

Restoring Lord Wavell's place in history

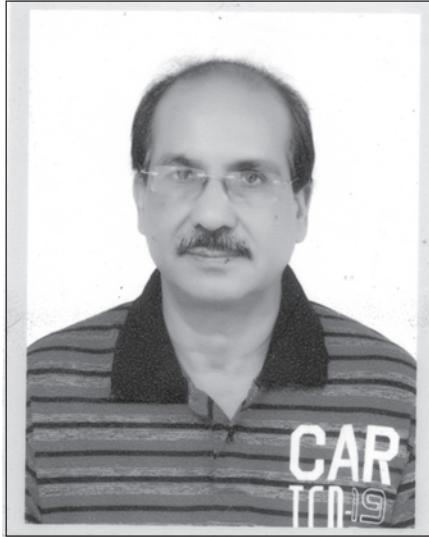
PREETI VERMA LAL

For Professor Dr Muhammad Iqbal Chawla 67 years are not enough to erase the pangs of Partition. Or, to brood over the what/ifs of history. Neither to rewrite an era that was swathed in blood and hatred. Six decades do not suffice to put back on pedestal a Governor General who has been near-obliterated by his suave and charming successor.

In these 67 years, Dr Chawla, Chairman, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of Punjab (Lahore), has not forgotten the role of Lord Archibald Wavell who served as India's Governor General between October 1943 to March 1947. Neither has Dr Chawla forgiven history for denying Lord Wavell his rightful

place in the annals of shackle-breaking-from-British stories.

It is for Lord Wavell that Dr



Dr Muhammad Iqbal Chawla

Chawla hunched over reams of paper to write a treatise on Britain's penultimate Viceroy in India. In Wavell and the Dying Days of the Raj, a 265-page hardback book, Dr Chawla delves into Wavell's Breakdown Plan. "The main point of my book is that though Wavell was not in favor of India's division into two countries, he, however, was strongly in favor of the minority rights in India," says Dr Chawla.

Lord Wavell did set the stage for all that transpired in the Mountbatten era. In his book, Dr Chawla covers all the important events and dramatis personae of

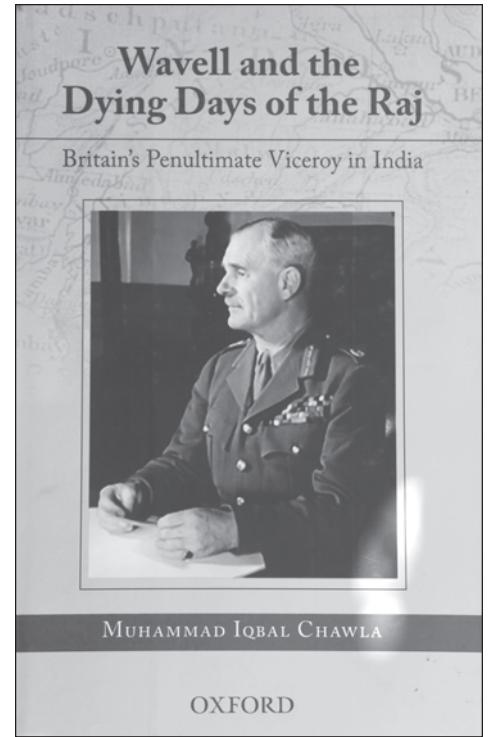
the movement that eventually led to the partition of India. History would acknowledge Dr Chawla as the first historian to peer so hard into Lord Wavell's vicerealty and lend another perspective to the common historical threads. Dr Chawla calls it "a grave historical oversight which I try to correct".

Dr Chawla has never been to India, but it was in the blood-soaked land of Jullundhur that the book - in a way - was born. "Within the vast arena of historical research, my area of interest, the Pakistan Movement, especially its conclusive phase from the Lahore Resolution of 1940 onwards, was decided by what my elders underwent in 1947. My parents and most of the members of their extended family resided in Jullundhur. Their journey from

Jullundhur to the newly-emerged Pakistan's borders was a journey through the fires and ravages of hell.

The stories varied in details but all of them had one theme in common: the unimaginable, daily tales of woe and suffering underlying their trek to Wagah, Burki, Gandasinghwal... It is that generation's experiences which were transferred to me and became mine in a sense no less than theirs..." says Dr Chawla, his ears still deafened by the unheard shrieks of hapless refugees.

Having studied in Sargodha and with Masters, MPhil and Ph.D degrees from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Dr Chawla teaches graduate, post-graduate



Khoobsurat sets record in Pak

Fawad Khan's debut Bollywood movie Khoobsurat may have got off to a tepid start in India, but in Pakistan it is already setting records.

"No film has ever made Rs 10 million (Rs 1 crore) on a non-holiday weekday and this is the first time this has ever happened," Amjad Rasheed who owns the IMG entertainment company told PTI in Karachi.

Khoobsurat has garnered Rs 3 crore in its first three days in Pakistan. The Fawad Khan-starrer has not only outdone Parineeti Chopra and Aditya Roy

Kapur-starrer Dawaat-e-Ishq but also Pakistani film Dukhtar, Nadeem Mandviwalla, founder of film distributing company Mandviwalla Entertainment, said.

Khoobsurat may have received a lukewarm response at the box office in its first weekend in India, but Fawad Khan has managed to become the talk of the town for his suave charm and good looks.

Khoobsurat managed to gross around Rs 11-12 crore in its first weekend in theatres, according to Bollywood website koimoi.com.

Parineeti Chopra and Aditya Roy Kapur starrer Dawat-e-Ishq

managed to do marginally better business in India at around 13-14 crore in the first weekend.

Khoobsurat, produced by Disney and Anil Kapoor Production also stars Sonam Kapoor, Ratna Pathak Shah, Kirron Kher and theatre veteran Aamir Raza Hussain.

The film, loosely based on the 1980 film based on the same name, has received positive responses from audiences in India and will rely on 'word of mouth' for its business to pick up before Hrithik Roshan and Katrina Kaif starrer Bang Bang hits theatres on October 2.-PTI



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