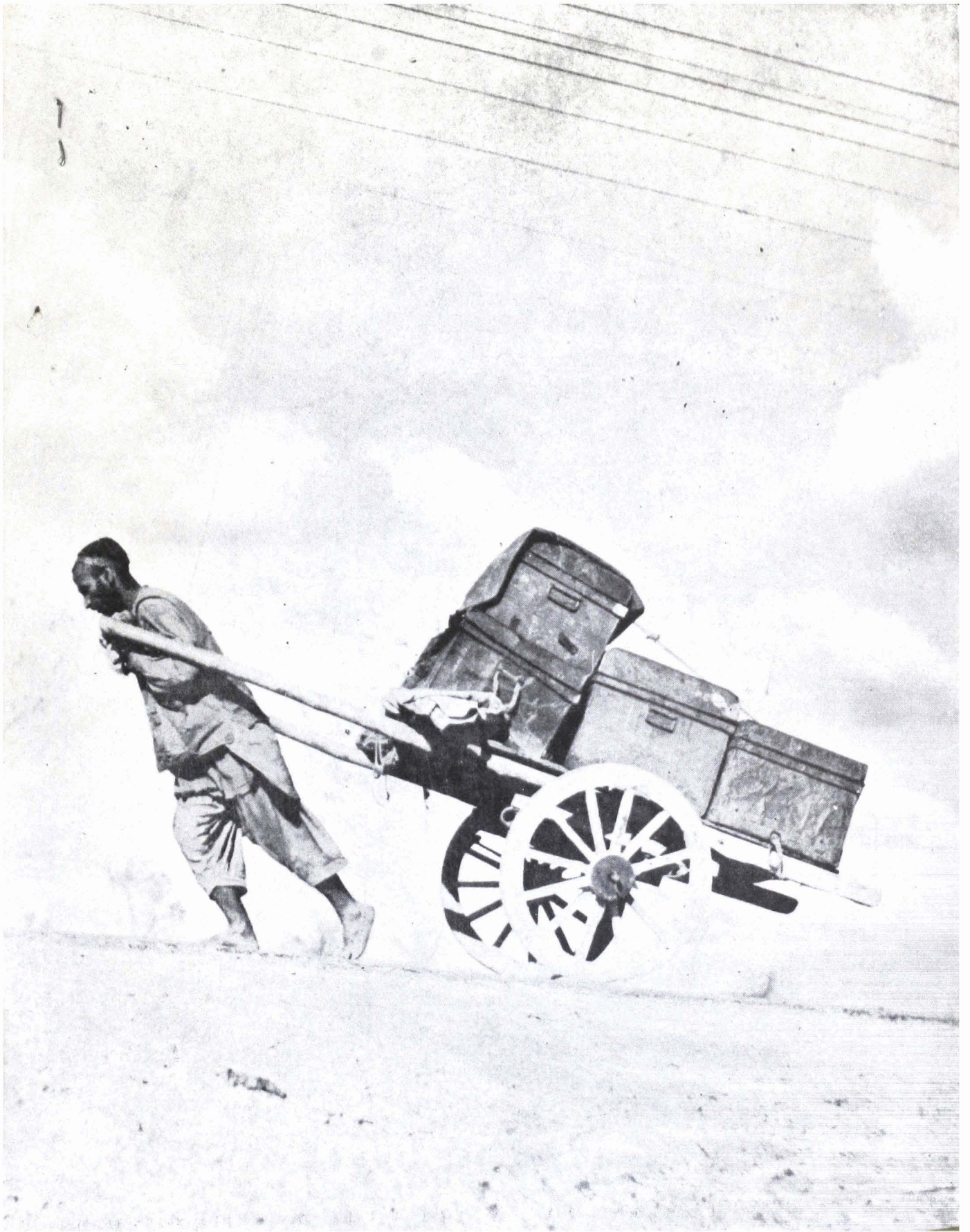


BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN IN KASHMIR

NEUTRAL OPINION

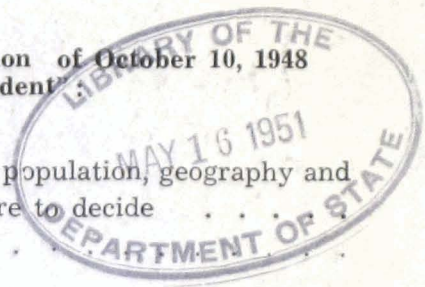


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SYSTEMATICALLY EXTERMINATED

An extract from an article in the Times of London of October 10, 1948
by a "Special Correspondent"



..... In the remaining Dogra area the 237,000 Muslims were systematically exterminated—unless they escaped to Pakistan along the border—by all the forces of the Dogra State headed by the Maharaja in person and aided by Hindus and Sikhs. This happened in October, 1947—five days before the Pathan invasion and nine days before the Maharaja's accession to India. This elimination of two-thirds of the Muslims last autumn has entirely changed the present composition of Eastern Jammu Province.

Its communications and economic links until then almost exclusively with West Punjab have not been and cannot be re-orientated so easily towards Pathankot — India's only road and rail head near the State. There can be no doubt which Dominion the whole State would join

ultimately if population, geography and economy were to decide
.....

They spared none





Refugees from Mendhar Valley on their way to Pakistan

Briefly the victim stated that having been captured by Gurkha troops he was tied up in a tree all night. In the morning he was made to dig a trench until about midday. He was given no food or drink. He was then taken before a Sikh Lieut.-Colonel who questioned him and then ordered a party of about 20 of his Gurkhas to take him to "Pakistan Nullah" or place of execution. Having been taken there he was beaten and slashed with kukris. He was then thrown in a ditch and covered with stones. Later in the night he

recovered consciousness and managed to make his way back to his village. A companion with him did not survive this treatment, and the man said he saw other recently killed corpses in the ditch.

I inspected the man's scars, he had seven in all, and they appeared definitely to have been caused by kukri wounds. The incident, he said, took place about two miles west of Rajauri town. He gave the date but I cannot now recollect it.



THEY BOMBED THEIR OWN PEOPLE

On March 18, 1948, Col. H. K. Johnson, Commandant of a British Red Cross Hospital, submitted the following report to his principals:

I have been in Pakistan more than three months now engaged in refugee and Red Cross work. A short time ago the International Red Cross asked me to act as their Observer when the evacuation took place of NON-MUSLIMS from Muzaffarabad (Azad territory) in Kashmir.

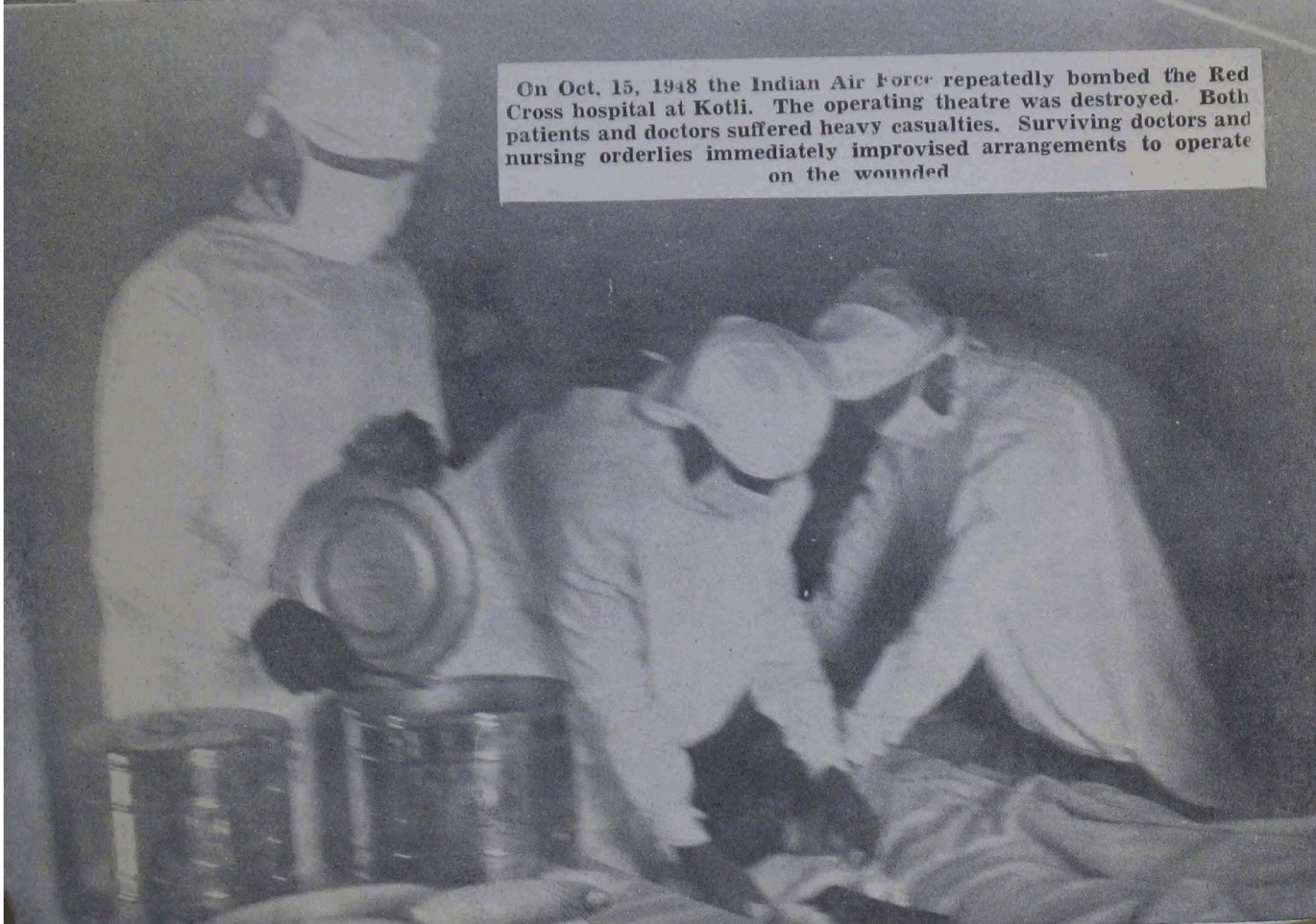
Early in March I visited Muzaffarabad and had a talk with the leaders of the refugees. It appeared that they were being looked after quite well but they told me that they would all like to be evacuated and stay away until peaceful conditions again prevailed. They were rather anxious about their safety on the journey but I was able to tell them that the Pakistan Army would transport and protect them and they should not be afraid. They seemed to have a lot of confidence in the local Azad Kashmir Government Police Officer for they said they would feel safer if he would accompany them. I thought this was a high compliment for him. There seemed to be surprisingly little sickness among them and there were only three patients for me to bring back to hospital in Rawalpindi.

The heavy rain during the first half of March held up the evacuation but after several postponements it was

finally settled it should take place on the 16th and 17th. I overtook the large convoy on the Pakistan Army lorries on the afternoon of the 16th, walked on the roadside between Abbottabad and Muzaffarabad and I was able to see that the vehicles were not being used for any purpose other than evacuation. I went on ahead and about five miles short of Muzaffarabad I stopped at the top of the pass to have a look round. It was about 4 o'clock and it seemed a very quiet and peaceful place with a fine view over the Jhelum Valley. There was a Customs Post with a Custom official in charge, possibly quite an important post in ordinary times but hardly I imagine doing any business now. Then a familiar sound made me look up and there was an aircraft (Indian) circling over the valley. It soon disappeared but its appearance made me uneasy. What had happened? Surely the Indian Air Force had been informed about the evacuation? How horrible if the refugees collected for the evacuation were bombed! Soon after I reached Muzaffarabad I found that my fears were justified. A group of people waiting in a house for the transport to arrive to collect them, had received a direct bomb hit. There were a number of killed and wounded. What a tragedy



On Oct. 15, 1948 the Indian Air Force repeatedly bombed the Red Cross hospital at Kotli. The operating theatre was destroyed. Both patients and doctors suffered heavy casualties. Surviving doctors and nursing orderlies immediately improvised arrangements to operate on the wounded



for these poor people on the eve of being taken away to safety!

Fortunately the main group of refugees was untouched. They had been well organised by officials of the Azad Kashmir Government into compact little parties of families and friends, each party to travel together in one lorry. The convoy arrived eventually; the bad road having caused delay; the vehicles were turned round (no easy matter) and the refugees embarked on the first stage of their long journey to India. Once again I was struck with the lack of sick people. There were three ambulances available including the one I was in but the only case of possible sickness was an expectant mother. The husband wanted her to come in the ambulance but she firmly refused and duly gave birth to a child in a lorry during the night! I saw this family in the train at Havelian and the mother was remarkably well and disposed of a large quantity of milk brought from the bazar by a Muslim sympathiser.

But the ambulances were certainly required when the bomb casualties had been dressed and collected. Fortunately a doctor was available to attend to them early but in spite of the morphia injections some of the stretcher cases suffered severely from the jolting of the ambulances over the bad road. They were all women and children and all were relations. Two of their menfolk

travelled with them in the ambulances and helped to look after them on the 130-mile journey to Rawalpindi. I never want to be in an ambulance full of wounded women and children again! They were eventually brought in to the British Red Cross Hospital and later enquiries show that all are doing well.

I was in time to see the refugee train pass through Rawalpindi. There were nearly 3,000 of them and they nearly all had 3rd class accommodation which was better than that provided for most of the Muslim refugees going to Sind from the West Punjab. I do hope these Hindu refugees can go back to their homes eventually. How they will miss the magnificent scenery of the Muzaffarabad district when they are in the plains of India! And how they will feel the heat of those plains! Perhaps the Indian authorities will deal kindly with them and send them to a camp in Dehra Dun or some hill station. It was touching to see the obvious sympathy of Pakistan Army Officers and men for these refugees and at places where our ambulances stopped it was good to get offers of food and drink for the wounded from the local people. I do wish the members of the Security Council of U.N.O. could have seen this evacuation. They would have learned a lot; and, the urgent necessity of their settling the Kashmir problem would have been emphasised.







From the gloom
and the shadow
of ravaged homes
thousands of Kash-
miri refugees—
men, women and
children—toil
their weary way to
Pakistan and
safety.



THOUSANDS KILLED BY STATE TROOPS

Two Englishmen, one acting on behalf of the Government of India and the other on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, compiled a summary of the facts when they visited Jammu and Kashmir in November 1947. They reported as follows:

On the morning of November 5, it was announced by beat of drums in Jammu City, in the name of His Highness the Maharajah, that all Moslems must immediately leave the State and that, in fact, Pakistan had asked for them. They were instructed to assemble at the parade ground in Jammu.

Conducted from there to the police lines, they were searched, deprived of most of their belongings and loaded on motor lorry convoys. They were told they would be sent to Suchetgarh, but instead the convoys took the Kathua Road and halted at Mawa, where the passengers were told to get down.

Bomb shattered Muzaffarabad.





—and Pulandari

At Mawa, the lorry drivers, who were Sikhs and armed to the teeth removed all the young women from the convoys and began to attack the remainder. The Kashmir State troops looked on indifferently while the mobs of Sikhs and Hindus were killing the Moslem refugees.

Out of the four thousand Moslems, who had left Jammu, only nine hundred managed to reach Sialkot. It was in this attack that a daughter and a sister of Mr. Ghulam Abbas, President of the Kashmir Moslem Conference, were taken away by the attackers.

A convoy of seventy trucks, containing most of the respectable Moslem

families of Jammu City left for Suchetgarh on November 6. A few miles out of the city the trucks were halted and were attacked by armed Jathas of Sikhs and State troops and volunteers of the Rashtrya Swayam Sewak Sangh.

During the beginning of October 1947, about fourteen thousand Moslems living in Sambha were besieged by armed Hindus and Sikhs, who cut off the rations and water supply of the villages. On October 22, Sambha village was visited by His Highness the Maharajah himself, and almost immediately after his visit all the Moslem women in the village were taken away by State

troops, and the men were slaughtered with the exception of fifteen survivors, who escaped to Sialkot.

About eight thousand Moslems assembled at the Bulla Tank near Kathua on October 20 after their request for protection had been ignored by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Kathua. After marching three miles towards the Pakistan border, they were encircled by Dogra troops and armed Sikh civilians, and all of them were slaughtered with the exception of forty persons, who managed to escape to Sialkot.

On the instructions of the State Government about twenty-five thousand Moslems from Miran Sahib area collected at Maogaon to be evacuated to

Pakistan. But as they were doing so, their women and all their personal belongings were taken away from them by Dogra troops, and the rest made to stand in a line, whereupon they were riddled with machine-gun bullets. Only about two hundred men out of the total number of twenty-five thousand refugees managed to make their way to Pakistan, by hiding in fields during the day and travelling by night.

About fifteen thousand Moslems were brought from the surrounding villages to Akhnoor Bridge on October 20. They were asked there to go to Pakistan on foot. Refusing to do so, they were killed by Rajput and Dogra soldiers. Only one hundred of them escaped, hiding in maize fields.



CHAOS IN KASHMIR

Reproduced from the Daily Gazette, Karachi, of July 20, 1948. The Daily Gazette is owned by an Indian Hindu, Seth Dalmia. The Editor is an Englishman, Mr. Robert Cochran:

There is complete administrative chaos and repression in the vale of Kashmir today.

The present regime has brought misery and starvation for large sections of the State's population. Kashmir's tourist industry, to which the economy of the whole vale was geared, has now

completely collapsed, as also other branches of industry, such as carpets, namdas, woodwork and silverwork.

Corruption among the State's officials today rates even higher than during the darkest days of Maharaja-rule.

People have been so greatly disillusioned by Sheikh Abdullah that

In a refugee camp in Pakistan





Refugees receiving ration cards at a frontier post in Pakistan

there is hardly anyone in Kashmir today who does not eagerly look forward to a Free Plebiscite.

There are some in Kashmir who have even begun to sing praises of Hari Singh; some who cast their eyes over the mountains towards Soviet Russia.

India's case for Kashmir suffered considerably because of Sheikh Abdullah's "Misrule". People have had the opportunity of saying that Sheikh Abdullah, being Nehru's chosen, represents the best which Kashmir can expect from India.

This is the picture of Kashmir given by two English women who visited Karachi recently. One is the wife of a

retired British Army Officer, an old Srinagar resident, who knows Kashmir well; the other is a lady doctor, a philanthropist, who has spent several months in Kashmir.

The British Army Officer's wife, who has left Kashmir regretfully, after many happy years, had a personal experience of Sheikh Abdullah's "misrule". She had tuned in to Radio Pakistan at random on her new 11-valve Phillips wireless set, when one of the State's "national defence guards" knocked at the door of her room in Nedou's Hotel and said to her "General Thimmaya will see you at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Don't you realize



Pakistan's Refugee Minister with a group of nurses in a Refugee Camp

that you are listening to Lahore which is against the law?" The lady protested that she had not known whether the station she had tuned in to was Moscow or Chung-King or Lahore; the guard left her with the curt remark that she should tell that to General Thimmaya at 10 o'clock".

Next morning, another guard came in to say that the appointment with General Thimmaya had been cancelled. "Sheikh Abdullah will see you at 10-30", he said.

Sheikh Abdullah, whom she met at 10-30, told her of her "crime", and that in punishment for it he was confiscating her wireless set. She could, however,

appeal against his decision, he said, and expect to get back the wireless set in about three months.

The lady then informed Sheikh Abdullah that he might as well keep the set, as she was leaving Kashmir as soon as she could. "That is what they have done to our beloved valley", she said sadly. The lady doctor related another story of confiscation of private property. House-boat CLAREMONT, one of the glories of Nassim Bagh, the property of a British shipping magnate of Calcutta who had spent a considerable amount of money in reconstructing a Jehangir Moghul-garden on the moorings, was commandeered by Sheikh

Abdullah's Government, and is now used by one of his Ministers.

"Whatever chances India had of winning Kashmir are being marred by Sheikh Abdullah's Government", the lady doctor said to me.

She was present in Srinagar recently when Jawaharlal Nehru paid an official visit to Kashmir State. "I have seen Nehru driving in an open carriage, I have seen him walking through crowds, the people fighting among themselves to get near him and to cheer him. In Srinagar, I saw him dash past in a closed motor car, with a heavily-armed escort on motor-cycles, in front and rear of his car".

The lady doctor, who has been an admirer of Nehru for many years, felt

sorry that blind love for Kashmir, his homeland, had made Nehru give a "performance, quite foreign to his usually well-balanced judgment."

This visit by Nehru to Srinagar, she said, was in strange contrast to a previous one when he had made a triumphal progress down the Jhelum in a decorated house-boat.

In Kashmir now, she said, were a number of Eastern Europeans—Rumanians, Czechs and German Jews—who, although visitors, were not, strictly speaking, tourists. One German Jew, a well-known Engineer, was running a cherry-farm near Nagin Bagh on the Dal Lake. "Srinagar now is reminiscent of Lisbon in wartime", she said.





