The River Basin as Sovereign Space: Partition and Nature
The River Basin as a Product of Nature, Science, and Imagination
The River Basin Concept

“The idea of the river basin is more than a mere engineering concept allowing water resources to be harnessed for the common good.... With frequent borrowings from the natural sciences, [it] has been associated with attempts to justify ‘ideal’ or ‘natural’ limits, political, managerial, or otherwise...”

--Francois Molle, “River-basin Planning and Management: The Social Life of a Concept” (2009)
Pre-20th c. Indus Basin History:
Localism & Regionalism
(1) “Let there be greater boldness in attacking the problems to be solved, and let these be taken up in a broader manner than has yet been done

(2) Inundation canals must be supplied from weirs...

(3) Use every drop of available water as far as possible...

(4) Every bit of land which needs water to be irrigated if possible, even if the schemes be costly…”
Chenab Canal Colony – Opened 1892
TRIPLE CANAL PROJECT
Completed 1915
India: The Basin and the Struggle for Sovereignty

Bhakra Dam
Bhakra Dam/Rajasthan Canal
Sovereign Power: Replication of Canal Colonies
Managing the Eastern River “System”

1955 INTERSTATE WATER AGREEMENT
• Rajasthan 8.00 Million Acre-Feet (MAF)
• Punjab 7.20 MAF
• Jammu and Kashmir 0.65 MAF

1981 INTERSTATE WATER AGREEMENT
• Rajasthan 8.60 Million Acre-Feet (MAF)
• Punjab 4.22 MAF
• Haryana 3.50 MAF
• Jammu and Kashmir 0.65 MAF
Provincial Conflict: Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal

- **1966**: Reorganisation of Punjab; it is decided that Haryana will get share of Sutlej water.
- **1977**: Land acquisition starts for 214km Sutlej Yamuna link – 122km of it in Punjab and 92km in Haryana.
- **1980**: Haryana completes its portion. Punjab skips deadlines, moves SC repeatedly.
Center and Province: Rajasthan Canal Renamed

Indira Gandhi Canal in Rajasthan

TIME
“If I die today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation”

Indira Gandhi 1917–1984

KHALISTAN
HUNDRED DOLLARS

Chairman, Dal Khalsa International
Republic of Khalistan
The Ravi, Beas and Sutlej have, even in their most playful abundance, never cultivated any riparian relationship with Haryana or Rajasthan.... The common denominator of Punjabi identity, associated with the very name ‘five rivers,’ is the silvery wreath of its rivers which embraces Punjab in its sweet hug.”

--Gurdev Singh, “Scramble for Punjab Waters”
HARDENING STANDS

Punjab government on Friday said it will not accept any decision to take away its river waters.

Haryana CM M.L. Khattar describes the resolution passed by the Punjab Assembly as “gross violation” of the orders of the SC.

- The controversial SYL canal, the foundation for which was laid way back in 1982, was to link the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers in Punjab and Haryana.

- Presidential reference on SYL has been pending in the Supreme Court since 2004.

- Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal appeals to Punjabis to prepare themselves for tough battles ahead.

November 2016
Pakistan: The Sovereignty of the People and the Sovereignty of Nature

Reconstructing the River Basin after Partition
EAST PUNJAB WATER BLOCKADE LIFTED

Quaid-i-Azam congratulates Raja ji

KARACHI, May 5: The Governor-General of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, today congratulated the Delhi Government for lifting the five-week water blockade on the East Punjab. He said the Delhi Government had been squeezed for the last five weeks because of the water problem.

The East Punjab government, on the other hand, congratulated Delhi on the decision to lift the water blockade.

E Bengal Cabinet expanded

DACCA, May 5: The Cabinet of Bangladesh expanded today. The following ministers resigned: Mr. Muzaffar Ali, Mr. Kazi Momin, Mr. Nazrul Islam, and Mr. A. K. Firoz.

Indo-Pakistan disputes must be settled

LONDON, May 5: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru today asked both the governments of Pakistan and India to settle their disputes peacefully. He said that the two countries should work towards a peaceful resolution of their differences.

The water level in the canal was restored, and the water was flowing as usual.

The damages caused to the tune of two crores have been increased.

Dominion Representatives in the Indo-Pakistan Canal talks held in Delhi on Monday met. Photo shows S. S. Deva, Singh, Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Mamed Ali and other officials.

R. N. S. Anwar Khan Chatty (centre), Mr. Ghulam Mubarak and Mr. Jafar, new High Commissioner for Pakistan in India.

Successful conclusion of Delhi talks

DAMAGE CAUSED TO THE TUNE OF TWO CRORES

(By a Staff Reporter)

The East Punjab government lifted the five-week long water blockade on Wednesday. When water gushed in Lahore Canal after it remained dry for the last five weeks.

Although the water level in the canal was restored, the damages caused were still significant. The estimated damage was around two crores.

The East Punjab government, on the other hand, congratulated Delhi on the decision to lift the water blockade.
Bambanwala-Ravi-Bedian-Dipalpur Canal
Begun 1948; Completed 1956
Canal work in progress near Jallo. Photo shows the students of the M.A.O. College, Lahore, busy with the digging of the canal.
The “Ghazi” Canal
The River Basin & Authoritarian Rule

West Pakistan “must be welded into one unit, and all artificial provincial boundaries removed, regardless of any prejudices to the contrary, which are more the creation of politicians than real. ...Lying as it does in the basin of the Indus river and its tributaries,” West Pakistan’s “future economic development must now be considered as a whole.”

--Gen. Muhammad Ayub Khan, supporting the Creation of “One Unit” in West Pakistan
The Indus Basin Project and WAPDA
Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal
“They [the leaders of Punjab] were laying a death-trap for catching and enslaving the mighty Indus, the world-famous Lion River and for thus desertifying and destroying their century-long adversary, Sindh... After completing the lawless misappropriation of all the waters of all the five Punjab rivers, the Indus tributaries, they straight-away proceeded to loot and plunder the waters of the Indus the last remaining source of the life of the lower riparian Sindh, through the construction of link canals. Ostensibly constructed for conveying only surplus waters of Indus to Punjab canals, [these were] known in Sindh as ‘robber canals’, intensifying the desertification of Sindh which has now reached alarming proportions.”

---Rasul Bux Palijo, Sindhi lawyer & author, 2003
International Day of Action
Against Dams & For Rivers, Water & Life

NO FURTHER CUT ON
RIVER INDUS
No to Kalabagh Dam & No to Greater Thal Canal
Joay Sindh Quami Mahaz

WORLD WATER DAY: Water & Culture
Large Dams Destroy Culture & Civilization.

No Dam - No Cut On River Indus.
MARCH 22, 2006 - HYDERABAD
Sindh National Council (SNC)
Forum for Conflict Resolution (FCR)
State, Nature and Sovereign Authority