-being of the Sikh community in the face of escalating communal tensions and violence in Punjab. Along with other Sikh leaders, Udham Singh Nagoke was instrumental in its formation, advocating for Sikh rights and mobilizing the Sikh population. Udham Singh Nagoke and his associates organized meetings and conferences, delivered speeches to unite the Sikhs and encouraged them to join the *Akal Fauj*. Their efforts aimed at safeguard Sikh-majority areas and ensuring the safety of Sikhs amidst the growing communal divide. Udham Singh Nagoke also maintained a commitment to non-violence and peace, even as he supported the formation of the *Akal Fauj*. He stressed that the use of arms was solely for self-defence and not to incite violence. His principled stance reflected the determination of Sikh leaders to protect Sikh interests while seeking a peaceful resolution to the challenging circumstances of that time. In the post-independence era, Udham Singh Nagoke also played an important role in ensuring the safety of Muslim convoys.

⁴¹ Partition Branch Records, Vol. III, *File No. CF-254-2U49, Pages 1-2*, Personal Collections of Kirpal Singh, pp. 36, 37, Digitalized by Panjab Digital Library, www.panjabdigilib.org.

⁴² *Punjab*, Amritsar, October 5, 1947.

⁴³ Ganda Singh, *A Dairy of the Partition Days 1947*, p. 246.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*