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Kashmir

1846-1948

A Century Struggle

The first three years of the thirties of twentieth century form a landmark in the history of modern Kashmir. It was during these years that a growing concern developed among the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir to launch an organised struggle against the Dogra rule. This concern ultimately concretized in the formation of the first ever-known political organisation of Kashmir—All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, on 21st June 1931 by Molvi Yusuf Shah, Molvi Ahmad, Saed Hassan Jalali, Saed-Ud-Din Shawl, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Mistri Yaqoob Ali, Mufti Shuhab-Ud-Din, Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas, Gowhar Rehman, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Ahmad Shah Jalali and others, on 13th July 1931, [since then, 13th July is observed as ‘Martyrs Day’ in Jammu and Kashmir] police firing in Srinagar on agitators, who were protesting against the tyrant rule of Maharaja resulted into more than two dozen deaths.

The centuries of suppression, subjugation and surrender to arbitrary powers forced Kashmiris to seek refuge or voluntarily invite foreigners to rule the land, in some cases, strange regimes were established in connivance with indigenous support, Afghans and Sikhs, who ruled Kashmir, were more savages than other monarchs.

The period from 1752-1819AD is considered among the darkest periods in the history of Kashmir. This was the time when Afghans ruled Kashmir and unleashed a reign of terror on Kashmiri people. Records Tyndale Biscoe —

“It is said during the Afghan rule in Kashmir, the Afghans were in the habit of riding into the Kashmiri houses on their horse-back, stabling their horses in the lower portion and occupying the rest for themselves. The Kashmiris were unable to check these outrages by force. They devised therefore the plan of having so low doors that not only the intruder had to dismount, but also to bow his head on entry. As the Afghans were haughty and no one of them was willing to make obeisance to a local person, they were forced to remain outside.”

However, some historical critiques say that Biscoe didn't mention the source of his statement, it seems to be the result of his observations of people's houses. The construction of houses in Kashmir required the low sized doors and windows for effective protection from harsh winters[!]

There are some reports which reveal that Kashmiri Pandits were harassed by Afghans. Some Afghan rulers earned bad name for their barbarous approach towards Kashmiris.

The Sikh period of Kashmir 1819-1846AD is painted black by several chroniclers because for 21 years, the Jamia Masjid [Grand Mosque of Kashmir] Srinagar faced closure for prayers to which orders were issued by Dewan Moti Ram, the Sikh Governor. Phula Singh, a Sikh commander who is said to have bigoted and communal approach towards Muslims. He tried to destroy Mir Ali Hamadani^{A.R} mosque in Srinagar. Muslim notables knocked at the doors of Birbal Dhar, who interceded on their behalf and saved the mosque from getting destroyed. Kashmiris were heavily taxed in Sikh regime and their governors even continued the practice of forced labour, no matter the seeds were sown much earlier.

The growing abhorrence against the regime would prompt them into inviting another power with the hope that their aspirations would be accommodated in the new step-up. Through this mechanism of politics of invitations they exercised their influence on the affairs of their country and reconciled with what followed under the new invited regime. As a good safety valve for the tensions they built up under an oppressive regime through the faithful servant of Ranjit Singh, this course of action, available in the circumstances, was adequate enough to enable them to shape their attitudes and not to resort to agitations and virulent protests².

On 16th March, 1846, when the British defeated Sikhs and apparently sold Kashmir to Gulab Singh Dogra, the ruler of Jammu, but in real sense gifted to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's patronised servant, as a reward for his treachery against the Sikhs, thus given an employment through an infamous deal called the 'Treaty of Amritsar'.

But the transfer of their land to an upstart by an unrelated power deprived them of the safety-valve rendering them helpless in face of the new developments. The vacuum created by the loss of this opportunity was however filled up with the rising turbulent spirit which was capable of launching agitations from protest from time to time.

The Kashmiris began showing up little fighting spirit when Ghost-ruler, Gulab Singh's name was officially declared as the future Maharaja of Kashmir. They were conscious of the wider implications of the new arrangements for future was likely to land them in deep trouble and bog them down in the quagmire of exploitation to the benefit of the new ruler of whose despicable actions they had enough previous experience. They showed enthusiasm in cooperating with those who were hostile to Gulab Singh and determined to stall his entry in valley by force. And when the Dogras appeared on the Kashmir soil the people raised in unison, under the leadership of Imam-Ud- Din. The entire lot of Kashmiris left their homes and hearths to join the agitators, comprising the manufactures, the merchants, the hill chiefs and the regular forces to challenge the legitimacy of the Dogra regime whom the British (unconcerned power) has given the mandate to rule Kashmir; a crucial and ubiquitous factor in Kashmir's history which was bound to deprive the people of their control on the means of production,

livelihood and subject them to the new forces of coercion and extortions . They fought neck-to-neck till they were suppressed by the British Armed intervention. The Kashmir army too was quelled through threats carried out by British: intimidating them into doing what they wanted⁵.

The failure of the Kashmiris did not, however, dampen their hurly –burly attitude, it continued to deteriorate the supreme of their life throughout Dogra Regime and gave a clear cut notion to British of what the Kashmiris required at that juncture as a new dispensation. As a result, the British sought an undertaking from Gulab Singh that he would:

- a. Dispose of the produce of Kashmir, received as revenue, at a fixed rate;
- b. Collect custom duties only at specific places;
- c. Treat his subjects equally
- d. Guarantee religious freedom to Muslims;
- e. Give fair treatment to Hill Chiefs and Khakhas and Bombas
- f. Pay eight (8) Kashmiri rupees monthly to each soldier as emolument
- g. Not increase the revenue
- h. Pay 2 annas to each, engaged in Begaar⁶, as remuneration.

But ignoring all this he also charged an *ad valorem* duty of 25% on each shawl. Besides this , his officials charged their illegal extortions, which also amounted to 25% of the cost . In the face of such oppression, the workers started fleeing the valley. Gulab Singh imposed tax on every shop @ Rs 120 per annum and for new shops @ Rs 60 per annum.

Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the tyrannical acts of unjust taxation and extortion. He had taxed heavily it is true, but he sucked the life blood of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom, on the work of men's hands. But he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers.

The shawl weavers were forced to prepare' gaily coloured shawls , the threads of which were not the only ones woven on the loom to their completion , threads of life , more costly than the softest Pashm, whose price would be demanded by heaven , yet were spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering', Nothing but death could release them from the Maharaja's bondage', since the discharge of a shawl-baf would reduce the Maharaja's revenue by 36 Chilkees a year, besides extortion.

On 6th June 1847, about 4,000 shawl-bafs managed to flee the valley for Punjab to escape the horror of horrors ; forcible extortions ; ruinous taxation; cumbersome administrative procedures ; compulsory weaving; dolorous wage system; begaar into which even their children were conscripted. Fraught with the consequences of inflicting a severe blow to the shawl industry, the real goose that laid the golden eggs, this unhealthy trend disturbed him a lot. To prevent the growing emigration of the Shawl –bafs, and, thereby, save the inevitable doom of the Industry, he introduced Rehdari system; ordering his troops to plug all the escape routes and passes. Thus, stranded in whirlpool of unprecedented oppression, that hapless Shawl- bafs began straining at the leash to escape weaving. To them no other course seemed as a welcome relief from their suffering than to peel off their thumbs. A choice that disabled them pursuing weaving but with a bounden duty to keep the trade going by providing a substitute⁴.

A British official, Lt. Reynell Taylor, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore was deputed to Srinagar to investigate the grievances of Muslims. He was accompanied by another British officer, Mr. Melvin. According to Syed Hassan Shah, soon after his arrival, a meeting of the Muslims of Srinagar was convened at the Maisuma Maidan on 21st June 1847. After addressing the meeting, Taylor enquired whether they were well-governed and whether they wanted Gulab Singh's rule to continue. Gulab Singh and his officers had taken care to bribe a few leading Muslims. According to Mr. Bamzai, Pandit Raj Kak Dhar, the son of Pandit Birbal Dhar, an active collaborator of Sikhs had worked very hard and the result of these efforts and precautions were that the people present in the meeting told Mr. Taylor that they were satisfied with the Dogra rule. However, it seems that despite efforts to prevent Muslims from attending the meeting in strength, there was no dearth of courageous individuals who were prepared to speak out the truth. Taylor himself records that the following questions were asked in the meeting:

- 1) Whether the British Government were the heirs to Kashmir?
- 2) Whether the two officers had full powers to do whatever they liked?
- 3) Whether in the case of complaints, they were to interfere authoritatively to procure redress or were just to intercede?

- 4) Whether they could guarantee the subsequent safety of those who came forward with substantial complaints.

Taylor had nothing positive to offer and did not even guarantee the safety of those who were prepared to speak out the truth. It is better to keep his own narrative, what he told them in reply:

"The Maharaja was king of the country and likely to remain so; that we could do nothing but recommend and intercede etc.; but that I believed our advice would meet with attention."

He succeeded in persuading the Maharaja to dismiss Diwan Karam Chand. He cites an instance which shows the state of maladministration, insecurity and army excesses. Two Dogra soldiers who were travelling in the countryside joined a civilian who was also travelling in the same direction; as soon as they were sufficiently out of town, they drew a blanket on his head to overpower him easily, gagged his mouth, killed him on the spot and ran away with his belongings. Taylor apprehended them and put them to death⁵.

On the whole, the people starved and it aroused misgivings in the minds of British Government about the internal administration of Gulab Singh and Lord Hardinge asked the Maharaja in 1848 to effect necessary improvements in his administration and demanded⁶:

1. Reduction in taxes, Baaj, Nazrana, Extortion
2. Fixation of wages
3. Establishment of rule of law
4. The introduction of new regulations for the reorganisation of Shawl industry.

The Maharaja had played a hoax on the Shawl-bafs became amply known to them after they resumed their work. Things continued as they were before; not allowing them to even eke out an existence in face of their ever increasing bondage. The other Kashmiris were equally suffering from years of want; there was no one to have pity for the straining millions. Following the tradition of his father, the new Maharaja [succeeded by Ranbir Singh in 1857, after the death of Gulab Singh], exploited them to the full aggravating their economic ruin beyond imaginable proportions. He did not even hesitate to get hundreds of famine stricken Kashmiris drowned in the Wullar (Lake) for which inhuman act he was, subsequently, exonerated because no Kashmiri dared to come

forward and give evidence. As a consequence started in the migration march towards Lahore in violation of Rehdari, and a good number of Kashmiris succeeded in getting past the passes by withstanding into extreme atrocities, committed by the solders, and by bribing the guards⁷.

Gilghit rose up in arms under the banner of Gowhar Aman and Chilasis started their raids into the territories of Maharaja. In 1852 a powerful force was despatched to the frontier under Dewan Hari Chand. But he suffered a cursing defeat at the hands of the Chilasis and over 1500 Dogra Soldiers died in this campaign. By the end of 1852, the Dogras were expelled from all parts of Dardistan and Gilghit, which went out of their hands. In one of this enthusiastic letters he asked for a life size statue of the queen of England, he was told that his services have cemented the bonds of friendship between him and the British. On his father's death, he was told that nothing could change the friendship and mutual trust which existed in the days of Gulab Singh. What were the motives which led Ranbir Singh to show so much submissiveness to the British? The answer lies in the fact that he wanted to prepare ground for his '*leap forward policy*' towards the north. He wanted to regain what his father had lost in Gilghit and Dardistan and something more beyond the Pamirs. It may be recorded here that the British having consolidated their position, successfully suppressed all oppositions, while on other side, could not support the Maharaja in his wild adventure beyond the Pamirs⁸.

A conspiracy to assassinate Ranbir Singh was detected in 1859 involving Mian Huttoo Singh, an illegitimate son of Gulab Singh, with seven other officers of the Dogra Army. Mian Huttoo was joined by Jowhar Singh and Mohan Singh. The ring leaders were arrested and hanged. The times of India, while commenting on the incident wrote:

The present ruler of Cashmere is not liked by his troops and is said to have sufficient of the devil in him, to keep them and his subjects in general, in good order⁹.

In April 1865 the people agitated against the atrocities before the officials. Shawl workers took the lead and it was unique and organised rising. On the historic day of April 29th, 1865, the worker joined the struggle to obtain their demands. It was perhaps the 1st organised Demand Day in the history of class

struggle in India. Workers from all parts of the city, marched in procession towards Zaldagar, Srinagar. They raised slogans and burnt the effigy of Raja Kak Dhar, he was not only the Daroga of the Shawl department but also worked as contractor, and taken a contract from the ruler and was personally interested to suck more blood from the shawl workers. Dewan Kripa Ram, who was the governor of Kashmir at that time, decided to crush the uprising ruthlessly. The Dogra forces at Srinagar were sent under the command of Col. Bajay Singh to deal with the procession. The workers were surrounded and then charged with guns and spears. After some deaths, the procession ran towards the bridge Haji Rather and most of them fell into marshy canal and got drowned. Hundreds of worker suffered minor and major injuries and at least 28 dead bodies were returned to the people by the army. These inconspicuous martyrs played an important role as pioneers and forerunners of the freedom struggle.

As soon as the Maharaja received the information about the agitation, he ordered that the rebels be dealt with severely. He desired that the dead bodies afloat the water be buried secretly. The Maharaja also desired that as directed earlier, punitive fines be imposed on workers Patwaris and others, who had taken part in the agitation, he further desired that punitive fines be realised from all the agitators and their leaders be arrested and punished. The agitation was suppressed ruthlessly. Its leaders that is Sheik Rasool, Abli Baba, Quda- Lala and Sona Shah were arrested and brought to the Shergarhi Palace and beaten mercilessly and strapped. They were thrown in a Dungeon. Shaikh Rasool and Abli Baba died of these atrocities. In the meanwhile, a heavy fine of Rs 50,000/ each was imposed on all leaders. And when it came to light that they were poor, it was proposed to reduce to Rs 25,000 in each case. But the Maharaja did not agree to this remission, for he wanted to make it a test case and example for his subjects. The other two leaders were sent to Jammu to be imprisoned in the Bahu Fort. Besides, the above, hundreds of agitators were arrested and imprisoned in the prison of Habak. Most of them died of cold and starvation. Pt. Raj Kak Dhar was the main conspirator, instigator and supporter of Maharaja in ruthless dealing with the shawl-bafs, even some Pandits helped government in the arrest of Muslim shawl workers and their relatives. The government of British India deputed some officers to

enquire into these atrocities, but could not sympathise with the miseries of the people. After all they had themselves suppressed an uprising of 1857 mutiny, in which the Dogras had whole heartedly supported Britishers, and they could in no case encourage such movements in the native state¹⁰.

In the bitter and despairing mood, the shawl-bafs made a wooden bier, such as the Muslims use to carry their dead to the place of interment. Placing a cloth over the coffin, they the procession, exclaiming; Raj Kak is dead, who will give him grave? The house of the individual thus honoured overlooked the maiden, and the whole proceeding was apparent enough to him. He went to the governor Diwan Kirpa Ram, who gave him some 300 to 500 sepoy with whom he proceeded to the maiden. The shawl-bafs fled at the approach of an armed force, and in the crowding and hurry of their flight some five or six were drowned in the waters of the canal. The affair was reported to Jammu but no enquiry appear to have been made at the time, about a month and a half afterwards, Raj Kak did really die with unenviable feelings, one can fancy and the shawl-bafs were left to purchase at the reduced rates in peace. The restrictions as to quantity, however, remained unchanged, until by the decree of the 1st December 1867, the boon of permission to purchase eleven Kharwars of Shali yearly was granted to the family of each shawl-baf¹¹. After the death of Ranbir Singh, Pratap Singh became ruler in 1885.

A whole concept of awakening was up in the minds of Kashmiri and infusing them with a spirit of recalcitrance in 20th century, when various Anjumans had come into being under the influence of newly founded Mission Schools, Hospitals, Post and Telegraph system and most importantly opening of Jhelum Valley Cart Road, bringing people closer to the ideas that were shaping the attitudes of common people against British colonialism, when Western political concepts were gradually seizing the imagination of the Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, but imperceptibly, gaining tremendous confidence as a result of the achievement of their ambition through their campaign for mulki rights¹².

This consciousness, no doubt, symbolized a fragmented view of the society, but its common factor was the growing popular discontent with the policies of Dogra regime; a composite formation that embodied the nascent agitation attitude in the matrix of a broader political culture. But the

shadow of rather too parochial mulki objective obscured the prospects of achieving requisite social solidarity to form a joint alliance against their common foe, irrespective of creed, colour, race and religion. It obtruded its ugly horns to put a real damper on the growing expectations of communal cohesion, and exposed what was cunningly concealed in mulki demand.

The Pandits wanted a share in State's higher services which were practically reserved for non-Kashmiris. In the name of general masses, they raised a hue and cry against the employment policy of the government and continued to grumble till their sectarian [Mulki] rights were recognised and the doors of the State's higher services thrown open for them. While substantiating this, one of the most prominent Pandit leaders and prolific writers of the times, P.N Bazaz writes:

Kashmiri Pandits demanded a change in the policy of Government. In the name of the people of Kashmir they protested against discrimination and unfair treatment¹³.

But while they spoke in the name of the people what they demanded was not for the benefit of the masses and the lower strata of the society, but for themselves. They wanted a share in the State services.

The successful culmination of their mulki[country] demand and the resultant absorption of their young men in the State services changed them into good propagandists for the Dogra regime; the staunch defenders of the autocratic Hindu rule and saboteurs of the Muslim aspirations. It resulted in their assimilation to the tradition of the exploiter; making them his[Maharaja's] real good stooges to inspire obedience.

It was no wonder, therefore, that they got a good return on their investment. Responsive to the wishes of its adulators and sycophants, the regime extended full patronage to the Pandits by giving them power to satiate their gluttonous appetite for economic comforts; converting them into parasites with souls made of money; and with a mindset whose sole aim was personal aggrandizement.¹⁴

Kashmiri Pandits launched 'Roti Movement' for the security of their bread, they suspected that the Dogra ruler of brushing aside and ignoring the Pandits and preferring the Punjabi Hindus over them, so they started the movement.

Sir Walter Lawrence writes:

.... [Sic]..... Kashmiri Pandits had a power and authority, and Muslims..... were forced to work to keep the idle Brahmans in comfort.

Thus the Kashmiri Pandits gained ample economic stability , political power and social status which, subsequently , so enhanced their influence that they could easily subvert any attempt aimed at reducing their subsidies and concessions or granting the same rights to Muslims.

The secret of the cheap shali [was] because if the prices were allowed to rise to its proper level the whole body of Pandits would compel the palaces to yield to their demands¹⁵.

The Pandits had a right to be well fed whether there[was] famine or not at two chilki rupees a Kharwar¹⁶.

..[sic]...The cultivator [was] considered to have rights neither to his land nor to his crops¹⁷.

Thus, the Kashmir history was slowly preparing the ground for new political experiments. It was, by degrees, melting into newer scenes. And by 1924 A.D, the feelings of both communal and class consciousness had become too visible to propel the Kashmiris along the road of agitation . Some spark had to ignite the crises ; it was the meagre wages of the workmen of the State owned Silk factoryⁱⁱ.

The pressure was multiplied by a phenomenal growth in its profits which had gone up to 25 lakh of rupees a year. The management , comprising Pandits , was in no mood to enhance the wages which were mere four and a half annas per head per day , a portion of which was pocketed by it for itself.

The increasing profits of the Factory fully justified the workers demand for a revision of wages . But the management turned down the demand on one pretext or the other, and tried to reduce workmen to silence by employing the routine business methods which they refused to abide by. The management ignored the demand.

It was, however, a tactical error of the management to calculate the demand as insignificant and to ignore it altogether. A blunt refusal to discuss the issue was even more annoying. The official arrogance so enraged the workmen ,

who came mostly from the suburbs of Srinagar, that they decided to go on all-out strike¹⁸.

The uncontrolled and unprecedented transgression and violation of human rights and social equilibrium paved the way for cracks to develop in the traditional ethos of Kashmir which manifested themselves in an unbridgeable gulf between the two sides of its population ; one represented by less than 01% richly rewarded parasites and idle comfort-seekers and the other by over 99% poverty afflicted procedures of wealth . disturbing psychologically and emotionally the externally quiet masses —the undefended cultivators, unprotected workmen , the impoverished weavers and unemployed youth—the situation was volatile enough to reinforce the public hatred for the enslaving bureaucracy , and for the disreputable political methods of the Pandit community.

Not realising the dimension of the growing labour unrest , the Government failed to conceive that the workmen would observe strike which even the people could not believe was possible .The unrest assumed a new proportion . The workmen's misery had by now crossed the limit. Frustration was writ large on their faces. The Factory premises presented a scene of turbulent emotions. The entire work came to a standstill.

The workmen “assumed a defiant and threatening attitude and refused to work and to carry out the orders of the Director . They went to appoint their own officers from among their ranks¹⁹ .It was the critical juncture that the government started sensing trouble and decided to act. 25 of 27 labour leaders were arrested on the charges of fomenting trouble in the Factory²⁰.

This action was even more provocative to light the fire of upsurge .The workmen now took out a procession in which even the children participated. They openly attacked the Government by chanting Amma Baba's revolutionary song and by waving banners displaying anti-establishment feelings. A big crowd of 2000 proceeded towards Shergarhi where they tried in vain to enter the police station. However, they declined to leave until their leaders were not released²¹ . The sheer magnitude of the resistance so completely unnerved the authorities that they deployed both infantry and cavalry to suppress it with violence . Still, the agitators were in no mood to yield. They continued defending their position against the disreputable business methods of an

unreliable management ; forcing it to increase their wages , though minutely²².

Hitting the entire city unprecedentedly, this labour unrest was an epoch – masking event in the evolution of organised opposition to the Dogra rule, it became a collective social action by gaining a large number of supporters for the workmen's cause and inspired the unemployed skilled labour, the weavers , the papier-mâché artists and the educated unemployed Muslim youth to join hands with the agitators²³. Even some religious organisations extended their full support to the movement²⁴. And the volunteers of *Anjuman-e-Hamdan-i- Islam* participated in the procession , demonstrations and protest meetings organised by the Anjuman was forced by Government to leave the State territories²⁵. But whether Anjuman, if at all it physically existed was most insignificant and not with consideration, even some historians contend and say that Bazaz is mistaken here²⁶. The State Silk Factory strike , thus, brought the conditions of the Kashmiri Muslims into focus and encouraged many prominent members of the community to present a memorandum to Viceroy of India , Lord Reading , when he visited Srinagar in October 1924 A D. The Memorandum outlined their grievances and a catalogue of reform; a strategy that became the core of their political thinking and social action henceforth²⁷.

The events of the First War of Indian Independence—1857 [mutiny] forced the British colonialists to suspend their policy of annexing “indigenous regimes” in India. British imperialism adopted a new policy of forcing indigenous rulers to submit their sovereignties to the British Raj by making submissive agreements and then to maintain them. Previously, these submissive agreements with ancient countries in India had been made only to annex them when favourable situation arose. After the First War of Indian Independence, these submissive agreements with 565 states were almost maintained by the British imperialism till 1947.

The area of India consisting of these 565 states is known as Princely States India or States India having some very small states and some very big states like Junagarh, Hyderabad and Kashmir. States India consisted of one third of all India and one fourth of its total population. The Indian Independent Movement in States India developed on two levels: on the Indian states level and on the Indian States people's level.

On the Indian States level, the States rulers represented the Indian Independent Movement in States India. During the Round Table Conference held in London from 12th November 1930 to 19th January 1931, 57 representatives from British India represented British India and 7 representatives from States India represented States India. On the Indian States people's level, the All India States People's Conference was, on the behalf of the hundreds of Indian States, encouraging direct political dealing between the States India and the British Raj.

The policy of annexing “indigenous regimes” that was suspended after the First War of Indian Independence was fully put into operation again after 90 years. Fraud, deception and military aggression were the means of the British colonialists to eliminate and destroy States India completely from the map of India. The Kashmir case presents an example of this barbarous act of British colonialism in annexing States India.

So, the first three years of the thirties of twentieth century form a landmark in the history of modern Kashmir. It was during these years that a growing concern developed among the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir to launch an organised struggle against the Dogra rule. This concern ultimately concretized in the formation of the first ever-known political organisation of Kashmir—All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, on 21st June 1931 by Molvi Yusuf Shah, Molvi Ahmad, Saed Hassan Jalali, Saed-Ud-Din Shawl, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Mistri Yaqoob Ali, Mufti Shuhab-Ud-Din, Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas, Gowhar Rehman, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Ahmad Shah Jalali and others, on 13th July 1931, [since then, 13th July is observed as ‘Martyrs Day’ in Jammu and Kashmir] police firing in Srinagarⁱⁱⁱ on agitators, who were protesting against the tyrant rule of Maharaja resulted into more than two dozen deaths.

Glancy commission's report which had been established to inquire into grievances of the Muslim and the uprising that broke out in the country in 1931. The issue of Pather Masjid also made a broad base for the political mobilisation of the newly formed Muslim conference. In the end the Dogra rulers realised the significance of the agitation around the Pather Masjid that it had to return the mosque to the Muslim community as per the Glancy commission's recommendation. This success gave boost to morale of Muslim

community and made them bolder in their demands. In 1932, the Mosque (Masjid) of Dara Shikoh was returned to the Muslims. Thus archaeological protests became one of the source for Muslims of Kashmir for raising their voice against the denial of their social, political and economic rights. And in January 1932 Civil Disobedience movement was launched by Muslim Conference²⁸.

On 11th June 1939, Sunday, Muslim Conference was officially converted into National Conference, in this regard, a move was taken earlier in 1938, by the active persuasion of Pt.P.N Bazaz. Later on, All India States People's Conference was a political organisation of States India and its first session was held in Bombay (Mumbai). Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the head of Kashmir's National Conference was also Vice-President of the All India States People's Conference on the eve of the transfer of the political power and prison houses of the Indian nations in 1947. The All India States People's Conference was struggling to secure the collective independence of States India from the British Raj. However, the British imperialism had its own designs against States of India to protect its imperialist interest in India and the interests of the ruling classes of India and Pakistan.

When partition of British India was high on cards, Kashmir became the bone of contention between the two newly expected dominions, India and Pakistan.

Kashmir is generally used to denote the borders of the princely state of Kashmir which, since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, now spans three countries, India, Pakistan and China. Kashmir as a greater term comprises several sub-regions, each with varying and different cultures.

[So], Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General of undivided India, visited Kashmir in June, 1947 and had talks with the Maharaja. His was a three days' visit. The first two days were devoted to trout-fishing by His Highness [Maharaja Hari Singh] and His Excellency [Lord Mountbatten]. From the chats in the car and talks at social functions during these two days, The Maharaja sensed, rightly or wrongly, that the object of the visit was to ask him to accede to Pakistan. As [Maharaja] had no intention of obliging His Excellency [Lord Mountbatten], he [Maharaja] wanted to avoid the formal official

interview between him and Lord Mountbatten fixed for third day. Lord Mountbatten was informed that His Highness [Maharaja] had severe colic. the interview could not be held , with the result that Lord Mountbatten failed in his mission of persuading the Maharaja to his own views on the question of accession . He returned to Delhi very much disappointed²⁹.

As earlier as June 1947, Poonch disputes assumed a low profile militant and separatist character. The Maharaja's armed forces responded with tremendous brutality. Thus Kashmir dispute dates back to the partition of British India when two Independent states of India and Pakistan emerged as separate dominions in August 1947, at the time, 562 princely states under British suzerainty but not directly ruled by the British Government opted for joining either Pakistan or India. However, Kashmir remained a different case.³⁰

The newborn states of Pakistan and India are fighting an endless war to claim over Kashmir. Both countries claiming peace as their byword never realise the fact that the right to rule belongs to the sons of the soil. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the ruler was Hindu while the population was overwhelmingly Muslim, waited for the decision to join India or Pakistan. M. K. Gandhi's three-day visit to Kashmir in August 1947— early days of first week— although described by him as apolitical and to fulfill the promise made by him in 1919 to Maharaja Pratab Singh at Kumbh Mela, soon after Gandhi's departure Maharaja Hari Singh replaced R.C. Kak^{iv} with Mehr Chand Mahajan under the influence of Guru Sant Dev, who had developed convivial relations with M.K Gandhi [Mahatma Gandhi].³¹

It is axiomatic that the State of Jammu and Kashmir became an independent State as soon as it was released from its allegiance to British Crown under the Indian Independence Act. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir became the repository of all power under this Act which created the two Dominions of India and Pakistan. The maharaja was free to decide whether he would accede to anyone of two Dominions. It has been argued that legally the rulers could remain Independent. A few of the States toyed with this idea for some time. The Maharaja of Kashmir and his advisors from some of politically conscious groups in the State would have been happy if such a consummation had taken

place. They entertained dreams of an independent Kashmir, a Switzerland in Asia³².

On the other hand there are references that Lord Mountbatten had been advising the Maharaja not to accede to anyone of the two dominions without ascertaining the wishes of his subjects by referendum, plebiscite, election or by representative public meetings. This was in curious contrast with the advice which he was offering to the Nizam. Naturally the Maharaja could not but watch with interest developments in Hyderabad. This made him delay matters.

³³

So far as Pakistan's stand on the concept of Independence to Jammu & Kashmir State, the policy statements of June 16, July 11 and July 30, 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the President of Muslim League had declared that Indian Princely states had every right to declare complete Independence in addition to their right to join India or Pakistan. His [Jinnah's] statement issued on July 11, 1947 said:

"I have clearly made it clear more than once that the Indian States are free to join either the Pakistan Constituent Assembly or Indian Constituent Assembly or remain Independent. I have no doubt that the Maharaja and the Kashmir government will give their closest attention and consideration to his matter and realize that interests not only of the ruler but also of his people."³⁴

Maharaja Hari Singh hoped to keep Kashmir Independent, offering a "*standstill agreement*" for trade, communications, and other normal affairs between Kashmir, India, and Pakistan, as in the British Raj. On Tuesday, 12th August 1947 Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir decided to negotiate a standstill agreement with India & Pakistan. Government of India sent a telegram for Maharaja or his representative to visit Delhi for discussions. Whereas 'Stand Still' agreement was signed with Pakistan on Saturday, 16th August 1947, with regard to State's postal services, railways and communications and was expecting similar kind of agreement with India.— thus Pakistan in a sense accepted the Sovereignty of Kashmir. Already, on Friday, 15th August [1947] post offices in J&K hoisted the Pakistani flags.

On Monday, 18th August 1947 a controversy came into light when Sir Cyril Radcliffe awarded a portion of Muslim majority Gurdaspur district to India causing fundamental differences in J&K's geopolitical situation³⁵.

[Earlier], with considerable difficulty, [Lord Mountbatten] extracted from India's political leaders Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru a pledge to accept a decision by Kashmir's Hindu Maharaja, Hari Singh to join his state to Pakistan. (Under the terms governing the transfer of power, the rulers of India's princely states were to accede to the dominion either to India or of Pakistan, taking into account the desires of the majority of their populations.)... [...sic...]...

'Hari Singh, 'he told the prince, 'you've got to listen to me. I have come up here with the full authority of the government of the future dominion of India to tell you that if you decide to accede to Pakistan because the majority of your population is Moslem [Muslim], they will understand and support you.'

Singh refused. He told Mountbatten he wanted to become the head of an Independent nation. The Viceroy, who considered Singh 'a bloody fool', replied: 'You just can't be independent. You're oversized and under populated. Your attitude is bound to lead to strife between India and Pakistan. You're going to have two countries at daggers drawn for your neighbours. You'll end up becoming a battlefield, that's what will happen. You'll lose your throne and your life, too, if you're not careful.'³⁶

A delegation of NC working committee which include Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq visited Pak, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, leader of Pakistan told them that if they [Kashmiris] want Independence, Pakistan will support it and will not even allow a single tourist to visit Kashmir unless permitted by administration [Independent Kashmir], and went to the extent for signing a blank paper and fix and decide the terms yourself, narrator giving a mention of Syed Mir Qasim.³⁷

Pakistan was authorised to operate Kashmir posts and telegraph department. Pakistan was also obliged to supply food stuffs and other necessary items under the agreement, but India intriguingly pressed for Kashmir's incorporation into India.

On Monday, 25th of August, 1947, a letter from Maharani of Kashmir through a special messenger, Captain Harnam Singh to Mehr Chand Mahajan for interview with Maharaja Hari Singh for the implementation and necessary action in lieu of discussion [with regards to Prime Minister of Kashmir] held in Flatti's Hotel at Lahore, to which Mahajan replied on Monday, 1st September 1947 and on Sunday, 7th September another letter was shot by Maharani, so, on Wednesday, 10th September, Mahajan left Dharamsala for Jammu and due to heavy rains he reached Srinagar on Friday, 12th of September 1947.

At the same time Maharaja had to face a powerful national movement and there had been demands for autonomy in Gilgit, Baltistan, Hunza, and Nagar regions, autonomous vassals of Jammu Kashmir, since the mid-nineteenth Century.³⁸

Negotiations were then going on between Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla[h] and Maharaja through Ram Lal Batra, who was the Deputy Prime Minister and General Janak Singh who was officiating as Prime Minister. Shaikh Abdulla[h] was in poor health in jail and altered situation of the country, the Maharaja was considering whether he should be released. The Maharaja's advisors wanted a letter of apology and a letter of pledging loyalty to the Maharaja from Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla[h]. He was half willing to give such a qualified and guarded undertaking as would not affect his leadership later on. When the Maharaja consulted me [Mahajan], I [Mahajan] said if a political leader is to be released, [Abdullah] should be released without any condition³⁹.

.... [Sic] an Englishman was helping Kak, the ex Prime Minister of the State in getting away from Srinagar to India. It is said that he took him in his car to the aerodrome and was about to put him on board the airliner when an officer appointed by Maharaja at the aerodrome gave this news to the palace with the result that the flight of the plane in which R.C Kak was to be evacuated was cancelled. R.C Kak, therefore, could not get away from Kashmir as he desired⁴⁰.

On 18th September, 1947, M.C Mahajan accepted the offer of Maharaja to be the Prime Minister of Kashmir.

[M.C Mahajan in Delhi] was advised to see Mahatma Gandhi and [he] went to pay [his] respects to him. [He] had an hour's talk with him. He said that he

had no desire to liquidate the Maharaja or to do any harm to him and that if possible this state should accede to India and that the administration should have a democratic setup⁴¹.

By mid or late September 1947, there was a large scale armed uprising in Poonch, led by Muhammad Ibrahim with a view that the Maharaja of Kashmir had no right to call in the Indian Army, because it held that the Maharaja of Kashmir was not a hereditary ruler, that he was merely a British appointed employee.

On 1st October 1947, Wednesday, while addressing a public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said, "Till the last drop of my blood, I will not believe in two-nation theory." On 2nd October, the Working Committee of the National Conference met under Abdullah's presidency and decided to support accession to India.

On midnight of 10th October, 1947 when [M.C Mahajan in Amritsar] had retired to bed an urgent telephone call came from Sardar Patel asking [him] why [he] was not proceeding to Srinagar and telling [him] that [he] should do so as once. [He] told him that [he] had received no orders from the Governor either about [his] leave or about the permission to serve elsewhere. It seems that Sardar Patel immediately rang up the Governor asking [him] to come immediately to Delhi in the plane of Lady Mountbatten who was in Amritsar that day. During the early hours of the morning, a telephone message came from the Governor granting [him] eight months' leave with permission to take up employment in the state with effect from 10th October and followed by a telegram⁴².

M.C Mahajan reached Delhi on 11th of October, 1947 in the plane from Amritsar in which Lady Mountbatten was travelling, there Mahajan called on Sardar Patel, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Mountbatten. Mahajan had an hour's talk with Lord Mountbatten. He very clearly told Mahajan that his position was unenviable and that he did not know what advice he should give to Maharaja. Mountbatten resented Maharaja's attitude to Mahajan when he had visited the State earlier as the Maharaja had refused to meet him for discussing the question of accession. Mahajan guessed that

Mountbatten's view was that Kashmir had no alternative but to accede Pakistan, though Mountbatten said that as Governor General of India he would be very happy if Mahajan advised the Maharaja to accede India. Mountbatten asked Mahajan to see V. P Menon in whom he had great confidence, he asked his A.D.C to take Mahajan to Menon, whom Mahajan found in the company with Shyamprasad Mukerjee, and both of them advised Mahajan to bring about the accession of the State to India anyhow⁴³.

On 13th or 14th of October, 1947[in Srinagar] Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah and Begum Abdullah sought an interview with Maharaja Hari Singh. They were duly received at the palace and were presented to Maharaja with palace formalities. Shaikh Abdullah had desired an interview with Maharaja alone[sic].... The burden of the talk was that [Maharaja] should trust him and handover administration of the State to him. He would then behave like a dutiful son and a loyal subject. Though [Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah] was swearing allegiance and loyalty to Maharaja, he desired that the Maharaja should only remain constitutional ruler and real power should be delegated to him⁴⁴.

M.C Mahajan before taking formally oath of office on 15th October, 1947, he had apprised himself of the political situation in the State. The leaders of the Muslim Conference and some influential divines in the State were keen that Maharaja should accede to Pakistan. They have conveyed the wishes to him in various ways. Mahajan had a talk with some of them. Without hesitation they told Mahajan the he should advise Maharaja to accede to Pakistan and if that was done, they would always remain loyal to him and would see that that Maharaja remained an independent ruler inside the Pakistan State⁴⁵.

From the economic point of view the position [of Pakistan] was equally clear. [Pakistan's] agricultural economy was [is] dependent particularly upon the rivers coming out of Kashmir. The Mangla Headwork[s] were actually in Kashmir and the Marala Headwork[s] were within a mile or so of the border. What then would be our [Pakistani] position if Kashmir was to be in Indian hands? Similarly, the economy of Kashmir itself was inevitably linked with Pakistan because her only trade route, which remained open throughout year and which carried almost her entire trade, was the road coming into Pakistan at

Kohala and Muzaffarabad. The major portion of Kashmir's timber, her main source of income, went by the river Jhelum to Pakistan.⁴⁶

It's, [Major Akbar Khan], who wrote out a plan under the title 'Armed Revolt inside Kashmir'. As open interference or aggression by Pakistan was obviously undesirable, it was proposed that [Pakistani] efforts should be concentrated upon strengthening the Kashmiris themselves internally—and at the same time taking steps to prevent the arrival of armed civilians or military assistance from India into Kashmir. The Maharaja's Army was said to be about 9,000 strong of which 2,000 or so Muslims could be expected to remain comparatively passive or even to desert if all went well. The 7,000 were believed to be widely scattered and could be overcome by the Kashmiri people little by little. But it would be essential to ensure that the Maharaja was not reinforced from India, and, therefore, the routes by which such reinforcements could come would have to be blocked.⁴⁷

I cannot say exactly when it was decided that an attack by tribesmen should be carried out in the manner that it was. I had however, been hearing that Khurshid Anwar was gathering a lashkar of tribesmen. At the time of the Tribal attack, India also received information from our side as apparently, according to "Mission with Mountbatten", the Commander-in-Chief India received a telegram on 20th October from GHQ Pakistan Army, stating that some 5,000 tribesmen had attacked and captured Muzaffarabad and Domel.⁴⁸

The tribesmen of North-West Frontier Province stirred up the movement. The raiders who numbered about 20,000 crossed the border and smuggled arms into Kashmir. They, along with the Muslim army deserters from the state forces and retired army men, came to help rouse the peasantry of Poonch. Indeed around 60,000 Poonchis and other 'hill men' had served in the British Indian Army during the World War II. There were also rumours of the Pakistan Army's assisting to the 'Provisional Government' of North Frontier Province in such raids.⁴⁹

As even Shaikh Abdullah was putting the blame on the Maharaja, it seem[ed] that the latter could not bring himself to accede to India, and he was unable to find any real excuse for inviting Indian assistance. But then,

suddenly at this stage, the whole situation was radically altered by the entry of Frontier tribesmen into Kashmir on 23rd of October. This event was of such significance that it led to the accession of the State to India within four days.⁵⁰

[While as, on the hand, the] activities [of warriors in Poonch and its allied areas] grew into a full-scale revolt against the Dogra rule, on 20th -22nd October 1947 took control of Muzaffarabad side and culminated in the form of the 'liberation' of an area in western Jammu and Kashmir and proclaimed the independent 'Azad' Kashmir on 24th October 1947, some Kashmiri leaders which include G.N Gilkar[the founder president of Azad Kashmir Government]and several others played an important role for its establishment.

The tribesmen from North West Frontier Province descended on Baramullah, only 30 miles from Srinagar on October 22-24, and opened up Gulmarg front.

The (tribal) leaders completely lost control over their men; an orgy of killing was the result. This was certainly the case at St. Joseph's College, Convent and Hospital, the site of what was to become one of the most publicised incidents of the entire Kashmir conflict. Here nuns, priests and congregation, including patients in the hospital, were slaughtered; and at the same time a small number of Europeans, notably Lt. Colonel D.O. Dykes and his wife, an Englishwoman preparing to leave the hospital that day with her new-born baby, Mother Teresalina, a twenty-nine-year-old Spanish nun who had been in Baramulla only a few weeks, as well as Mother Aldertrude, the Assistant Mother Superior, and one Mr. Jose Barretto, husband of the doctor, met their deaths at tribal hands⁵¹.

In the backdrop of the revolt, the 'hill men' [raiders] besieged Kotli for nearly a month and Poonch for half month, killing many non-Muslims ruthlessly. They particularly made 'a practice of killing the leading banias (shopkeepers)...[sic]⁵².

The first news of the tribal invasion of Kashmir reached New Delhi more than 48 hours after Sairab Khayat [Hayat] Khan's advance guard had seized its key bridge over the Jhelum River [Kohala] .The Indian Government received it, not in a despairing communication from the Maharaja, but through a channel as

remarkable as it was unorthodox. Along the principal of the Punjab's exodus, above the road where for eight weeks the wretched millions had fled, suspended from the poles on which the bloated vultures still perched, was a telephone line linking India and Pakistan. Thanks to that line it was still possible for Rawalpindi 1704 to call a number which might have been a world away, New Delhi 3017. Those were the private numbers of the Commander-in-Chief of Pakistani and Indian Armies. They were close friends former comrades in the old Indian Army.

Just before five o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, 24th October, Major General Douglas Gracey, replacing General Messervy who'd been sent to London, got his first intimation of what had happened in Kashmir through a secret intelligence report. It gave the raiders' strength, armament and their location. Gracey did not hesitate. He immediately went to the private phone in Messervy's quarters and communicated that precious information to the last man Jinnah would have wanted to get it, the man who commanded the only force which could deny Kashmir to the raiders, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army⁵³.

Lt. -Gen. Sir Rob Lockhart, a Scot and a Sandhurst classmate of Gracey's, was stunned by his friend's report. He in turn communicated it to two more people, both of them English: the governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, and filed Field-Marshal Auchinleck.

The dialogue initiated by Gracey's telephone call that afternoon was the first in an extraordinary series of conversations. The conflict just erupting would pose for the English officers involved in it an appalling moral dilemma. As, men they were concerned with preventing the spread of the conflict, with stopping the Indian and Pakistanis who had been their comrades in arms from killing each other. As officers, the orders they would receive would frequently run directly counter to those desires.

The colloquy opened in Gracey's and Lochart's exchange would continue, even when the armies they commanded were facing each other in the snows of Kashmir. Their attitude would earn for those unhappy Englishmen the severe disapproval of the governments they served and hasten their departure from

the sub-continent .Yet, the fact that an all-out war, with all the senseless killing it would have involved , did not break out between Indi and Pakistan that autumn was due in no small part to secret exchanges carried by that telephone wire linking Rawalpindi 1704 to New Delhi 3017.

Mountbatten received the news as he was dressing for a banquet in honour of Thailand's Foreign Minister . When the last guest has left, he asked Nehru to stay behind. The Prime Minister was by the news. There was scarcely a piece of information that could have upset him more. He loved his ancestral home above all place, like 'a supremely beautiful woman whose beauty is almost impersonal and above all desire.' He loved 'its feminine beauty of river and valley and lake and graceful trees.' Time and again during the struggle for freedom he had gone home to contemplate the hard 'mountains and precipices and snow -capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below.' 54

The Governor-General was to discover another Nehru on the Kashmir issue. The cool, detached intelligence Mountbatten so admired disappeared, to be replaced by instant to emotional response fuelled by passion even the Kashmir Brahmin could not control. 'As Calais was written upon the heart of your queen Marry'. Nehru would cry him one day to explain his attitude, 'so Kashmir is written upon mine.'

Still another stormy interview, this one with Field-Marshal Auchinleck, remained for Mountbatten. The Supreme Commander told the Governor-General he wanted to airlift a brigade of British troops to Srinagar to evacuate its hundreds of retired Britishers. If they weren't got out, he warned, they would be victims of a frightful orgy of rape and massacre.

'I am sorry, Mountbatten said, 'I cannot agree'. However ghastly that prospect was, he could not endorse the use of British soldiers on the soil of sub-continent became independent. If there was going to be military intervention in Kashmir, he declared, as far as it would have to be by Indian, not British, forces.

'Those people of there will all be murdered and their blood will be on your hands', an angry Auchinleck protested.

‘Well,’ they unhappy Mountbatten replied, ‘I shall just have to take that responsibility. It’s is the penalty of having the job. But I’m not going to answer for what if British troops get involved.

The following afternoon a DC3 of Royal Indian air force put down on the abandoned dirt strip of Srinagar Airport it carried V.P. Menon the civil servant who presided over so many princely accessions to India, Colonel Sam Manekshaw of Indian Army and air force officer [on 25th October].⁵⁵

V.P Menon, Secretary of the Ministry of States, arrived in Srinagar by plane came straight to my [Mahajan’s] residence to see me[Mahajan] and told me[Mahajan] that he had come there to take me[Mahajan] to New Delhi. Nothing about military aid, he said, could be decided till my[Menon’s] arrival there. [Mahajan claimed] that we had sent our Deputy Prime Minister to Delhi with a letter of accession on 24th October, 1947. [Mahajan again claimed] that when he [Mahajan] had come to the State to take over as Prime Minister, I[he] had been assured of military aid whenever [he] wanted it.⁵⁶

.... [On Saturday, 25th October, 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh told Mahajan to accompany V.P Menon to Delhi early morning on 26th of October, 1947. He further decided to send the Maharani and the Yuraj, who was bed-ridden owing to a fracture of his hip-joint, to Jammu. Maharaja did not want to leave Srinagar. He wanted to remain in the city on post of duty, and do his best to protect it, as claimed by M.C Mahajan]...

Even Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah also left Srinagar for Delhi on 25th of October by Plane.

Earlier, the decision to send three men to Srinagar had been taken by extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet’s defence committee that morning. The committee had been confronted with a plea by beleaguered Maharaja. Worried by his conversations with Auchinleck, and aware of how intense Nehru’s feeling were, Mountbatten has realised military intervention was likely. Determined that it should have a legal framework, he had convinced his government that India should not send her troops until the Maharaja had officially acceded, thus making his state legally a part of India.⁵⁷

He went further, he was attached to certain democratic notions in India's service as he had been in the service of George VI. Just as he had believed it would be impossible for Britain to remain in India against India's, so he believed there could be no solution in Kashmir that ran athwart the sentiments of its Moslem [Muslim] majority. He had no doubt what they were. 'I am convinced', he would write in a report to his cousin the King on 7th November, 'that a population containing such a high proportion of Moslems [Muslims] would certainly vote to join Pakistan.'

Despite Nehru's reservations, he persuaded the prime Minister and the cabinet to attach to Kashmir accession a capital provision the Maharaja's accession would be considered temporary. It would be rendered permanent only after law and order had been restored and it had been confirmed by a plebiscite as representing the will of Kashmir's population.

V.P. Menon was ordered for Srinagar to present the cabinet's terms to the Maharaja, while officers accompanying him studied the military situation. While they flew off, the former Supreme allied commander South –East Asia set in motion the preparation for the historic airlift to Kashmir. He ordered all India's civil air transport to leave their passengers wherever they were and had for Delhi.

V.P Menon and Mahajan suggested Maharaja to leave for Jammu as soon as possible as the situation may demand his personal negotiation with India. For this purpose it would be more convenient if Maharaja shows his presence in Jammu than in Srinagar. He was persuaded to leave Srinagar about 2 A.M. On Sunday, 26th of morning, on the same day, V.P. Menon and Mahajan flew to Delhi. They arrived at Safdarjung airport at about 8 A.M., where a car was waiting. Mahajan immediately drove to the Prime Minister's House on York road. The Prime Minister [of India] and Sardar Patel both were there and were apprised of the situation that had arisen. In view of the advance of the raiders towards the town of Baramullah and Srinagar, Mahajan requested immediate military aid on any terms. Mahajan said somewhat emphatically that the town of Srinagar must be saved at any cost from loot and destruction. During the talk, the Prime Minister [Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru] said that even if the town was taken by the tribesmen, India was strong enough to re-take it. It's, recapture,

however could not undo the damage that would have resulted. Mahajan, therefore, firmly but respectfully insisted on the acceptance of his request for the military aid. The Prime Minister of India observed that it was not easy on the spur of the moment to send troops as such an operation required considerable preparation and arrangement, and troops could not be moved without due deliberation merely; Prime Minister also was sticking to his own view. As a last resort Mahajan said, "Give us the military force we need. Take the accession and give whatever power you desire to the popular party. The army must fly to save Srinagar, this evening or elsewhere I will go to Lahore and negotiate terms with Mohammad Ali Jinnah."

When I[Mahajan] told Prime Minister[Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru] that I[Mahajan] had orders to go to Pakistan in case immediate military aid was not given, he naturally became upset and in an angry tone said, "Mahajan, go away." I[Mahajan] got up and was about to leave the room, Sardar Patel detained me[Mahajan] by saying in my[Mahajan's] ear, "Of course, Mahajan, you are not going to Pakistan." Just then, a piece of paper was passed over to the Prime Minister [Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru]. He read it and in a loud voice said, "Shaikh Sahib also says the same thing."⁵⁸

When Hari Singh was on his way to Jammu, it is said that he laid the foundation stone of communalism by refusing to take tea served by a Muslim bearer attached to rest-house at Ramban.⁵⁹

At 10 A.M. Defence Council meeting of India was called on 26th of October, 1947 and the Cabinet meeting in the evening affirmed the decision of Defence Council to give military aid to Maharaja Hari Singh and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru sent a message to Mahajan around dinner time that V.P. Menon and Mehr Chand Mahajan should fly to Jammu to inform Maharaja of this decision and also to get his signatures.⁶⁰

Shortly, before the midnight on Saturday, 26th October, yet another refugee joined the greatest exodus in history. To the ten and a half million Hindus, Sikhs and Moslems [Muslims] who had fled their homes that autumn was added one more figure, Hari Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir. His block cart was a comfortable American station wagon leading a caravan of trucks and cars

in to which his most precious belongings had been packed. No marauding bands were going to menace his flight: his well-armed bodyguard would watch over his voyage. Nor would his trip deliver the downcast Maharaja to cholera – infested refugee camp, but to a pleasurable exile in yet another palace, his winter palace in Jammu, where he had once welcomed the Prince of Wales and his young ADC, Lord Louis Mountbatten. There, where his subjects were predominantly Hindu, he could hope to dwell in safety.⁶¹

Mr ‘A’ and his futile hopes of independence had been engulfed by the precipitous rush of events. All Hari Singh’s manoeuvres had won him barely three months outside the apple basket Louis Mountbatten tendered to him. On the advice of V.P. Menon he was leaving his menaced capital while Menon returned to Delhi to inform his colleagues that the Maharaja was ready to accept any terms they proposed in return for their aid.

He would never again foot in the palace he was fleeing that night. In a few years, when the palace had been converted into a luxury hotel, the corridors along which he had frolicked with the officers of Army whose loyalty had proved so fragile would welcome wealthy American tourists. While his servants emptied his strong boxes of their pearls, emeralds and diamonds, Hari Singh himself sort out the two objects he treasured most, his matched Purdy short gun with whose blue black barrels he had blasted his way to the world’s duck shooting record. A glum expression on his face, he caressed well-oiled stock. Then, carefully locking them into the leather case, he carried them to his waiting car himself.⁶²

After a difficult seventeen-hour trip the Maharaja’s caravan reached Jammu. The exhausted Hari Singh went immediately to his private quarters to retire. Before going to sleep, he called an ADC to issue his last order as a ruling Maharaja. “Wake me up only if V. P. Menon returns from Delhi, ‘he said, because that would mean India had decided to come to my rescue, if he doesn’t come before dawn shoot me in my sleep with my service revolver, because if he hasn’t arrived, it will mean all is lost.

As soon as they returned to Delhi, V.P. Menon and the two officers who’d accompanied him to Srinagar made their report to another meeting of the

cabinet's defence. Their words made sombre hearing. The Maharaja was ready at last to present Kashmir to India, but Pathan raiders were only 35 miles away from Srinagar and could at any movement seize the only airport in Kashmir on which India could land her troops.

The British commanders of India's army and air force both raised objections to the military intervention. It would be a distant, dangerous operation in the midst of the population which could prove hostile. Sensing the intensity of Indian emotions on the issue, Mountbatten overruled them, he warned that the operation they were embarking on could be long and involve far more men and resources anyone foresee. But his cabinet determined to act, Mountbatten threw the full weight of his own military experience into the balance.

He ordered an airlift to start flying troops to Srinagar at Dawn the following morning. Every available transport in the country, civil and military, was used in the effort. The troops would have a cling at all costs to the airport and Srinagar until reinforcement in armour and artillery could reach them by land. Those reinforcements were ordered to leave immediately by the only land link joining India to Kashmir, the inadequate road Cyril Radcliff's pencil had providentially delivered to India when he had assigned New Delhi the town of Gurdaspur with its largely Moslem [Muslim] population.⁶³

While the frenzied preparations for the operation were underway, Mountbatten ordered V.P. Menon to fly to Jammu. Hari Singh would not die of a bullet in the brain on the first night of his flight. V.P. Menon reached his bedside before the expiration of the ultimatum, the maharaja had given to his ADC. With him, awaiting only Hari Singh's signature was the act of accession which would provide a legal framework for India's action.

Maharaja^y blamed that tribesmen have entered in the State and writes to Mountbatten on 26th October 1947—

"I have to inform Your Excellency that a grave emergency has arisen in my State and request the immediate assistance of your Government. As Your Excellency is aware, the State of Jammu Kashmir has not acceded to either the Dominion of India or Pakistan. Geographically my State is

contiguous with both of them. Besides, my State has a common boundary with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and with China [Sic]⁶⁴.”

While as India claims that the Accession of the state of Jammu Kashmir to India, signed by the Maharaja Hari Singh was completely valid in terms of the Government of India Act (1935), Indian Independence Act (1947) and international law and was total and irrevocable. But evidence based on declassified military papers suggest that India had Patiala gunners at the Srinagar airport by October 17, 1947⁶⁵. And some writers scoffed at the Indian apologists who propose that India's invasion of Kashmir was the triumph of improvisation—instead—state that India had troops mobilized for an invasion of Kashmir by October 25th, 1947, this would mean that India's army was in Kashmir before the decision of the Maharaja. With Indian army already in Kashmir it is obvious why the Maharaja^{vi} would hand his country over to India. Because of the injustice displayed by India, the Treaty of Accession, if it was even signed, is nullified and void⁶⁶.

Sunday, at about 9 A.M.[Monday] of 27th of October 1947, I [Mahajan] got a message from the aerodrome officer of Srinagar that troops had landed there and had gone into action. On receipt of this message, I [Mahajan] flew to Jammu with Mr. V.P. Menon. As they landed at Jammu, the Brigadier of the State force met them. He felt considerably relieved by the arrival of the Indian army in Srinagar. He told me [Mahajan] that troops on landing in Srinagar had gone into battle with tribesmen. Mr.V.P. Menon and I [Mahajan] met His Highness [Maharaja Hari Singh] at the palace. [As claimed by Mahajan] His Highness [Maharaja] had seen Indian planes carrying the troops flying over the palace and the town. This had created some confidence in his mind. After some discussion, formal documents were signed which Mr. Menon took back to Delhi..... [Sic]...⁶⁷

It is said that Lord Mountbatten accepts the conditional accession on 27th October 1947 delivered by Mr. V. P. Menon stating that:—

“Consistently with their policy that in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question if accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my Government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader the

question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people... [Sic]".^{vii}

V.P. Menon was back in Delhi home late in the evening of that same Sunday, [27th] October. Alexander Symon Britain's deputy high commissioner joined him for a drink, a few minutes after his return, Menon was jubilant. He poured them each a stiff drink. As they sat down enormous smile spread across his face. He raised his glass to Symon. Then he pulled a piece of paper from his jacket pocket and waved it gaily towards the Englishman.

'Here it is,' he said. 'We have Kashmir. The bastard signed the Act of Accession and now we have got it, we will never let it go.'⁶⁸

While leaving for Jammu on the morning of 27th of October, Mahajan requested Prime Minister of India to give him in his own handwriting the conditions on which the Maharaja has been given military help at such a critical juncture. Pt. Jawaharlal wrote out briefly those terms. The first was that Maharaja should accede to India with regard to three subjects: defence, external affairs and transport [communication].⁶⁹

But why had two crucial days been wasted at Baramullah? It is more than probable that if two days had not been lost, the story of Kashmir would [have been] an entirely different one. There was no authentic answer to be found. It is unlikely that the tribesmen themselves had wanted the delay; sending back their wounded could not have taken that much time; waiting for more men could hardly have been the cause as they knew that speed would be more valuable; and Baramullah itself could not have held that much attraction for them when the biggest prize of all, Srinagar, was so near at hand. All the same there may have been some good reason, one cannot say, or it may have been what the locals at Baramullah said, that Khurshid Anwar, who was in command, had waited for Kashmiri Leaders whom he had sent for, in order to confer with regarding his own position in the future Government of Kashmir. Whatever the reason, there was no time to find out for certain as it was near midnight, and the front had yet to be reached.⁷⁰

It was 6th November, 1947, the Pakistan government dispatched many buses to Jammu city to transport the refugees into Sialkot. When the convoy arrived at Jammu-Sialkot road, Dogra troopers, RSS men and many armed Sikhs attacked the caravan and killed most of the passengers and abducted their

women. The fortunate ones managed to escape to reach Sialkot. According to a statement of a well-educated Muslim refugee who had fled from Jammu to Sialkot, 'Thirty lorries carrying Muslim evacuees out of Kashmir State were attacked by Dogra troops and fanatic Hindus at Satwari in Jammu, the convoy was turned towards Samba; instead of Suchitgarh. After travelling for some distance on the Samba road suddenly firing started near a place called 'Mawa', unleashing brutalities on them. Most of them got killed and some young men risking their lives swam across the canal and after travelling five miles on barefoot were able to reach Pakistan. Most of the male members were massacred, while the women abducted.⁷¹

The situation was so grave that some Hindu fanatic intellectuals of Jammu [like Prof. B.D Mal Sharma] had already prepared the list of Muslim intellectuals to be executed, revealed by Prof. Mohi-ud-din Hajini [who was teaching Arabic]⁷².

After this massacre, out of the remaining lot, young ladies were abducted. It was on this spot that 16year old daughter^{viii} of Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas was also abducted.⁷³ And was later traced by the collective efforts of top political leaders, Chaudhary's wife was also critically injured, and even leading Muslim Conference leader Hameed Ullah's young daughter was also abducted in Jammu.

Next day (7th November, 1947), when Muslims in police lines came to know about the death of their kith and kin, they demanded perfect security, later on crossed the border under the security cover of Indian army. And Muslims of Ustaad Mohalla came to know about this bloodbath through Pandit Girdari Lal Dogra who informed them about the incident of mass murder of Muslims which had taken place on the Satwari-Samba road and admonished them not to go to Pakistan. On his advice, the Muslims dropped the idea of going to 'Pakistan' and decided to stay in Jammu without the security of the government⁷⁴.

When—Hindu refugees from Muzaffarabad and surrounding areas reaching Kashmir desired to be sent to Jammu or Punjab, local Muslims motivated Kashmiri tongawallas (horse-cart drivers) to transport them to Jammu against heavy odds. Initially 22 tongawallas were hired in Anantnag by Mitha Singh, a shopkeeper of Anantnag (Islamabad), later joined by many others from rural

belts including the tangas(carts) which came from north of Anantnag culminated into a caravan on Khanabal-Qazigund cart road. On return all those poor tongawallas numbering around 90 were massacred near Nagrota.⁷⁵

Thousands of Jammu Muslims, mostly old women, old men, teenage girls and boys were brought to Kashmir. Here they were lodged in different mosques, where Mohalla people collected clothes, food and medicines for them⁷⁶.

It is worth to mention that one million Jammu Muslims were uprooted and an estimated [0.25 million-0.30 million^{ix}], were massacred in the Jammu region alone in August-October 1947.⁷⁷ But, few commentators put the figure very low.

The Dogra state troops were at the forefront of attacks on Muslims. The state authorities were also reported to be issuing arms not only to local volunteer organisations, but to those in surrounding East Punjab districts such as Gurdaspur, even, Maharani Tara Devi, Chet Ram Chopra and Mahajan distributed arms among communal Hindus and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) volunteers and Sikh communalists accompanying them, who attacked Muslim villages and set them on fire, the killings of Muslims were organised by the Maharaja, his bigoted wife who played an important role. She was under the influence of a mysterious Guru Sant Dev, described as Rasputin of Kashmir!⁷⁸

This can be even established by the fact that Shaikh Abdullah had organised a Kashmiri Volunteers Corps and requested Pt. Nehru to supply 303 rifles to them. Rifles were sent to the Commander of the Indian Forces located in the State. Mahajan warned the Commander that these arms should not be handed over to the volunteers without being satisfied that they would be able to use them and take care of them. Thus some delay took place in the supply of arms to the Shaikh's volunteers.

To make an explicit assessment of Jammu's Muslim massacre by the State-sponsored bid to change demographics in 1947, it is necessary to look at the composition of the population in the region at time. According to the Census of 1941, the eastern half the Jammu province, cutting across small strip of Punjab plain was inhabited by 619,000 non-Muslims, including 10,000 Sikhs and 305,000 martial Dogras Rajputs and Brahmins, and 411,000 Muslims. Forming

40 per cent of the population of this whole area, to the north and astride the Chenab Muslims were in a majority in the Riasi, Ramban, and Kishtwar areas and nearly attained parity in Bhadrawah. Within the province, the position of the majority of Muslims and Hindus in part explains their differing aspirations for the future of the state. At the same time, it contained elements of segmented and precarious society, theorized by Leo Kuper, which were likely to explode into 'genocidal violence' during a crisis⁷⁹.

The Hindu Dogra Princely State's main aim was to change the demographic composition of the region by compelling the Muslim population. The depopulation of the Muslim population in the Jammu region is evidenced clearly in the data of the 1961 Census of India. In Jammu province, for example, about 123 villages were 'completely depopulated', while the decrease in the number of Muslims in Jammu district alone was over 100,000. The Muslims numbered 158,630 and comprised 37 per cent of the total population of 428,719 in the year 1941, and in the year 1961, they numbered only 51,690 and comprised only 10 per cent of the total population of 516,932. Kathua district 'lost' almost fifty per cent its Muslim population⁸⁰.

M.C Gandhi was so disgusted with the carnage that on two occasions, he made mention of it in following words—

"He [Mahatma] had heard of murders of numberless Muslims and abductions of Muslim girls in Jammu. The Maharaja must hold the responsibility of this. The Dogra State forces were under his direct control. He had not yet become the mere constitutional head and, therefore, he must be held responsible for all the acts, good or bad, of people under his rule. Shaikh Abdullah had been to Jammu and had tried to allay passions..... Gandhiji would advise the Maharaja to step aside along with his Minister in view of what had taken place in Jammu and give fullest opportunity to Shaikh Abdulla[h] and the people of Kashmir to deal with the situation."⁸¹

G. K. Reddy, a Hindu [Journalist] said in a statement, 'I saw the armed mob with the complicity of Dogra troops was killing the Muslims ruthlessly. The state officials were openly giving out weapons to the mob'. The state administration had not only demobilised a large number of Muslim soldiers serving in the state army, but Muslim police officers, whose loyalty was

suspected, had also been sent home. In Jammu city, the Muslim military was disarmed and the Jammu Superintendent of Police was replaced by a Hindu Dogra officer[on the removal Mahajan adopted what is psychologically called ‘Rationalisation’ as a part of defence mechanism and has exaggerated the event perquisite to the propaganda in his autobiographical account “ looking Back” on page 163]. There were also reports that the Maharaja of Patiala was not only supplying weapons, but also a Sikh Brigade of Patiala State troops were also operating in Jammu and Kashmir. The state authorities intended to create a Hindu majority in the Jammu region.⁸²

Even, M.C Mahajan plotted the killing of some Muslim personnel of the State forces who were being evacuated by Indian Army from Kotli, Mahajan raised wild allegations against them saying that they were rebels and had been disarmed and saying that some of them misbehaved while coming to Jammu under military escort and naturally there was some shooting!

In addition, the other feature of the carnage was commandeering the properties of Muslims, even names signifying Muslim properties or areas were instantly obliterated to kowtow the new ownerships, for illustration Urdu Bazar became Rajinder Bazar and Islamia School became Hari Singh High School for the acceptance of new “ownership”. Almost 95- 98 percent of abandoned property belonging to Muslims, in normal course, should have been taken by State government, went to looters and rioters.⁸³

Earlier, in the backdrop of the revolt in Muzaffarabad, the hill men [tribesmen] ruthlessly killed hundreds of non-Muslims in Kotli, Poonch and some nearby areas. They particularly made ‘a practice of killing the leading banias (shopkeepers) and then inviting [other likeminded] to join in looting their property’⁸⁴.

Similarly on 11th November, 1947, Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in a public speech near Palladium cinema of historical Lal Chowk, Srinagar, promised Kashmiris that they will be given the right to express their future allegiance by granting them their right of ‘Plebiscite’⁸⁵.

Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mehr Chand Mahajan told a delegation of Hindus who met him in the place when he arrived in Jammu that now when the power was being transferred to the people they should better demand parity. When one of them associated with the National Conference

asked how they could demand parity when there was no much differences in population ratio. Pointing to the Ramnagar natural reserve below, where some bodies of Muslims were still lying, he said, ‘the population ratio too can change’, and to avenge for the killings of Hindus in Rawalpindi, Attock, Murree, Bannu and Hazara as some refugee from these areas had come to Jammu, which also acted as one of the triggers although strongly contested by M.C Mahajan in his autobiographical account “Looking Back”⁸⁶.

On 2nd March 1948, morning Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas was released on the border of Pakistan near Suchitgarh under the orders of the Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah and pushed to other side of the border.

Earlier, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah and Ghulam Abbas had conversation on a number of matters. During this discourse both had agreed that whatever was happening in Kashmir should be put to an end. War was going on in the state those days, NC and MC had reached to an agreement—

“India and Pakistan should stop fighting in Kashmir and the position of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood on 15th August, 1947, should be restored. A coalition Government comprising National Conference and Muslim Conference should take the administration of the state for an interim period. Trade links and road communication between the state and the two countries should be restored. After a period of three years a plebiscite, to know whether or not the people of the state want to give a final shape to such a position, should be held .Further there was an agreement on the suggestion of holding a roundtable conference between the authentic leaders of both India and Pakistan; Shaikh Abdullah; Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and supporters of both the leaders of [NC and MC]⁸⁷.”

When Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas presented the whole issue before the Qade-Azam[Mohammad Ali Jinnah].⁸⁸ M.A Jinnah, while expressing his doubts rejected the formula and said that since India has taken the Kashmir to UNO, we must wait for the decision of the world body⁸⁹. Shaikh Abdullah had placed one more suggestion before Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas. He should not go to Pakistan and that the members of his family would be called back and he should join the state cabinet, but Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas did not agree to this suggestion⁹⁰.

Outwardly Shaikh Abdullah was loyal to India but later on developed the idea 'Third Option' [Independent Kashmir]. He spoke openly in favour of Kashmir's accession to India in January, 1948 at the UN when he was one of the members of Indian delegation, but in a private meeting with Warren Austin, the US representative at the United Nations, according to telegram sent to US secretary of State, Austin reported that Abdullah^x had been anxious to point out that there is third alternative— Independence— he did not want his people to be torn by violent conflicts between India and Pakistan, communal frenzy people triggered violent clashes which claimed thousands of lives mostly innocent and Kashmir war was the added dimension men and material got consumed heavily between the two. It would be much better if Kashmir was Independent and could seek American and British aid for the development of the country.⁹¹ But there were several revolutionary writers in Pakistan who were supporting Kashmir freedom struggle that too independence. This can be established by the fact that Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan who was in-charge of Kashmir front, met Mr. Faiz Ahmad Faiz^{xi}, Editor Pakistan Times, [probably around June] 1948 at Muree and Akbar left the place accompanied by the staff officers and reached Muzaffarabad about 7.00 pm on the same day, the scene from there onwards, looked somewhat familiar –once again panic had gripped the area, civilians were deserting even Muzaffarabad.⁹²

Innumerable factors are responsible for the emergence of Kashmir conflict, while seeking opinions of Kashmiris, Indians or Pakistanis; they share different beliefs even about the genesis of the conflict. The Kashmir conflict soon turned into a struggle for strategic superiority. The Kashmir dispute is entangled in the definitions of sovereignty and the right to self-determination-India terms Kashmir as its crown and integral part, while as Pakistan says that it is a jugular vein for them. Kashmir is one of the most militarised zones of world with the significant aspect that the conflict exists in a weaponised environment, need arises for evolving new approaches to deal the problem. Kashmir gives a description of the two sides of the LoC – the Indian administered Jammu Kashmir having an area of 95561.48 Sq.Kms and the Pakistan administered Kashmir having an area of 82227.32 Sq. Kms, 44447.20 Sq. Kms are with China including 8000 Sq.Kms of Shakshum valley ceded in 1963. Valley of Kashmir, which is administered by India, is about 80 miles long and 35 miles

wide (130 x 55 kms). The Kashmir conflict refers to the political dispute over Kashmir, the north-western area of the subcontinent. The parties to the dispute are India, Pakistan, people of Jammu and Kashmir and even China is a stakeholder, keeping in view the land held by it, definitely Kashmir is having geo-political importance in South Asian Region.

Notes

- i) Begaar was a cruel form of bounded labour, in which an individual was asked by Dogra rulers to work for State against his will and not even paid the labour, usually the work assigned was very hazardous in nature and there was always a major risk of death, sometimes the labour was paid but almost nothing.
- ii) An old industry of Kashmir. “Nothing, however is known about its origin beyond the fact that it is intimately connected with that of Bukhara with which it has always had interchange of seed and silk. After 1846-1925 A.D., the industry was revived on scientific lines, particularly when the Kani shawl industry suffered a decline. The Factory was built on the left bank of the Doodh Ganga River and it employed about 5000 workmen.
- iii) At Central jail Srinagar people who had gone to watch the court proceedings against Abdul Qadeer, a non Kashmiri from Amroha [presently with Uttar Pradesh], probably the servant of a British employee in Kashmir, Qadeer voiced the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims at Khanqah-i-Moila, Srinagar, watchers were brutally dealt and ruthlessly fired at a pointblank range by Maharaja’s armed forces.
- iv) Favours Kashmir’s Independent Character, seemingly a contrast to the wishes of Indian and Pakistani leaderships. Pertinent to mention that in a press conference on 28 May 1947, Sunday, Choudhry Hameedullah, acting President of the Muslim Conference said:
“Accession to Pakistan will disturb Hindus while accession to India will disturb Muslims. Therefore, we have decided not to enter into any controversy either with India or Pakistan. The second thing we have decided is that we should try to acquire independence for the State. The third question now before us is what would be the position of the Maharaja? We have never been lacking in showing loyalty and respect for him and it is because of this attachment that we did not support the Quit Kashmir Movement, although in one way it was a natural Movement. We, therefore, felt that we should try to find a solution which will maintain the position of the Maharaja Bahadur while at the same time, it should also satisfy the Praja. The best solution that we have found is that the Maharaja should become a constitutional King as is the position in many countries. The fourth thing that we have decided is that we should have a Constituent Assembly of our own to draft our constitution...[sic].
I have the support of all-important leaders of the Muslim Conference and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan has himself expressed agreement with this proposal. A representative convention of the Muslim Conference will be called within a month where the proposal will be unanimously adopted. So, therefore, this solution should be considered the official policy of the Muslim Conference. Muslim League has not given this, nor we are presenting it to deceive the Hindus. We have arrived at this solution in all honesty and after taking into account of the local situation. The only connection that the Muslim League has with it is that the Muslim League’s past and present policy of non – intervention in Indian States has strengthened us. I would like to say in all honesty that we have had no talks in this connection with any leader or worker of the Muslim League. We do not want to get any instructions from the Muslim League and Hindus should also give up being led by the Congress. The best thing for us all is that the League and Congress should leave us undisturbed and we should give up both the parties. When we say we want to separate ourselves from Hindustan and Pakistan, we

mean that we want to be friends with both of them. We would have political as well as economic relations with Pakistan and in the presence of Hindu ruling dynasty, we will also have pleasant relations with India.”

Later on, the meeting of the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference was called on 18 July 1947, Friday. The working Committee after careful consideration unanimously endorsed the statement made by, the acting President, Choudhry Hameedullah; and ‘unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the Maharaja to declare independence and assured him of the Party’s wholehearted support and co operation. The Muslim Conference ‘Convention’ for which no official invitations were given to delegates was held on the following day. A small advertisement was put in paper and members were requested to attend the ‘Convention’, which was attended by less than hundred people.

While as, members of the Muslim Conference, claim that the starting point for the Azad Kashmir is 19 July 1947, Saturday and equate it in significance to the resolution in 1940 of Lahore known as the ‘Pakistan Resolution’.

19 July 1947 Sardar Ibrahim called the meeting of general assembly of Muslim Conference at his residence[Rawalakot] and passed a resolution is known as ‘Accession to Pakistan Resolution’. But the Provisional Government of Azad Kashmir was announced on Saturday, 4 October 1997.

Accession to Pakistan Resolution reads:

“This Convention of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference expresses its jubilation and great satisfaction at the coming into being of Pakistan and offers its congratulations to the Quaid – e – Azam.’

The inhabitants of the Princely State of the Sub – Continent had hoped that they would achieve the objectives of national freedom shoulder to shoulder with the inhabitants of British India but unfortunately, whereas the inhabitants of British India achieved freedom with the partition of the Sub – Continent, the Third June Plan has strengthened the hands of the rulers of these States; so long as these autocratic rulers do not bow before the demands of time, the future of the inhabitants of Indian States will remain bleak. Under these circumstances only three alternatives are open to the inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir State, namely accession to India or accession to Pakistan or the establishment of a free and independent State

After carefully considering the position, this Convention of the Muslim Conference has arrived at the conclusion that accession of the State to Pakistan is absolutely necessary in view of the geographic, economic, linguistic, cultural and religious considerations because Muslims constitute eighty percent of the State’s population, all major rivers of Pakistan have their source in the State and the inhabitants of the State are strongly connected with the people of Pakistan through religious, cultural and economic relations.

It is, therefore, necessary that the State must accede to Pakistan.

The Convention strongly demands of the Maharaja that the people of Kashmir should be given complete internal autonomy and the Maharaja should treat himself as constitutional Head of the State and set up a representative Legislative Assembly while handing over the portfolios of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

The Convention wishes to proclaim that if the Kashmir Government did not accept the demands of the Muslim Conference or did not act upon the advice so tendered, on account of any internal or external pressure and instead brings about accession of the State to the Constituent Assembly of India, the people of

Kashmir will stand as one man against such a decision and launch a struggle with all the power at their command.”

Actually, what had happened between 18/19 July 1947 nothing has been reported.

- v) Some experts on Kashmir political history say that in reality did such thing has occurred or not and even maintain that letter for conditional accession to India by Maharaja was executed in a fraudulent manner, presence of V.P Menon, Colonel Sam Manekshaw of Indian Army along with top air force officer on 25th October, 1947 in Srinagar is another dimension and is suggestive of the fact that letter of Maharaja was probably given to Menon on the same day[Friday] and even some commentators treat the accession letter of Maharaja as “ communiqué in distress”.

- vi) Whether Maharaja was threatened for the arrest, forced to hand over his country or did on the basis of religion to which he belonged, but the colloquy of Menon with Alexander Symon, then Britain’s deputy high commissioner, in late evening on 27th October, 1947 is self explanatory. A group of Hajj Pilgrims from Kashmir ,who were in Bombay around 1949, the delay to the ship which they were to board, caused high level of distress , when they came to know that Hari Singh was in Bombay , they met him and he welcomed all of them with warmth gestures and invited for the lunches and dinners to three consecutive days till they boarded the ship to Saudi Arabia.

When one of the Hajj pilgrim from Bejbehara asked Hari Singh that why he hadn’t come to Kashmir, in reply Hari Singh told to the group of Hajj pilgrims that Kashmir is no more a country, in which Capacity I will return, and further added that a deliberate conspiracy was hatched to destroy the ‘Independent Character’ of Kashmir, revealing the ordeal he said to them that as Maharaja of the State, he was pulled and grilled to do the unwanted!

- vii) However several historians perceive that Kashmir was intriguingly made to become a different case. The division of British India was made on the basis of mutual agreement between Indian Muslim League and Indian National Congress—Two Nation Theory—eight States with dominant Muslim population and their proximity to the newly created Pakistan, were automatically to join Pakistan, Kashmir was clearly such a State. At the same time most historians argue that Maharaja was of the opinion to keep Kashmir an independent state, *raison d’être* that he opted for a Standstill Agreement with both of the newly created States [India and Pakistan]. Although Pakistan accepted it but India didn’t.]. Now, the question arises, whether Lord Mountbatten replied to the letter delivered to him by V.P. Menon or not, but the reply of Lord Mountbatten subscribes, peoples will [plebiscite], so, some conflict experts treat it true and valid. Furthermore , as per UN Resolution over Kashmir in Security Council April ,1948, under the heading—Restoration of Peace and Order : clause 1(a), one more, heading— Government of India should: clause 2(a), 2(b),29(c) ,2(c)I and 2(c)ii. And another heading—Plebiscite: clause 6, 7, 10(a)... [Sic].... should also be taken into account.

- viii) Mohammad Ali Jinnah personally contacted Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru over the issue, consequently, girl was recovered from the abductors by the intervention of Nehru and later on sent to Pakistan.

- ix) Surely, more research is needed for the exact number of Muslims killed by Hindu fascists in Jammu but without doubt the killed persons were very large, it is important to consult the Census records of 1931, 1941 of British India, Kashmir

and even Census of 1951, 1961 of both India and Pakistan to check the demographic change of Muslims in Jammu.

[Similarly], in 1941 [Census of British India], the Muslims were in absolute majority in Punjab accounting for 53.2 percent of the total population. The Hindus made 29.1 percent of the total, the Sikhs 14.9 percent, Christians 1.9 percent, and others [0.9] percent.

(Source: A Study by Gopal Krishan, Demography of Punjab, p83)

- x) Some commentators on Kashmir say that when Shaikh Abdullah felt that he is being treated as subordinate by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, later on he resorted to new methods, embarrassing and exhibiting his arrogant leadership that could not baffle, Pt. Nehru later on ordered Shaikh's removal and his imprisonment on 8th August 1953.
- xi) Faiz Ahmad Faiz was one of the prolific Urdu poets of world and was best known for his revolutionary approach, some neutral commentators ascribe him the great supporter of Kashmir Freedom Struggle[Independence], even ready to the extent that he was willing to participate in Kashmir resistance movement, his marriage was solemnized in Kashmir and Nikkah was interpreted by Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, the then towering political figure of Kashmir.

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- ⁶⁷) Mehr Chand Mahajan, Looking Back, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi,pp154-155.

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- ⁷⁰) Ex. Major-Gen. Akbar Khan, Raiders in Kashmir, Rebus Publishing House, Srinagar, p38.
- ⁷¹) Prof. G. M. Shad, Historian.
- ⁷²) ibid:
- ⁷⁴) Rashid Tehseer, Tehreeq-i- Hurriyat Kashmir , , Vol. III, Srinagar, pp 319-321 (Urdu).
- ⁷⁵) Source: Gh.Mohi-Ud-Din Baba, shopkeeper, Anantnag.
- ⁷⁶) Source: Prof. G.M Shad, who himself volunteered for the relief of Jammu refugees, as a teenage worker.
- ⁷⁷) (Source: <http://jammuregionalmuslims.wordpress.com/1947-when-jammus-rivers-turned-red/> accessed,March, 2013)
- ⁷⁸) Source: Prof. G.M Shad, Historian.
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- ⁸⁰) Source: Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal’, Prejudice in Paradise’, Communalism Combat, Vol. 11: 104 (January; 2005)
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