Mountbattens were certainly inclined to the left

Lord Casey (gov. of Bengal 1944-46) thought Edwina “startlingly left wing”

Within 2 weeks, Mb's had developed friendly relations with Nehru and Gandhi.

First meeting with Jinnah was 'frosty'. Mb believe he was charismatic, but Jinnah was not warm to him. Mb described Jinnah as an 'evil genius', 'a lunatic', a 'psychotic' and even 'a bastard'.

Edwina was a 'socialite' who had a history of infidelity became infatuated with Nehru. Their flirtations were noted. “Nehru's relationship with Lady Mountbatten is sufficiently close to have raised some eyebrows.” (Shahid Hamid, Auchinlek's private secretary, 31/3/47)

The 'affair' was more of a “schoolgirl with a crush” almost certainly not consummated, it was trivial, but it added to Muslim fears and accusations that Mb was in Congress's pocket.

Mb given till end June 48 to “save the game”

Main aim was to maintain India in the Commonwealth (i.e. keep them as an ally) for strategic purposes.

1st month = meetings with Indian ministers, politicians and British advisers which led Mb to decide that partition was inevitable and would be better sooner rather than later. Huge disappointment to Attlee and Britain which wanted the legacy of the Raj to be a united India.

Mb said on 3 June:

“For more than a hundred years 400 millions of you have lived together in this country as a single entity....My greatest hope was that communal differences would not destroy all this."

**Plan Balkan**

mid-April

Fragmentation

Congress accepted on 28 April (convinced that Pakistan would not survive and would eventually be reincorporated into India)
Biggest problem = how to divide the army (Hindus and Muslims mixed in almost every unit)
Auchinlek said he needed 2-5 years to divide assets properly and fairly. He was given 4 weeks!

13,500 British officers needed to be replaced.

Plan Balkan = each province would decide which provincial group to join. Punjab and Bengal could subdivide, therefore fragmentation and violent “free for all” recipe for anarchy

**Simla Moment 10 May**

Mb showed Nehru plans (inappropriate), Nehru said plan was ridiculous and informed Mb that Congress would reject it.

Mb shelved plan Balkan and turned to V.P. Menon (Indian reforms commissioner) for a new plan

Menon plan drawn up in a week and taken by Mb to London on 18 May...(Panic??)

Menon Plan = 2 states India & Pakistan with dominion status (each state would use 1935 laws until they decided to change them – so no more constituent assembly)

Provincial assemblies would decide which state to join. Princes would decide whether to join India or Pakistan or whether to remain autonomous.

At first, the two states would just have dominion status (but they could drop it once the transfer of power had happened).

Everyone reluctantly agreed. Congress because they would easily dominate the Hindu areas, Jinnah because he was tired and would get a 2-part Muslim state (even though Punjab and Bengal would be divided) and Balder Singh (Sikh) because he had no other alternative.

Meanwhile, Muslims and Hindus were guilty of sectarian violence, probably designed to “ethnically cleanse” areas before partition. Massacres of Sikhs in Rawalpindi. Sikhs and Hindus fleeing in terror from Northern and Western Punjab.

Violence often sparked by minor incidents “a row over washing a bullock, a buffalo stolen from Muslims, a false rumour that a Hindu had been stabbed in Rewari, a lewd remark by a Muslim boy to a Hindu girl at a fair...”
“The slightest issue led to bands of armed men gathering and attacking and burning neighbouring villages.”

Princely states were often the worst. “There were rumours that the Maharaja of Bharatpur intended to expel all the Muslims and distribute their land to the Hindus....On 7 August, Alwar state forces and police armed with Bren guns and Mortars combined with between 10,000 and 20,000 Hindus to besiege the Meo (Muslim) village of Silgaon. Two Meos, both former Indian army officers, attempted to negotiate, but they were shot as a prelude to a massacre.”

A British officer shot 50 Hindus who were attempting a similar attack on another Meo village. The attack was aborted and the mob dispersed.

In many areas, the violence had been planned for years and weapons (mostly blades) had been stockpiled.

There was violence based on individual outrage, but most of it was planned terror by political parties. In particular, the Muslim League in the Punjab carried out a calculated campaign to destabilise the province which it could not gain control over. 60% of Punjab was Muslim, but the League had never managed to defeat the Muslim Unionist Party which had formed a coalition with Sikhs and Hindus and wanted the Punjab to remain in India.

On 2 march, the coalition resigned in the face of the violence. The Muslim League tried to form a coalition at the same time as it carried out a systematic campaign of violence and intimidation. The M.L. Was worried that it would lose Eastern Punjab to India (E. Punjab was a wealthy are, so important to the economic viability of Pakistan).

4 March 1947, Punjab erupted into civil war. British troops and the Indian army eventually suppressed the violence (Indian soldiers did not descend into sectarian hatred – was Wavell right? Could a large army presence have prevented the bloodshed?)

...the massacres in the Punjab resumed in May!

Mountbatten refused the Punjab more troops and announced on 3 June that the Punjab would be divided (Menon Plan) which led to increased violence as both sides tried to secure their power.

Jinnah, Nehru, Patel and Singh ALL asked Mountbatten to declare Martial law in the Punjab (Jinnah said “I don't care if you shoot Muslims, it has got to be stopped”)

In the end, they set up an all-party commission to investigate the problem!!
3 June Announcement of the Menon Plan

All-India Radio, Mountbatten, Jinnah and Nehru announced that there was a plan and that India and Pakistan would gain their independence on 15 August (anniversary of the defeat of Japan).

Story goes that Jinnah announced Pakistan Zindabad (Long live Pakistan) but that many Hindus heard Pakistan's in the bag!!!

Cyril Radcliffe

"I am going to see Mountbatten sworn as the first Governor General of the Indian Union at the Viceroy's house in the morning and then I station myself firmly on the Delhi airport until an aeroplane from England comes along. Nobody in India will love me... and there will be roughly 80 million people with a grievance who will begin looking for me. I do not want them to find me. I have worked and traveled and sweated - oh I have sweated all the time."

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a distinguished barrister, was appointed to draw the boundaries between the two nations.

30 June, 1947, the Governor General of India constituted the two Boundary Commissions for the partition of Punjab and Bengal - each consisting of two Hindu members and two Muslim members.

Radcliffe's task was an unenviable one, given that:

- he had never ever been to the subcontinent in his life earlier; he did not know its people, and had no first hand knowledge of its culture, economics, or perhaps even history...
- he had to work with Census statistics, which were outdated and unreliable - the previous major census was done in 1931. In 1941, the British were too preoccupied with WW-II and though the Census was conducted, it supplied meager information to rely on (in fact, there were also reasons to believe that the demographic statistics were falsified in Punjab and Bengal by the communal elements on both sides).
- he hardly had any time. He arrived in India on July 8th, 1947 for the first time,
FIVE WEEKS to divide "more than 35 million people, thousands of villages, towns and cities, a unified system of canals and communication networks, and 16 million Muslims, 15 million Hindus and 5 million Sikhs, who despite their religious differences, shared a common culture, language and history."

Examples of the sorts of problems he faced

• Religious contiguity, unfortunately, does not follow geography. One of the most sacred Sikh Shrines, Nankana Sahib, was located in Western Punjab - which was surrounded by an overwhelming Muslim population.

• Gurdaspur had a slight Muslim majority, but it was the Sikhs who dominated economically.

• There were many shrines of Sufi saints who were equally revered by the Muslims, as well as by Hindus and Sikhs.

• Lahore had a Muslim majority, but it was Hindus and Sikhs who owned the bulk of banking, insurance and manufacturing.

Etc...

• Hardly surprising that neither the "owners" of India or Pakistan were satisfied.
The only "homage" (?) he ever got was from the poet W.H. Auden in his lesser-known poem

**The Partition**

*Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,*  
*Having never set eyes on the land he was called to partition*  
*Between two peoples fanatically at odds,*  
*With their different diets and incompatible gods.*  
"Time," they had briefed him in London, "is short. It's too late  
*For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:*  
*The only solution now lies in separation.*  
*The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,*  
*That the less you are seen in his company the better,*  
*So we've arranged to provide you with other accommodation.*  
*We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu,*  
*To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you."

*Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day*  
*Patrolling the gardens to keep the assassins away,*  
*He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate*  
*Of millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date*  
*And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,*  
*But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect*  
*Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,*  
*And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,*  
*But in weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,*  
*A continent for better or worse divided.*

*The next day he sailed for England, where he could quickly forget*  
*The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not,*  
*Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot.*