



# The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of Indias Partition

*By Narendra Singh Sarila*

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Historians and political analysts have not paid enough attention to the crucial link between Indias partition and British fears about the USSR gaining control of Central Asia. Realizing that Indian nationalists would not play the Great Game against the Soviet Union, the British settled for those willing to do so, using Islam as a political tool in pursuit of their objectives. How this operation was conceived and carried out forms the theme of this untold story of India's partition. Narendra Singh Sarila unearths top-secret documents which throw new light on several prominent political figures of the era, while bringing out little-known facts about the pressure that the US exerted on Britain to grant India her independence. The author also traces the roots of the present Kashmir imbroglio in this fascinating account.

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The 1947 partition of the British Raj led to the displacement and death of millions, three wars between India and Pakistan, and chronic instability in Pakistan. The consensus among historians is that the partition was a hastily done effort by a British government eager to divest itself of an imperial burden. Sarila, a former aide-de-camp to the last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, has a different view. Utilizing a variety of sources, including previously classified documents, he asserts that the British government supported the creation of Pakistan with the understanding that British military bases there would provide easy access to the oil fields of the Middle East. Sarila cites numerous statements by British officials, particularly Churchill, to support his case. Unfortunately, he has cherry-picked the evidence, ignoring equally strong documentation that supports the conventional view. Still, this is a useful look at a tumultuous series of events. Sarila provides interesting perspectives on key historical figures. Gandhi, for example, is shown as infuriatingly naive and self-righteous. Sarila does not prove his case here, but this is a work likely to engender additional discussion and controversy. *Jay Freeman*

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### Review

"\* 'An impressive range of documentary sources illuminates a controversial era with skill and conviction. Historians and general readers alike will learn much from the sweep and drama of the narrative.' Sir Martin Gilbert \* A meticulously researched, highly readable, fascinating version of the last days of the Raj' Mark Tully \* [Sarila's] penetrating intelligence...shines a light on the diplomatic world of hints, pressures and concealed motives on the route to partition' Sunday Telegraph \* 'a valuable, highly readable, indeed fascinating study' TILS" --Sunday Telegraph

### About the Author

Narendra Singh Sarila was heir to the princely state of Sarila in central India. An ADC to Lord Mountbatten, he later joined the IFS, where he worked from 1948 to 1985. He also served as Indias ambassador to Spain, Brazil, Libya, Switzerland and France.

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