

Bungling in Kashmir

**Balraj
Madhok**



AN ORIENT PAPERBACK

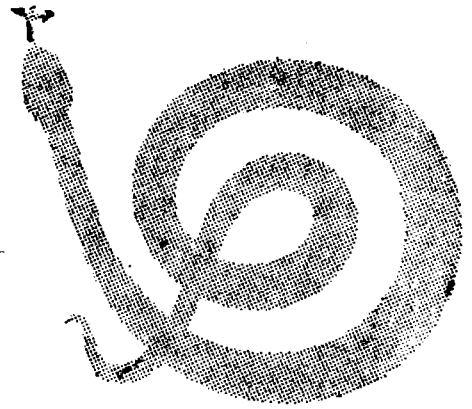
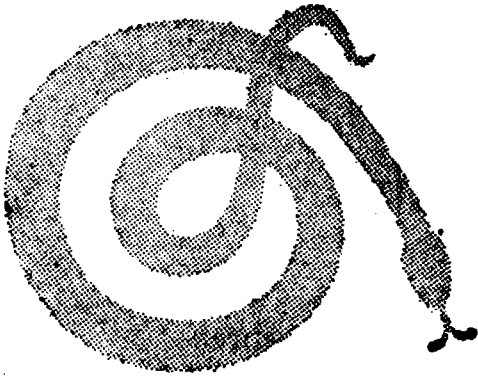
**A sharp indictment
of our Kashmir
policy and those
responsible for it**

BUNGLING IN KASHMIR

Kashmir continues to make headlines. The problem has defied a solution for nearly three decades. Every new effort at a breakthrough has inevitably complicated the matter, and caused for India a good amount of renewed headache.

Balraj Madhok, who has been closely connected with Kashmir problem since its beginning puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of India's policy-makers who jumped from blunder to blunder. Though legally and constitutionally Kashmir is an inalienable part of India as any other state the bunglings of Nehru who kept it out of the hands of Sardar Patel made Kashmir dependent on the whims and fancies of Sheikh Abdullah. According to him the approach of Mrs. Gandhi, which follows that of her father, has made its continuation as a part of India very difficult, if not impossible.

Prof. Balraj Madhok is an outstanding historian and an important political figure. He played a leading role in organising defence of Srinagar at the time of the Pak aggression in 1947. One of the founders of Bhartiya Jana Sangh, he has twice represented Delhi in Parliament. Always controversial in his opinions and analysis, he has authored several political and biographical works, including *Indianisation* and *Murder of Democracy* (available in Orient Paperbacks).



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Balraj Madhok

Published by
 Hind Pocket Books

*Dedicated to my
late father*

SHRI JAGANNATH MADHOK
*Who served Jammu & Kashmir State
all his life*

Bungling in Kashmir

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CONTENTS

Preface / 7

- 1 / **The House that Gulab Singh Built** / 11
- 2 / **Politics of Disruption** / 30
- 3 / **The Dilemma of Hari Singh** / 40
- 4 / **Pak Invasion** / 47
- 5 / **Bungling at U.N.** / 83
- 6 / **The Balance Sheet of Patriotism** / 100
- 7 / **The Dixon Proposal** / 113
- 8 / **Shadow of Cold War** / 121
- 9 / **China Enters the Fray** / 133
- 10 / **Back to Arms** / 151
- 11 / **Tashkent to Simla** / 160
- 12 / **The Way Out** / 167

PREFACE

Five hundred and odd princely states dotted the map of India before August 15, 1947. Jammu and Kashmir was the biggest and most important of them. It was the handiwork of Maharaja Gulab Singh who built it brick by brick, first as a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and then as a junior ally of the British.

The partition of India in 1947 followed by the withdrawal of the British came as a challenge as well as an opportunity to these princely states. The withdrawal of the protecting hand of the British, together with the clear advice of the British crown through its representative, Lord Mountbatten, to accede to India or Pakistan keeping in view the consideration of geographical contiguity left no choice for most of them. Only a few states like Bahawalpur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jammu and Kashmir which were contiguous to both the new dominions had a choice. But from the point of view of socio-religious composition and aspirations of their population, the choice of even these states with the exception of Jammu and Kashmir was obvious. Jammu and Kashmir stood on a different footing. While its eastern half happened to have a Hindu-Buddhist majority, its western part was a Muslim majority area. Its ruler was a Hindu whose natural sympathy

and inclination were towards India. In view of the difficult situation in which he was placed, he needed a sympathetic and tactful handling.

Handling of Jammu and Kashmir state with its peculiar socio-cultural pulls and geo-political situation would have been a tough job even for Vallabhbhai Patel who displayed great statesmanship, tact and understanding in handling the five hundred states that came directly under his purview as the Home Minister in the government of free India. But he never got a chance to handle Kashmir. Jawaharlal Nehru, whose ancestors came from Kashmir and who had developed some kind of infatuation for his Kashmiri cousin, Sheikh Abdullah, wanted to treat Jammu and Kashmir as his close preserve. That was the initial mistake in Indian policy in regard to Kashmir. All the bunglings that have made Kashmir a running sore in the Indian body politic were the direct result of the handlings of Kashmir issue by Nehru. His daughter who succeeded him, has continued bungling in Kashmir as a matter of her filial duty. The reversal of the earlier Indian stand that Kashmir was not negotiable at the Simla summit held after a glorious victory of the Indian armed forces who had foiled all attempts of Pakistan to grab Kashmir by force has put Kashmir in a melting pot once again. Indira Gandhi has committed India to talks with Pakistan for a final settlement of Kashmir problem. Pakistan has made its stand about Kashmir clear. It does not regard it to be a part of India and insists upon the right of self-determination for its people. It is confident that the people of Kashmir valley will opt for Pakistan as and when they are given a free choice to decide about their future.

Indira Gandhi is now trying to get out of the mess she created at Simla by making a bargain with Sheikh Abdullah. Such a bargain is bound to lead to a chain reaction all over the country besides making the disintegration of the "House that Gulab Singh built" inevitable. What is worse there is greater possibility

of such a bargain being effectively denounced and repudiated by Maulana Farooq, the leader of the pro-Pak elements in Kashmir valley who outnumber those whom Sheikh Abdullah may be able to carry with him in support of such a bargain.

The new situation has provided another excuse for Bhutto to force another and bloodier confrontation on India in the near future.

The present study aims at placing all the salient facts about the Kashmir problem in historical setting together with the record of bungling on the part of Nehru dynasty which first politicised a purely military problem and then internationalised it which gave opportunity to super powers to fish in the troubled waters in pursuit of their global strategy and interests. Pakistan de-politicalised the issue in 1965 and 1971 by taking recourse to arms once again. It failed miserably both the times. But thanks to the failure of Indian political leadership and diplomacy, Pakistan again succeeded in politicising the issue at Simla.

It is difficult to predict whether a political solution would be found. A final solution of Kashmir problem, however, depends upon a final solution of the problem posed by Pakistan itself. The inevitable disintegration and disappearance of Pakistan from the map of the world alone will provide a lasting solution of Kashmir as well as so many other problems created by the artificial and communal partition of India in 1947.

BALRAJ MADHOK

I

THE HOUSE THAT GULAB SINGH BUILT

The state of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed in 1947 before the Pakistani invasion, was the handiwork of Maharaja Gulab Singh, one of the most remarkable soldier-statesmen that India had produced in the nineteenth century. At a time when Indian principalities and kingdoms, some of which had a hoary past, were falling flat like a house of cards before the fast-moving British steamroller, he carved out for himself a virtually independent kingdom stretching from the plains of the Punjab to the Pamirs and including such areas as Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit which had been politically cut off from India for many centuries.

Born in 1792, Gulab Singh was a scion of the ruling family of Jammu which was one of the 22 petty Rajput states in which the sub-mountainous Kandi area to the north of the Punjab was then divided. He left his home at the age of seventeen in search of a soldierly fortune. He intended to go to Kabul and join the army of Shah Shuja but his attendants refused to go beyond the Indus. Then, he decided to join the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who was at that time just making his mark in the Punjab. He joined the army of Ranjit Singh in 1809, the year in which the latter signed the famous treaty of Amritsar with the British which gave him a free hand to expand his kingdom to the west of the Sutlej.

Gulab Singh soon distinguished himself as an intrepid soldier with a high sense of duty and devotion to Ranjit Singh. He made his mark in many a campaign which Ranjit Singh undertook to conquer Kangra, Multan and Hazara. He also introduced his two younger brothers, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, in the court of Ranjit Singh. Both of them later played a very important role in the making and moulding of the kingdom of Lahore.

Ranjit Singh rewarded Gulab Singh by appointing him Raja of his ancestral principality of Jammu and put the *tilak* on his forehead with his own hand in 1822. Thus, after thirteen years of his absence from Jammu, he returned to it as its ruler, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Having thus secured a foothold in his ancestral home, he assiduously tried to expand his influence in the surrounding areas while serving Ranjit Singh whenever and wherever required. His interests at the court of the Lahore kingdom were well looked after by his younger brother, Raja Dhian Singh, who rose to be its Prime Minister.

As Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh raised an army of his own which included such notable soldiers as Zorawar Singh who distinguished himself as the conqueror of Ladakh, Baltistan and western Tibet. He successfully conquered the principalities of Bhimber, Rajouri, Bhadarwah and Kishtwar which extended the limits of his state to Rawalpindi in the west and Ladakh in the north. The valley of Kashmir which had been annexed by Ranjit Singh earlier was, however, ruled by a separate governor as a province of the Lahore kingdom and Gulab Singh had nothing to do with it.

In 1834, Gulab Singh decided to extend his sway to Ladakh and Baltistan. He entrusted this job to Zorawar Singh who successfully led six expeditions to Ladakh between 1834 and 1841. Since Kashmir valley was not under Gulab Singh at that time, the route followed by Zorawar Singh was through Kishtwar, Padar and Zanskar. It was more difficult

but much shorter than the route passing through Kashmir valley via Yojila pass.

After having conquered and added the kingdoms of Baltistan and Ladakh to the territories of Gulab Singh, Zorawar Singh decided to go forward and conquer Tibet. It was a most adventurist move. He left Leh with an army of about 5,000 Dogras and Ladakhis in May 1841 with a pledge not to return to Leh till he had conquered Lhasa. After overcoming the Tibetan resistance at Rudok and Tashigong, he reached Minsar near lake Mansarovar and the holy Kailash mountain. From there he advanced to Taklakot which is just about 15 miles from the borders of Nepal and Kumaon and built a fort there. Here he met two emissaries—one from the Maharaja of Nepal and the other from the British Governor of U.P., then called North-West Province. The British were not happy over Zorawar Singh's advance because they dreaded a direct link-up of Lahore kingdom with the kingdom of Nepal. They had in fact been putting pressure on Lahore durbar to press Gulab Singh for recalling Zorawar Singh and vacating the Tibetan territory already occupied by him. Zorawar Singh was, however, blissfully ignorant of these moves. But an intense cold weather and the long distance from his base at Leh forced him to stop further advance and encamp at Taklakot for the winter.

In the meantime, the Lhasa authorities sent large reinforcements to meet him. On learning the approach of this new army from Lhasa, Zorawar Singh, intrepid and dashing as he was, decided to take the offensive against the advancing army instead of waiting for it to attack him. It was not a very correct decision. His supply position had become extremely bad and his Dogra soldiers had been reduced to sore straits by the intense cold. Many of them were frost-bitten and incapable of moving about. As a result the battle of Toyu, which was fought on the 11th and 12th of December, 1841 at a

height of about sixteen thousand feet above sea level, proved disastrous for Zorawar Singh. He died fighting and his Dogra army like Napoleon's army in Russia, was destroyed more by cold than by the Tibetans.

The death of Zorawar Singh was a grave blow to Gulab Singh's prestige in Ladakh where people rose in rebellion aided and abetted by the advancing Tibetan army. A new army was then sent from Jammu under the command of Hari Chand which suppressed the rebellion and threw back the Tibetan army after inflicting a crushing defeat on it which convincingly avenged the defeat of Toyu. Thereupon the Tibetan government approached for peace and a peace treaty was signed on the 2nd of Asauj, 1889 Vikrami (September, 1842) by Hari Chand and Ratnu on behalf of Gulab Singh and Kalon Surkhan and Depon Pshy on behalf of the Dalai Lama. By this treaty the traditional boundary between Ladakh and Tibet "as recognised by both sides since olden times" was accepted as the boundary between Jammu and Tibet. The village and area around Minsar near Mansarovar lake which was held by the Rajas of Ladakh since 1583 was, however, retained by the Jammu Government. The revenue from Minsar which lies hundreds of miles inside Tibet was being received by the Jammu and Kashmir Government regularly till 1948. This treaty of 1842 settled the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet in unequivocal terms leaving no scope for any kind of border dispute.

While Zorawar Singh was making history in Ladakh and Tibet, the kingdom that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had built had fallen on evil days. Ranjit Singh died in 1839. His death was a signal for the worst kind of anarchy and mutual killings in the history of the Punjab. The Sikh nobles who had been jealous of the ascendancy of the Dogra brothers in the Lahore kingdom, now began to conspire against them with the help of Sher Singh who succeeded to the throne of Ranjit Singh after the death of

Kharag Singh and his son Naunihal Singh in rapid succession. The situation was made much more difficult by the presence of British troops in Peshawar in terms of the tripartite treaty of 1838 by which Ranjit Singh had agreed to help the British to put Shah Shuja on the throne of Afghanistan. Gulab Singh was then at Peshawar to assist the British on behalf of the Lahore darbar. The Muslim battalions of the Punjab army had refused to fight against the Muslim Afghans and had mutinied. The party in power at the Lahore court was, if not actually hostile, at least indifferent to the fate of the British troops still stranded in Afghanistan. Gulab Singh well understood the situation and proved very helpful to the British in terms of the tripartite treaty in getting them out of a difficult situation. The British felt gratified and at one stage actually proposed that he might be given possession of Peshawar and the valley of Jalalabad in return for Ladakh for the timely help rendered by him. But he refused the offer both on moral as well as practical grounds. Ladakh had been conquered by him through his own armies and was contiguous to Jammu while Peshawar and Jalalabad would be too far removed from his ancestral base at Jammu. But the assistance he rendered created a high respect in the minds of the British for him and his Dogra army.

Things moved rapidly in Lahore after 1841. Both Dhian Singh, the ablest leader and Prime Minister of the Lahore kingdom, and Suchet Singh were brutally murdered. Maharaja Sher Singh too was murdered and the infant Dalip Singh was put on the throne with a council of regency dominated by his mother Rani Chand Kaur. Gulab Singh escaped because he kept away from Lahore most of the time. These murders of his brothers naturally left him cold towards the affairs of the Punjab and he began to concentrate on building his own power in Jammu. He took no part in the first Anglo-Sikh war which began in 1845. The Lahore darbar wanted him to

come down to Lahore and lead its armies. Had he agreed, it would have made a world of difference for both sides. His advice to the council of regency at Lahore to avoid war with the British was, in the circumstances, not heeded.

After the defeat of the Sikh army at Subraon in February 1846, peace negotiations were opened. Gulab Singh was given full powers to negotiate on behalf of the Lahore darbar. The British government were well aware of the resourcefulness of Gulab Singh who was reported to have advised the Lahore darbar to avoid pitched battles with the British and instead cross the Sutlej and attack Delhi with the help of some picked cavalry regiments. The British were, therefore, very anxious to secure his friendship. He was offered a bait that he would be recognised as an independent ruler of Jammu and Kashmir if he withdrew his support from the Lahore darbar and made a separate deal with the British. Gulab Singh replied that he could not negotiate with the British about his own possessions while he was acting as an envoy for Dalip Singh, the king of Lahore. He continued the negotiations on behalf of the Lahore darbar which culminated in the treaty of Lahore signed on March 9, 1846.

According to this treaty of Lahore it was agreed to by the Lahore darbar to cede the territory between the Beas and the Sutlej to the British and pay £15 lakh (Rs. one crore Nanak Shahi) as war indemnity. Lal Singh, the then Prime Minister of the Lahore kingdom, had no love for Gulab Singh. In order to strike a blow at Gulab Singh he offered to the British the hill territories of the Lahore kingdom including Jammu and Kashmir in lieu of the indemnity. His idea was "to deprive Gulab Singh of his territory and give the British the option either of holding Kashmir which would have been impossible at that time because of the long distance and intervening independent state of the Punjab or to accept a reduced indemnity." This offer, however, suited Gulab Singh.

and the original offer of making him an independent ruler of Jammu and Kashmir was revived. But now it was conditioned by his taking the responsibility of paying the indemnity which had been made a charge on this territory by the cleverness of Lal Singh.

Gulab Singh agreed to pay the money to the British and they recognised him as an independent sovereign. Accordingly, a stipulation was made in the treaty of Lahore by which Maharaja Dalip Singh of Lahore agreed to recognise the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by a separate agreement between him and the British Government.”

Seven days later, on 16th March, 1846, the treaty of Amritsar was signed between Maharaja Gulab Singh and the British according to which Gulab Singh was recognised as an independent ruler of all the territories already in his possession together with the valley of Kashmir which till then formed a separate province of the Lahore kingdom.

According to the treaty of Amritsar the British transferred for safe independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and his heirs all the hilly and mountainous portions with its dependencies situated to the east of the river Indus and west of the river Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahaul—being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore kingdom. In consideration for this transfer Maharaja Gulab Singh was to pay the British Rs. 75 lakhs in cash.¹

There was no stipulation in this treaty about the British keeping a Resident or an army in Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja, however, recognised the supremacy of the British government in token of which he was to present annually to the British government one horse, 12 hill goats and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

1. *Founding of Kashmir State* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 98.

The amount to be paid was reduced to Rs. 75 lakhs from one crore because the British decided to retain in their own hands the territory between the Beas and the Ravi which includes the Kangra district of the Punjab because of the strategic value of Nurpur and Kangra forts. The territories of which Gulab Singh was thus recognised as an almost independent ruler also included the area between the Jhelum and the Indus in which Rawalpindi and Islamabad, the new capital of the Pakistan, are situated. Since the area was too far removed from Jammu, he approached the British to exchange it for certain areas near Jammu. Thus the Jhelum instead of the Indus became the western border of his kingdom.

Kashmir valley was then controlled by Sheikh Imam-ud-Din as Governor appointed by the Lahore darbar. He was secretly instructed by Lal Singh not to hand over the possession of the valley to Gulab Singh. As a result he put up stiff resistance to the vanguard of Gulab Singh's army when it reached Kashmir to occupy it in terms of treaty of the Amritsar. Lakhpat, one of his ablest Generals, lost his life in this campaign. It was only after the British had put pressure on Lahore darbar and a new army was despatched to Kashmir that Gulab Singh could occupy the valley. Thus he had to make the possession of Kashmir valley, obtained by him by the treaty of Amritsar, effective by force of arms.

After he occupied Kashmir. Nathu Shah who controlled Gilgit on behalf of the Lahore darbar transferred his allegiance to Gulab Singh who became master of Gilgit as well. Thus by 1850, Gulab Singh had become both *de facto* and *de jure* master of the whole of Jammu and Kashmir state including Jammu, Kashmir valley, Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit. The states of Hunza, Nagar and Ishkuman adjoining Sinkiang were added to the state by his son, Ranbir Singh, some years later.

It is clear from the above account that Jammu

and Kashmir state as at present constituted is purely the creation of Gulab Singh who welded together such diverse and far-flung areas as Jammu bordering on the Punjab, Ladakh bordering on Tibet and Gilgit bordering on Sinkiang, Afghanistan and the U.S.S.R across the Pamirs.

It is wrong to describe the British grant of *de-jure* recognition to him as master of Jammu and Kashmir as a sale deed. He was already in possession of most of this territory and would have fought for it if the British had tried to dispossess him. Actually the British had earlier offered him this territory even without payment of any money. He was forced to pay this money simply because of his own loyalty to the Lahore darbar and the chicanery of Lal Singh, the last Prime Minister of the Lahore kingdom.

The events and circumstances leading to the creation of Jammu and Kashmir state as detailed above naturally made it a heterogeneous conglomeration of diverse and distinct areas devoid of any basic unity, geographical, social or cultural, except obedience to a common overlord. Geographically it presented a delightful panorama of alluvial plains to the south of Jammu obtained in return for the territory lying, between the Jhelum and the Indus, melting into hills, hills melting into snowy mountains and mountains into high arid and wind-swept plateaus of Ladakh and Baltistan with the vale of Kashmir as an emerald set in the centre inviting the wistful glances of all Asian neighbours.

Broadly speaking, geography divides this state into the catchment areas of three major rivers of the Punjab : the Chenab, the Jhelum and the Indus. The entire area from the plains to Pir Panchal range is drained by Chenab. The valley of Kashmir and western districts of Mazaffarabad, Poonch and Mirpur form the basin of the Jhelum. The Indus drains the waters of Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit before turning south and cutting through the

Himalayas to reach the Punjab plains.

From the linguistic and cultural point of view, this vast and varied state of 84471 square miles, bigger than many of the modern European states, whose only unity lay in a uniform and unified administrative system, could be divided into six distinct peoples with a distinct past. A clear understanding of the historical and cultural background of these different peoples and regions and a proper appreciation of their economic, social and cultural ties and political aspirations is essential for a proper understanding and appraisal of the Kashmir problem as it developed after partition of India in 1947.

The first and the foremost is the Jammu region, the homeland of the founder of the state as also of the Dogra people. It is directly contiguous to Indian Punjab and Himachal Pradesh comprising the entire districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur and Doda including Bhadarwah and Kishtwar. It stretches from the River Ravi in the east to roughly the cease-fire line in the west and from Suchetgarh in the south to the Banihal Pass in the Pir Panchal range in the north. Its total area is about 12,000 square miles.

The inhabitants of this region are Dogras. A good number of Kashmiris have spilled over into the Ramban and Kishtwar tehsils of Doda district. The Gujars, who speak a Pahari dialect, inhabit the north-western part of this region. The total population of this region is about 20 lakhs of which about 15 lakh are Hindus. The spoken language of this region is Dogri which includes a number of Pahari dialects and is written in Devnagari script.

The whole of this region is mountainous except for a narrow belt bordering on the Punjab. A few beautiful valleys like that of Bhadarwah, which is known as "miniature Kashmir" lie in its interior. The Chenab flows right through this region draining its waters and carrying its valuable timber wealth to

Akhnur near Jammu where it enters the Punjab. The chief occupation of the people is agriculture and soldiering. Thousands of hardy Dogras from this region serve in the Indian army. Maize and rice are the main agricultural crops. Lower Himalayan ranges, traversing this zone are covered with rich fir and *Deodar* forests. Lumbering, therefore, is an important industry. Forest produce, lime, resin, honey, '*anardana*' and medicinal herbs, besides timber, form the chief exports of this area. It is also the richest part of the state in respect of mineral wealth. Extensive deposits of coal, iron and aluminium are known to exist in it.

Bhadarwah which is now linked with Chamba in Himachal Pradesh and with Batote on the Jammu-Srinagar road by motorable roads is the most beautiful part of this region. Its fruits are superior even to those of Kashmir valley and the natural scenery is no less charming. Kishtwar, which lies just to the north of Bhadarwah, is famous like Kashmir for its saffron fields. It links Jammu with Ladakh which lies to its north.

Politically, this area had remained divided into a number of small principalities ruled over by Hindu Rajas owing occasional and doubtful allegiance to the powerful empires rising in the plains till their unification into one compact whole by Raja Gulab Singh. He himself came from the ruling family of Jammu, which principality occupied, according to tradition, the leading place among the twenty-two principalities of this hill area. Jammu is still the chief town of this region and the winter capital of the whole state.

Socially, culturally, and economically, the people of this region are indissolubly linked with the Dogra belt of the Punjab. In fact, the Dogra belt spread over Gurdaspur, Kangra and Hoshiarpur districts of Indian Punjab, Chamba and Mandi districts of Himachal Pradesh, and the Jammu region of the Jammu and Kashmir state forms, one compact

homeland of the Dogras. Naturally, therefore, the people of this region aspire to remain connected with India, irrespective of what happens to other parts of the state. Northern parts of Sialkot district of Pakistani Punjab including Zafarwal, Shakargarh areas captured by Indian army in 1971 war are also part of this belt.

From the Indian point of view this is the most important part of Jammu and Kashmir state. It forms the only direct and feasible link between India and the rest of the state. The Pathankot-Jammu road and the Jammu-Banihal road that connect rest of India with the Kashmir valley pass entirely through this region. The choice of its inhabitants on the question of accession is beyond doubt. Its mineral and power resources are immense.

To the north of Jammu and to the north-east of the Kashmir valley lies the extensive plateau of Ladakh. It is directly contiguous to Himachal Pradesh. It was being ruled over by a local Buddhist Raja, Tandup Namgyal, when it was conquered by Zorawar Singh between 1834 and 1840 for his master, Maharaja Gulab Singh. He entered Ladakh through Kishtwar and not through Kashmir valley. Its total area is about 34,000 square miles and total population is about two lakhs, mostly Buddhists.

This is a very backward area. The inhabitants eke out a bare existence by rearing yaks and cultivating *girm*, a kind of barley, in the few high and dry valleys of the Indus. Their chief pre-occupation is their religion. They give their best in men and material to the numerous monasteries that act as oasis in a veritable desert. The wealth, art and learning of the people are concentrated in these monasteries. Some of them contain rich collections of ancient Buddhist literature in Sanskrit or its translations in Bodhi, the local language of the area. The population is kept down by social customs like polyandry and dedication of girls and boys to the monasteries and is being further reduced by slow conver-

sion to Islam through inter-marriages with Balti and Kashmiri Muslims. The offspring of these mixed marriages are known as *arghuns*. They form the trading community.

Leh, the chief town of this zone, is situated at a height of more than 11,000 feet above sea level and is one of the highest towns in the world. It used to be the seat of the Raja of Ladakh before the Dogra conquest. After the conquest and formation of the Ladakh district, it became the summer headquarters of the District Officer appointed by the State Government. It is connected with Srinagar by a well-kept highway. It crosses the high mountains dividing Ladakh from Kashmir through the Yojila pass. Leh used to be, till a few years back, a great mart for Central Asian trade. Caravans laden with silks, rugs and tea used to pour into Leh from distant Tashkand, Kashghar and Yarkand. These goods were exchanged here for sugar, cloth and other general merchandise from India. But since the absorption of these Central Asian states into communist empires of Russia and China, this trade has virtually stopped. But the strategic importance of Leh as a connecting link with Central Asia has in no way been decreased.

A part of Ladakh was overrun by the Pakistanis in 1947-48 when, after capturing Askaru and Kargil, they began their advance on Leh. Several hundreds of innocent Buddhists were murdered and many monasteries were looted, despoiled and desecrated by the invaders. But the epoch-making landings of the I.A.F. dakotas carrying the sinews of war on the improvised airfields of Leh at more than 11,000 ft. above sea level and the brilliant winter offensive of the Indian army leading to the capture of the Yojila Pass and Kargil saved Leh and the rest of Ladakh from going the way of Gilgit and Baltistan.

The third distinct zone of the state is Baltistan inhabited by the Balti people. It lies to the north of Kashmir and to the west of Ladakh. For admi-

nistrative purposes, the Maharaja's government had grouped it with Ladakh to form the district of that name. Its total area is about 14,000 square miles and total population is now about two lakhs. Almost all of them are Muslims.

Baltistan was conquered by Zorawar Singh along-with Ladakh between 1834 and 1840. Before that it was being ruled over by petty Muslim Rajas of Ladakhi descent. The chief town of this zone is Askardu which used to be the winter headquarters of the Ladakh district. Situated on the Indus like Leh it has a fort of great natural strength.

Baltistan was overrun by Pakistani troops and Gilgit Scouts during the winter of 1947-48. The State garrison in the Askardu fort held on gallantly for some months. But no effective help could be sent to them from Kashmir because the Yojila pass had passed into the control of Pakistan and aid by air was made difficult by the enemy occupation of all possible airstrips.

The winter offensive of the Indian Army in 1948 succeeded in the recapture of the Yojila Pass and the town of Kargil beyond it, which commands the road to Leh and Askardu. Thus a part of Baltistan came back into Indian hands but its major portion including the town of Askardu still lies on the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line.

Baltistan is not of much economic or strategic importance. It is sandwiched between Ladakh and Gilgit. But it has provided Pakistan with a convenient route for advance towards Yojila Pass and Leh from its base in Gilgit. Its main produce are barley and fruits, specially apricots. Some of the valleys of the Indus in this zone are quite fertile. The people of this part of the state are very backward and till the time of invasion were quite indifferent to political developments in Kashmir valley and Jammu. But now they have been infected by Pakistani propaganda. Pakistan is known to have linked Askardu with Gilgit by a motorable road and

has also built a big air-base there.

The fourth distinct region of the state is Gilgit. It includes the Gilgit district which used to be administered directly by the State Government and the tributary states of Hunza, Nagar, Chillas, Punial Ishkuman, Kuh and Ghizar. The total area of this region is about 16,000 square miles and the total population is about two lakhs. Almost all of them are Shia Muslims or followers of the Aga Khan. They belong to the Dardic race and are closely connected with the Chitralis in race, culture and language.

This region was conquered with great difficulty by Maharaja Gulab Singh and his son Maharaja Ranbir Singh between 1846 and 1860. Thousands of Dogra soldiers lost their lives in the campaigns that led to the conquest of this inhospitable but strategically very important region. It is here that the three empires, British, Chinese and Russian, met. The independent kingdom of Afghanistan also touched its boundaries.

The strategic importance of this region has increased very much since the advent of air force and the expansion of the U.S.S.R. and the communist China towards the Central Asian regions adjoining Gilgit and Baltistan. Though very mountainous, this zone contains the valley of the Gilgit, a tributary of the Indus, which can serve as an excellent military and air base.

Gilgit is divided from Kashmir by the same high Himalayan range which divides Kashmir from Ladakh and Baltistan. But the direct and the shortest link between Gilgit and Kashmir is provided by another Pass, the Burzila. It is about 12,000 feet above sea level and, therefore, remains closed for many months in the year. The access to Gilgit from Pakistan via Peshawar is comparatively easy.

The whole of Gilgit including the Burzila Pass now lies on the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line. The state garrison as also the military governor

appointed by the state were overpowered by Pakistan troops with the aid of the local militia, the Gilgit Scouts, during the winter of 1947. Gilgit has since been developed as a major military base by Pakistan.

From the economic point of view Gilgit has vast potentialities. Its climate is bracing and temperate. Temperate fruits like apple, apricot, and almond grow in abundance. *Zira*, a valuable spice, however, is the most valuable produce of this area and is exported in large quantities. The people are healthy and fair-complexioned. Polo is their national game in which they excel. They had come under Hindu and Buddhist cultural influence quite early. Gilgit probably formed a part of the Khotan province in Ashoka's empire. A recent find of Buddhist and Sanskrit books near Gilgit confirms this view. A class of people among them is held in high esteem. They are expected not to eat beef and to remain clean. They were perhaps the Gilgiti Brahmins before their conversion to Islam.

Till 1947, these people were very much devoted to the Maharaja and his Government. They protested against the lease of Gilgit to the British. But after the partition they, especially the Rajas of Hunza and Nagar, were incited by the Pakistanis and the British Political Agent to press the Maharaja for accession to Pakistan. They later became collaborators of the Pakistanis and revolted against the Maharaja's government. The silk road which now links Pakistan with communist China passes through this region.

The Punjabi-speaking districts of Mirpur, Poonch and Muzaffarabad lying along the river Jhelum which forms the western boundary of the state, constitute the fifth distinct region of the state. Mirpur formed a part of the Jammu province, Muzaffarabad of Kashmir and Poonch was a big *jagir* in the state ruled over by a descendant of Raja Dhian Singh, younger brother of Maharaja Gulab Singh, who rose to be the Prime Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The total area of this belt is about 6,000 square miles and total population about 10 lakhs. Nearly a lakh of them were Hindus. They have either been killed or squeezed out by the local Muslims with the help of Pakistani invaders. The chief towns of this area are Mirpur, Poonch, which is still in Indian hands, and Muzaffarabad on the confluence of the Jhelum and the Krishna Ganga. This last town is now the headquarters of the so-called Azad Kashmir government. Mirpur and Poonch were conquered by Gulab Singh for Maharaja Ranjit Singh from the local Rajas. Muzaffarabad was acquired by him after he had occupied Kashmir after defeating its Muslim Sultan in a bloody battle.

Parts of this zone are quite fertile. But the real importance of this region lies in its warlike manpower. Poonch area alone gave about sixty thousand recruits to the Indian army during the second World War. The Sudbans, the Jarals and the Chibs who inhabit this area are all Rajput converts to Islam. This area has an additional importance for Pakistan because the river Jhelum which carries the rich timber wealth of Kashmir and Karen forests flows through it. The headworks of the Upper Jhelum Canal at Mangla and Mangla dam are situated near Mirpur in this zone. This zone also links the West Punjab and the North-Western Frontier Province with the valley of Kashmir.

The people of this region are bound by ties of common religion with those of Hazara, Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts of West Punjab. They actively sided with the Pakistani raiders when they invaded the state from that side. At present most of this zone except the towns of Poonch and Mendhar lies on the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line which runs just three miles from the town of Poonch.

In the centre of the state, surrounded by diverse regions and peoples mentioned above and cut off from them by high Himalayan walls, lies the beautiful valley of Kashmir, the *nandan vana* of India and

the playground of Asia. This home of the sage Kashyap who, according to tradition, made a breach near Baramula and thus converted a lake into a spacious valley, is essentially a beauty spot. It includes the valley of the river Jhelum and many smaller valleys especially those of the Lidar and the Sindh, the two tributaries of the Jhelum. Its total area is about 3,000 square miles and the total population about 20 lakhs.

Once a seat of Sanskrit learning and cradle of Aryan culture, it is now a predominantly Muslim area. The Kashmiris were forcibly converted to Islam by Sultan Sikandar towards the end of fourteenth century. They wanted to come back to their ancestral faith during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, but the orthodox Kashmiri pandits refused to receive them back in the Hindu fold.

Racially, the Kashmiris belong to the Aryan stock. The Kashmiri language, originally written in Sharda, a form of the Devnagari script, has a rich literature. But under the influence of Islam this ancient script has been discarded and the Persian script now rules supreme.

Kashmir has a continuous recorded history of more than two thousand years. The great Kashmiri historians, Kalhan and Ratnakar, have written beautiful stories about Kashmir which, apart from their historical value, are recognised as great pieces of Sanskrit literature. Some kings of Kashmir like Lalitaditya and Avantivarman extended their sway far beyond the mountains that surround Kashmir into the plains of the Indus and the Ganga. They enriched Kashmir with beautiful temples and buildings, the magnificent ruins of which still remind the visitors to Avantipur and Martand of the glory that was Kashmir. Every beautiful spot and spring in Kashmir is a holy place of the Hindus. Hindu shrines and temples are found in the remotest corners and on the highest peaks of Kashmir. Amarnath, Gangabal, Khir Bhawani and Mattan are some of

the most important holy places in Kashmir that have an all-India fame and importance. The temple of Shankaracharya in the heart of the valley and overlooking the city of Srinagar is an outstanding reminder of Kashmir's unity with the rest of India.

Islam entered Kashmir through a Balti adventurer, Renchen Shah and a devout missionary, Shah Hamdan. The work they began was soon completed by Sikandar, the Khorasani iconoclast who converted the whole of Kashmir to Islam by force and destroyed all shrines built by Hindu rulers. A few families managed to escape to safety. Their progeny now forms the Kashmiri Pandit community of Kashmir, about one lakh people in all.

The Pathans were followed by the Mughals in the 16th century, who enriched Kashmir by building the beautiful Mughal gardens. They were succeeded by Sikhs, who in turn were supplanted by the Dogras in 1846.

These linguistic, cultural and geographical divisions of the state provide the physical and historical background of the Kashmir problem which has been hanging fire all these years. The attitudes of the people inhabiting these distinct regions towards the partition of India and the political and legal implications of the accession of the state to India under Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947, are essential elements of the Kashmir problem.

2

POLITICS OF DISRUPTION

The forces and circumstances which ended the Dogra rule over Jammu and Kashmir and gave rise to the 'Kashmir problem' can be directly traced to the socio-political revolution that began to take shape in British India from the early years of the 20th century. The British rulers of India foresaw quite early the birth of national awakening of a different type than the one which had manifested itself in 1857 and formulated a set policy to checkmate it. It was thus enunciated by Sir John Stratchey, one of the ablest British administrators in India, in 1874 : "The existence side by side of these (Hindu and Muslim) hostile creeds is one strong point in our political position in India. The better classes of Mohammedans are a source of strength to us and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but an energetic minority of the population whose political interests are identical with ours."

In pursuit of this policy, the British began to use the Muslims to further their own political end and to counteract the national upsurge which had always been essentially Hindu in inspiration. The partition of Bengal in 1905, the command performance of Aga Khan deputation in 1906 and the subsequent formation of the Muslim League and the introduction of separate electorates in 1909 were calculated steps in the pursuit of this set policy.

This British policy got a momentary setback

during the short-lived honeymoon between Khilafat movement which aroused religious consciousness and extraterritorial loyalties of the Indian Muslims under the leadership of fanatics like Maulana Mohammed Ali and the Indian National Congress under the mystical leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But this marriage of convenience could not last long. The abolition in 1921 of both Sultanate and Khilafat by the Turks themselves enabled the British to divert against the infidel Hindus the religious frenzy aroused by the Khilafat movement amongst the Muslims against the infidel Britishers. The bloody communal riots that followed in Malabar, Kohat, Multan, Saharanpur and many other places marked the failure of the Gandhian experiment in communal patch up and a complete success of the British policy.

The growth of aggressively communal Muslim separatism in Indian politics that followed, had its reverberations in the princely states as well. But as in British India, it needed support from the British political department to find its feet there. Since Jammu and Kashmir state was a Muslim majority state under a Hindu Maharaja who was proving to be inconveniently independent and patriotic, the British decided to raise the Muslim bogey in his state to chastise him and bring him to his knees.

This marked the extension of religio-political awakening and sectarian political organisations of British India into the Jammu and Kashmir state. A clear gap of the religio-political awakening in the state which took different regions according to socio-religious complexion in each case is essential for any scientific study of the Kashmir problem.

Geographical barriers and socio-economic backwardness precluded the frontier areas of Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit from being affected by the religio-political influences which began to enter the state from 1921 onwards till they were violently shaken out of their blissful ignorance or indifference to developments in the rest of the state by shots and

shells of Pakistani invaders in 1947-48.

Of the remaining three regions, Kashmir valley was the first to experience political activity. Mirpur and Poonch areas followed the lead of Kashmir. The Dogra area of Jammu remained steeped in its sectional and factional politics till the revolutionary changes in the state's administrative and constitutional set-up following the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir in 1947 forced its people to organise themselves politically and adjust themselves to the new order.

Broadly speaking, the political life in the Jammu and Kashmir state has been revolving around three organisations—the Muslim Conference, the National Conference and Praja Parishad. The National Conference and Praja Parishad have of late merged into the Indian National Congress and the Bhartiya Jan Sangh respectively.

The first of these in order of age and the influence it has exerted on the politics of the state is the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. It began as a religio-political movement of the Muslims aimed particularly against the Hindu Maharaja. The inspiration and guidance for it came in the beginning directly from the British officers of the political department who had become irritated by the anti-British attitude and progressive and patriotic views and sympathies of Maharaja Hari Singh. This has been conclusively proved by the correspondence between Sheikh Abdullah and the political department which came to light at the time of winding up of British Residency in Srinagar in 1947.

Certain grievances of the Muslims who constituted an overwhelming majority of the population in Kashmir valley and Mirpur Poonch areas provided the starting point. Abdullah who had just been dismissed from the post of teacher in a Government High School at Srinagar on grounds of misconduct became a willing instrument of the British for browbeating the Maharaja. He along with some other disgruntled educated Muslims laid the foundation of

the Muslim Conference at Srinagar in 1930.

The anti-Maharaja and anti-Hindu propaganda of the Muslim Conference with the help of mullahs gained immediate results. The religious fanaticism of the illiterate Muslim masses, thus roused, resulted in widespread anti-Hindu riots in Kashmir valley as also in Mirpur and Poonch districts. Thousands of Hindus were killed or rendered homeless. The Maharaja had to request the British government for troops to quell the riots and rebellion. His spirit was broken. He had to appoint an inquiry commission under the chairmanship of Glancy and accept many British officers.

The report of the Glancy Commission which the Maharaja accepted in toto brought many privileges to the Muslims. An undermatriculate Muslim was now to be preferred to a graduate Hindu for the recruitment to the state services. The state was to have a Legislative Assembly called the Praja Sabha. It was to have 75 members in all, of which 33 were to be elected. The Muslims were given 21 elected seats.

The agitation and its success raised the prestige of Sheikh Abdullah very high among the Muslims. He began to be hailed as *Sher-e-Kashmir* (Lion of Kashmir).

But a split occurred in the Muslim Conference in the year 1939 when Sheikh Abdullah decided to convert it into National Conference. He was able to carry a majority of his Kashmiri followers with him. But the Muslims of Jammu and Mirpur-Poonch regions refused to follow his lead.

Jammu, Mirpur, Poonch and Muzaffarabad then became the main centres of activity of the Muslim Conference. It continued its work in Kashmir as well under the leadership of Maulvi Mohammed Yusuf, the priest of Srinagar. His party came to be known as *bakra* (goat) party as against the *sher* (tiger) party of Sheikh Abdullah. But the central leadership of the Muslim Conference now passed

into the hands of Punjabi-speaking Muslims like Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim.

Under the new leadership, the Muslim Conference became a branch of the All India Muslim League. It began to support the demand for Pakistan openly and wanted the whole of Jammu and Kashmir state to be a part of Pakistan. Finding the chances of accession of the state to Pakistan by pressure tactics from within fading away due to the resolute stand taken by Mehar Chand Mahajan who became Prime Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir state early in October 1947, the Muslim Conference leaders, in collaboration with the Pakistan government, began to plan for a massive invasion of the state from Pakistan to grab it by force.

The failure of the Pakistani invasion to achieve its main objective of occupying Kashmir valley and Jammu and presenting the world with a *fait accompli* sealed the fate of the Muslim Conference in the state for the time being. Awami Action Committee of Maulana Farook is the new edition of Muslim Conference in Kashmir.

The National Conference was born in 1939 when the Muslim Conference in its annual session at Sopore decided by a majority vote to change its name from 'Muslim' to 'National' and admit non-Muslims also into it. The decision was taken on the initiative of Sheikh Abdullah who then became the President of the National Conference.

The sudden change in the name of the organisation was motivated mainly by the desire of Sheikh Abdullah to secure the moral and material support of the Indian National Congress and the nationalist press in his fight against the Dogra Raj. He had been thinking in this direction since 1937 when Congress was returned to power in 8 out of 11 British Indian provinces including the overwhelmingly Muslim North-Western Frontier Province. The

Muslim League had been badly trounced in the Punjab where it could secure only one out of nearly 90 Muslim seats in the Punjab Legislature. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who visited Kashmir soon after also influenced him. He realised that power in whatever way it came into popular hands would mean power for Muslims who constituted above 90% of the population of the valley. It, therefore, did not matter very much if their organisation was called Muslim Conference or National Conference so long as the objective remained the same. The only change it meant in practice was a greater stress on the denunciation of the Maharaja's rule in political and economic rather than communal terms. Anti-Dogra slogans replaced the anti-Hindu slogans.

A number of leading Indian communists, who had fled to Kashmir in the wake of anti-communist steps taken by the government of India after the declaration of war against Nazi Germany in 1939, also helped in bringing about this change in nomenclature. They came to occupy important places in the counsels of this party from its very inception.

The strong anti-communist feeling that grew in the rest of India after the sudden *volte face* of the Communist Party of India in the wake of Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941, and the treacherous role played by the Indian communists during the Quit India movement in 1942 did not affect the communists working through the National Conference in Kashmir because Quit India movement was never extended to that state. Furthermore, their advocacy of the right of self-determination on the point of secession for the various linguistic regions of India and their stress on a Congress League compromise on that basis ideally suited Sheikh Abdullah's aspiration to become the *de facto* Sultan of Kashmir valley. So he began to place more and more reliance on the communists for providing radical ideological basis for the achievement of his personal ambition. The absence of the Congress leaders

from the Indian political scene because of their arrest and imprisonment made the task of communists easy. They began to play the role of friends, philosophers and guides of Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference.

The 'New Kashmir' manifesto which was adopted by the National Conference as a statement of its political and economic goals in 1945, is known to have been masterminded by the communists. Apart from its communist overtones, Sheikh Abdullah in an introduction to it paid rich tribute to Soviet Russia for demonstrating "before our eyes, not merely theoretically but in the actual day-to-day life and development, that real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation."

With the change of government in Britain and the arrival in 1946, of British Cabinet Mission for a final round of talks with Indian leaders regarding British withdrawal from India, Sheikh Abdullah, on the advice of his communist friends, decided to make a direct approach to the British government for handing over power in Kashmir to him on the plea that the treaty of Amritsar by which the Dogra rulers had obtained *de jure* control over Kashmir valley would have no validity after the British had left. The 'Quit Kashmir' movement that he then launched was, therefore, hailed by the C. P. I. as "the biggest, the most bloody and the most glorious struggle." It considered it as a model for the rest of India.

The Congress leadership, which had not been consulted at all before this movement was launched, was put in a very embarrassing position. It could not support it. Only Jawaharlal Nehru who claimed to be expert on the Kashmir situation, rushed to the rescue of Sheikh Abdullah whose sympathy and support he wanted to retain at any cost. But the state government did not permit him to enter the state and arrested him at Kohala bridge when he tried to force his way. The arrest of Nehru at Kohala on the eve

of his appointment as Vice-President of the interim government gave world-wide publicity and respectability to the 'Quit Kashmir' movement which had virtually fizzled out by then.

Incidentally, this Kohala incident made Nehru an inveterate enemy of Maharaja Hari Singh who had the audacity to order his arrest when he was shortly going to be the head of the Indian government. He began to nurse a personal grouse towards him which contributed more than anything else to complicate the Kashmir problem from its very inception. This personal vendetta of Nehru against the Maharaja was systematically exploited by Sheikh Abdullah to lead the Government of India from one wrong step to another till it made complete mess of the Kashmir problem.

The announcement of Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947, about Partition and British withdrawal from India by August 15, gave a further fillip to communists working through the National Conference. The C. P. I. stand about the right of self-determination to each linguistic 'nationality' fitted very well with Sheikh Abdullah's stand for freedom before accession. As a result he was further drawn towards the communists. The fact that he chose Mr. G. M. Sadiq in October, 1947 to negotiate with Jinnah the terms on which he might have preferred accession of Kashmir to Pakistan, showed the reliance he put on his communist or pro-communist colleagues and his aversion to outright accession of the state to India.

This line-up of Sheikh Abdullah with communists during the 'Quit Kashmir' movement and after, set the pattern of his thinking and actions before and after he was put in power by Pakistani invasion of the state in 1947. The idea of an independent Kashmir which he later tried to give effect to had been planted and nursed in his mind by his communist mentors.

The efforts to extend the activities of the National Conference to Jammu did not prove very successful,

Its genesis and ideological and emotional moorings made it suspect in the eyes of the people of Jammu who looked upon it as something alien and abominable. Its equivocal stand about accession to and integration with the rest of India even after the Government of India had accepted the lawful accession of the state and Indian army had landed in Kashmir to save it from Pakistani marauders further doomed the chances of National Conference gaining acceptance in Jammu whose people ardently stood for full integration of the state with the rest of India like other acceding states. They needed a political organisation of their own which could reflect their aspirations and represent their viewpoint in the changed situation.

This need was met by the Praja Parishad in Jammu in November 1947. Since there was no tradition of broad-based political activity on democratic basis and since most of the known political figures were mortally afraid of doing anything that might displease Nehru, who had put implicit faith in Sheikh Abdullah, it fell to the lot of a few ardent young men to bell the cat by launching the new organisation.

Hari Wazir, who later joined the Indian army as a commissioned officer and died as a martyr in defence of his motherland against Pakistani invaders, became the first President of the organisation. The main object of the new organisation was to achieve full integration of Jammu and Kashmir state with the rest of India like other acceding states and safeguard the legitimate democratic rights of the people of Jammu from the communist-dominated anti-Dogra government of Sheikh Abdullah.

The formation of Praja Parishad was welcomed by the masses of Jammu and it began to spread very fast. Soon after a number of older people like Prem Nath Dogra who had been watching the situation and had become thoroughly disillusioned with National Conference joined the Praja Parishad which

became the most powerful and popular democratic force in Jammu comparable to the National Conference in the Kashmir valley.

Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh, sparsely populated and cut off from the rest of the state by high mountain walls as they are, remained blissfully ignorant of and indifferent to these socio-political rumblings in Kashmir and Jammu till they were awakened to the changed situation by the onrush of Pakistani invaders.

The people of Ladakh being predominantly Buddhist, the Pakistani invaders treated them as *kafirs* like the Hindus and indiscriminately destroyed their monasteries. No wonder, therefore, that they actively co-operated with the Indian Army to throw the Pakistani invaders out. But they were soon disillusioned by Sheikh Abdullah's government with its open pro-Muslim bias. The result was a pathetic outcry among the people of Ladakh who represented to the Government of India through the Ladakh Buddhist Association that they had nothing in common with Kashmir except common crown which was no more. They, therefore, requested the Government of India to take Ladakh under its direct control.

The emotional background, ideological affiliations and political development in the different regions of the State as discussed above have been the determining factors in the Kashmir situation since 1930 when organised political activity began in the state. They provide the background to the Maharaja's prolonged indecision about accession as also to their attitude in regard to the integration of the state with the rest of India after the state acceded to India in October, 1947.

3

THE DILEMMA OF HARI SINGH

The Mountbatten plan which propounded the principle of partition and laid down the procedure to give effect to it, placed the Jammu and Kashmir state in a very difficult position. Though theoretically it conceded an independent status to all the states after the lapse of British paramountcy, it advised them in their own interest as also in the interest of the new dominions of India and Pakistan to join one or the other of them before 15th of August, the deadline for British withdrawal. The geographical contiguity was laid down as the main factor guiding their choice of the dominion for accession. For most of the states except those few which were directly in league with Pakistan, the choice was obvious. But that was not the case with Jammu and Kashmir state which was geographically contiguous to both. Some of its parts had close social and cultural ties with residual India while others had closer ties with Muslim Pakistan. The majority of its population taken as a whole was Muslim while the ruler was a Dogra Hindu. Its position, therefore, was very unenviable.

There were three courses open to the Maharaja. He could accede to India or to Pakistan or remain independent. Jinnah claimed Kashmir for Pakistan on the ground of its being a Muslim-majority unit contiguous to Pakistan. In fact he was so confident about it that he told a deputation of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference that "Kashmir is in my pocket."

Indian leaders were naturally interested in retaining Kashmir in India. But instead of basing their claim on the natural ground of its being an integral part of India which could not be affected by the partition agreement which concerned only British India, they banked on the support of the Kashmiri Muslim followers of Sheikh Abdullah who held the balance between the Hindus who wanted the state to accede to India and the supporters and followers of the Muslim Conference who preferred Pakistan. Therefore, they, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, wanted to appease Sheikh Abdullah by putting him in power before accepting the accession of Kashmir.

This put the Maharaja on the horns of a dilemma. He did not want to accede to Pakistan. His preference was definitely for India. But the condition of putting Sheikh Abdullah in power before accession of his state to India was unpalatable to him. Sheikh Abdullah had made no secret of his hostility to the person and government of the Maharaja. He and his National Conference wanted him to quit Kashmir bag and baggage before they could give their opinion about accession authoritatively. Accession to India, therefore, meant to him a sort of voluntary abdication of his authority over Kashmir without any definite guarantee that Sheikh Abdullah and his followers would decide to accede to India even after obtaining full power. On the other hand, Pakistan government began to offer him alluring terms if he joined Pakistan. The Maharaja was, therefore, between the devil and the deep sea. Accession to India meant immediate transfer of power to Sheikh Abdullah without any definite guarantee about the future of the state. His sentiment and patriotism stood in the way of accession to Pakistan. So he deferred decision.

The fact that under national division, the district of Gurdaspur including the railhead of Pathankot, which provided the only road link between Jammu

and (East) Punjab, had been included in West Pakistan added to Maharaja's difficulties in making up his mind. By delaying the announcement of the Radcliff Award, which awarded Gurdaspur to India, by two days the Award was made public on 16th instead of 14th of August—Lord Mountbatten too contributed to Maharaja's indecision.

Actually Lord Mountbatten, far from being neutral in the matter of accession, wanted the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan. The Maharaja lacked courage to resist his pressure. This further added to his indecision.

As time passed the third course of remaining independent began to appeal to him. His Prime Minister, Ram Chandar Kak, was an enthusiastic supporter of this idea. The author discussed the question at length with him. He argued that Jammu and Kashmir being a Muslim majority state, Pakistan had a logical claim to it on the basis on which India had been partitioned. Accession to India, he said, would be resented by Pakistan and there would be trouble in Muslim majority parts of the state. Accession to India would mean putting Sheikh Abdullah in power. He doubted Sheikh Abdullah's bonafides and sincerity. On his assertion being challenged he warmed up and said, "I too am a Kashmiri. I know Sheikh Abdullah well. His past antecedents and present politics if studied realistically cannot warrant any other conclusion".

All this sounded quite plausible. But what he could not explain convincingly was the way independent status of Kashmir was to be maintained in face of a hostile Pakistan and an indifferent India. His plea was that Kashmir should remain independent some years till India became strong and her leaders more realistic in their policies. That, he thought, would be the time to accede to India. But the weight of these arguments was taken away by his close association with enemies of India like Nawab of Bhopal whose Home Minister, Shoaib Qureshi, frequently

visited Srinagar as his guest in those days. The author pointed out to him that the example of independent Kashmir would strengthen the separatist and Pakistani elements in Bhopal and Hyderabad. But his personal ambition and distrust of Nehru stood in the way of his appreciating this point of view. He was, however, not able to get much support from the Hindus of the state for this policy. But the Muslim Conference strangely enough, supported this move. May be, it wanted to prevent Kashmir from acceding to India till Pakistan became free from internal problems created by partition and could turn her attention to Kashmir.

The net result of this conflict and confusion in the mind of the Maharaja and his Prime Minister was that the state had not decided about accession till the eve of partition day. At the eleventh hour the Maharaja's government decided to send telegraphic requests to Mr. Jinnah and Lord Mountbatten for stand-still agreements. Jinnah at once accepted the request and a stand-still agreement with Pakistan was signed. But the Indian Government started protracted negotiations which remained incomplete till the date of Pakistani invasion.

Pakistan did not remain content with a stand-still agreement. She wanted to grab the whole state. The stand-still agreement, however, removed her anxiety about immediate accession of the state to India for she was not in a position just then to exert her full pressure. It gave her time to strangulate Kashmir economically before delivering the final blow.

This failure of the state to accede before the 15th of August is responsible for much of the tragic drama that has been enacted there since then. There can be no doubt that accession of the state to India before that fateful date would have simplified the issue. Most of the pro-Pakistan Muslims of the state would have surely gone over to Pakistan and their place might have been taken by the Hindu refugees from the adjoining areas of West Punjab and

North-Western Frontier Province. Such a development, whatever its merits or demerits, would have been in line with what had happened in the princely states of Punjab and Rajasthan and would have been taken as the natural result of the unnatural partition of the country. Actually lakhs of Hindus passed through Jammu and Kashmir territories during their forced exodus from West Pakistan to East Punjab. Many of them, particularly those from the districts of Hazara, Rawalpindi and Peshawar, were keen on settling in the Kashmir valley because of the congenial climate.

That would have put the seal of finality on the resultant alignment and there would have been no Kashmir problem as such. But that was not to be.

It has become customary to put the blame for the failure of Jammu and Kashmir state to accede to India in time on the Maharaja and his Prime Minister, Kak.

Kak had his own ambitions and fears. He was convinced that accession to India so long as Nehru, his Kashmir compatriot, was Prime Minister at New Delhi would mean transfer of power to Sheikh Abdullah and his own exile into wilderness. Furthermore, he was under planned pressure from British diehards and the rulers and premiers of the states like Bhopal and Hyderabad which were then toying with the idea of independence. The unique geopolitical situation of Jammu and Kashmir made it an ideal state to give the lead to other princely states in asserting their independence which would have led to Balkanisation of India as desired by the hostile British officials and politicians. His British wife and her British relations some of whom then occupied high civil and military posts in the state might also have exerted their influence in the same direction.

But it would be wrong to give too much importance to Kak in the matter. He was after all a servant and not the master of the Maharaja. His influence and advice proved effective only because

the Maharaja's own mind was also conditioned that way. He had a strong feeling that the Indian Prime Minister wanted to humiliate him by forcing him to submit to Sheikh Abdullah about whose bonafides he had strong and valid doubts. Sheikh Abdullah on his part banked on Nehru to secure power for himself. He, therefore, did not feel the necessity of winning the confidence of the Maharaja.

Jawahar Lal Nehru was deeply interested in securing Kashmir's accession to India because of his emotional attachment with it as his ancestral homeland. But he had pinned his hopes on Sheikh Abdullah for whom he had developed a strange infatuation. He had nothing but contempt and hatred for the Maharaja and his Prime Minister, who had the temerity to order his arrest on the eve of his appointment as head of the interim government in 1946. Vindictive by nature, Nehru was more keen on humiliating the Maharaja than on understanding his point of view, giving him friendly and sympathetic guidance and helping him in arriving at a correct decision.

On the basis of the policy announced by the Government of India, the acceding prince had to accede only in respect of three subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications—without interference in their sovereignty in other respects. Had Sardar Patel, who as States Minister had persuaded hundreds of princes to accede to India before 15th of August in spite of the machinations of the Political Department and subtle pressure from Jinnah through his declaration that the Muslim League would respect the independence of the states falling in Pakistan, got a free hand in regard to Jammu and Kashmir he could have surely allayed the fears of the Maharaja and persuaded him to accede in time. But since Nehru claimed to be a specialist on Kashmir and did not like anybody else in his party to interfere with it, the Sardar never took that personal interest which marked his handling of other princely states. Perhaps

the Maharaja too was obsessed by the fear that in respect of Jammu and Kashmir only Nehru's will would prevail. So he too did not turn to Sardar for guidance and help even though he was known to have tremendous respect for the latter. Thus the issue of accession of Jammu and Kashmir was made more difficult and complicated by the interplay of personal factors.

4

PAK INVASION

The dismissal of Prime Minister Kak on the 10th of August had sent a wave of consternation in the Pakistani circles in Kashmir. But they felt reassured when they found that the dismissal of Kak was not followed, as expected, by accession to India. The stand-still agreement with Pakistan, which followed, gave them great relief. They thought that the worst was over and that the state would fall into the lap of Pakistan in due course.

But their hopes vanished when the Maharaja's government vigorously protested to the Pakistan government against the hoisting of Pakistan flag on post offices in the state, which Pakistan thought had come under her control according to the stand-still agreement, because Jammu and Kashmir state was included in Sialkot postal circle in undivided India. The Maharaja's government even went a step further. It requested the Government of India to take charge of the Post and Telegraph administration in the state. This showed the bent of mind of the Maharaja.

The Pakistan government and the Pakistani elements in the state now began to devise other methods for bringing the state into Pakistan. The pressing internal problems that came in the wake of the partition and the situation in the North-Western Frontier Province, where the Congress party was still in power, did not permit the Pakistan govern.

ment to put direct pressure on the state just then. So steps were taken to put indirect pressure. It took three forms—economic blockade, Pakistani propaganda among the Muslim population and officials in the state to prepare them for a rising from within and organised raids in the western districts of the state from without. Side by side preparation began to be made in the tribal areas as also in the districts adjoining the state for a direct assault at the opportune moment which it was thought, could come in winter when the main lines of communication between Jammu and Srinagar would get blocked due to heavy snowfall on the Banihal pass.

Economic blockade was quite easy. Though contiguous to both the dominions, all the main arteries of trade between the state and outside would pass into Pakistan. Jammu was linked by rail and road with Sialkot and Srinagar was linked with Rawalpindi and Abbotabad by all-weather motorable roads. Most of the import and export trade of the state passed through these channels. All the necessities of life like salt, soap, sugar, cloth, foodgrains, petrol and kerosene oil meant for Kashmir state used to be stocked in the markets of Rawalpindi and Sialkot from where they were sent to Jammu and Kashmir in motor lorries. The Pakistan government stopped the movement of these goods into the state. The rail link with Jammu was cut off. All the engines, bogies and the Muslim staff on the intermediary stations were removed to Pakistan leaving the Hindu staff to fend for itself. This naturally caused great hardship to the public and the state government. Even the supplies for which payment had already been made were not delivered. Stoppage of the supply of petrol affected internal transport as well as military movements. The state government protested against this breach of the stand still agreement but to no avail. Even the motor lorries sent from Srinagar to fetch the supplies were confiscated by the Pakistani authorities.

Along with this economic blockade a virulent Pakistani propaganda was set on foot in the state. Batches of students of Islamia College, Lahore, and Aligarh Muslim University began to tour villages in the interior. The Muslim officials of the state and the Muslim personnel of the state police and armed forces were completely won over. Some of the high ranking Muslim military officers led by Col. Adalat Khan, began to work actively for insurrection from within. Others like Mian Abdul Rashid, Superintendent Police in Jammu, Faiz Ullah, District officer of Baramula, and many others began to incite the civil population. Arms and ammunition began to be smuggled in large quantities from Pakistan into the state. Regular training in the use of firearms began to be given in the mosques at Jammu, Srinagar and elsewhere.

To divert the attention of the authorities and disperse the state troops over large areas, raids were organised all along the western border especially in the Poonch area. The local Muslims were also incited to rise in rebellion in Poonch and Bagh areas.

These developments at last aroused the Maharaja out of his slumber and self-complacency. But it was too late. Thakur Janak Singh, on whom premiership had been thrust after Kak's dismissal, was too old and timid to initiate and carry out any policy at all. No Indian statesman wanted to risk his reputation by taking over the charge of the state as its Prime Minister at such a critical time. Continued absence of the National Conference leaders, then in jail, had left the field free for the Muslim Conference whose followers were aggressively pro-Pakistan.

The change in the policy of the state took two forms. In the first place Sheikh Abdullah and his associates were released from the jail so that they might counteract the growing influence of the Muslim Conference. In the second place, Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan who happened to be an old friend of the state was persuaded with great difficulty

to become the head of the State administration and help it in weathering the storm that had already gathered.

The release of Sheikh Abdullah and appointment of Mehar Chand Mahajan to the premiership early in October came as a shock to the Pakistanis, inside and outside the state. The leaders of Pakistan knew Mehar Chand Mahajan too well to underestimate his strength and capacity. He was known to enjoy the support of the Indian government as well. Further, being closely connected with the state he knew its people and territories too well to be easily hoodwinked by Pakistani officers or selfish advisers of the Maharaja.

The first thing he did was to speed up negotiations with the Indian government whom he requested for a liberal supply of arms and ammunition for the state troops. The Indian government too had been forced to think realistically by reports about preparations in the tribal areas for an invasion of Kashmir. So they agreed to supply the necessary arms.

The Pakistan Government too, now free from other immediate and pressing problems created by the partition, became alert. They did not want to give Mahajan time to re-organise and strengthen state's administration and defence. So they changed the programme of invasion. It was decided to begin the invasion in October. The plan as revealed by a senior Muslim officer of the 4th Jammu and Kashmir infantry to a young Hindu friend of the author, who had been mixing up with him and other Muslim conspirators in the guise of a Muslim, was as follows:

- (1) Invasion of the state territories was to begin from Muzaffarabad and Jammu sides simultaneously between the 20th and 22nd of October so as to capture the cities of Jammu and Srinagar by Id-ul-Zuha which fell on the 25th of October in 1947.

- (2) Attempt was to be made on the life of the Maharaja at Srinagar on the 24th when he was to go in a procession to attend the Dussehra Darbar.
- (3) The Muslim personnel of the state army on the frontiers was to join the invaders and that of the garrisons at Jammu and Srinagar was to strike after the panic had spread.
- (4) The local Muslims at Srinagar and Jammu were to keep quiet till the invasion had well advanced to lull the authorities into a sense of security. They were to prepare the ground for the victorious entry of the *mujahids*, the warriors for religion.
- (5) In order to prevent any help from India from reaching the state the aerodrome at Srinagar was to be captured first. A column of invaders was to move along the foot of the Pir-Panchal range to secure the Shupian and Banihal passes, leaving it to the other column to enter Srinagar.

Maps and charts were ready and everything was to be done according to plan. The news about the immediate invasion was confirmed by whispering talk among Muslim officials to remember October, 22. Some of them even advised their Hindu friends to pack off to India if they wanted to save their lives.

The Jammu and Kashmir government had no knowledge of this planned massive invasion from Abbotabad side. Its hands were full with Pakistani raids in the Poonch area which had become a major threat to the security of the state. The stoppage of all supplies including petrol by Pakistan had created a very serious situation in regard to internal mobility of the limited defence forces which were dispersed over a long frontier.

While trying to cope with the situation as best as it could, the State Government tried to persuade Pakistan through diplomatic channels to honour its commitments under the stand-still agreement.

Failing to get a positive response to its numerous communications the Prime Minister of Kashmir sent a rather strongly worded telegram to the Governor General of Pakistan, Jinnah, on October 18, 1947. In the course of this telegram Mahajan said :

“Finally, the Kashmir government wish to make it plain that it is not possible to tolerate this attitude longer without grave consequences to life and property of the people which it is bound to defend at all cost. The government even now hopes that you would personally look into the matter and put a stop to all the iniquities which are being perpetrated. If unfortunately this request is not heeded the government fully hope that you would agree that it would be justified in asking for friendly assistance and oppose trespass on its fundamental rights.”

A cable was sent on the same day to the Prime Minister of the U. K. apprising him of the situation created by the influx of armed Pakistanis into Poonch area of the state and stoppage of all supplies. It added : “The policy of the government has been to afford protection to the Muslim refugees about 100,000 of whom have been given safe conduct to their new abodes in Pakistan. On the other hand, a party of 200 state subjects sent from Rawalpindi at the request of the state has practically been wiped out and no non-Muslim from the state can pass through Pakistan. Railway service from Sialkot to Jammu has been stopped since August 15 without any reason : As a result of the obvious connivance of Pakistan government the whole of the border from Gurdaspur side up to Gilgit is threatened with invasion which has actually begun in Poonch. It is requested that the Dominion of Pakistan may be advised to deal fairly with Jammu and Kashmir state and adopt a course of the conduct which may be consistent with the good name and prestige of the Commonwealth of which it claims to be a member.”

The Governor General of Pakistan in a reply

sent to the Maharaja of Kashmir on October 20, took no notice of the allegations made by Kashmir Government and instead made counter-charges of repression by Dogra troops. But to lull the state government into complacency it repeated an earlier suggestion made by it about a meeting of the representatives of the two governments to settle outstanding questions at an early date. Khurshid, then private secretary of Jinnah, was sent to Srinagar for the purpose.

While this exchange of telegrams was going on, preparations were afoot at Abbotabad for a large invasion of Kashmir. A large number of soldiers and officers of the Pakistan army 'on leave' were deputed to organise and assist about five thousand tribals that had been assembled there in the name of *jehad*, holy war. The invasion was to be led by Major-General Akbar Khan of the Pakistan army who was given the name General Tariq after the name of the Arab conqueror of Egypt.

As if to create an excuse for the personnel of regular Pakistan army taking part in the invasion a telegram was sent by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan to Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir on October 21, which said, "Serious anxiety regarding the safety of their families is being felt by Pakistan military personnel whom it is exceedingly difficult to reassure in absence of any clear reports or assurances by you."

Before a reply to this telegram sent by the Prime Minister of Kashmir on October 22, reached the Pakistan Foreign Office, the massive Pakistani invasion of Kashmir had begun.

The tribal hordes, armed by the Pakistan government and led by officers of the Pakistan army, that entered the state from Hazara district along the Abbotabad-Muzaffarabad—Domel-Srinagar road on October 22, formed the spearhead of the final and the biggest blow of Pakistan against the state. Its objective was Kashmir valley and the capital city of

Srinagar. Almost simultaneously new thrusts were made all along the Kashmir-Pakistan border including Gilgit. These other thrusts did not get much publicity because they were directed against comparatively little known though strategically equally important parts of the state. They ultimately succeeded in gaining their objectives in Gilgit, and the western districts of the state. But their master plan to occupy Srinagar and Jammu simultaneously and present the world with a *fait accompli* before any outside help could come to the state was foiled by the timely arrival of air-borne Indian troops in Srinagar and by the popular resistance put up by the people of Jammu.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the threat and the success it achieved one should have a clear picture of the circumstances which made it possible. The Kashmir-Pakistan frontier is over 500 miles long, a major portion of which is quite unnatural or ill-defined. Beginning from near Pathankot it runs along the districts of Sialkot, Gujarat, Jehlam and Rawalpindi up to Kohala at which point that river leaves the state to form its western boundary. From Kohala onwards this frontier runs along the Hazara district of the North-Western Frontier Province, and then touches the tribal area of Yagistan and the frontier state of Chitral, which had already acceded to Pakistan.

During the British regime the state had not to worry about long frontier. The prestige of Dogra arms established by Maharaja Gulab Singh coupled with British protection was enough to keep in check the turbulent elements within and without the state. The defence of the northern frontier of the state used to be a joint responsibility of the British and the state troops stationed in the Gilgit cantonment. The ruler of Chitral owed allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir as well. But with the disappearance of the protecting hand of the British and the establishment of a hostile and aggressive state like Pakistan along

this long frontier, the problem of defence was bound to become difficult for Jammu and Kashmir.

The problem was made all the more difficult by the nature and affinities of the people inhabiting both sides of the western frontier. The people of Mirpur-Poonch area belong to the war-like Rajput and Jat tribes. They have close social, economic and religious ties with the inhabitants of the adjoining districts of Jehlam, Rawalpindi and Hazara in Pakistan. They had been converted to Islam during the Mughal times. Many of them wanted to be reconverted to Hinduism during the twenties of the present century. But the conservatism of Brahmins and Hindu Rajputs did not allow such efforts to succeed. During the thirties they came under the influence of the Muslim Conference. The politics of the adjoining districts of Jhelam and Rawalpindi also began to influence them. The result was that most of them became supporters of Pakistan after its establishment. Many of them being ex-Service men possessed firearms and were adept in their use. It was, therefore, easy for the Pakistani agents to instigate them to rebel against the authority of the state.

The armed forces of the state which had to defend about 600 miles long frontier with Pakistan as also to meet the threat of internal uprisings were quite inadequate to meet the situation. The strength of the state army was nine infantry battalions, two mountain batteries and one cavalry squadron. The two mountain batteries were retained by the British Indian Government after the end of the Second World War because they had given a very good account of themselves during the war. Of the nine infantry battalions three, the 2nd, 4th and 6th J. & K. infantries, were mixed—half Hindu Dogras and half Muslims from Mirpur and Poonch areas. These battalions had been spread all along the frontier. At the time of invasion the mixed 4th battalion was in charge of the Muzaffarabad-Kohala sector, the 2nd of a part of Mirpur-Poonch sector and 6th had

been ordered to proceed to Gilgit to assist Brigadier Ghansara Singh who was appointed military governor of that region after the withdrawal of the British. Srinagar cantonment at the time of invasion had only one company of the 4th infantry battalion besides the Maharaja's personal guards.

The state troops were efficient and brave. But they were ill-equipped. Even the quota of arms and ammunitions allotted to the state had not been obtained in full for the last two years prior to the invasion. The Pakistan government had withheld all supplies meant for the state forces after the partition. The Indian government which had been approached for arms and ammunitions had agreed to supply them, but none had been sent till the fateful day of invasion. To crown it all, the loyalty of the Muslim personnel of the armed forces was doubtful. Information had reached the state authorities about plans of sabotage and desertion prepared by Muslim officers of the state army in collaboration with Pakistan authorities. Their names had been submitted to the Maharaja and he had been requested to disarm and disband them in the interests of security of the state. But the state government did not, and perhaps could not, do this because they had no reserves and they feared mutiny. Colonel Narain Singh who commanded the 4th battalion in charge of Kohala-Muzaffarabad sector was, however, warned to remain alert and careful about the Muslim personnel. But Narain Singh, who had commanded that battalion in the Burma campaign, expressed his full faith in his Muslim soldiers and officers. He had to pay a heavy price for this self-complacency.

In view of these circumstances the rapid advance of Pakistan hordes after they had once broken through the outer defences should cause no surprise. Their main column entered the state at the dead of night between 22nd and 23rd of October, 1947. The Muslim personnel of the state pickets joined hands with them. They killed their Hindu comrades in

their own tents and began to lead the convoy of motor lorries supplied by the Pakistan government for carrying the invaders. They occupied the strategic Krishanganga bridge without much difficulty and entered the town of Muzaffarabad without firing a shot. The District Officer was taken by surprise in his own house and shot dead in the presence of his wife and children for refusing to shout 'Pakistan Zindabad'. A few of them simultaneously crossed over to Domel, the confluence of the Jehlam and the Krishanganga, through a suspension bridge. The Muslim pickets there joined hands with them and Colonel Narain Singh was shot dead in his own tent by his own Muslim sentinel in the early hours of the 23rd morning. The occupation of Domel brought both the roads leading to Srinagar from Rawalpindi and Abbotabad under the control of the invaders. Thus their supply lines became secure.

The road to Srinagar now lay open. The garrison guarding the Kohala bridge finding itself sandwiched between the hostile forces across the bridge and those coming from Domel side made a hasty retreat towards Poonch. It succeeded, however, in taking with it about ten thousand Hindus and Sikhs living in the Bagh area, to Poonch town in safety.

The raiders occupied Garhi the same day and started their advance towards Uri on the 24th. The few retreating Dogra troops resisted them at every step. But the odds against the defenders were heavy. Brigadier Rajendra Singh, chief of the staff of the state army, then came forward to command the troops in person. He had orders from the Maharaja to fight till the last man to defend a bridge near Uri and stop the advance of the enemy.

Brigadier Rajendra Singh rose to the occasion and maintained the prestige of Dogra troops. He stemmed the tide of enemy advance near Uri for two days. But some of the raiders led by Muslim soldiers of the state army managed to outflank the Dogra troops. They were able to put the Mahura power

house, which supplies electricity to Srinagar, out of order on the night of the 24th, and then attacked the state troops led by Rajendra Singh from behind. Rajendra Singh, like a gallant soldier, fought the enemy to the bitter end. He and all his 150 men were cut to pieces in this action. But he and his colleagues will live in history like the gallant Leonides and his 300 men who held the Persian invader at Thermopylae.

The reports from the front, particularly the capture of Mahura power house which plunged Srinagar into darkness, sent a wave of consternation in the people and government at Srinagar. The Maharaja who held the Dussehra darbar and parade as usual on the 24th afternoon sent an urgent appeal for help to the Government of India. At the same time steps were taken to disarm the Muslim personnel of the garrison at Srinagar and mobilise patriotic youth to act as a second line of defence till reinforcement from India arrived.

The leaders of the National Conference including Sheikh Abdullah were even more scared. They could not depend on their followers, once the Pakistani invaders moved in. They could turn Muslim Leaguers overnight. The Sheikh had already sent his family to Indore for safety. He himself slipped away to Delhi.

Before taking any action on the Maharaja's requests for help the Government of India decided to send V.P. Menon to get first hand information. He flew to Srinagar on the 25th of October. He soon realised the desperateness of the situation. The invaders after overcoming the gallant resistance of Brigadier Rajendra Singh had reached Baramula, the district headquarters at the entrance of the valley, where they were welcomed by Faiz Ullah, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, who was in turn appointed governor of the area by the invaders. Had they continued their advance they would have reached Srinagar in a day's time. Menon, therefore,

advised the Maharaja to leave immediately for Jammu with all his valuable possessions, to be out of reach of the Pakistani invaders. This was a timely and correct advice because the aid could be sent from India only after the Maharaja had acceded to India by signing the Instrument of Accession. That he could not have done, if he had fallen in the hands of Pakistani invaders.

The Maharaja left Srinagar for Jammu that very night and Menon and the Kashmir premier, Mahajan, flew to New Delhi early next morning. The Maharaja's departure for Jammu on the advice of Menon, who spoke for the Government of India, was later exploited by Sheikh Abdullah who declared that the Maharaja had run away and that he had 'picked the crown of Kashmir from dust.' What was worse, Nehru who was supposed to know the true facts also repeated the same allegation against the Maharaja to lower him in the estimation of his own people and add grist to the anti-Maharaja campaign of Sheikh Abdullah. That also proved his personal vendetta against the Maharaja.

On receiving the report from Menon, the Government of India felt inclined to go to the rescue of the state. But it was felt that formal accession of the state must take place before any help could be sent. So Menon flew back to Jammu with the Instrument of Accession. He woke up the Maharaja who was fast asleep after a night-long drive from Srinagar. Menon has recorded in his famous book *Integration of States* that before going to sleep the Maharaja left instructions with his A.D.C. that "if I (Menon) came back from Delhi, he was not to be disturbed as it would mean that the Government of India had decided to come to his rescue and he should therefore be allowed to sleep in peace, but that if I failed to return, that meant everything was lost, in that case his A.D.C. was to shoot him in his sleep."

The Maharaja at once signed the Instrument of Accession and also handed over a letter for Lord

Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, informing him that it was his intention to set up an interim government at once and ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in the emergency with Mehar Chand Mahajan, his Prime Minister. It was out of sheer patriotism and solicitude for the safety of his people that the Maharaja agreed to submit to this pre-condition of the Indian Prime Minister.

Sardar Patel who in his anxiety for the state had been waiting at the aerodrome for Menon to return, was now prepared to go all out to save the state. But Nehru and Lord Mountbatten were hesitant. It was not before Mahajan threatened to proceed to Karachi and surrender Kashmir to Jinnah to secure safety of its people that Nehru's reluctance was overcome. But before doing so he accepted Lord Mountbatten's suggestion to make the accession conditional on a plebiscite to be held in the state when the law and order situation allowed.

While these hurried discussions were going on in Delhi on that fateful Sunday, the people of Srinagar were hanging between life and death. The report of Maharaja's departure for Jammu and the invader's occupation of Baramulla spread like wild fire in the whole city casting gloom of death on all Hindus and an air of jubilant expectation in pro-Pakistan circles. All ears were turned to the radios and all eyes towards the sky to hear the news of acceptance of accession and see the arrival of aid which could only come by air. But instead of the news of help from Delhi, reports began to spread that tribal raiders had been seen on the outskirts of the city. That was a signal for pro-Pakistan slogans. Stray looting of Hindu shops also began.

Just then news reached that accession had been accepted and that the Indian help will not take long in coming. G. C. Bali, the Police Chief, immediately made this fact known to the people of Srinagar by the beat of drums and warned the pro-Pakistan elements of dire consequences if they started trouble. It had

quite a salutary effect and the 26th of October passed off peacefully.

Had Pakistani invaders entered the city that Sunday everything would have been lost. Not a single Hindu would have survived. The author himself was in Srinagar that day. The problem might have taken quite a different turn. But fate conspired otherwise. The tribal hordes which had come more out of lure for loot and women than for anything else, found the autumn atmosphere, the beautiful landscape of Baramula together with rich prospects of loot and rape too absorbing to remember Jinnah's resolve to celebrate Id, which fell on October 25, in Srinagar. They converted every mosque in Baramula into a brothel and entertained themselves to hearts' content. Even the European nuns of the local mission hospital could not escape their bestiality.

As a result the Indian air-borne troops when they flew into the valley in the morning of October 27 found the Srinagar aerodrome safe. It was not to fall in the hands of the invaders and Kashmir was to be saved. It was saved.

The "Operation in Kashmir" and the lightening speed and efficiency with which it was conducted to save it from the ruthless Pakistani tribal-cum-regular army marauders, will forever remain a glorious chapter in the annals of Indian army. The role of the Indian Air Force which airlifted Indian troops to Srinagar on October 27, was even more creditable. It was in a way unprecedented in the history of warfare. Lord Mountbatten who had been chief of combined operations and Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, in the Second World War testified that in all his war experience he had never heard of an airlift of this nature being put into operation at such a short notice.

But the success of this airlift and the subsequent action in Kashmir was made possible by the failure of the invading hordes to capture the Srinagar aerodrome. This was mainly due to the dogged resis-

tance of the Dogra troops, who had been fighting against every odds. Deserted and betrayed by their own Muslim comrades-in-arms, who acted as vanguard of the invading army, the Dogra troops had literally to fight for every inch to gain time for the expected succour to reach Srinagar before everything was lost. The example set by Brigadier Rajendra Singh who will go down in the history of India as a great military hero, inspired every one of them. They were still holding the main enemy column at Pattan, seventeen miles from Srinagar, when the first Indian troops landed at Srinagar. They, therefore, in a way played the most decisive role in saving Kashmir and checkmating the Pakistani design of presenting the world with a *fait accompli*.

The Dogras thus vindicated themselves and their ruler. Those who had ruled the valley for one hundred years did not leave it to the vultures. They defended it with their own blood. But for their dogged resistance, Sheikh Abdullah and his patron, Nehru, who have said so much to malign the Dogra rule over the valley would have been nowhere in the picture in Kashmir.

It is, however, equally true that but for the timely arrival of Indian troops and the immediate relief they provided to the Dogra troops, the enemy would have entered Srinagar in a day and achieved his objective.

The first Indian troops to land at Srinagar came from a Sikh unit commanded by Colonel Ranjit Rai. The people of Srinagar who had been gazing at the sky for hours in expectation of the airlift planes were thrilled by the sight of the dakota after it suddenly emerged from behind the snow-covered Banihal range. It was comparable to the thrill created in French hearts by the emergence of Allied planes over the French sky on the D-day in 1944.

No sooner did the first dakota land than the troops jumped into the trucks that were standing by and moved on to the front line. The author

wanted to stop these troops near his residence for small refreshments. His request was met by a loud and heart-warming cry "Sat Siri Akal" and the curt reply: "Do not detain us. We will quench our thirst with the blood of the enemy."

Within hours they went into action and before the day was out, Colonel Ranjit Rai lay dead in defence of Kashmir which had by now become an integral part of India, legally and constitutionally too, as a result of acceptance of accession of the state by the Government of India. The next important casualty was Major Sharma who died defending the aerodrome against the enemy column which was approaching it from the foot-hills of Gulmarg.

Jinnah who had come down to Lahore to proceed to Srinagar as a victor was terribly upset by the report that India had accepted the accession of Jammu and Kashmir state and that Indian troops had landed at Srinagar. He immediately summoned General Gracey, the C-in-C of Pakistan army, and ordered him to rush regular troops to Kashmir. But General Gracey expressed his inability to carry out his instructions without the approval of the supreme commander, Field Marshal Auchinlek, who was supervising the partition of the army and stores between the two dominions. Field Marshal Auchinlek who reached Lahore on October 28th informed Jinnah that in view of Jammu and Kashmir state having legally acceded to India the British officers of the Pakistan army will have to withdraw if he ordered a regular invasion of Kashmir. This forced Jinnah to relent. Thus the immediate danger of a full-scale war between India and Pakistan which would not have remained confined to Jammu and Kashmir was averted.

But short of throwing regular Pakistan army into action everything possible was done to strengthen and reinforce the invading hordes who were well-equipped with arms and stores supplied by the Pakistan government. Therefore, the Indian troops had quite

launched his movement without even the knowledge of the Congress or the State Peoples Conference, its wing for dealing with Indian state, the 'Quit-Kashmir' fiasco would have ended his political career altogether. He, therefore, naturally developed a special regard for Nehru.

The more he drew nearer to Nehru the more suspect he became in the eyes of Jinnah. Imperious and vindictive as he was, Jinnah was not the man who could inspire confidence in Sheikh Abdullah even about his personal safety. But in Pakistan he alone counted. Morally too, it would have been difficult for Jinnah, even if Sheikh Abdullah had supported accession to Pakistan, to overlook the claims of those Muslim Conference leaders of Kashmir who had stood by him and Pakistan all through.

Even then Sheikh Abdullah made an attempt to secure some kind of assurance from Jinnah which might enable him to throw his lot with Pakistan. To that end, he sent a deputation of some of his leading lieutenants to wait on Jinnah early in October, 1947. But being confident of Kashmir falling in his lap like a ripe apple, Jinnah refused to give any assurance which might restrict in any way his freedom of action in Kashmir after it had fallen in his hands.

Having thus lost all hope of reconciliation with Jinnah on his own terms, Sheikh Abdullah decided to sit on the fence and watch the course of events. Finding that the Maharaja was veering round to the idea of independence for the whole state he made a serious bid for reconciliation with him. Along with his wife he actually waited on him and assured him of his allegiance to his throne. His pride had been humbled and he was prepared to share power with others under the Maharaja.

But Pakistani invasion and its progress precipitated a situation for which neither the Maharaja nor Sheikh Abdullah was prepared. To begin with, the Maharaja tried to stem the Pakistani tide with his

own resources. But as the situation became critical and he was forced to appeal to the Government of India for help, Sheikh Abdullah's opportunity came. He had already left the valley and was with Nehru in Delhi when the final discussion about accepting the accession of and sending troops to Kashmir were going on there. As a realist he realised that the success of Pakistani invaders would mean an end not only of the Maharaja's rule but of his own future as well. He, therefore, put his weight in favour of accepting accession to India as a result of which he was installed in power.

In the circumstances it was naturally expected of him and his followers to make a show of their opposition to Pakistani invaders. No wonder, therefore, that after the acceptance of accession by India on October 26, National Conference leaders particularly the communists among them came out on the streets of Srinagar shouting slogans: "This is our country, we will defend it. We will rule over it." The stress was on the last slogan.

But the real test for them to demonstrate their loyalty to India and their profession about secularism never came because Indian troops reached the next day, before the invaders could enter Srinagar. It is, however, significant that wherever the invaders came the National Conference supporters and volunteers with the single exception of Maqbool Sherwani of Baramula joined hands with them. There was no question of their fighting against the invaders.

It is, therefore, all right to say for the sake of propaganda that Sheikh Abdullah and his followers demonstrated their love of secularism and defended Kashmir against Pakistani invaders. But it bears little relationship with actual facts. Sheikh Abdullah's followers, he himself having fled, would have been put to a real test only if Pakistani invaders had been able to enter Srinagar before the entry of Indian troops. There is no doubt in the author's mind that no Hindu would have been left alive to testify

a tough job to do in the beginning. The enemy was able to get local support wherever it reached. The only notable exception was Maqbool Sherwani of Baramula who refused to line up with the invaders and was therefore shot dead.

But the tide turned with the arrival of more troops and armoured cars. Baramula was recaptured on November 8. This removed the threat of further incursions into the valley because Baramula commanded the entrance to it. A few days later Uri was recaptured and a column was sent from there to relieve Poonch which had been besieged by the enemy. But this column could not reach Poonch because of destruction of a strategic bridge by the Dogra troops who realised that the enemy were advancing from Uri.

The recapture of Baramula and Uri demoralised the stray detachments of the invaders still in the valley. They withdrew from Gulmarg and Tanmarg without firing a shot. Thus by the middle of November, 1947, the valley proper was cleared of Pakistani invaders.

Baramula, Sopore and the western fringe of the valley along the Gulmarg sector of Pir Panchal range were the only parts of the valley which came under the effective control of Pakistan for a few days. The rest of the valley, particularly its southern and south-eastern part which is directly contiguous to Jammu and Ladakh regions of the state, remained absolutely untouched by the invaders. An attempt was later made by them to break into the valley through the old Mughal route which would have brought them to Shupian and enabled them to cut the Banihal road. That would have proved a grievous blow because Banihal road is the only motor link between Srinagar and Jammu. But they were intercepted and pushed back by the Indian troops after bitter fighting near Nandi Marga, over 10,000 feet above sea level.

Indian army thus supplemented the legal right of

India over Kashmir valley attained through the lawful accession of state to her by one established by the force of arms. In doing so it had to undergo a lot of suffering and make heavy sacrifices in the blood of *jawans* drawn from all over India. This fact needs to be kept in mind when looking at the Kashmir problem which mainly revolves round the valley.

A word may be said about the role of Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference during those critical days because much propaganda about it has been made by the interested parties. It is a fact that Sheikh Abdullah supported Kashmir's accession to India. The reasons were obvious. He had struggled for twenty years to secure power to become the virtual Sultan of the Valley. He was not interested in any other part of the state. He had aligned himself with the Indian National Congress, particularly with Nehru, because he felt that would save his movement, which was essentially communal in inspiration, from the charge of communalism and provide him with the much needed material and moral support from the rest of India. But he had never bound himself to the decisions and directives of the Congress. He had only one ambition—power for himself, and was prepared to use all means to achieve it.

At first he tried to by-pass both the Congress and the Muslim League by appealing directly to the Cabinet Mission. He wanted to establish his position in Kashmir valley through the 'Quit Kashmir' movement aimed against the Dogras before the British withdrew from India so that he might get some kind of a recognition from the British in the over-all settlement. The complete failure of the 'Quit Kashmir' movement landed him in the Maharaja's jail instead of the royal palace. There was little sympathy in India for his blatantly communal and parochial misadventure. But for the support lent to him by Nehru, in spite of the fact that he had

launched his movement without even the knowledge of the Congress or the State Peoples Conference, its wing for dealing with Indian state, the 'Quit-Kashmir' fiasco would have ended his political career altogether. He, therefore, naturally developed a special regard for Nehru.

The more he drew nearer to Nehru the more suspect he became in the eyes of Jinnah. Imperious and vindictive as he was, Jinnah was not the man who could inspire confidence in Sheikh Abdullah even about his personal safety. But in Pakistan he alone counted. Morally too, it would have been difficult for Jinnah, even if Sheikh Abdullah had supported accession to Pakistan, to overlook the claims of those Muslim Conference leaders of Kashmir who had stood by him and Pakistan all through.

Even then Sheikh Abdullah made an attempt to secure some kind of assurance from Jinnah which might enable him to throw his lot with Pakistan. To that end, he sent a deputation of some of his leading lieutenants to wait on Jinnah early in October, 1947. But being confident of Kashmir falling in his lap like a ripe apple, Jinnah refused to give any assurance which might restrict in any way his freedom of action in Kashmir after it had fallen in his hands.

Having thus lost all hope of reconciliation with Jinnah on his own terms, Sheikh Abdullah decided to sit on the fence and watch the course of events. Finding that the Maharaja was veering round to the idea of independence for the whole state he made a serious bid for reconciliation with him. Along with his wife he actually waited on him and assured him of his allegiance to his throne. His pride had been humbled and he was prepared to share power with others under the Maharaja.

But Pakistani invasion and its progress precipitated a situation for which neither the Maharaja nor Sheikh Abdullah was prepared. To begin with, the Maharaja tried to stem the Pakistani tide with his

own resources. But as the situation became critical and he was forced to appeal to the Government of India for help, Sheikh Abdullah's opportunity came. He had already left the valley and was with Nehru in Delhi when the final discussion about accepting the accession of and sending troops to Kashmir were going on there. As a realist he realised that the success of Pakistani invaders would mean an end not only of the Maharaja's rule but of his own future as well. He, therefore, put his weight in favour of accepting accession to India as a result of which he was installed in power.

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whether the National Conference succeeded or failed in the test.

Kashmir valley was saved from Pakistani marauders by the gallantry of a handful of Dogra troops and the swift action of the Indian Army and Air Force. They are the real saviours of Kashmir valley and they still are the only guarantee of its safety which is now being threatened by the Pakistanis from the west and the Chinese communists from the north-east.

Simultaneously with the invasion of Kashmir from the Abbotabad side, the Pakistanis put the Jammu part of their plan also in operation. The plan, as told above, was to capture the cities of Srinagar and Jammu at about the same time and present the world with a *fait accompli* in regard to the whole state. They considered their task in Jammu to be comparatively easy because of the close proximity of this part of the state to Pakistan and the complete allegiance of all local Muslims to the Pakistan ideology.

But there was one difficulty. The eastern, that is, the Dogra part of the Jammu province including the districts of Jammu, Riasi, Udhampur and Kathua being a Hindu majority area, was expected to put up a stiff resistance and fight to the last against those who wanted their homeland to be grabbed by Pakistan. So two different plans were devised—one for the eastern part and the other for the predominantly Muslim western districts of Mirpur and Poonch.

The plan in regard to the eastern part including the city of Jammu which had a large Muslim population was to foment trouble from within and then rush organised raiders from outside at the opportune moment. Jammu city being only about 20 miles from Sialkot cantonment, the plan was considered to be quite workable. In pursuance of this plan, arms and ammunitions were smuggled into Jammu in large quantities to equip the local Muslims.

Trouble from within was to be started approximately at the same time as the invasion of Kashmir. The signal was to be given by Pakistani raids on the border villages.

This signal was given in the middle of October when the border villages of Alla and Charwah were raided, many persons killed and many Dogra women kidnapped. The Dogras of Jammu who had come to know of Pakistani plans became alert by these raids on their border villages. They, therefore, forestalled the Pakistanis inside the city as well as outside it. Taken aback by this sudden turn of events the Muslims vacated the city and made a hurried retreat to Pakistan. Some of them were killed in the encounters that took place in the city as also in other parts of the province. Huge quantities of arms and ammunitions as also wireless transmitters found from the houses of Muslim evacuees in Jammu left little doubt that any slackness on the part of the people of Jammu at that critical moment would have spelled disaster for them.

This failure of Pakistan's plan in regard to Jammu contributed a good deal towards the defence of Kashmir. Jammu region forms the only direct link between India on the one side and Kashmir valley and other parts of the State on the other. The vital Pathankot-Jammu-Srinagar road passes through this region up to the Banihal Pass. Had the Pakistanis succeeded in capturing Jammu, the only supply line to Kashmir would have been cut off and military aid to save Kashmir would have become impossible.

The situation in the Punjabi-speaking western districts of Mirpur and Poonch including Bhimber and Rajouri was different. This is a predominantly Muslim area. About a lakh of Hindus, who were less than 10 per cent of the total population of this region, constituted the business community though some of them tilled the soil as well. They were spread over the whole of this area. But the main centres of their concentration were the towns of

Poonch, Kotli, Mirpur, Bhimpur, and Rajouri. The Muslim inhabitants of this area, who are mostly illiterate but warlike, are economically dependent on the Hindu population to a large extent. Their relations with the Hindus were, therefore, generally good. But being closely connected with the Muslims of the adjoining districts of Gujarat, Jehlam and Rawalpindi in West Punjab, they had come under the influence of Pakistan ideology. It appealed especially to the upper and military classes among them who had economic interests in Pakistan or depended for their living on service in the Pakistani part of the armed forces of undivided India.

The state government was aware of the dangerous potentialities of this area if its people, of whom about a lakh were demobilised ex-soldiers, ever took into their heads to rebel against their king. So a large part of the state forces was concentrated in this area as also along its border adjoining Pakistan. The state also depended upon the loyalty of elderly Muslim Rajput chiefs and jagirdars of this area who had still close social relations with the Hindu Rajputs of their respective tribes and looked upon the Rajput Maharaja as their natural leader.

Pakistanis, therefore, knew that it was not easy to instigate rebellion from within. Therefore the plan adopted by them for this area was to send a large number of Pakistani nationals, soldiers and tribals to rouse the local population in the name of Islam. This plan was put in operation in the Poonch area, to start with. Large numbers of armed Pakistanis began to cross the Jehlam by barges to enter into the state. The state government protested repeatedly to Pakistan and West Punjab governments as also to the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi during September and October, 1947 against this violation of the state territory by Pakistani nationals. But the protests were of no avail.

When the invasion of Kashmir began, the trouble in the Poonch area had already become widespread

with the collaboration of the local Muslims. Simultaneously with the invasion of the valley, fresh raids on other parts of this area began. The Muslim personnel of the 2nd Jammu and Kashmir Infantry which had been posted in this sector, now deserted the enemy. The Dogra troops hardpressed from all sides could not stand the strain. They realised that it was impossible to defend the whole area against Pakistani invaders and local rebels unaided. So they concentrated themselves in the few towns to which the Hindu population from the surrounding areas had thronged for safety. Very soon all these towns were cut off from one another as also from Jammu. The history of the war in the region after the 22nd of October, therefore, is the history of the defence of these besieged towns by the civil population with the help of the state troops who had managed to reach them. Their only hope of safety was reinforcements of Indian troops from Jammu or Srinagar. Unfortunately this expected relief failed to reach them in time, except in the case of Kotli and Poonch. They fell to the enemy one by one. Their history is one of tragic destruction at the hands of the barbarous enemy in spite of the most heroic defence and sacrifices by civil population. We will take them one by one in chronological order.

1. *Bhimber* : This town, with a normal population of about three thousand which had swelled to about five thousand because of refugee inflow from Pakistan and Hindus from surrounding villages, lies just two miles within the state border. It was a tehsil headquarter within the Mirpur district. It fell to the armed Pakistani raiders who began shelling the town with armoured cars and heavy guns. Just at this time, the Indian dakotas were carrying the first consignment of airborne troops to Srinagar. The people of the town who had assembled in the courtyard of the fort-like tehsil building found all their roads of escape blocked. Still some of them rushed out with the few state troops. But most of them could not.

Finding that no hope was left, hundreds of Hindu women took poison which they had taken with them as a precaution and thus revived the practice of *jauhar*. Many others were kidnapped along with their children. The male population was put to the sword. Thus Bhimber was the first town of the Jammu province to fall into the hands of Pakistan.

Perhaps the fall of this town could not be avoided because there were no troops in Jammu which could have been rushed to save it. But that was not the case with the other towns which fell soon after, one by one.

2. *Rajouri* : This town, with a normal population of about six thousand which had swelled to about 11 thousand at the time of its fall, because of the arrival of Hindus from the surrounding villages, lies in the interior of Jammu province on the old Mughal Road to Kashmir. It was tehsil headquarter within the Riasi district before its fall.

This town was considered to be comparatively safe because of its being out of the direct reach of the Pakistani raiders for some time at least. But the local Muslims, aided by the deserters from state troops did not wait for the raiders. The urgent call of the besieged population for help was in vain because the gravity of the situation in these areas was not appreciated by Sheikh Abdullah who continued to divert all available Indian troops to Kashmir. The result was that the town fell on November 10 before the local Muslims who proved to be more cruel and barbarous than the tribal raiders. The story of Bhimber was repeated with the difference that the number of the persons who could escape to Jammu safely from here did not exceed a hundred. Most of the women performed *jauhar* by taking poison while many of the youth died fighting. Many of those who managed to escape were killed on the way by local Muslims. The number of ladies abducted from this town ran into several

hundreds.

3. *Kotli* : This town with a normal population of 3 to 4 thousand was a tehsil headquarter within the Mirpur district. It lies on the Jehlam-Mirpur-Poonch road. The small detachments of the state troops spread between Mirpur and Poonch had concentrated themselves in this town when their position in the interior became untenable. Colonel Baldev Singh Pathania, the Revenue Minister of the state, who had been sent to guide the operations of the state troops in this area as also Brigadier Chatar Singh, the officer in-charge, had also taken shelter in this town. It was surrounded on all sides by the well-armed local and Pakistani raiders and so no contact could be made with Jammu or Mirpur.

The ammunition with the troops in Kotli ran out early in November. It would have, therefore, fallen to the enemy and suffered the same fate as Bhimber but for the heroism and gallantry of a few local youngmen. An Indian army plane dropped about 20 chests of ammunition in the town. But per chance instead of falling at a safe place they fell on a deep slope outside the town within the reach of the enemy fire from the adjoining hills. To bring the chests into the town was a problem. It looked like sure death. No volunteers were coming forth even from among the troops. Thereupon about 20 members of the local branch of the R. S. S., a youth organisation, volunteered themselves. Their heroism and sacrifice enabled the town to defend itself till it was relieved a few days later by an advance party of the Parachute Brigade of the Indian army stationed at Jhangar.

Though saved from the enemy at that time, this town of the heroes was abandoned by the Indian army voluntarily. This proved to be a military blunder. It made the position of the besieged population and garrison at Poonch precarious. It also relieved many hundreds of raiders besieging this town who now joined hands with the besiegers of Mirpur. That ill-

fated town was the next to fall.

4. *Mirpur* : This strategic town of a normal population of about 10 thousand which had swelled to about 25 thousand at the time of its fall was the headquarters of the Mirpur district. It lies at a distance of about 20 miles from the town and cantonment of Jehlam. Mangla headworks from where the Upper Jehlam canal is taken out and where Mangla Dam has since been constructed by Pakistan is only about nine miles from there. It was connected with Jehlam, Bhimber, Jammu and Poonch by motorable roads.

This town was cut off from Jammu after the fall of Bhimber. It had a garrison of state troops some hundreds strong. But they had little ammunition with them. They had also lost complete touch with Jammu because their wireless sets had developed trouble which they could not set right. After the fall of Bhimber and Rajouri it was feared that Mirpur might also suffer the same fate. Therefore, the people of Jammu who had their relatives in Mirpur waited upon Jawaharlal Nehru when he visited Jammu in the middle of November and pathetically impressed upon him the need of sending immediate reinforcement to Mirpur. But he angrily referred them to Sheikh Abdullah who was expected to guide the military authorities about the disposal of the Indian troops. Instead of paying any heed to their requests, he diverted even the 40 lorries carrying troops which had been sent towards Mirpur to Srinagar where the need was not so urgent after November 8 when Baramula was recaptured. The Indian troops stationed at Jhangar on the junction of Jammu-Mirpur and Jammu-Kotli-Poonch roads did not make any effort to relieve Mirpur even though it lay only at a distance of 30 miles because they had no orders to proceed there.

The town fell on November 25, 1947 when the enemy broke open the back door of the town by heavy gunfire. The state troops and local officers

then lost heart and retreated even before the town could be evacuated by the civilians. The people, therefore, began to run in terror. The fight soon became a rout and the rout a massacre. Hardly two thousand people out of about 25 thousand living at that time in the ill-fated town managed to reach Jhangar in safety. The rest were ruthlessly butchered. The number of women abducted from here ran into thousands. Most of them were paraded and then sold in the bazars of Jehlam, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. The barbarism of the Pakistan troops and civilians on these helpless women who were kept for some time in Alibeg camp before their dispersal to different towns put to shame the worst orgies of rape and violence associated with the hordes of Chengiz Khan and Nadir Shah.

The loot obtained by the Pakistanis from these towns, especially from Mirpur, went into crores. The floor of every house in Mirpur was dug by raiders in search of hoarded treasures.

5. *Deva-Vatala*. Next to fall along the Jammu-Pakistan border in Bhimber tehsil was the cluster of Hindu villages inhabited by Chib Rajputs and known by the name of Deva-Vatala. The warlike people of these villages kept the Pakistanis at bay for two months with their crude weapons. But when Pakistanis began to attack them with modern fire-arms supplied by the Pakistan government they approached Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, then Chief Emergency Officer for Jammu Province, to supply them with arms and ammunition. But no heed was paid to their requests. Towards the end of December, 1947, thousands of Chibs of the area retreated to Jammu with what little they could bring on their heads as refugees. The occupation of Deva-Vatala by the enemy brought him on the outskirts of Chhamb about 30 miles from the city of Jammu.

6. *Poonch*: The only town of this area which did not succumb to enemy pressure was Poonch. The small garrison of state troops supported by the

Indian troops who managed to reach there from Uri, kept the enemy at bay for one long year. Their task would have become impossible but for the daring landings of the I. A. F. dakotas on an improvised airstrip in the town, which lay within firing range of the enemy who commanded the surrounding hills. This town was later relieved by the Indian forces advancing from Rajouri.

The story of the war in the Jammu sector in the early months is thus a continuous tragedy occasionally relieved by episodes of glory provided by the heroes of Kotli, or the defenders of Poonch. But the most unfortunate part of it is that little is known to the people in India and outside about this side of the Kashmir story.

The tragedy about happenings in the Jammu area is heightened by the fact that most of this area fell in the enemy's hands and massacres took place there after the state had acceded to India and the Indian troops had taken charge of the defence of the state.

Kashmir valley having been cleared of the enemy by November 10, Indian troops could have conveniently turned their attention to this strategic area. They could have at least relieved the beleaguered towns of Rajouri and Mirpur and prevented the worst massacre of Indian history after Timur's massacre of Delhi in 1398 from taking place at Mirpur.

That they could not do so was not the fault of army commanders. The men responsible for these massacres were Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. Nehru would not allow anybody else in India to advise him in his handling of the Kashmir situation. He was solely guided by Sheikh Abdullah who had no interest in any other part of the state except the Kashmir valley. His critics even go to the length of charging him with deliberate indifference towards the fate of beleaguered Hindus. That may or may not be correct, but the fact remains that he refused to send troops for the relief of Mirpur even when they were

not so urgently needed in the Kashmir valley.

A more painful aspect of this unmitigated tragedy of Jammu is that till now very little about it is known in India or outside world. Even though the number of Hindu men and women killed and abducted in Jammu area is at least three times that of the Muslim casualties, not a word of sympathy about them was said in India or at the U. N. On the other hand both Sheikh Abdullah and his Indian patrons made so much noise about killings of Muslims in Jammu that Zaffarullah, Pakistan's representative at the U. N. could indict the Government of India of genocide of Muslims in Jammu with telling effect.

If the ruthless killings in Jammu area could be called genocide, it was a genocide of the Hindus and not of the Muslims. While most of the Muslims in the Hindu majority parts of Jammu province migrated to Pakistan, only a few thousands out of over a lakh of Hindus including refugees from adjoining districts of West Punjab could escape to safety from Mirpur-Poonch Muzaffarabad region.

The External Affairs ministry of the Government of India did a singular disservice to India and the world by not bringing true facts of the Jammu story to the notice of the U.N. in time. Nehru had thus not only been unjust to the Maharaja and the heroic people of Jammu who fought the Pakistani invader and saboteurs on their own and thus saved the vital link between Kashmir valley and Indian Punjab from falling into Pakistan's hands, which would have made the Kashmir operation infructuous but had also been responsible for weakening India's position vis-a-vis Pakistan which could take the posture of injured innocence at the U.N. and give a communal colour to an issue which was essentially military and political.

Foiled in their attempt to capture Srinagar and occupy Kashmir valley which would have automatically cut off all the northern parts of the state from India and brought them under Pakistan's control

without much effort, the Pakistani strategists now decided to capture those parts first both for their own strategic importance and also for encircling the valley from the North. The closure of Burzila and Yojila passes which provided the only link between Kashmir valley and Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh due to the onset of winter made the chances of any timely help from Indian army to small detachments of the Kashmir state forces in these parts extremely difficult if not impossible. This was an additional temptation for Pakistan to lay her hand on them just then.

Gilgit, the westernmost part of this frontier region of the state being directly contiguous to and approachable from N.W.F.P. was the first to be attacked and occupied.

The Dogra rulers of Kashmir had a special sentimental attachment with Gilgit because of the great sacrifices made by the Dogra people in conquering it. The *samadhis* of thousands of Dogra soldiers who had laid down their lives in the various Gilgit campaigns between 1859 and 1895 which finally brought the entire Gilgit area including the Gilgit states like Hunza, Nagar, Ishkuman, Koh, and Gizar under Dogra rule, are still a grim reminder of their adventurous spirit and patriotic fervour. They had, therefore, resisted British pressure to surrender the control of this area as long as they could.

After obtaining a lease of the Gilgit area for sixty years from Maharaja Hari Singh in 1935, the British had set about building it as a strategic outpost in the chain of their North-Western defences. It had been linked with Peshawar by a new road. A local force, called Gilgit Scouts on the model of Frontier Guides, led by British officers had been raised and a British Political Agent was posted at Gilgit to control the administered area and the states of Gilgit Agency whose rulers continued to owe allegiance to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir as well. The state forces stationed at Gilgit had been withdrawn

to Bunji on the left bank of the Indus, about 35 miles south of Gilgit cantonment.

Soon after the announcement about transfer of power the Gilgit Agency had been retroceded to the Maharaja who celebrated the occasion with great joy. He had then appointed Brigadier Ghansar Singh as military Governor of the area. He had reached Gilgit along with Major General Scotts, then chief of staff of the state army, on July 20, 1947. On arrival there they found that all British officers in Gilgit had opted for service in Pakistan and that Gilgit Scouts also wanted to go over to Pakistan. The only force available to the Governor was the 6th J. & K. Infantry stationed at Bunji too which was half Muslim and half Sikh. It was commanded by a Muslim officer of doubtful loyalty, Lt.-Colonel Majid Khan.

In the circumstances, it was clear that British officers on the spot were strongly pro-Pakistan. What was worse they had also poisoned the minds of the Rajas of Gilgit states, who till then had a deep feeling of personal loyalty to the Maharaja. It was also clear that the Maharaja's government at that time was in no position to hold Gilgit militarily against the combined strength of Chitral and Swat levies backed by Pakistan government and Gilgit Scouts, particularly when the loyalty of the Muslim officers and other ranks of its own army had become doubtful.

It was suggested to the Maharaja by some people who knew about the difficult situation in Gilgit that he might lease out the areas to Afghanistan on the same terms on which it was held by British. But the suggestions were never taken up seriously. Afghanistan might have welcomed such a move if it had been seriously mooted in time.

The things began to move fast after the launching of the full-scale Pakistani invasion of Kashmir on the 22nd of October, 1947. The Muslim personnel of the state army deserted. On the night of October

31, the Gilgit Scouts together with these deserters surrounded the residence of the Governor who was forced to surrender. He was put under arrest and a provisional government was established by the rebels. Most of the non-Muslims in the state army and civil population were liquidated and a few made prisoners. Three days later, Major Brown, the British Commandant of Gilgit Scouts formally raised the flag of Pakistan in the Scouts lines. Soon after a political agent from Pakistan established himself in Gilgit.

The fall of Gilgit into the hands of Pakistan and the role played by British officers in the whole affair throws a flood of light on the British attitude towards the Kashmir question from its very inception. Their imperial interests demanded that Jammu and Kashmir state as a whole or at least its northern part including the Kashmir valley should go to Pakistan which they considered to be more dependable of the two new dominions.

After consolidating their position in Gilgit the Pakistan militarists hurried to control the approaches to the valley before the winter had run out. One of their columns advanced towards the Burzila Pass, occupied it and began to infiltrate into Gurais area of Kashmir from that side. Another column advanced west, bypassed Askardu, the capital town of Baltistan, for it had a Dogra garrison on its fort, and occupied Kargil without much difficulty. Kargil lies on the road connecting Srinagar with Leh and Askardu through the Yojila Pass. From Kargil one of their columns began to advance towards Leh and the other advanced south and occupied the Yojila Pass. Some of them even succeeded in infiltrating into the Sindh valley in Kashmir proper.

Thus before the winter was over and before any reinforcements to Askardu, Kargil or Leh could be sent, the Pakistanis with the help of Gilgit Scouts and local recruits, for whom winter weather was no hindrance, had occupied both the passes linking these areas with Kashmir valley. Leh too would

have fallen before the Pakistanis, who spoiled many monasteries and killed about five hundred Buddhists but for the adventurous and hazardous dash was made by a Lahauli officer of the Indian Army, Captain Prithvi Chand, with a few companions towards Leh through Lahaul in mid-winter. He succeeded in reaching Leh, organised a local militia and improvised an airstrip at the height of about 11,500 feet above sea level where equally adventurous Indian pilot, Sardar Mehar Singh, landed his dakota carrying sinews of war and thus saved Leh from meeting the fate of Kargil and Gilgit.

The besieged garrison and Hindu population of Askardu was soon reduced to sore straits by the besieging Pakistani forces. The I.A.F. did drop some supplies to them but due to bad weather and giddy heights that had to be crossed, they fell short of the minimum needs of the besieged. At last Colonel Sher Jang Thapa of the state forces surrendered to the Pakistanis after a gallant resistance of many months on August 15, 1948. The entire Hindu population and most of the surviving troops were put to the sword.

Thus by August 1948, the Pakistanis had occupied most of the northern part of the state including Gilgit, Baltistan and a part of Ladakh. The Burzila and Yojila passes too had passed under their control. Thus they had succeeded in encircling the valley from three sides.

The only hurdle in the way of that further advance to East Punjab through Lahaul and Kulu and to Jammu through Padar and Kishtwar was the town of Leh. Had that town fallen, not only the task of Indian troops in Kashmir would have become very difficult but also a new and more difficult front would have opened in the north.

The problem before the Indian army now was how to regain control over the Burzila and Yojila passes. The heights in these passes were commanded by Pakistanis who now had a fine base at Gilgit well

supplied through air and land transport by the Pakistan government. The whole summer of 1948 was passed in efforts to check the infiltration of the enemy into the valley through these passes.

That alone could not have saved Kashmir of Ladakh. But by the beginning of winter when the passes had been blocked by snow and the Pakistanis felt quite secure in their commanding positions, General Thimayya who commanded Indian forces in Kashmir planned an offensive action which has made history. Light tanks were carried to Srinagar and from there to the Yojila Pass at a height of 11,000 feet, all unnoticed by the Indian public and unknown to the Pakistani spies. As these tanks rumbled along the Yojila Pass, the enemy began to fly like rabbits from their hideouts. Before the year had run out, the Indian troops were in complete control of the Yojila Pass and had also occupied the strategic town of Kargil beyond the pass on the road to Leh. A column now advanced towards Leh from Kargil and made a short work of the Pakistani pickets in this sector. Leh was thus relieved, Ladakh saved and encirclement of the valley prevented.

The initiative had now come in the hands of the Indian army in this as also in other sectors of war. The Pakistani invaders who had since been reinforced by regular troops of Pakistani army were on the run along the four hundred mile long battle front. The Indian army would have completed the job entrusted to it by clearing the whole state of the Pakistan forces, both regular and irregular in course of time had it not been halted by the unilateral ceasefire ordered by the Government of India on the first of January, 1949. This brought the political aspect of the question, which has ever since eclipsed and overshadowed its military aspect, to the fore-front.

5

BUNGLING AT U.N.

The acceptance of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir state by the Government of India and the consequent assumption by India of the responsibility to defend the territories of the state coupled with cancellation of his order to regular Pakistan army to march into Kashmir under compulsion of the threat of withdrawal of all British officers from Pakistan army, impelled Jinnah, the astute politician and realist as he was, to open a diplomatic front to retrieve his position and gain by other means what he thought might not be possible to achieve by force of arms. Fortunately for him, the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, and the Prime Minister, Nehru, readily fell into his trap. They in fact had already provided him the base to mount his diplomatic offensive by unilaterally making the accession of Kashmir to India provisional and conditional.

The offer of plebiscite to determine the will of the people of Kashmir regarding accession after the invading hordes had been thrown out and law and order restored in the state was uncalled for, irrelevant to the situation and illegal. There was no provision in the Instrument of Accession about it. It was outside the ambit of the Act of Independence and was never accepted by the Maharaja who had the absolute choice in the matter. Nor was it demanded by Sheikh Abdullah or any other leader of the state. The rulers of Pakistan had explicitly declared through the

resolution of the All-India Muslim League in 1946 that the rulers should have the final authority to decide the question of accession of their state. Furthermore, they had forfeited any right to object to legal and constitutional accession of the state to India by their blatant aggression to secure the control of the state by force.

The argument that Indian leaders were guided by the situation in Junagarh and Hyderabad in making their offer is untenable because there was no analogy between those states and the situation obtaining in Kashmir. Both Junagarh and Hyderabad were not only overwhelmingly Hindu in population but also completely surrounded on all sides by Indian territory. Therefore, under the Mountbatten Plan they had no other choice but to accede to India sooner or later. The only plausible explanation therefore is that Lord Mountbatten made the suggestion about plebiscite merely to placate Pakistan, and Nehru accepted it for same reason. It was in keeping with his policy of appeasement of Muslim League and Pakistan. Later, however, other explanations such as refutation of the two-nation theory by showing that a Muslim majority area was prepared to remain in India of its own free will and thereby strengthening of secularism in India have also been offered. But they are clearly afterthoughts.

Whatever the reasons and motives behind this offer may have been, the fact remains that this offer of plebiscite lies at the root of the complications that made a purely military question one of the most difficult political questions which has been plaguing Indo-Pak relations with international ramifications ever since.

At the moment it provided Jinnah with an immediate diversion to save his position which had been made untenable and ridiculous in the eyes of his own people by his inability to back up the so-called tribal invasion by the full might of regular Pakistan army without which its collapse before the

Indian army was a foregone conclusion. He sent a message to Lord Mountbatten through Field-Marshal Auchinleck on October 29, 1947 to meet him in conference at Lahore. It was a clever and astute move to make the issue political while the invasion was still on and the possible military decision could not be in his favour.

Sardar Patel, a realist and a practical man as he was, saw through Jinnah's game. He opposed any Indian leader going to Lahore and warned against appeasing Jinnah who was clearly the aggressor in Kashmir. He suggested that if Jinnah wanted to discuss anything he could come down to Delhi. But his wise counsel was not heeded and Lord Mountbatten and Nehru got ready to fly to Lahore on November 1. Nehru, however, had to drop out at the last moment due to indisposition.

At the conference table Jinnah proposed that both sides should withdraw from Kashmir. When Lord Mountbatten asked him to explain how the tribesmen could be induced to remove themselves, Jinnah replied : "If you do this, I will call the whole thing off." This made it absolutely clear that the so-called tribal invasion was fully organised and controlled by the Pakistan government.

Lord Mountbatten formally made the offer of plebiscite to Jinnah at this conference. Mr. Jinnah objected that with Indian troops in their midst and with Sheikh Abdullah in power, the people of Kashmir would be far too frightened to vote for Pakistan. Therefore, Lord Mountbatten suggested a plebiscite under the auspices of the U.N. This was a clear victory for Jinnah. He had virtually got the effect of legal accession of the state to India nullified and got Lord Mountbatten committed to a course of action which could only internationalise an issue in which, strictly speaking, Pakistan had no *locus standi* after the Maharaja had signed the Instrument of Accession and the Government of India had accepted it.

Nehru ratified the offer verbally made by the Lord Mountbatten at Lahore in his broadcast speech of November 2, 1947 in which he declared his readiness, after peace and rule of law had been established, to have a referendum held under some international auspices such as that of the United Nations.

The commitment on the part of the Government of India had, besides throwing the accession of Kashmir to India open to question, two other important implications. On the one hand, it provided Pakistan with a second string to its bow. Conscious of the strength of the appeal of religion to Muslims, it could now hope to secure by peaceful method what it failed to achieve by force. On the other hand, it made the Government of India dependent for the ratification of the accession through plebiscite on the goodwill of Sheikh Abdullah whose position was changed from that of a suppliant to that of the master who must be kept in good humour at all costs. These in their turn set in motion a chain of events and created a psychological atmosphere in Kashmir which suited Pakistan.

Even this major concession to a communal approach to the problem which has since given Pakistan a whip hand in Kashmir, did not soften the attitude of Jinnah and his government who kept up their military pressure through tribal hordes supported by regular Pakistani troops at a high pitch. Even though the invaders had been thrown out of the valley, they maintained, as described earlier, their advance in Jammu and the northern areas of the state. The right and honourable course for India in the circumstances was to discontinue all negotiations with Pakistan and concentrate on securing a military decision. India at that time, was definitely in a position to secure a favourable military decision had it decided to attack the bases of the invaders in Pakistan. But Nehru in his anxiety to keep the conflict confined to Jammu and Kashmir

State would not permit that. In this he had the full support of the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten. Therefore, the negotiations were continued even when Pakistani invaders were only attacking and occupying more and more territory.

Direct talks between Nehru and Liaqat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, were held for the first time since Pakistani invasion began, on December 8, 1947 when the former visited Lahore along with Lord Mountbatten to attend a meeting of the Joint Defence Council. But they proved abortive. Therefore, Lord Mountbatten who was growing apprehensive of the fighting in Kashmir degenerating into full scale war between the two dominions, a contingency which he wanted to avoid at all costs, pressed Nehru to refer the matter to the U.N. and invoke its good offices for a peaceful settlement of the problem.

Most of Nehru's cabinet colleagues were opposed to this suggestion for obvious reasons. It amounted to inviting outside interference into a purely internal and domestic problem and a tacit admission on the part of India of its inability and incapacity to meet the situation created by the invaders. But ultimately he had his way.

As a necessary preliminary, he personally handed over a letter of complaint to Liaqat Ali Khan on December 22, 1947 when the latter visited Delhi in connection with another meeting of the Joint Defence Council. It demanded that Pakistan should deny to the invaders i) all access to and use of Pakistan territory for operations against Kashmir, ii) all military and other supplies, and iii) all other kinds of aid that might tend to prolong the struggle.

Liaqat Ali Khan promised to send an early reply. But instead of doing that fresh invasion was launched in Jammu which forced an Indian brigade to fall back to Nowshera from Jhangar, an important road junction in the western part of Jammu. The pressure on areas still nearer to Jammu city was also stepped

up. This made an attack on the enemy bases in Pakistan an imperative necessity to save Jammu and the supply line to Srinagar. But Nehru was unwilling to do that. So without waiting for a reply from Pakistan which was being deliberately delayed, the Government of India formally appealed to the U.N. under Charter 35 of the U.N. Chapter on December 31, 1947 and nominated Gopalaswamy Ayyangar to lead the Indian delegation which was to include Sheikh Abdullah also.

That very day, but after the application to the U.N. Security Council had been despatched, Liaquat Ali Khan's reply was received by the Government of India. It was a lengthy catalogue of countercharges. It contained fantastic allegations that the Government of India were out to destroy Pakistan. It gave clear indication of the line Pakistan was going to take at the U.N. From the timing of the reply, it was evident that Pakistan government had its informers in the Indian Foreign Office who kept it posted with the exact details of the Indian complaint and the time of its despatch. This presence of Pakistani agents and informers in the Indian Foreign office is an advantage that continues to give Pakistan an edge over India in diplomacy.

This appeal to the U.N. by India was the second major blunder on her part in handling of the Kashmir question and was a clear diplomatic victory for Pakistan which had succeeded in politicising and internationalising an issue in which she had no *locus standi*. It came as a surprise not only to the Indian public but also to all those countries which had been looking upon the Kashmir question as an internal affair of India. No self-respecting country would have voluntarily invited the interference of foreign powers through the U.N. in an essentially domestic affair like this. In doing so, the Government of India simply played into the hands of Pakistan whose leaders found in it a God-sent opportunity to malign India before the bar of world opinion by

levelling all kinds of fantastic and baseless charges against her.

The Security Council immediately put the issue on its agenda and discussion on it began on January 15, 1948. But to the great disappointment of the Government of India, instead of giving precedence to the Indian complaint about Pakistan's hand in the invasion and putting pressure on Pakistan to stop aiding the invaders, the Security Council from the very beginning put India and Pakistan, the victim of aggression and the aggressor, on the same footing and began to consider Pakistan's counter-charges, which were quite unrelated to the issue, along with the question of Jammu and Kashmir. This was clear from the resolution moved by the Council President Dr. Von Langenhare of Belgium on January 20, 1948. The resolution provided that i) a Commission of the Security Council be established composed of the representatives of three members of the United Nations, one to be elected by India, one by Pakistan and the third to be designated by the two so elected; ii) the Commission shall proceed to Jammu & Kashmir as soon as possible to investigate the facts and secondly to exercise any mediatory influence likely to smoothen the difficulties and iii) the Commission shall perform functions in regard to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and secondly in regard to other situations set out by Pakistan Foreign Minister in the Security Council.

In spite of the objections of the Indian delegation that by bringing other extraneous issues raised by Pakistan within the purview of the Commission, the Security Council was relegating the real issue to the background, the resolution was passed with nine in favour and two, U.S.S.R. and Ukraine, abstaining.

As the debate proceeded, the President suggested that the Security Council might concentrate its attention on the question of holding a plebiscite. This was fully in accordance with Pakistan's line and was therefore duly supported by her Foreign Minister and

chief delegate, Zafarullah Khan. Therefore, resolutions and proposals began to be framed with that end in view.

This provoked the chief Indian delegate, N. Gopaldaswamy Ayyangar, to declare that the Security Council was "putting the cart before the horse." The real issue, he said, was to get the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir stopped by pressing Pakistan to withdraw her support from the invaders. The question of a plebiscite, he added, could be taken up only when peace and normal conditions had been restored. He further requested for adjournment of the debate so that he might go back to India for further consultations. Even this request for adjournment was opposed by the members of the Security Council.

This hostile attitude of the Security Council came as a rude shock to the Government of India and disillusioned even Nehru who had insisted on reference being made to the U.N. against the advice of his colleagues. Speaking at Jammu on February 15, 1948, he said, "Instead of discussing and deciding our reference in a straightforward manner, the nations of the world sitting in that body got lost in power politics."

The pattern of voting in the Security Council which has remained unchanged ever since, began to influence India's foreign policy in favour of the bloc headed by the U.S.S.R. which further prejudiced the Western countries against India in regard to the Kashmir question.

But it would be wrong to put the whole blame for this near unanimous disregard of Indian complaint on the power politics of the two blocs which is reflected in their attitude and voting at the U.N. invariably on all issues. India's mishandling of its case at the U.N. is equally responsible for its discomfiture.

In the past place it was, wrong to refer the Kashmir issue to the U.N. It was a domestic issue. Pakistan had committed unprovoked aggression.

India was in a position to handle the situation militarily. It should have been left to Pakistan to invoke the interference of the U.N. to escape the thrashing it deserved. But instead of putting Pakistan in a tight position, India decided to put her own head in the noose. It was an utter bankruptcy of leadership as well as statesmanship.

Having taken the decision to go to the U.N., the issue should have been put before that body in its true perspective emphasising the fact of Pakistan's aggression in Jammu and Kashmir state, which had become an integral part of India after the accession in terms of the Mountbatten Plan. India should have specifically charged Pakistan of unprovoked aggression and not of mere abetment of aggression by giving passage to tribals through her territory. There was an overwhelming evidence that aggression had been committed by Pakistan itself. By avoiding the specific charge of aggression in her complaint, the Government of India compromised its own position before the Security Council from the very beginning. Such a complaint could not create that sense of urgency about the problem and the real issue of aggression in the minds of Security Council members who were not supposed to know the real situation and had, therefore, to be guided by the memoranda submitted by the respective parties and their elucidation through the speeches in the Council.

If the Indian plan was wrong in so far as it underplayed Pakistan's hand behind the invasion, its advocacy was worse. The man chosen to lead the Indian delegation, N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, was a good old man who had been Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir for some years before 1944. But he was a novice to the ways of U.N. diplomacy which is conducted more at informal meetings and late night dinners and drinking parties than at the Council table. He was an honest gentleman who believed in the Indian concept of "early to bed and

early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise". He was too honest and simple-hearted to be a match for Pakistan's Zafarullah Khan who, apart from being a leading jurist, was a man of few scruples, wide contacts and great eloquence. It is really surprising why the late Mehar Chand Mahajan who as a jurist and a debater was more than a match for Pakistan's Zafarullah, was not chosen for the job. Being the Prime Minister of the state during the days of Pakistani invasion he was best suited to rebutt the baseless charges and lies of Pakistan. The only explanation for this lapse is that he was a *persona non grata* with Nehru who gave preference to his own likes and dislikes over the interests of his country.

To make things worse, the Indian delegation included Sheikh Abdullah, "a flamboyant personality" about whom Campbell Johnson, the gifted Press Attache of Lord Mountbatten, had predicted that he would "swamp the boat of India." He was more interested in projecting himself and running down the Maharaja and the Dogra Hindus than in pleading the cause of India.

No wonder therefore that the statements and speeches made by him on different occasions as also the statements and speeches of Nehru provided Zafarullah with the stick to beat India with.

Even more inexplicable was the failure of the Indian spokesmen to lay proper stress on the fact of accession by the Maharaja which in itself was full, final and irrevocable and from which all the rights of the Government of India flowed. They harped on the "will of the people of Kashmir" and India's offer to them to give their verdict about the accession through a plebiscite after peace had been restored there.

The members of the Security Council as also world opinion in general had not been properly educated regarding the true facts of the Kashmir situation. The external publicity of the Government

of India in this as in other matters was halting and hesitating. The Government of India itself appeared to be apologetic about the acceptance of Kashmir's accession. It felt shy of telling the world the atrocities committed by Pakistani and local Muslims on the Hindus of the state.

The Pakistan government and its delegates at the U.N. on the other hand were aggressively assertive about their baseless and unrelated charges against India and blatantly emphatic in their denial of the Indian charges about aiding the tribal invaders. In the face of Pakistan's categorical denial and the Government of India's apologetic and hesitating approach the first impression on world opinion as also on the U.N. circles was distinctly pro-Pakistan and anti-India.

Pakistan had the added advantage of Gilgit on her side. The strategic importance of Gilgit in the overall Western strategy to contain communism was immense and the British were fully conscious of it. Pakistan could treat it as a bargaining counter to win the support of the Western bloc for Pakistan.

The comparatively favourable attitude of the Communist delegates towards India from the very beginning has also something to do with Gilgit. Control of Gilgit and the Kashmir valley by the Western bloc through Pakistan was considered by Russia as a major threat to her armament industries which had been shifted during the Second World War to the east of the Ural mountains. They were within easy reach of Gilgit-based bombers. This fact, complied with the dominant position of pro-Communist elements in Sheikh Abdullah's government who wanted to use Kashmir as a spring-board for Communist revolution in India, influenced Russia to take the side she did. This in its turn helped Pakistan to get further ingratiated with the Western bloc which had the upper hand in the Security Council.

The pattern that was set in the early debates in

the Security Council was reflected in the composition of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan—UNCIP. India chose Czechoslovakia from the Communist bloc and Pakistan chose Argentina, and when Pakistan and India failed to agree about their common nominee, the Council President named the U.S. The Security Council further decided to raise the strength of the UNCIP to five, nominating two more members—Belgium and Columbia—to it.

Pakistan insisted that the Commission should also go into the question of Junagarh, genocide and certain other problems arising out of the partition of India. The U.S. and Britain helped Pakistan to get these issues discussed in the Security Council. On June 3, 1948, the Council President submitted a resolution which proposed that the Commission be directed to proceed without delay to the area of dispute and besides the question of Jammu and Kashmir, “study and report to the Security Council, when it considers appropriate, on the matters raised in the letter of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan dated January 15, 1948.” This resolution was passed by the Security Council with U.S.S.R., Ukraine and Nationalist China (Formosa) abstaining.

This widening of the scope of the UNCIP evoked strong protests from the Indian delegation and the Indian Government. It was even suggested that India should withdraw its complaint from the U.N. and walk out of it. But, ultimately, the Government of India agreed to receive the Commission and cooperate with it.

The UNCIP arrived in India on July 10, 1948 and began discussions with representatives of India and Pakistan. The Pakistan Government which had so far denied any complicity whatsoever in the invasion of Kashmir now found it impossible to hide the facts any longer. Therefore her Foreign Minister, Zafarullah Khan, informed the Commission that regular Pakistan troops had moved “into certain

defensive positions” in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It created an entirely new situation. It more than substantiated the original complaint of India and clearly brought out Pakistan as an aggressor and necessitated a review of the situation *de novo*. It put the question of plebiscite which had been projected to the forefront by Pakistan in the Security Council in the background for the time being and brought home to the Commission the urgency of getting the hostilities stopped first—a point which India had been stressing all along.

On August 13, 1948, the Commission, therefore, formulated and presented to the Government of India and Pakistan a resolution which called upon both the sides to stop fighting which was to be followed by a truce agreement after which plebiscite was to be conducted in the state under the auspices of a plebiscite administrator to be appointed by the U.N. to determine the will of the people about the accession of the state. It asked Pakistan to withdraw her troops as a first step towards the creation of conditions in which plebiscite could be held.

India accepted this resolution after obtaining certain clarifications as it vindicated her stand that Pakistan being the aggressor must withdraw her troops first. She particularly stressed the need of early withdrawal of Pakistani troops from the northern areas where a garrison of state troops in the fort of Askardu was still holding out against heavy odds.

Pakistan too wanted certain clarifications particularly in regard to the position of the so-called ‘Azad Kashmir’ government which it had set up in the occupied areas of the state. She also wanted to know the clarifications furnished by the Commission to India and Indian acceptance of the clarifications given by the Commission to her before she could accept the said resolution.

While Pakistan was thus procrastinating, the Commission returned to Geneva in September 1948

where it drew up its report which was submitted to the Security Council in November 1948. It admitted in its report that admission by Pakistan about the presence of her troops in Kashmir and her overall control of all Pakistani troops and tribals fighting there has "confronted the Commission with an unforeseen and entirely new situation". It therefore recommended that as a first step towards the final solution of the dispute, the Pakistan government should be asked to withdraw its forces from the state. This has not been done by Pakistan so far.

The Security Council resumed its debate on Kashmir on November 25, 1948. It unanimously appealed to India and Pakistan to stop fighting in Kashmir and do nothing to aggravate the situation or endanger the current negotiation.

Following this resolution Alfred Lozano, a member of the UNCIP, and Erik Colban, personal representative of the UN Secretary General again visited New Delhi and Karachi to discuss with the two governments certain proposals supplementary to the resolution of August 13, 1948. They dealt with appointment of a plebiscite administrator and certain principles which were to govern the holding of a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir after normal conditions had been restored.

Another round of conferences between them and the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan followed. Nehru asked and obtained certain clarifications from Lozano which were later published by India in the form of an *aide memoire* setting out the Indian point of view in greater detail. Lozano returned to New York on December 26 to report to the Security Council.

Soon after he left, the Government of India waiting for any further initiative from the UNCIP or the Security Council ordered a cease-fire to be operative from the midnight of January, 1949. Pakistan reciprocated. This brought to an abrupt end the undeclared war between the two dominions which had

continued for nearly 15 months.

The ceasefire came as a pleasant surprise to the world, especially to the UN circles. What the UNCH had failed to achieve in spite of its best efforts was made a reality by an 'act of faith' on the part of Jawaharlal Nehru. In India it was received with a mixed feeling of relief and dismay because it came all of a sudden at a time when initiative had passed into the hands of the Indian army which was fast recapturing the areas occupied by the enemy. Pakistan and the so-called Azad Kashmir circles, however, felt relieved at this move of the Indian Government. Their fast-waning prestige with the people of the occupied areas was restored and they got a much-needed breathing space to put their house in order.

The reasons for this sudden move on the part of the Indian Government are best known to them. But apparently it was the desire of India's self-righteous Prime Minister to call a conference of the eastern nations at Delhi to discuss the situation arising out of the Dutch aggression against the Indonesian Republic which actuated him to talk of this step. How could he talk of peace elsewhere when his own country was engaged in a war in Kashmir? That this was not of India's own seeking, but had been forced on her by a perfidious neighbour did not seem to bother him. Was not the applause that he won for this act of self-abnegation on behalf of his country a compensation enough for the harm it might have done to the interests of India in Kashmir?

Whatever may be said about the advisability of ceasefire at the time it came, there is no denying the fact that it, in a way, simplified the problem of Kashmir. The ceasefire line which was finalised at a joint military conference of India and Pakistan held at Karachi from July 18 to July 28, 1949, divided the Jammu and Kashmir state roughly into two equal parts. Beginning from near the Karakoram pass in the north this line runs close to the Srinagar-Leh road near Kargil and then runs

along the great Himalayan range dividing Kashmir from Baltistan; then turning South it runs along the western mountains, dividing Kashmir from Chilas upto Uri from where it goes south-west parallel to the river Jehlum and touches the southern boundary of the state near Chhamb. A major portion of Baltistan excepting the town of Kargil, the whole of Gilgit and a major portion of the Punjabi-speaking area of Muzaffarabad, Poonch and Mirpur fell on the Pakistan side of the ceasefire line. The strategic Burzila Pass, the only direct link between Kashmir valley and Gilgit, also fell on the Pakistan side.

Thus out of the six distinct linguistic and cultural regions of the state three came into the hands of Pakistan. All of them are predominantly Muslim. All Hindus including Sikhs living in these parts were either killed or driven out.

The remaining three, Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir valley, lie on the Indian side of the ceasefire line. Of these, Kashmir valley alone has a Muslim majority. The remaining two are Hindu and Buddhist majority areas of the state.

Thus by proposing the ceasefire and allowing the Pakistani forces to remain in occupation of the Pakistan held areas of the state, the Indian Government virtually accepted a partition of the state. The ceasefire agreement did not mention the right of the state, government to administer the areas held by Pakistan or the so-called Azad Kashmir government. Those areas were left to be administered by the "local authorities" which practically meant the "Azad Kashmir Government" or any other authority sponsored and supported by the Pakistan government.

Had the ceasefire been brought about after a serious consideration of the military and political situation with a view to effect a planned partition of the territory involved as in the case of Korea and Indo-China, it might have well nigh put an end to

the problem of Jammu and Kashmir which, unlike Korea, never possessed any intrinsic geographical, cultural, economic or religious unity. But in this case the ceasefire was the result of just another sudden flash in the impulsive mind of Jawaharlal Nehru who had the rare quality of thinking at leisure after he had spoken or acted in haste.

As a result the ceasefire line did not follow any set geographical, topographical or demographical pattern. Even strategic considerations, which should have been kept in mind when drawing the line, could not be given due attention because the ceasefire had been ordered at a time when the Indian army had left its defensive positions but had not yet fully dislodged Pakistani forces from the strategic and defensive positions which they commanded.

6

THE BALANCE SHEET OF PATRIOTISM

The virtual division of Jammu and Kashmir state between India and Pakistan as a result of the cease-fire diverted for some time the attention of both India and Pakistan from the discussions at the U.N. to the task of consolidating their position in their respective parts. Pakistan had made valuable gains at the cost of India. But what still remained with India was of no less importance to her. A realistic appraisal of what Pakistan gained and what India still retained and the internal developments in the two parts of the state since then is an essential prerequisite for proper appreciation of the developments which have made even the retention of the Kashmir valley by India doubtful

The gains made by Pakistan from her undeclared war against India were considerable and significant from every point of view. Militarily, she could claim to have scored a victory over a much bigger and stronger India. At a much less cost in men and materials she was able to add to her dominions a territory roughly equal in size to Punjab and Haryana. It was quite a rich dividend for her aggression and naturally confirmed the impression that India could be bullied and bluffed into acquiescence in aggression and acceptance of any demand, however unreasonable, if it was backed by adequate force. This created a new confidence and psychology of aggression in Pakistan which has marked her dealings with India on all

questions ever since.

Politically, Pakistan had made a mockery of the lawful accession of the Jammu and Kashmir state by Maharaja Hari Singh and asserted her claim to have a say in the future of that state. While she had obtained control over nearly half of the state by force, she had got the way cleared for getting the rest of it, or at least Kashmir valley, through other means by getting India committed to a plebiscite under the supervision of the U.N. Knowing the Muslim mind, as she did, she was reasonably confident of the outcome of a plebiscite whenever it was held.

Diplomatically, she had scored a resounding victory over India. Taking advantage of Nehru's bunglings and indiscreet statements, she had succeeded in putting India, the aggressed and the complainant, on the defensive at the U.N. and at the bar of world opinion had own valuable friends and allies. Having foolishly minimised and underplayed the fact of accession by the Maharaja, which was the only real and legal claim of India to be in Jammu and Kashmir, India was reduced to the pitiable position, depended more on the good graces of Sheikh Abdullah and votes of the Communist bloc rather than on the unassailable right derived from accession and the heroic defence of Kashmir by her armed forces.

This swelled Sheikh Abdullah's ego and threw India into the lap of the Communist block to the chagrin of there Western countries, on the other. The dangerous shift this situation gave to India's foreign policy directly led to her virtual isolation. Pakistan's gains in terms of territory, human and economic resources and, above all, achievement of important strategic objectives too were immense.

The area of the state territories now held by Pakistan comes to about 34,000 square miles out of the total area of 84,471 square miles for the whole state. It includes about 17,000 square miles of Gilgit, about 12,000 square miles of Baltistan and about 5,000 square miles of the Mirpur-Poonch-Muzaffarabad

zpne. The total population of Pakistan-occupied part of the state in 1949 was about 11½ lakhs out of a total of 40 lakhs for the whole state, according to the 1941 census. It included the population of Gilgit which stood at 1,16,000 in that year, over one lakh Hindus having been exterminated.

Though these population figures are not very imposing yet they were important to Pakistan. The Poonchis, Mirpuris and Gilgits are fine fighting material. They make good soldiers and seamen. In fact, military service is the main occupation of these people. There were at that time a lakh of demobilised or ex-soldiers in Mirpur and Poonch area. Being comparatively backward, educationally and politically they were considered to be more amenable to army discipline. This war-like man-power has since been an asset to Pakistan.

Apart from this man-power, Pakistan was able to achieve a major part of its objectives in the state by the occupation of these territories. Pakistan's main contention about the state was that, being a Muslim majority unit, it should accede to Pakistan. But the more realistic Pakistani leaders realised the difficulty in obtaining for Pakistan the Hindu or Buddhist majority parts of the state which are directly contiguous to the Indian Union. They, therefore, favoured a division of the state on the same basis on which India had been partitioned. Such offers in fact were made by the Muslim Conference leaders to the Dogra leaders of Jammu long before the troubles started there. But the division of the state on the basis of religion was disapproved by the Dogra people of Jammu for that would have meant loss of the Kashmir valley to them.

Pakistan had now virtually brought about a division of the state. Three Muslim majority zones of the state were held by her. The only Muslim majority part of the state that still remained out of her control was the Kashmir valley.

From the strategic point of view she had obtained all that she could reasonably hope to get. The first objective of Pakistan in this regard was to cut off the state from the N.W.F.P., the tribal area and Afghanistan so that no link-up of Pathan homeland with India might be possible. The anxiety of Pakistan to prevent this link-up was great because of the growing demand for Pakhtoonistan and the keen interest that was being evinced by Afghanistan in it. Though the Indian leadership had let down the Khan brothers (Khan Abdul Guffar Khan and his brother, late Dr. Khan Sahib) the sympathies of the Indian people were with the Pathans who had worked shoulder to shoulder with the Indians in their fight against the foreign rule. A direct link between India and Pakhtoonistan and Afghanistan, therefore, would have become a headache for Pakistan. That possibility was removed by the *de facto* control of Gilgit and the Krishan Ganga basin by her.

Pakistan's control over Gilgit besides preventing a direct contact between India on the one side and Afghanistan and U.S.S.R. on the other, provided Pakistan with a bargaining counter to secure the sympathy and support of the U.S.A. and Britain for herself. Because of its strategic location, Gilgit was of vital importance to the U.S. in her world-wide strategy of containing international communism at the time. That explained the deep interest of the U.S. and Britain in favour of Pakistan retaining control of Gilgit and securing control over Kashmir valley, which also could develop into a major supply base for the advance bases in Gilgit. For the same reasons, the U.S.S.R. was determined to prevent the Kashmir valley from passing into Pakistan's hands. Her support to India over Kashmir in the Security Council had been actuated more by her self-interest than by sympathy for the Indian point of view.

Control over Gilgit and Baltistan also brought Pakistan in direct touch with Sinkiang province of the expanding communist Chinese empire, commu-

nist China became interested in securing control over a part of Ladakh after her forcible occupation of Tibet. This created a community of interests between Pakistan and communist China in the dismemberment of Jammu and Kashmir state in such a way as may give Ladakh to China and the Kashmir valley to Pakistan. That explains the communist Chinese attitude to the Kashmir question ever since its inception. Thus strategically the territories acquired by Pakistan have proved to be of immense importance to her.

From the economic point of view too these territories have proved to be of great importance to Pakistan. The Mangala headworks of the Upper Jehlum canal which irrigates a large part of the West Punjab lie near Mirpur. It flows for about 24 miles within the state territory before entering West Punjab. The economic life of a good portion of West Punjab could be strangled by the destruction of these headworks. Even a breach in the right bank of the canal which flows parallel to the river could render the canal—useless to Pakistan. Now, the headworks and the area through which the canal flows came under the direct control of Pakistan. Therefore, the real or imaginary fear of Pakistan about economic strangulation by India was removed.

The economic importance of Mangala, a name derived from goddess Mangala, whose temple stands on top of cliff surmounted by a fort, has since been further enhanced. The site was chosen for the construction of a high altitude dam on the Jehlum with U.S. help. It has since become the greatest single power-cum-irrigation project in Pakistan.

Furthermore, these territories brought Pakistan in possession of rich source of timber as well as the means of bringing it to the plains. All the rich forest wealth of Kashmir and Karen is carried to the plains by Jehlum. This was an important gain in view of the fact that Pakistan has few forests for good timber. The control of these forest areas

assured Pakistan of a regular supply of raw material for her resin factory at Jallo near Lahore, and of other kinds of forest produce. Pakistan, in fact, obtained almost a monopoly of *kuth*, a fragrant medicinal herb, which grows in the forests of Karen and Chilas.

As far as minerals are concerned, little is known so far about this area. But a geological survey is bound to reveal the rich mineral potentialities of these 34,000 square miles of mountainous territory. The surveys so far made have revealed the existence of mineral oils in the Poonch area. Limestone suitable for cement and different types of valuable clays are also known to exist in abundance in these parts.

These gains of Pakistan have proved to be sure and permanent. The people of the occupied areas, who have close linguistic, social and cultural ties with the people of the adjoining districts of West Pakistan, have been fully indoctrinated with Pakistan's ideology. They are, therefore, sure to stand by Pakistan in peace or war. The question of plebiscite, which has since lost all relevance to the situation has, therefore, never been a headache for Pakistan.

Pakistan was not at all bothered by any U.N. reactions. She had, in fact, from the beginning used that forum to malign India with total impunity. The fact that she had violated the U.N. Charter by crossing into the territories of Jammu and Kashmir state did not in any way compromise her position at the U.N. She was not bothered about her own legal position or world opinion, so long as she was in firm possession of the territories concerned. As later events have proved, world opinion or legal quibblings matter only for the weak, the strong who can present the world with a *fait accompli* can always get away with it unless the victim of aggression can mobilise more strength to under the wrong.

Therefore, she went ahead with consolidating these gains untrammelled by any extraneous considerations or inhibitions. She established her direct

control over the northern strategic areas, Gilgit and Baltistan, which have since continued to be centrally administered units of Pakistan. In the Western districts of Mirpur, Poonch and Muzaffarabad she had already set up a puppet regime for the purpose of tactical manoeuvrability at the U.N. She gave this area the name of "Azad" (independent) Kashmir even though it had nothing to do with the Kashmir region of the state which is cut off from the rest of the state by high Himalayan ranges. She had since raised fully trained and equipped battalions from among the local people which constitute the real striking force of Pakistan in the state.

Having thus acquired and consolidated her position in three out of the four Muslim majority regions of the state, Pakistan began to prepare for the control of the rest of the state. The cessation of hostilities and restoration of normal conditions in the valley enabled her to start a propaganda offensive inside the valley through her numerous agents in the state administration and the *Mullah* class to rouse communal feelings in the people there.

The state of affairs in the India-held part of the state, in spite of the sound legal and constitutional position of the Government of India, has been just the opposite. The developments there and the policy of Government of India regarding them tended to further compromise and weaken the position of India both internally and externally.

Even though the gains of aggression to Pakistan at the cost of India were valuable and important, the territory still left with India was of much greater extent, value and importance. It included the Kashmir valley and parts of Uri and Titwal subdivisions of Muzaffarabad district in Kashmir province, four eastern districts comprising the Dugar region of Jammu province together with the town of Poonch, whole of Ladakh including Kargil lying between Ladakh and Baltistan proper across the Yojila Pass.

The total area of this territory was about 50,000 square miles including about 33,000 square miles of Ladakh, about 12,000 square miles of Jammu, about 3,000 square miles of the Kashmir valley and about 2,000 square miles of Uri and Titwal area.

From the population point of view the Kashmir valley with its 20 lakhs population of which about 19 lakhs are Muslims is the most populous. Next comes Jammu with a population of about 20 lakhs of which about 15 lakhs are Hindus. The Muslim population of Jammu is mainly concentrated on the west along the ceasefire line. Ladakh with a population of over a lakh, of which Buddhists form a majority, is the most sparsely populated.

Jammu and Ladakh being directly contiguous to each other as also to Himachal Pradesh form a compact bloc of about 45,000 square miles with a predominantly Hindu or Buddhist population. The Kashmir valley and the adjoining areas of Uri and Poonch form the only compact Muslim majority area on the Indian side of the ceasefire line.

Strategically though not comparable to Gilgit because of its being the meeting ground of international frontiers of Afghanistan, U.S.S.R., Communist China and India, the territory held by India is yet of immense importance to her. Being the only link between India and the rest of the state including the Kashmir valley, the Jammu region has the greatest strategic importance for India. Its warlike Dogra population and hill terrain make it an ideal frontier area separating Indian Punjab from the north-western parts of Pakistan and Pakistan-held territories of the state.

Gilgit and Baltistan having been lost to Pakistan, Ladakh remained the only window in Indian hands opening into Central Asia. Though the town of Leh has ceased to be the nerve centre of Central Asian trade since the incorporation of the Central Asian Khanates by U.S.S.R. and China, yet its importance as a political and military outpost cannot be mini-

mised. The strategic importance of this area has since been enhanced manifold by the communist Chinese occupation of Tibet and its expansionist designs on India.

The strategic importance of the Kashmir valley which is essentially a place of beauty lies in its being a vast stretch of plain land surrounded by the high Himalayan ranges which make it an ideal supply and air base for the defence to India's northern frontier. The fact that the only motorable road linking Leh with Jammu and the rest of India passes through the valley has made it indispensable for Indian defence against Communist Chinese expansionism.

The economic potentiality of this territory is much greater. The magnificent fir and deodar forests of Jammu region, whose valuable timber flows down the Chenab to Akhnoor near Jammu, are among the best of their kind in the Himalayas. Saffron is produced in the Kashmir valley and Kishtwar in Jammu. This area also abounds in rare medicinal herbs and other kinds of forest produce. Silk and wool of high quality are also produced in large quantities and processed in the wool and silk factories at Srinagar and Jammu.

The Jammu region, particularly its Reasi area, is very rich in minerals. Large deposits of coal, good quality bauxite, iron-ore and copper and many other minerals have been found in this area. There are rich sapphire mines at Podar near Kishtwar. Limestone and other clays suitable for cement and ceramics are found in large quantities in the Kandi areas. Ladakh too is known to be rich in minerals though exact assessment must await a detailed geological survey of the area.

Cheap hydro-electric power can be generated to exploit this rich mineral wealth by harnessing the waters of the Chenab and the Ravi and their numerous tributaries. In fact, the scope for generating power is immense in the Jammu region. The Salal Scheme on the Chenab near Reasi which had long

been under consideration of the Governments of Punjab and Kashmir before partition and which has recently been taken up by the Government of India, will produce, when completed, enough power to transform the economy of the entire area.

The economic potential of the Kashmir valley as a tourist resort and as home of deft artisans whose handicrafts have a worldwide market is equally great. Jammu region also abounds in places like Sannasar and Bhadarwah which excel the best beauty spots in Kashmir valley and can be developed into great tourist centres. They have remained neglected because of the indifference of both the Dogra and the present regimes.

Furthermore all the famous shrines and places of pilgrimage like the holy caves of Shri Amarnath and Vaishno Devi, the holy springs of Mattan and Khir Bhawani and great temples of Shankaracharya and Martand which provide base for the emotional attachment of the people of India with the Jammu and Kashmir state remain in Indian hands.

Statesmanship and realism demanded that India, while maintaining its legal claim over the whole state, took steps to consolidate her position in these territories. Had she done that, the ceasefire might have simplified the issue by providing the basis of a *de facto* partition of the state which while providing valuable spoils to Pakistan would have given to India control over those parts of the state which for well-known reasons abhorred to be annexed by Pakistan.

But India's handling of the Kashmir issue in its internal aspect has been as unrealistic and impolitic as that of its external aspect in relation to Pakistan and U.N.O. The story of India's bungling in this respect makes a sickening reading from the very beginning.

As discussed earlier, one major reason for Maharaja Hari Singh's hesitation in acceding to India was his fear about insistence to hand over power to

Sheikh Abdullah whose bonafides and motives were thoroughly suspect in his eyes. But the circumstances which forced him to request the Government of India to accept his state's accession left him with no choice but to obey the dictates of the Government of India in this respect. He had to hand over full power to Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference as a pre-condition for the acceptance of his state's accession so that Indian troops could be flown to Srinagar to save it and the rest of the Kashmir valley from going the Baramulla way. Sheikh Abdullah became the Chief Emergency Officer to start with and then Prime Minister of the entire state and not of the Kashmir valley alone.

This was a great blunder and a grave injustice to the people of Jammu and Ladakh. The National Conference in its genesis and growth had remained a purely Kashmiri organisation which depended for its following mainly on Hindu anti-Dogra and anti-Maharaja feeling which it had steadily built up since 1930. It had no adherents in Jammu except a small Communist cell. The 'Quit Kashmir' movement as discussed earlier was mainly aimed against the people of Jammu. That movement had made it absolutely clear that Sheikh Abdullah was interested in securing control over the Kashmir valley alone and was not the least interested in other parts of the state. He never aspired nor expected to be put in charge of the government of the whole state.

He, in fact, was reluctant to come to Jammu and had to be persuaded to come there by Prem Nath Dogra and other dignitaries of Jammu many days after he had taken charge of the government at Srinagar. The proper course, therefore, would have been to entrust him with power in the Kashmir valley and given charge of Jammu and Ladakh to popular representatives for these regions.

To make things worse the Government of India began to treat him as a *de facto* Sultan of the whole state from the very beginning. Instead of having a

tighter central control over his administration because of the state being a theatre of war, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, poor judge of men that he was, decided to give him such a long rope as would have prompted even a better man to hang himself with it. The Agent General to the Government of India, Justice Kanwar Dalip Singh, who was supposed to watch the interests of India and guide Sheikh Abdullah was quick to notice the dangerously independent and anti-Indian attitude of Sheikh Abdullah and warned the Government of India to exercise a check over him. But instead of heeding his report, he was asked not to interfere with Sheikh Abdullah's administration and be guided by him. He resigned in disgust and went back to Delhi.

Sheikh Abdullah never had need for Indian guidance. He had enough communists around him to guide him towards "independent Kashmir" which suited their overall strategy for a communist revolution in India. With the appointment of Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Emergency Officer for the whole state pending the formation of a regular government, they became the real masters of Kashmir for some time at least. They took charge of all available military stores, commandeered private arms and organised a militia of which such well-known communist leaders as Rajbans and Sher Jung became Brigadier and Colonel Commandant respectively. They named the main square of Srinagar as Lal Chowk—red square—and filled all the key administrative posts with their own nominees. With the departure of Sheikh Abdullah for New York as a member of the Indian delegation to the U.N., G.M. Sadiq became the virtual head of the government in Kashmir which further gave a free hand to communists.

It was a time when communist terrorism, miscalculated revolution, was in full swing in Telengana. To avoid arrest many leading communists had come to Kashmir. Most prominent among them was B P L. Bedi, who became a close confidant of Sheikh

Abdullah. He was reported to have said in 1948 that “with Soviet Russia at our back we can turn Kashmir into an arsenal for revolutionary movements in India and Pakistan.”

This Communist strategy demanded that Sheikh Abdullah must repudiate authority of India and work for an independent Kashmir. Even otherwise Sheikh Abdullah was inclined to take this line because that suited his ambition to become the Sultan of Kashmir. As a result, Sheikh Abdullah began to display from the very beginning an arrogant disregard for India and stress his own role in the revolutionary changes that had brought him into power. In his first public speech at Lal Chowk, Srinagar, on October 27, 1947 he said “we have picked up the crown of Kashmir from dust. Whether we should join India or Pakistan is a secondary question. First, we have to complete our independence”. There was no reference in this speech to the role of the Indian army, not to speak of any word of appreciation for it

Such utterances created scare in Jammu whose people wanted the accession of the state to India to be a fact rather than a farce. The anti-Dogra tirades of Sheikh Abdullah and the repressive and discriminatory policies of his government coupled with reckless enforcement of the “New Kashmir” plan created a lot of discontent against his administration in Jammu within a few months of the transfer power to his hands.

The discontent in Ladakh was no less. The Buddhists there found the new regime not only repressive but also communal in its outlook and approach. As a result, the feeling began to grow in Jammu and Ladakh that they must be freed from the oppressive rule of Sheikh Abdullah and his communalist-cum-communist agents even if it meant their separation from the Kashmir valley.

7

THE DIXON PROPOSALS

The ceasefire eased the situation in so far as it put a stop to the actual fighting. It also removed the fear of the fighting in Kashmir developing into a general Indo-Pak War. But it did not bring the solution of the problem as visualised by the UNCIP in its resolution of August 13, 1948 any nearer. Nothing had been settled about the truce agreement and plebiscite which were to follow the ceasefire in the terms of that resolution before India took the initiative to end the shooting war. This put the U.N. Commission in a difficult position. While it appreciated India's self-abnegation in stopping the actual fighting it did not want the matters to rest there. It, therefore, after waiting for a few months passed a new resolution about the truce agreement and the plebiscite. To expedite the work it decided to move down to India and Pakistan to carry on its mediatory efforts to that end.

But neither Pakistan nor India was in a hurry to oblige the U.N. Commission. Pakistan wanted to consolidate her position in the territories acquired by her and was in no mood to take any risk by withdrawing the 30 battalions of local troops raised from among the people of these territories and allowing the writ of the lawful government of Jammu and Kashmir to run, even nominally, over the whole state on which India insisted. The divergence between the views of the two sides regarding demilitarisation

and administrative control over the territories occupied by Pakistan was so great that it took them seven months to finalise the ceasefire line.

The UNCIP therefore began to veer round to the idea of arbitration by a third party regarding the disputed points about demilitarisation which stood in the way of signing the truce agreement and induction of a plebiscite administrator for which post the Security Council had nominated Admiral Chester Nimitz of the U.S. Accordingly, it presented to the governments of India and Pakistan on August 29, 1949, its proposal about submitting to arbitration their differences regarding the implementation of Part II of the resolution of August 13, 1948. As if by prior arrangement, President Truman of the U.S. and Premier Attlee of the U.K. wrote to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan about the same time to accept this suggestion about arbitration.

The government of Pakistan accepted the suggestion but the Government of India rejected it on the plea that the outstanding issue of disbanding and disarming of "Azad Kashmir" forces was a matter not for arbitration but "for affirmative and immediate decision." Though the arbitration proposal thus fell through, it hardened the attitude of the U.S. and the U K against India.

The U.N. Commission therefore felt that any further efforts at mediation would be useless and decided to return to New York and report its failure to the Security Council. This it did on December 12, 1949. The majority report was signed by four of the five members. While admitting the Commission's failure in the task entrusted to it, suggested that the Security Council should designate as its representative, a single individual who should proceed to the subcontinent with the broad authority from the Council to endeavour to bring the two governments together on all unresolved issues."

Dr. Chyde, the representative of Czechoslovakia, submitted a separate minority report in which he

charged the U.N. Secretariat, the U.S. and the U.K. with interference in the work of the UNCIP, suggested that a new mediation organ really independent and untrammelled by outside interference should be created and asserted that the Security Council as a whole alone could be such an organ.

The presentation of these reports and the charges levelled by Dr. Chyde about interference by the U.S. and the U.K. in the working of the UNCIP made the division of Security Council between the western and eastern blocs on the question of Kashmir absolutely clear. It was now evident that the Kashmir issue had got caught up in the cold war and that a dispassionate study and solution of the problem on its own merits was going to become more and more difficult. This fact began to further influence the foreign policy of the Government of India in favour of the communist bloc which in its turn made the attitude of the western bloc more and more sympathetic to Pakistan's point of view.

The Security Council, after debating these reports for many weeks, decided by a majority vote on March 14, 1950 to send a single U.N. representative to assist in the demilitarisation programme and subsequent steps for organising a plebiscite. Owen Dixon, a retired judge of the Australian High Court, was chosen for the purpose. Earlier, the names of Admiral Chester Nimitz and Ralph Bunche were proposed but had to be dropped because of India's opposition.

Owen Dixon arrived in India on March 27, 1950. He immediately undertook a comprehensive tour of Jammu and Kashmir state on both sides of the cease-fire line and held discussions with local leaders besides the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. On August 22, 1950 he announced that he had come to the conclusion that there was no immediate prospect of India and Pakistan composing their differences and that he would shortly report to the Security Council. This he did on September 15, 1950.

Owen Dixon's report was the first judicial report on the state of affairs in Jammu and Kashmir as it had developed since the beginning of Pakistani invasion in October, 1947. He made some practical suggestions about the solution of the problem in the light of the situation on both sides of the ceasefire line.

He was the first U.N. representative to state in unequivocal terms that the crossing of the frontier of Jammu and Kashmir state by Pakistani invaders on October 22, 1947, and the entry of regular Pakistan army into Kashmir in May, 1948 were against the international law.

He was again the first U.N. representative to clearly grasp the fact that Jammu and Kashmir state is just a heterogeneous conglomeration of territories under the political power of one Maharaja and that it was not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically. He, therefore, concluded that "if as a result of one overall plebiscite the state in its entirety passed to India, there would be a large movement of Muslims and another refugee problem would arise for Pakistan. If the result favoured Pakistan a refugee problem, although not of such dimensions, would arise for India.

In the light of above conclusions he suggested the following two alternatives to overall plebiscite :

1) A plebiscite be taken "by sections or areas" and the allocation of each section or area be made according to the result of the vote.

2) Without holding a plebiscite, areas certain to vote for India and those certain to vote for Pakistan "be allotted accordingly and the plebiscite be confined only to the uncertain area." The "uncertain area" according to Dixon appeared to be in "vale of Kashmir and perhaps some adjacent country."

This plan of holding a partial plebiscite in a limited area consisting of the valley of Kashmir and partitioning the remainder of the state was according

to Dixon "a last possibility of saving the situation." He wanted to set up an administrative body in this limited plebiscite area consisting of United Nations officers headed by the Plebiscite Administrator with powers to "exclude troops of any description. If, however, they decided that for any purpose troops were necessary, they could request the parties to provide them."

He further suggested that the Security Council should pull itself out of the dispute and let the initiative pass to the parties concerned. He however stressed the necessity for the reduction in armed forces holding the ceasefire line to the normal needs of a peace time frontier.

Keeping in view the actual state of affairs on both sides of the ceasefire line and the Indian commitment about plebiscite, Dixon's proposals appeared to be eminently reasonable and practical even though they militated against the legal and constitutional right of India over the whole of the state. They left the gains of aggression which included three out of the four Muslim-majority regions of the state in hands of Pakistan and gave her a fair opportunity to secure control over the fourth—the valley of Kashmir—if the people of that region really wanted to put their lot with her. They gave India an undisputed control over Jammu and Ladakh and provided her an opportunity to put the loyalty of Sheikh Abdullah and Kashmir Muslims for whom she had done so much to a fair test. To confine the plebiscite to the valley with its small and compact area was definitely to be preferred to an overall plebiscite in the whole of the state from every point of view.

But there was one snag in these proposals. The suggestion to replace the lawfully constituted authority in the valley by the U.N. administrator with the right to invite troops of both India and Pakistan, if necessary, for the purpose of maintenance of law and order could not be justified on any ground. It

amounted to absolute repudiation of India's special position emanating from the lawful accession of the state to her and bestowal upon Pakistan, the aggressor, who had already obtained rich spoils, an equal status and right over the Kashmir valley.

The Dixon proposals, if accepted by India, would have amounted to an implicit acceptance by her that accession of the state to India had no legal and constitutional validity and that the state should be partitioned on the same base on which British India had been partitioned earlier. Further, doubts had begun to assail the mind of Nehru about the advisability of putting the Kashmiri Muslims into the ordeal of a plebiscite in which, whenever held, religious and communal considerations would outweigh all other considerations. Taya Zinkin, the representative of *Guardian*, reported Nehru as having told her on June 30, 1950, in answer to her question whether he would accept *status quo* with plebiscite confined to the valley of Kashmir, that he would not agree to a plebiscite so long as Pakistan held a part of the state because the people of Kashmir were "timorous". Pakistan had agreed that it would not canvass in Kashmir on religious grounds but he could not run the risk of their breaking this understanding. Compared with the risk of communal conflagration he did not care about world opinion, but added "of course if the Kashmiris want a plebiscite to be fought on economic and not, mind you, religious grounds they can have it. But I shall never allow so long as I live a plebiscite over cow's urine and all that. It would undo the whole of communal harmony."

However, according to Owen Dixon, the Prime Minister of India was in agreement with the general principles underlying his proposals, viz., area where there was no doubt as to the wishes of the people going to India or Pakistan and plebiscite being confined to the areas where there was doubt about the result of voting provided the demarcation line was drawn

with due regard to geographical features and requirements of an international boundary. But he was strongly opposed to Dixon's proposal about supersession of the existing Kashmir government and bringing in of Pakistan troops in the valley if the plebiscite administration felt keeping them there was necessary.

There are reasons to believe that had Dixon and afterwards the Security Council adopted a flexible approach in regard to the suggestion about supersession of the lawful Kashmir government and admission of Pakistan's troops into the valley if the plebiscite administrator so desired, his proposals might have proved a workable basis for a final settlement in spite of the immediate adverse reactions of India and Pakistan to it.

But the Security Council which met on February 21, 1951 to consider the report of Owen Dixon instead of finding out ways and means of making the Dixon proposals acceptable to the two parties, decided by a resolution sponsored jointly by the U.K. and the U.S. to send another U.N. representative to India and Pakistan in succession to Owen Dixon "to effect the demilitarisation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of the demilitarisation proposals made by Dixon in his report with any modification which the U.N. representative deems advisable and to present to the governments of India and Pakistan detailed plans for carrying out plebiscite in the state of Jammu and Kashmir." This resolution was passed with slight modification in spite of the opposition of India by a majority vote on March 30, 1951. None voted against it but the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia abstained.

In accordance with this resolution the Security Council appointed Dr. Frank Graham of the U.S. as its new representative. Dr. Graham who first came to India and Pakistan in June, 1951 carried on endless discussions with the Prime Ministers of both the countries about the quantum of armed forces to

be retained by the two sides in Kashmir after a demilitarisation in terms of the resolution of August 13, 1948 had been brought about. Having failed to make any headway, he suggested direct negotiations between the two governments. They began at a joint conference of the two countries at ministerial level at Geneva in August 1952, and were later, after a change of government in Pakistan, following the assassination of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, continued at Karachi and New Delhi at the Prime Minister's level.

The joint communique issued on August 20, 1953, after the conclusion of the talks between the two Prime Ministers at New Delhi gave the impression that some headway had been made towards a negotiated settlement. According to the communique the Prime Ministers agreed to consider directly the preliminary issues like the quantum of forces to be kept by both sides in Kashmir and to that end decided to appoint military and other experts advise them in regard to these issues. A provisional timetable for implementation of their decisions was also drawn up according to which the plebiscite administrator was to be inducted into office by April, 1954.

But before any concrete steps could be taken to implement the decisions announced in the joint communique, a new turn was given to the whole problem by the military pact between Pakistan and the U.S. and the internal developments in Kashmir which culminated in the overthrow of Sheikh Abdullah and installation of a new government headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and ratification of accession by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly.

8

SHADOW OF COLD WAR

The developments leading to the dismissal and arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in August 1953 and the signing of U.S.-Pak military pact early in 1954 were closely linked up with cold war politics of the two power blocs. They in their turn contributed to a further intensification of the cold war in regard to Kashmir which made an objective approach and a negotiated settlement of the problem inside or outside the U.N. all the more difficult.

Internally these developments were closely linked up with Sheikh Abdullah's personal ambition to secure absolute power for himself in the Kashmir valley for which he leaned first on the communists who gave him the idea of independent Kashmir but later moved towards the West, particularly the U.S., to achieve the same end to the great chagrin of the communists.

The opportunity to cultivate the friendship of the western statesmen and secure their sympathy for his pet plan was provided to him by his successive visits to Europe and the U.S. as a member of the Indian delegation to the United Nations. The ruling circles in the U.S. had already veered round to the idea of a partition of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan more or less on the basis of *status quo* with freedom for the Kashmir valley to decide about its own future through a plebiscite under the U.N. auspices. This fitted in well with Sheikh

Abdullah's own ambition. He therefore felt encouraged to give out his mind in an interview to Michael Davidson of *Sunday Observer* and *New Scotsman* in May 1949. He was reported to have said, "accession to either side cannot bring peace. We want to live in friendship with both dominions. Perhaps a middle path between them with economic co-operation with each will be the only way of doing it."

The Government of India was taken aback by this statement of Sheikh Abdullah. Sardar Patel who had by that time integrated over 500 princely states but had scrupulously refrained from taking interest in the handling of Kashmir problem because of Nehru's insistence upon treating it as his close preserve, for once thought it necessary to put his foot down on Sheikh Abdullah's ambition. His one frown made Sheikh Abdullah realise that he had overstepped his authority. He, therefore, beat a hasty retreat.

The death of Sardar Patel towards the end of 1950 removed from the Indian scene the one man who could have kept Sheikh Abdullah's ambition in check and cleared the mess that Nehru had made in Kashmir by his unrealistic and erratic handling of the problem from the very beginning. Sardar Patel, in fact, told the present writer when the latter requested him to do something about Kashmir as well, that he would set things right there in one month. But he was not prepared to take the initiative unless Nehru specifically requested him to do so. Whether it was a gentleman's agreement between the two giants of the Indian politics not to interfere with each other's sphere of activity or deliberate self-denial on the part of Sadar Patel, it is difficult to say. But the fact remains that while Sardar Patel was able to integrate 500 and odd princely states including Hyderabad with great efficiency and success within two years, Nehru made a mess of Kashmir in spite of the huge sacrifices in men and material and complete and unstinted support of the nation to him in the matter.

With the passage of time even the worst critics of Sardar Patel have begun to admit that left to him the Kashmir issue would have been settled long ago in keeping with national honour and national interests. That will remain in the eyes of history, which is no respecter of personalities, the measure of Sardar Patel's greatness as a statesman and administrator as compared to Nehru whose handling of Kashmir issue will go down in history as an epitome of the failures of a man who with the best of opportunities and favourable circumstances made a mess of everything he handled.

Deterioration in the internal situation of the state after that was as rapid as it was disconcerting for India. To secure a free hand for himself in the state, Sheikh Abdullah succeeded, thanks to Nehru's dotting support to him, in getting the temporary Article 370, which made the bulk of the Indian Constitution inapplicable to the Jammu and Kashmir state, incorporated in the Constitution itself. It visualised a separate Constituent Assembly for the state to draft its Constitution.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in 1951. But they were so conducted that most of the candidates of the Praja Parishad, the only opposition party in the State, were eliminated at the nomination stage by rejecting their nomination papers and the rest were forced to withdraw for want of assurance that elections would be fair and free. As a result all the 75 nominees of Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference got elected unopposed.

The Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was supposed to ratify the accession of the state to India and adopt the Indian Constitution, in the making of which Sheikh Abdullah and three other representatives from the state had an equal hand. But Sheikh Abdullah tried to give it quite a different idea of its powers and scope from the very beginning. He told it that it was "one hundred per cent sovereign" and that "no Parliament, be it that of India

or of any other country, has authorisation here.” Referring to independence as a possible solution, he observed on March 25, 1952, “suppose for the sake of argument the people do not ratify this accession, the position that will follow will not be that Kashmir becomes a part of Pakistan. No, that would not happen. That cannot happen legally or constitutionally. What would happen in such an eventuality would be that the state would regain the status which it enjoyed immediately preceding the accession. Let us be clear about it ”

Simultaneously, he began to speak in the same strain outside the Assembly. His main object appeared to put pressure on the Government of India for making some definite commitment about the autonomy of Kashmir before the Constituent Assembly ratified accession. This he secured through the Delhi Agreement of July 1952 by which he secured a free hand to abolish the Dogra ruling dynasty and have a separate flag and Constitution for the state. Accordingly the hereditary Dogra ruler as the head of the state was replaced by an elected President called *Sadar-i-Riyasat*, the red flag of the National Conference was adopted as the state flag and machinery was set up for drafting a separate Constitution for the state while the question of ratification of accession was kept pending.

These separatist moves and utterances sent a wave of resentment in Jammu and Ladakh as also in the rest of India. The Praja Parishad launched a movement for the integration of the state with the rest of India like other acceding states with a common Constitution, a common President and a common flag. The popular discontent against discriminatory economic and administrative policies of Sheikh Abdullah’s government with regard to Jammu added strength to this movement which spread to every nook and corner of Jammu province. Thousands of people courted arrest and about two score persons were shot dead for hoisting the Indian

tricolour on the state buildings in Jammu and for raising the slogans :

Ek Desh Men Do Vidhan

Ek Desh Men Do Nishan

Ek Desh Men Do Pradhan

Nahin Challenge, Nahin Challenge.

(Two Constitutions, two Presidents and two Flags in the same country will not be tolerated).

The patriotic sufferings of the people of Jammu found sympathetic response from nationalist India spearhead by late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji who, ever since his resignation from the Nehru cabinet in April 1950, had been unofficially acclaimed as leader of the opposition even though his own party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, could return only three members to the first Parliament of free India elected in 1952. He took up the battle on behalf of the Praja Parishad inside and outside the Indian Parliament. Having failed to persuade Nehru to sit round a table with the representatives of the Jammu and Ladakh and meet their genuine and patriotic objections to the separatist policies of Sheikh Abdullah, he decided to extend the *Satyagraha* started by the Praja Parishad in Jammu to the rest of India.

Sheikh Abdullah, who had the full backing of Nehru, instead of relenting became more obdurate and aggressive. He intensified repression and the people in the villages began to be hunted out like rabbits. As the reports of this repression travelled out of the state, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji decided to visit Jammu and see things for himself. He asserted that as a citizen of free India and a member of the Indian Parliament he was free to go anywhere in the country without any kind of permit and, therefore, proceeded towards Jammu without an entry permit early in May 1953. It was expected that he would be arrested by the Government of India for this defiance. But instead he was allowed by the state authorities to cross the Ravi bridge at

Madhopur and enter the state to be arrested by the state authorities. This was arranged deliberately to keep him out of the jurisdiction of the Indian Supreme Court which would have surely released him on a reference being made to it.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji alongwith Vaidya Guru Dutt, a leading physician and well-known writer, who accompanied him as his personal physician, were taken as prisoner to Srinagar and detained there. After a month, on June 23, 1953, Dr. Mookerji died there in mysterious circumstances. It sent a wave of resentment all over India.

In the meantime within the National Conference as also in Sheikh Abdullah's cabinet a rift was developing. The pro-communist elements which had been the staunchest protagonists of the idea of independence for Kashmir had been alarmed by Sheikh Abdullah's steady drift towards Anglo-Americans which had become very marked after his visit to Paris towards the end of 1951. Sheikh Abdullah, it appeared, had realised that his dream of an independent Kashmir was more likely to come true with the help of the Anglo-American bloc which dominated the U.N. and the Security Council than with that of the communist. He had, therefore, begun to shift his allegiance from his communist friends inside and outside Kashmir to the Western countries. As the Praja Parishad movement for fuller integration of the state with the rest of India gathered momentum, he began to rouse the communal sentiments in the Kashmir valley in the name of Kashmiri nationalism and demonstrate his indifference and disdain about the susceptibilities of the people of Jammu and the Government of India in different ways. The trend became particularly evident after the visit of Adlai Stevenson to Srinagar early in May 1953. This alarmed the pro-communist Ministers, G.M. Sadiq and G.L. Dogra, who now turned against him. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the right-hand man of Sheikh Abdullah, joined hands

with them. These internal developments coupled with the pressure from outside resulting from Dr. Mookerji's martyrdom made Sheikh Abdullah desperate. But before he could show his hand by dismissing the dissident ministers and making a formal declaration of his plan about independent Kashmir, Yuvraj Karan Singh, the only son of Maharaja Hari Singh, who had been elected *Sadar-i-Riyasat* after the abolition of the hereditary rule of the Dogra dynasty dismissed Sheikh Abdullah and commissioned Bakshi Gulam Mohammed to form a new cabinet. Sheikh Abdullah was soon after arrested under Defence of Kashmir Rules.

This sudden turn of events took by surprise both Pakistan and the U.S. which had begun to lay great hopes on Sheikh Abdullah for a solution of the Kashmir problem suiting their ends. Their chagrin was clear from the hostile comments in their press.

The communists in India and outside hailed the overthrow of Sheikh Abdullah as a victory for themselves and started denouncing the U.S. in the strongest terms. They thus successfully exploited the popular feeling roused by the Jana Sangh against Sheikh Abdullah's separatist policies for creating an anti-American hysteria in India.

The pro-communist bias of India's neutralist foreign policy and the persistent support given by the U.S.S.R. and other communist countries to India's stand on Kashmir in the Security Council coupled with the failure of India's external publicity to properly educate the American public opinion about the justice of India's case contributed to Pakistan's success in creating a powerful anti-India lobby in the U.S. press and Congress. Many Americans genuinely began to feel that India was moving towards the communist bloc and that Pakistan could be an asset, particularly because of the strategic situation of Gilgit for containing the spread of communism in Asia if it could be persuaded to join the Baghdad Pact which has since been re-named as Central Treaty

Organisation (CENTO).

At the same time there was a visible pro-American shift in Pakistan's foreign policy particularly after the assassination of Liaqat Ali Khan in 1952. Even otherwise, the very genesis of Pakistan demanded that her foreign policy should run counter to that of India. Born out of hatred for the Hindus and Hindustan, Pakistan's very existence required that India was presented to her people as their chief enemy and everything was done to strengthen Pakistan vis-a-vis India.

At the end of 1953, it became evident that negotiations for a military pact between Pakistan and the U.S. were moving towards a successful conclusion. The signing of the pact was formally announced early in 1954.

India reacted very strongly to this pact which meant substantial augmentation of the military strength of Pakistan with free supplies of armaments from the U.S. Nehru referred to this new situation which had arisen out of the decision of the U.S. government to give military aid to Pakistan, in his letter of March 5, 1954 to Mohammed Ali, the Pakistan premier, and added that "the U.S. decision to give this aid changed the whole context of Kashmir issue and the long talks we have had about this matter have little relation to the new facts which flow from this aid... It changes the whole approach to the Kashmir problem. It takes it out from the region of peaceful approach for a friendly settlement by bringing in the pressure of arms."

Pakistan on the other hand strongly resented the declarations of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed after his assumption of power as head of the Kashmir government that accession of Jammu and Kashmir state to India was full, final and irrevocable. The actual ratification of accession by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly soon after further irritated her.

As a result, the area of disagreement about the quantum of forces to be retained by either side

which appeared to have been considerably narrowed by the direct talks of the two premiers became wider than ever before. Nehru insisted that in the new situation created by the abundant supply of military aid to Pakistan from the U.S. "What we said at a previous stage about the quantum of force had little relevance. We can take no risks now as we were prepared to take previously and we must retain full liberty to keep such forces and military equipment in the Kashmir state as we may consider necessary in view of this new threat to us."

Direct negotiations having thus floundered on the rock of U.S.-Pak military pact, Pakistan premier Mohammed Ali, informed Nehru in his letter of September 21, 1954 that "in the circumstances I am bound to conclude that there is no scope left for further direct negotiations between you and me for the settlement of this dispute. This case, therefore, must revert to the Security Council."

Pakistan, however, took two and a half years after the failure of direct negotiations to request the Security Council to take up the Kashmir issue once again. The request was made by Malik Feroz Khan Noon, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, on January 2, 1957 and the Security Council resumed debate on Kashmir after an interval of nearly five years on the 16th of the same month.

Meanwhile, the situation inside the state as also the attitude and approach of both the countries to the problem had undergone a lot of change. Within the state, the most significant development was the unanimous decision of the Constituent Assembly to ratify the accession and the specific declaration in the Constitution adopted by it on November 17, 1956, that "the state of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India." This strengthened the hands of Government of India which could assert with justification that the people of the state had given their democratic verdict in favour of accession of Kashmir to India.

While the unanimous decision of the Constituent Assembly strengthened the Indian position, the re-organisation of a Plebiscite Front and a Political Conference by pro-Abdullah elements in the Kashmir valley and their open demand for a plebiscite and accession to Pakistan strengthened the hands of Pakistan politically. Militarily, her position had vastly improved because of the massive flow of the latest armaments of all types together with military experts from the U.S. As a result, the attitude of the rulers of Pakistan became more aggressive. Apart from carrying on a diplomatic offensive against India all over the world, they began to actively organise and encourage acts of sabotage through their agents within the state.

As a reaction, India began to lean more and more upon the U.S.S.R. and her satellites which gave a further pro-communist tilt to her foreign policy. The visit to India of Bulganin and Khrushchev towards the end of 1955 and their open declaration at Srinagar on December 19, 1955 "that the question of Kashmir as one of the states of the Republic of India had already been decided by the people of Kashmir" made the alignment of the U.S.S.R. with India on the question of Kashmir as explicit as that of the U.S. with Pakistan. The cold war had now entered Kashmir itself. It began to be looked upon as one of the storm centres of the world like West Berlin where the interests of the two giants clashed directly.

The situation forced Nehru to do some rethinking about the stand he had taken regarding Kashmir so far. Doubts had already begun to assail him about the wisdom of the offer of plebiscite which was bound to be influenced by religious considerations if and when it was held. The behaviour of Sheikh Abdullah also gave him some kind of a shake up. The tone of his utterances about Kashmir therefore changed. He began to voice his opposition to plebiscite openly and the Indian Home Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, declared that Kashmir was an integral

and irrevocable part of India.

The change of attitude was reflected in the stand taken by the chief Indian delegate, V.K. Krishna Menon, when the Security Council resumed debate on Kashmir. India for the first time explicitly charged Pakistan of direct aggression and declared that she had no obligation to discharge till the aggression was vacated. India's voluntary offer to consult the people, he said, had been redeemed through elections to the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir whose actions were "declaratory and not creative." The legal right of India over the whole of Jammu and Kashmir state, he asserted, flowed from the lawful accession of the state by Maharaja Hari Singh which was full, final and irrevocable.

Some hope of a negotiated settlement outside the U.N. rose once again after the military coup in Pakistan which brought Ayub Khan to the helm of affairs in Pakistan in 1959. As a soldier he had a greater consciousness of the possible aggression from communist China for which Indo-Pak amity was essential. He needed it to stabilise his own position as well. Furthermore, he was in a position in the early days of his new-found power to take a decision even against the popular sentiments of the Pakistani people. He was naturally more keen for the settlement of the canal waters dispute in which India had a whip hand over Pakistan. Had Indian diplomacy shown any grasp of realities, it would have insisted upon a package deal embracing all Indo-Pak disputes such as the canal waters, Kashmir, evacuee property, partition debt and treatment of the Hindu minority in East Pakistan. But Nehru bungled once again. A canal water treaty was signed at Karachi in 1960 which gave Pakistan much more favourable terms than suggested by the World Bank award.

With that ended the short-lived Indo-Pak detente brought about more by personal relations between Rajeshwar Dayal, the Indian High Commissioner at Karachi, and Ayub Khan who happened to

know each other well since pre-partition days, than by a real change of heart on both sides. The old game of mutual accusation began once again. The communist Russia saw in the military regime of Marshal Ayub a greater threat to her position in Asia and, therefore, became more vociferous in her support to India over Kashmir. She began to use her veto to prevent any resolution to which India was opposed being passed by the Security Council.

This reduced the discussion in Security Council to just debating bouts between vitriolic Krishna Menon of India and suave and shifty Zafarullah Khan of Pakistan who began to exploit the world forum to malign India by repeating baseless charges against her which were given wide publicity all over the world. Personal unpopularity and pro-communist leanings of Krishna Menon made his able refutals of Pakistan's charges ineffective.

As a result, world opinion began to be influenced in favour of Pakistan. There can be no greater condemnation of the Indian foreign policy and its exponents that the people all over the world have a greater understanding and appreciation of Pakistan's point of view about Kashmir than that of India in spite of the truth and justice of the Indian case.

While these pointless exercises in histrionics were going on in New York, China had started fishing in the troubled waters of Kashmir cutting across the cold war politics of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

The entry of China into the Kashmir state as a third claimant to large chunks of its territories introduced a new factor in the Kashmir situation which not only gave a new turn to the Kashmir problem but also set the ball rolling for a new alignment of force in Asia and a new confrontation between India and Pakistan.

9

CHINA ENTERS THE FRAY

The Chinese interest in Jammu and Kashmir state territories swelled directly from her expansion and absorption of the Central Asian Khanates and Tibet in the Chinese empire. This expansion had been going on for centuries past through the peculiar Chinese method of creating the myth of Chinese suzerainty over all the smaller states situated on China's periphery which had the misfortune of entering into any kind of relationship, voluntarily or involuntarily, with the Chinese imperial court at Peking.

The Khanates of Tashkand and Yarkand which were at one time flourishing outposts of India's cultural empire, as is evident from the Sanskrit origin of these names, are inhabited by Uighur, Kirghiz, Tartar, Tajik and Kazakh tribes of nomadic herdsmen of Turkish origin who had been converted to Islam in the wake of Arab and Turkish expansion in the 8th and 9th centuries. Ethnically they represent a mixture of Indo-Aryan and Mongol stocks. They had come under pressure of Czarist Russia which began to move fast in Central Asia after her failure to expand south because of her defeat in the Crimean War of 1854. To checkmate Russian plans of expansion and keep this area within their own sphere of influence for the protection of their imperial interests in India, the British deliberately encouraged China, which was then too weak and decrepit to pose

a threat to British interests, to assert its suzerainty over these Khanates to prevent their absorption by Russia. Thus began that rivalry between Russia and China for controlling Mongolia and Central Asian Khanates which has continued ever since in spite of the fact that both of them now have communist regimes. The Chinese in keeping with their well-known method, re-christened the area claimed or controlled by them as Sinkiang.

The situation in Sinkiang remained precarious for China so long as she was weak and divided. But with the establishment of a communist regime in China in 1949, the Chinese communists extended their effective sway over Sinkiang through ruthless aggression and repression. This resulted in a lot of local discontent and violent outbursts such as that of the Kazakhs in 1949. The Russians who wanted to consolidate all these Muslim peoples under their own control are known to have actually instigated and helped these rebellions in the beginning. But communist China consolidated her position in Sinkiang by early fifties. The Indian and British consulates in this area were closed and a bamboo curtain was drawn between it and the rest of the world. As a result, the traditional trade between India and Yarkand and Kashghar, of which Leh was the main centre, virtually came to an end.

The story of Sinkiang was repeated in Tibet soon after. Unlike the small and warring Khanates of Central Asia now divided between Russian Turkestan and Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang), Tibet had been for at least two thousand years an independent state with a distinct personality and definite international boundaries though its cultural influence extended far beyond them. With the establishment of the Manchu dynasty in China in the 17th century, informal relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor had begun. Later, the Chinese government tried to derive some kind of a Chinese supremacy over Tibet from this relationship which the successive

Tibetan governments went on repudiating and resisting to the best of their capacity and strength.

Early in the 20th century Czarist Russia sought to gain some influence of Lhasa through Dorjief, a Mongolian Buddhist priest. To counteract the suspected Russian influence, the British forced their way into Tibet in 1903 through a military mission led by Colonel Younghusband. The Lhasa Convention of 1904 gave the British a special position in Tibet in respect of trade and other matters. But to protect themselves against the Russian charge of aggression and to keep Russian influence, which was what really mattered for the British at that time, out of Tibet the British in a way resurrected the myth of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet which in the words of Younghusband himself was just a "farce" and "a political affectation."

Even this farce of Chinese suzerainty was destroyed in 1911 when the Manchu regime was overthrown by Sunyat Sen's revolutionary movement. The tripartite Simla Conference of 1913-14 in which the representatives of China, Tibet and British India met on equal footing to settle Tibet-China frontier finally buried the myth of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet which now began to function as a fully independent state according to known international usage and practice.

With the withdrawal of the British from India in August 1947, all treaty obligations and commitments of British India in respect of India's neighbours revolved upon the government of free India. Both Sinkiang and Tibet flanked India in the north from the Pamirs to Burma, Pakistan nowhere came in contact with either Sinkiang or Tibet. The interests of free India as also of the entire free world demanded that communist influence should be kept out of these strategic border states as far as possible. Sinkiang was then in a ferment. But it is difficult to say what effective help India could have extended to nationalist Kazakhs and Uighurs in their battle for

freedom against communist Russia on the one hand and communist China on the other.

The situation in regard to Tibet was different. India which had inherited special rights and obligations in Tibet was expected both on moral grounds as well as in the interests of national security to help Tibet to preserve her freedom so that she might continue to be a buffer between India on the one hand and communist China on the other. She could have achieved this end by helping Tibet to secure membership of the U.N. or by securing guarantee of non-interference in Tibet from the communist government of China before she gave recognition to it in 1949.

But Nehru, the sole architect of India's foreign policy, would not allow such mundane considerations to influence his policy towards his new-found friends of communist China. Like the proverbial fools who rush in where the wise fear to tread, Nehru not only failed to get any assurance from communist China in 1949 but, what is worse, did nothing to prevent her from committing flagrant aggression against a weak and peace-loving Tibet in 1950. The argument that India was not in a position to halt Chinese aggression in Tibet in 1950 is fallacious and misleading. India with her three armed posts within Tibet and with the support of the free world could have surely and effectively checkmated the communist Chinese designs over Tibet at the time. Any sacrifices in men and material that India might have been required to make to save Tibet then would have been much less than the sacrifices she has made and will be required to make in future for shirking her responsibility in 1950.

Nehru's bunglings in regard to Tibet like his bunglings in Kashmir did not end there. After having made a gift of Tibet to China with all the destruction of monasteries and genocide that followed it, in the name of peace, he started such a campaign of *Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai-ism* that any objective assessment of Chinese aims occupying Tibet, her fast

sinification through genocide of Tibetans and settlement of large number of Chinese there and building of large military cantonments all along the Indian frontier began to be pooh-poohed by the Indian press and public opinion. This Nehru-Chou fraternisation culminated in the so-called Panchsheel treaty of 1954 between India and China regarding Tibet in the preamble of which Panchsheel literally meaning five norms of good conduct, viz., mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence, were first inscribed.

By this treaty India gave *de jure* recognition to a *de facto* aggressive occupation of Tibet by communist China and also surrendered all the special rights including that of running Tibet postal, telegraph and telephone services and stationing troops at a number of places within Tibet inherited by her from the British government of India. It was a great diplomatic victory of China and an unpardonable blunder on the part of the Indian Government. At one stroke it converted the Indo-Tibetan frontier into an India-China frontier. While signing this death warrant for Tibet and invitation to communist China to explore fresh fields for expansion across the Himalayas, the Indian Prime Minister failed to get even an unequivocal acceptance from China of the age-old Indo-Tibet frontier, the eastern sector of which had come to be known as the McMahon Line after the British officer who first surveyed it.

The story of Chinese aggression against India begins with the signing of this treaty which was aptly described in the Indian Parliament by Acharya J.B. Kripalani, an erstwhile President of the Congress party, as "born in sin." The treaty was signed on April 29, 1954 and the Chinese forces crossed over into Bara Hoti early in the June of the same year.

Having thus made her position secure in Tibet

which was described by Mao Tse-Tung in 1939 as the palm of a hand of which Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and India's North Eastern Frontier Province (Arunachal Pradesh) were five fingers, communist China under his leadership began to prepare for controlling these fingers to further her ultimate aim of bringing India, the only major democratic country in Asia, within the communist orbit. To that end it was necessary to build military and air bases in Tibet and develop communications for supplying the large forces deployed there with sinews of life and war. Tibet itself being mostly barren and unproductive, the supplies could come either from the Chinese mainland in the north and the east or from Sinkiang in the north-west of Tibet. Western Tibet bordering on Ladakh being far removed from Lhasa, which itself is at a long distance from the Chinese mainland, a direct road link between western Tibet and Sinkiang became a strategic necessity for China to carry out its plans of further expansion across the Himalayas.

Having decided to build the road, the Chinese found that the shortest and easiest route lay through the Aksai Chin region of Ladakh, an integral part of India with which she had not long ago signed the Panchsheel treaty. She began with cartographic aggression. The Chinese maps showed large parts of Ladakh including Aksai Chin and a narrow belt of territory along the Baltistan and Gilgit border with Sinkiang as Chinese territory.

The internal situation in Jammu and Kashmir state and the attitude of the Government of India suited China's purpose admirably. During the Maharaja's rule effective administrative control from the centre had been extended to the remotest parts of Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit. The Ladakh-Tibet border settled by tradition and usage of centuries had been confirmed by the treaty between Maharaja Gulab Singh and the government of Dalai Lama after the unsuccessful bid of Zorawar Singh to con-

quer Lhasa. The state officials who were deputed for the frontier duty were required to go right up to the border at least once in their three-year term. As a result there was no scope for confusion or uncertainty about the frontier.

But ever since power was transferred to the Kashmiri-dominated National Conference, administration of Ladakh and other outlying parts of the state outside the Kashmir valley began to be neglected. The new officials who were appointed more for their political affiliations than for administrative aptitudes seldom moved out of Leh. The Government of India too did not bother itself to take adequate steps to guard or patrol the border. The intoxication of Bhai-Bhai-ism had gone so deep into its head that it could not even think of any aggression from China. Kushak Bakula, the Head Lama of Ladakh and then Minister for Ladakh Affairs in the Jammu and Kashmir government, informed the State Assembly on March 18, 1963 that he had warned the government of Kashmir and India about the Chinese plans of aggression after his visit to lake Mansarovar and Lhasa in 1954. Similar warnings came from other quarters as well. But nothing perceptible was done either by the state government or the Government of India to draw the people's attention to the Chinese threat or to checkmate it. Maybe the communists within the Kashmir cabinet were privy to the Chinese game. As a result the Chinese were able to follow up their cartographic aggression by actual aggression. They built the road linking Sinkiang with Gartok in western Tibet right through Aksai Chin and also occupied a number of strategic outposts.

In the meantime, Pakistan too had started hobnobbing with communist China. Apart from a direct link with Sinkiang provided to her by the occupied territory of Gilgit and Baltistan, she thought it worthwhile to offer the bait to Ladakh of China if the latter in return could help her to get the

Kashmir valley or at least remain neutral in the dispute over it. Her desire for such an understanding with communist China had been heightened since the open and public Russian support to India during the visit of Russian leaders to India in 1955. No wonder, therefore, that it was reported in a number of Indian and foreign newspapers in 1956 that S.H. Suhrawardy, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, had during his visit to Peking suggested to his Chinese counterpart such a partition of Jammu and Kashmir state as would give the Kashmir valley to Pakistan, Ladakh to China and Jammu to India.

Whatever may have actually transpired between Suhrawardy and Chou En-Lai, the course of events as they have unfolded themselves since then coupled with the studied silence of communist China regarding Indian claim over Kashmir even when India was going out of her way to plead for replacement of nationalist China by communist China in the U.N. to the great chagrin of the U.S. and other Western countries, has conclusively proved that China had become actively interested in the disintegration of the Kashmir state so that she also might share the spoils with Pakistan.

The reports about Chinese intrusion into Indian territory began to pour in through unofficial sources after that. But till late July 1958, the Government of India in a '*note verbale*' to the Chinese counsellor in India had the temerity to say that "they would not like to believe that unilateral action had been taken by the government of People's Republic of China with whom their relations are of the friendliest kind, to enforce alleged territorial claims in the region."

The Government of India woke up to the Chinese hostile interventions and aggressive occupation of Indian territory in Ladakh only when the Chinese aggressed an Indian patrol party on normal routine duty in the northern part of Aksai Chin and detained and ill-treated the Indians for five weeks in September 1958.

The protest notes sent by the Indian Foreign Secretary to the Chinese on October 18 and November 3 were countered by China with the assertion that Aksai Chin area belonged to China and that Indian soldiers had intruded into Chinese territory.

China followed up the occupation of Aksai Chin by aggressive patrollings and encroachments into the region of western Pangong Lake in Ladakh where she arrested six Indian policemen and also established a camp at Spangur in spite of repeated Indian protests. On October 20, 1959, a Chinese military force advanced forty miles into Indian territory in the Chang Chemno valley of southern Ladakh and opened fire on the Indian patrol near Longka pass in which nine Indians were killed and ten others were taken prisoners and subjected to very harsh and inhuman treatment.

This created an explosive situation. Press and public opinion in India reacted to this outrage by Chinese very sharply. It forced Prime Minister Nehru, who had been systematically trying to minimise the gravity of the situation by first concealing the facts of Chinese intrusion from Indian public and parliament and then belittling the importance of the territory occupied by China by describing it as barren and desolate "where not a blade of grass grows" to pay heed to the popular sentiment. He made a belated effort in his letter of November 18, 1959 to persuade his friend, Chou En-Lai to ease the situation by withdrawing as an interim measure the Chinese troops beyond traditional boundary alignment shown on Indian maps while he on his part undertook to withdraw Indian troops to the line which China claimed as her boundary. The offer amounted to a clear surrender to the aggressor in so far as her claim that Ladakh-Tibet boundary was undefined was accepted and a 'no man's land' was sought to be created on the Indian soil itself.

But even this offer was rejected by Chou En-Lai who in his reply of December 16, 1959 to Nehru,

bluntly asserted : “This area has long been under Chinese jurisdiction and is of great importance to China. Since the Ching dynasty, this area has been the traffic artery linking up the vast region of Sinkiang and western Tibet. As far back as the latter half of 1950, it was along the traditional route in this area that units of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army entered the Ari area of Tibet from Sinkiang to guard the frontiers. In the nine years since then, they have been making regular and busy use of this route to bring supplies. For up to eight or nine years since the peaceful liberation of Sinkiang and Tibet when the units of the Chinese People’s Liberation army began to be stationed in and patrol this area till September 1958 when intrusion of the area by the armed Indian personnel occurred. So many activities were carried out by the Chinese side in this area under its jurisdiction and yet the Indian side was utterly unaware of them.”

Chou En-Lai’s visit to New Delhi and his direct talks with Nehru in April, 1960, failed to improve matters. Both the premiers, however, agreed to appoint teams of officials to jointly examine all relevant documents in support of the stands of the two governments and submit a report within six months. The Government of India published the report of the officials of the two sides in February 1961. The report made it clear on the basis of vast and indisputable evidence that the traditional boundary between India and Tibet was the one shown by India, and that China made unwarranted claims to about 50,000 square miles of Indian territory and was in unlawful occupation of about 12,000 square miles of this territory in Ladakh.

The government of China for long did not even acknowledge the existence of the report. Finally, in May 1962, they published a garbled and truncated version of the Chinese section of this report. Simultaneously the Chinese intrusions into various sectors

of the Indian frontier were stepped up. New check-posts and roads to link them with rear bases were constructed and the Chinese troops began advance patrolling. The Chinese actions and the tone of their replies to Indian protest notes, which were sent in abundance, became more and more curt and threatening. On April 30, 1962, China announced that they had ordered patrolling in the whole sector from the Karakoram pass to the Kongka pass and demanded that India withdraw two of her posts which were situated well within the Indian territory and threatened that if India failed to comply with the demands, China would resume patrolling along the entire boundary.

While India-Chinese relations were thus getting strained to a breaking point, Pakistan also stepped up its anti-Indian campaign. The main reason for this was the growing internal discontent against the Martial Law regime in Pakistan particularly in its eastern wing and the consequent weakening of the position of Ayub. He too, therefore, thought it convenient like his predecessors to divert his people's attention from internal difficulties by whipping up their frenzy about Kashmir by jingoistic talk and adoption of new pressure tactics. They included strengthening of the so-called Azad Kashmir government, which began to claim an independent status and started hurling threats of armed invasion of Kashmir unshackled by the international commitments of Pakistan and launching of a virulent campaign against India in the Pakistani press.

At the same time, possibilities of closer relations with communist China whose anti-India tirade was finding quite a sympathetic echo in Pakistan's press, began to be explored so that India could be harassed on both fronts. The possibility of such an eventuality had been hinted by the Chinese ambassador in India in his note of May 16, 1959 to the Foreign Secretary of India in which he had said that it would not be possible for India to fight on two

fronts—China and Pakistan—and therefore she must make up with China. In the background of earlier Sino-Pak confabulations, this veiled hint could not have gone unnoticed in Pakistan.

The process of Pakistan and China drawing nearer to each other thus culminated in the announcement of May 31, 1962, about the agreement between the two governments to enter into negotiations to locate and align the border between Sinkiang on the one hand and Baltistan and Gilgit regions of Jammu and Kashmir state, which had been illegally occupied by Pakistan, on the other. This was a clear indication that China and Pakistan were getting together to achieve their respective territorial ambitions at the cost of India.

The Indian policy-makers who, in spite of the pronounced hostility and naked aggression of communist China, were still not prepared to concede that their policy towards China had failed and were flabbergasted by this volte face of China. As in the case of the McMahon Line, they had been banking on the verbal assurances of Chou En-Lai to the Indian Ambassador in Peking in 1956 and to R.K. Nehru, the Secretary General of the External Affairs Ministry, in 1961 that China considered Kashmir to be a part of India. But they ignored the fact that communist China unlike communist Russia had never publicly supported India's stand regarding Kashmir. They were in fact living in a fool's paradise which was completely shattered by the Chinese Foreign Minister in his note to India dated May 31, 1962 which bluntly asked, "can you cite any document to show that we have ever said that Kashmir is a part of India?" It was a major victory for Pakistan. She had got the reward for hobnobbing with communist China over the head of the U.S., which had been arising her on the understanding and in the hope that she would stand up against communist Chinese and Russian expansion whenever required.

Pakistan's attitude towards India and China when the massive invasion of communist China both in Ladakh and Arunachal sectors of India's northern frontier began on September 8, 1962, could therefore be well anticipated. Pakistan's press systematically justified the Chinese stand and ridiculed India. Pakistan in fact was the only country of the non-communist world which openly supported China and in that it went a step further than Albania, North Viet Nam and North Korea.

As the Chinese offensive mounted and India's unpreparedness became woefully exposed, the Government of India was forced to request the U.S., the U.K. and other friendly countries to meet the communist advance. Realising the magnitude of the threat and its dangerous implications for the entire free world, the U.S. and the U.K. responded magnificently. Pakistan too should have come to the help of India both because the Chinese expansion was as much a threat to her as to India and also because she had been given arms aid by the U.S. specially on the understanding that she would use it against communist expansion and aggression whether it came from the U.S.S.R. or from China. But Pakistan not only did not make any friendly gesture to India but what was worse, she vehemently protested to the U.S. and the U.K. for having extended military aid to India.

This attitude of Pakistan must have come as a shock and an eye-opener to the U.S. It only confirmed the Indian view that Pakistan had obtained military aid from the U.S. only for use against India and not for assisting the free world in containing communist expansion.

By behaving as she did, Pakistan lost an excellent opportunity of reversing the trend of Indo-Pak relations since 1947. Had Pakistan openly and unreservedly come to the aid of India in her time of need, there might have been created the necessary fund of goodwill and proper atmosphere for the settlement

of all Indo-Pak disputes, including the one regarding Kashmir in a friendly spirit of give and take. But in view of later developments, there are reasons to believe that Pakistan stood committed to China not to go to India's help and that some secret deal about the distribution of Assam territory had been arrived at between the two before China started the invasion. That explains the refusal of Muslims in Assam to evacuate Tezpur when evacuation of its civil population was ordered by the authorities and their assertion that there was an agreement between China and Pakistan that territory to the north of the Brahmaputra would be annexed by China and that lying to its south would be annexed by Pakistan. The fact that most of the communist workers who were active in Assam also happened to be ex-Muslim Leaguers well known for their pro-Pakistan activities, lent further support to this assumption.

The position of the U.S. in this situation was really difficult. She had armed Pakistan to the teeth at a huge cost. Now she was rushing pressing military supplies to India. Her aim in both cases was to checkmate communist expansion. How could her public opinion reconcile to the fact that the aid she had already given to Pakistan was not being used for the purpose for which it had been given and that there was possibility of the arms supplied by the U.S. to Pakistan and India being used against each other instead of being used against communist China. It therefore became an obsession with the U.S. government to bring India and Pakistan together somehow so that India may at least be able to shift a part of its forces deployed for defence against Pakistan for fighting China. The British government also shared their viewpoint which began to influence the Indian opinion as well.

Therefore, while the Chinese were fast advancing into Arunachal and Ladakh, the American and British political and military missions led by Avrell Harriman, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State,

and Duncan Sandys, British Commonwealth Secretary, who had specially come to India to assess the situation and the aid needed by India immediately, prevailed upon Prime Minister Nehru and President Ayub to affix their signatures to a joint communique which was issued simultaneously in New Delhi and Rawalpindi on November 30, 1962. The communique said:

“The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India have agreed that a renewed effort should be made to resolve the outstanding differences between their two countries on Kashmir and other related matters so as to enable India and Pakistan to live side by side in peace and friendship.

“In consequence they have decided to start discussions at an able early date with the object of reaching an honourable and equitable settlement.

These will be conducted initially at the ministerial level. At the appropriate stage direct talks will be held between Mr. Nehru and President Ayub.”

This agreement to have direct talks between Pakistan and India on ministerial level to discuss Indo-Pak disputes particularly the one regarding Kashmir, which appeared to the Western powers to be the main hurdle in the way of collaboration between the two countries viewed in the background of the genesis and nature of their differences since 1947, was not a wise move. It placed India in a false and awkward situation. In effect it amounted to India agreeing to let Pakistan retain her fruits of aggression and have something more in the bargain. The circumstances leading to the agreement and the time chosen for talks made their success doubtful even before they began. They could lead to the desired result only if there was equal realisation on both sides of the gravity of the situation and indivisibility of the Indo-Pak defence against a threat like the one posed by communist China. But there was no evidence that there was any such realisation in Pakistan. Leading newspapers of Pakistan continued their

anti-India tirade and denunciation of U.S. for coming to the rescue of India. They acclaimed China as a friend and openly declared that there was no question of Pakistan going to the help of India against China even after getting Kashmir which they insisted must be handed over to Pakistan immediately. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan the late Mohammed Ali of Bogra, encouraged such writings and thoughts by his own bellicose statements and speeches.

On the other hand Nehru, even though he had signed the joint communique under the stress of circumstances, had his own difficulties and doubts which were betrayed in the several statements he made before and after the signing of the communique. Apart from his personal attachment to Kashmir, the fear of national reaction to any further surrender to Pakistan and the pressure of his communist and pro-communist friends inside and outside the government, who were interested in sabotaging the Western aid and maintaining the pro-Russian bias of India's foreign policy in the name of non-alignment, kept him wavering about the advisability of holding any talks and the limit to which India could go once such talks got going.

The prospects of the success of the talks were further dimmed by the unilateral ceasefire ordered by the Chinese government on November 21, 1962. The motives of the Chinese in ordering a ceasefire in their hour of victory will remain a matter of conjecture. But surely one of them was to sabotage the possibility of closer collaboration between India and the West. They also wanted to save the Communist Party, their political vanguard in India, and also its friends and patrons inside the Indian government from isolation and annihilation.

While China was keen to prevent an understanding between India and Pakistan for her own reasons, the ruling circles of Pakistan were keen to take advantage of the situation to put maximum pressure on

India and the U.S. to secure their pound of flesh in the form of Kashmir. The announcement of the decision of Pakistan to sign a border pact with China just on the eve of the first round of talks which opened at Rawalpindi on January 30, 1963 and the signing of the Sino-Pak pact at Peking by Z. A. Bhutto, the Foreign Minister and chief delegate of Pakistan at the Indo-Pak talks, and Marshal Chen-Yi, the Foreign Minister of China, on March 3, 1963 just a week before the opening of the fourth round of the talks at Calcutta were calculated moves to that end. These pressure tactics coupled with her fantastic demand for the whole of the state except just 3000 square miles of south-eastern tip of Jammu region made the eventual failure of these talks, formally announced at New Delhi on May 16, 1963 after the conclusion of the sixth round of the talks, a forgone conclusion.

This failure of the direct talks in spite of intense behind the scene activity by the British and the American diplomatic representatives at New Delhi and Rawalpindi to save them added to the already existing bitterness between the two countries. But they helped in clearing the air and removing some of the prevailing misconceptions about the attitudes and *bona fides* of the two countries regarding the basic question of Indo-Pak relations in general and Kashmir issue in particular. For instance, it now became quite evident that Pakistan was interested more in extorting fresh commitments and scoring diplomatic points over India for further use against her than finding an honourable and equitable settlement of the dispute as such.

Rather, her glee at the Chinese aggression against India and her growing fraternisation with communist China and the timing of the Sino-Pak border pact, for which her Foreign Minister specially went to Peking, pointed to the inescapable conclusion that she was more interested in a rapprochement with communist China than with democratic India.

The refusal of Pakistan to make any commitment about joint action with India to fight out the Chinese menace and her persistent rejection of the Indian offer of a no-war pact, which was repeated during the talks as well, made it further clear that there was little hope of actual disengagement of their forces in the state even if India surrendered the Kashmir valley to her. This attitude of Pakistan provided the basis for the fear expressed by a number of responsible Indian leaders about the existence of certain secret Articles in the Sino-Pak pact providing for collaboration between Pakistan and communist China to achieve their respective territorial and political objectives at the cost of India.

The developments narrated above tended to confirm the view that Pakistan so long as it exists would continue to be hostile to India. Cut up in two widely separated parts which had nothing in common except faith in Islam, her very existence depended on keeping the anti-Hindu and anti-Indian frenzy among her Muslim population at a very high pitch. Kashmir issue had been her main instrument for achieving this object. She would have picked up some other apple of discord to keep this frenzy on even if this Kashmir issue had been settled to her satisfaction.

It was this need to keep up the tension which impelled Pakistan to follow a foreign policy opposite to that of India. When India was drifting towards the communist bloc, Pakistan joined the Western bloc to secure its diplomacy a moral and material support against India. But when communist China's unprovoked aggression forced India to make an appraisal of her foreign policy and draw closer to the countries which came to her help in the hour of her need, Pakistan in keeping with her set policy of looking upon India as her first enemy began moving towards communist China. Viewed in the background of this guiding motive of Pakistan's foreign policy since its inception, the Sino-Pak pact added new dimensions to Kashmir issue. It made a renewed recourse to war by Pakistan to recover Kashmir a distinct possibility.

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BACK TO ARMS

Failure of direct talks between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan to settle the Kashmir issue to the satisfaction of Pakistan did not cause any surprise in India or Pakistan. The talks were doomed to failure because they were held under Anglo-American pressure in the background of Chinese aggression, and India's need of Anglo-American help to meet that aggression. Pakistan wanted to exploit the situation to get her full pound of Indian flesh in the form of whole of Kashmir valley and a large part of Jammu as well. This was clear from the often repeated reminder by Pak negotiators to their Indian counterparts that India had been defeated by China and therefore was the suppliant in the talks. It therefore put its demands too high to be accepted by even hard-pressed India.

India in fact at that time went a long way to placate Pakistan. It was prepared to give a few thousand square miles of Indian territory in addition to over thirty thousand square miles already held by Pakistan since January 1949 in the name of rationalisation of the ceasefire line which was to become the line of partition of the state. At one stage even the division of the Kashmir valley in which Pakistan would have got the northern part of it was suggested. But Pakistan at that time was in no mood to make any compromise with its demand for the whole of the state excepting a small part of Jammu.

In fact Pakistan was not at all serious about a negotiated settlement. As Bhutto who was then foreign minister and chief negotiator from the side of Pakistan, admitted in an interview with Kuldip Nayar, editor of *Statesman*, New Delhi, that she preferred to attack India in her hour of travail to get what Pakistan wanted. But for the unilateral ceasefire by China and the American pressure, Pakistan most probably would have followed the course desired by Bhutto.

But even though talks failed, Pakistan was able to make some tactical and diplomatic gains. It realised that India could be made to dilute its stand on Kashmir, that it was prepared to forego its claim on the part of the state forcibly occupied by Pakistan after 1947 and it could be made to surrender even more territory if sufficient pressure was applied. Discomfiture of India at the hands of China brought about a change in the psychology of proverbially timid Kashmiris, they became more enthusiastic for Pakistan than ever before.

But in another way the situation started becoming unfavourable for Pakistan. Chinese aggression and the failure of India to stem it came as a rude shock and eye-opener to the government and people of India. It disenchanted them not only about China and *Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai*-ism but also about their utopian notions of non-violence and "development before defence." Their disillusionment was best expressed in Nehru's pathetic remark, "we were living in an artificial world of our own imagination."

As a result, a new awareness about the importance of giving top priority to the defence needs of the country dawned on the people and the government alike. Defence budget for the ensuing year was more than doubled, a five-year plan for defence preparedness was drawn up and concerted efforts began to be made to step up defence production within the country and secure military hardware from outside.

This made Pakistan uneasy. It began to feel that military advantage that it had acquired over India because of massive arms aid from the U.S. since 1954 may not remain for long. Therefore its leaders began to think of a confrontation with India to grab Kashmir by force before India could become militarily strong enough to meet its challenge.

Politically too, the situation began to undergo a change not very palatable for Pakistan. Chinese aggression destroyed the image and prestige of Nehru as nothing else could have done. His dreams of going down in history as Ashoka, the second, had been shattered, the hollowness of the foreign policy that he had been pursuing since 1947 stood totally exposed and his self-confidence was shaken. His hold over the Congress party also suffered a severe jolt.

But he began to have foreboding about his end. He, therefore, began to make conspiratorial effort to remove his possible successors from office to pave the way for her daughter's succession to the throne of New Delhi. At the same time he began to plan for placating Sheikh Abdullah. He then got the conspiracy case against Sheikh Abdullah withdrawn and invited him to visit Delhi where he was given a V.I.P. treatment. On the suggestion of Sheikh Abdullah he was permitted to go to Pakistan to sell his plan of a settlement in which he would have become *de facto* Sultan of Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah visited Rawalpindi soon after and had long interviews with President Ayub. But before any tangible result of his parleys could be known, Nehru died on May 27, 1964.

Death of the sole architect of Kashmir policy of India came as a blow to Sheikh Abdullah. He lost all hope of a settlement with New Delhi suiting his ambition. He had always made a distinction between Nehru and India. He had personal obligation and commitment to Nehru who in his turn identified Jammu and Kashmir state and its people with him.

Sheikh Abdullah has never had any attachment with India and her people as such. Disappearance of Nehru from the scene, therefore, made him desperate. He began to talk of an Algeria-like struggle to liberate Kashmir and met Chou En-Lai presumably to canvass his support for the fulfilment of his ambition.

The activities of Sheikh Abdullah whose tour of West Asian countries from Pakistan to canvass their support for his plans and ambition upset the new Government of India which cancelled his passport and asked him to return to India forthwith. These developments further encouraged the military rulers of Pakistan to plan for a military decision before the military situation become unfavourable for Pakistan.

But before taking resort to arms, President Ayub wanted to probe two things. He wanted to know the American reaction if he used the arms supplied to Pakistan by it for use against aggression from any communist country against India which had been specifically assured by U.S. that arms supplied to Pakistan will not be used against her. Secondly, he wanted to have a measure of the personality and mettle of Lal Bahadur Shastri who had succeeded Nehru.

Attack on Kutch backed by the U.S. supplied Patton tanks was a well-calculated move. India was taken by surprise. Pakistan chose its own time and place for the attack which was very unsuitable for the Indian defenders. The Government of India hesitated about making a counterattack at a place of its choice. And before it could make up its mind, a ceasefire was brought about through the mediation of the British Prime Minister in April 1965. Later Shastri and Ayub met at London where both of them had gone to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference where a peace settlement was arrived at through the mediation of the British Prime Minister. According to this settlement the Kutch dispute was referred to an international tribunal of three members one of whom was to be nomi-

nated by India and one by Pakistan.

This was a clear victory for Pakistan. She had succeeded in creating a dispute by unprovoked aggression, tested its arms, known the American reaction which was none too violent to cause any headache to Pakistan and internationalised that dispute with the assurance that Pakistan will get something in the bargain.

The Kutch adventure and its outcome gave new hope and confidence to Pakistan. This was evident from Ayub's address to Pakistani students in London in the course of which he bragged that Pakistani tanks could have a stroll up to Delhi if he had so wished. The way Lal Bahadur Shastri, new as he was to the way of international politics and diplomacy acted during this Pak aggression and the negotiations that followed made Ayub think that he was no better than Nehru and that he could brow-beat him and India with impunity.

Pakistan therefore went ahead with the main flank of its programme which was to launch a sudden attack on Kashmir after sending thousands of armed infiltrators into the state to prepare the ground for proper reception and quick success of the invading army. The infiltration began in May 1965 itself. The plan was to take the city of Srinagar by surprise on August 9, 1965, when hundreds of thousands of villagers were to come there to celebrate the Martyrs' Day, call for which had been given by the pro-Pak leadership in the Kashmir valley. At the same time Pak saboteurs were to become active all along Pathankot Jammu-Srinagar highway and a major attack were to be made in Chhamb sector to clear the way for a sudden advance on Akhnur to get control of the only bridge on the Chenab to cut off the north-western part of the state from supply bases at Jammu and Pathankot.

The operation in Jammu region began according to plan. But the proverbial timidness of Kashmiris and timely information about infiltrators by a shep-

herd made the operation in the valley a flop.

The writer toured the border areas of Jammu from Pathankot to Chhamb for an on-the-spot study of the situation between August 26 and August 30. Thousands of people from the border areas, particularly in the Chhamb sector, had left their hearths and homes and were camping on the roads in and around Akhnur. Scores of military vehicles also lay burnt on the road between Samba and Jammu on the Pathankot-Jammu highway. He was told by these refugees that heavy artillery had been used to destroy their villages.

As a defensive action the Indian defence forces made an assault on Haji Pir, the only Pass leading into the Kashmir valley from the north-west which was under control of Pakistan and occupied it. An equally daring action led to the re-capture of the Kargil heights which command the Srinagar-Leh road. These heights had been captured by Indian defence forces in April at the time of Kutch war but had been returned to Pakistan in June. These two actions sealed off the Kashmir valley and ensured the safety of Ladakh.

Finding its plans of capturing Kashmir through armed infiltrators with the help of local people thus being thwarted, Pakistan decided to launch a full-scale invasion of the state from Chhamb side on September 1, 1965. The object was to capture Akhnur bridge on the Chenab in a lightning action which would have cut off Rajouri and Poonch from the rest of the state and enabled Pakistan to isolate Indian troops in the area and encircle the Kashmir valley.

The author was at Srinagar on that day. D.P. Dhar, the Home Minister of the state at that time, who gave the information to the author pleaded that Government of India must be persuaded to launch a counterattack on Pakistan if Kashmir was to be saved.

The Indian troops of a brigade strength in the

Chhamb sector had no tanks to support them. The one span bridge on the Chenab at Akhnur could not carry tanks. Wherefore capture of Akhnur and the strategic bridge by Pakistan appeared to be a certainty, air support was given to Indian troops in the area to check the advance of Pakistan tanks. Indian Air Force went into action in the evening when the Pak tanks were hardly about ten miles from Akhnur. It knocked out a number of tanks and stopped their advance. India soon established its superiority in the air by knocking down a number of Pak fighter planes in dog fights.

Though advance of Pak troops towards Akhnur was checked for the time being it could not be totally stopped unless the pressure was relieved by a counter-attack on Pakistan across the international border. This was a major decision.

Pakistan had planned its strategy on the assumption that war will remain confined to Jammu and Kashmir state as in 1947-48 and that it would be able to capture the valley because of its superior strength and logistic advantage and present the world with a *fait accompli*. India, it thought, would not extend the war to Punjab and would acquiesce in the loss of the Kashmir valley after fretting and fuming for some time.

Had Nehru been at the helm of affairs at New Delhi, Pakistan's assumptions might have proved correct. The experience of 1947-48 war when India, in spite of overwhelming military superiority over Pakistan, refrained from carrying war into Punjab and allowed Pakistan to get away with over 30,000 square miles of Indian territory in the state pointed to the same conclusion. Ayub had even poorer opinion about Lal Bahadur Shastri. He, therefore, thought that Shastri would not have the courage to extend the war by launching a counterattack on Pakistan. He was also confident that in case of a general war his armoured division equipped with Patton tanks will be able to go right up to Delhi.

The events proved this assumption to be utterly wrong. Lal Bahadur Shastri was not Nehru. Unlike Nehru, Shastri had been initiated into politics by Lala Lajpat Rai who was known for his nationalism and realism. Furthermore Shastri was a man of the masses and was responsive to public opinion. He had burnt his fingers in Kutch and he knew and respected the public opinion and the temper of the armed forces.

The counter-attack on Lahore and Sialkot on September 6 had the desired result. The pressure on the Chhamb sector was relieved. Pak forces fell back to defend Sialkot and Lahore. When the cease-fire was ordered on September 21 in response to the resolution of the U.N Security Council and pressure of super powers, Pakistan was nowhere near Kashmir while Sialkot and Lahore were within the range of Indian guns. Its plan to secure by force of arms what it had failed to get by diplomacy and negotiations all these years had completely failed. Kashmir eluded it once again.

The open sympathy of the U.K. and the U.S. for Pakistan during and after the war in spite of the fact that war was started by Pakistan and not India enabled U.S.S.R., which had maintained the semblance of neutrality during the war, to come forward as a peace-maker. Its Prime Minister, Kosygin, invited India and Pakistan to a peace conference at Tashkent and offered his good offices for bringing about a settlement. Both India and Pakistan accepted the invitation.

Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub led the respective delegations which met at Tashkent for a week from January 4 to January 10. The Tashkent declaration which was signed by the two leaders on September 10 restored *status quo ante* in Jammu and Kashmir. It was galling for India because it had to return the Kargil heights and Hajipir which, according to Indian stand, belonged to India and had only been recaptured from Pakistan who had been

in their adverse possession.

But for Pakistan which had started the war to get control of Jammu and Kashmir state by force of arms, and which raised high hopes in its people, the war proved to be a gamble that failed. It lost face with the people of Kashmir as well. Its pro-Pak elements were disillusioned and psychologically were in a mood to reconcile themselves to the Kashmir valley being an inalienable part of India.

The resultant situation was a great opportunity for India to set Kashmir problem at rest once for all. But that was not to be. Lal Bahadur Shastri died a few hours after signing the Tashkent Declaration in mysterious circumstances. Indira Gandhi who succeeded Shastri started bungling in Kashmir once again.

II

TASHKENT TO SIMLA

The Tashkent Declaration which was signed at Tashkent by the Prime Minister of India and President of Pakistan on January 10, 1966 in the presence of Soviet Premier Kosygin was nothing but a collection of platitudes. The only concrete and definite thing it contained was Clause II which said, "The Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan have agreed that all armed personnel of the two countries shall be withdrawn not later than 25 February, 1966 to the positions they held prior to 5 August, 1965 and both sides shall observe the ceasefire terms on the ceasefire line." It meant that India would have to withdraw its troops not only from Lahore and Sialkot but also from Hajipir and Kargil heights in Jammu and Kashmir state which belonged to India and which her troops had liberated at a heavy cost. In other words it gave a legal validity to Pak occupation of the territory it had forcibly occupied through its aggression in 1947-1948 without prejudicing its claim to the rest of the state which was still with India. It was a clear gain for Pakistan. It had succeeded in converting its military defeat into a diplomatic victory with the help of Soviet Union.

To be fair to Lal Bahadur Shastri, he resisted the Soviet pressure to vacate the territory in Kashmir recaptured by Indian troops till the last day when he succumbed to the pressure of his own colleagues,

Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, Defence Minister Yashwant Rao Chavan and Indian Ambassador to Soviet Union T.N. Kaul—who pleaded that non-acceptance of Soviet move would alienate U.S.S.R. and isolate India completely. This was therefore the price India had to pay for keeping all its eggs in one basket. Had India maintained a dialogue with the U.S before and after going to Tashkent, she might have been saved from the predicament in which Shastri had to sign the Tashkent Declaration against his better judgment.

It was later alleged by Bhutto, then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, who never made a secret of his opposition to Tashkent Declaration that there was a secret clause in the Declaration. But he never spelled that out. Perhaps it might have been nothing but a tacit understanding between the two parties to accept the division of the state along the ceasefire line and accept it as an international boundary. But in view of the death of Shastri the same night, it is no use speculating whether any such understanding was actually arrived at between him and Ayub.

Even if any such understanding was arrived at before the signing of the declaration, Pakistan was not sincere about it. That was clear from the statement made by Altaf Gauhar, Press Secretary of President Ayub, soon after the signing of the declaration. He was reported to have said that nothing but withdrawal of troops to August 5 position, which suited Pakistan, had been agreed upon and that Pakistan reserved the right to continue its efforts to secure Kashmir by peace or by force. President Ayub confirmed it in his statement made at Hamburg in November 1966. He said, "It (Tashkent Declaration) settled nothing. All it did was to enable the two countries to disengage their armies from each other."

From the Indian point of view the futile Pak attempt to grab Kashmir by force had two positive results. In the first place even those parties and

elements in India like the Swatantra Party which had so far been advocating a settlement with Pakistan about Kashmir now conceded that Pakistan had forfeited its claim on Kashmir by taking resort to arms and that it should not be considered a part to the Kashmir question. It thus created complete unity in India regarding Kashmir question. Secondly, it had a salutary effect on the mind of those Kashmiris who had been wistfully looking to Pakistan for grabbing Kashmir by force.

Had the Government of India taken advantage of this situation to fully integrate Kashmir with the rest of India and had it extended Indian Constitution to it to enable the people from other parts of the country to settle there, the danger of Pak designs on Kashmir would have been effectively scotched forever.

But that was not to be. Death of Shastri at Tashkent, the real facts about which are still shrouded in mystery brought Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi to the helm of affairs at New Delhi. That Russian Premier Kosygin, who overstayed in India for four days after the funeral of Shastri had something to do with Indira Gandhi's election as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party is now an open secret. She had the same emotional attachment to Kashmir valley and Sheikh Abdullah which prevented her father to adopt a nationalist and realistic approach to Kashmir issue. Her moves to placate Abdullah soon destroyed the wholesome effect of 1965 war on Kashmiri mind.

A more significant change in the situation was the marked shift in the stand of Soviet Union regarding Kashmir. Gone were the days when Khrushchev and Bulganin declared in Srinagar itself that Soviet Union regarded Kashmir as an integral part of India and would come to India's help if anybody tried to wrest Kashmir from her. The thaw in Russia Pak relations had begun soon after the opening of the Russian-built tunnel through the Hindukush moun-

tains. Russian tanks now could roll down to Kabul in a few hours. And from Kabul to Peshawar it was a distance of only five hours. No government of Pakistan could afford to be on the wrong side of Soviet Union after that. Soviet Union on its part wanted to secure its southern flank and prevent Pakistan from going all out with communist China. The pull of Pakistan, then the biggest and most powerful Muslim state of the world, on the Muslim population of Central Asian republics of Soviet Union was another factor that might have influenced Soviet Union in improving its relations with Pakistan. The winding off of the American air base near Peshawar from which spy flights into Soviet Union were undertaken was the result of this new equation between Soviet Union and Pakistan.

The shift in the thinking and stand of Soviet Union was also evident from the tone and contents of the speech of Kosygin at the opening session of Tashkent meeting on January 4, 1966 in the course of which he said "India and Pakistan are our southern neighbours." We always come out not only for the strengthening of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and India and Pakistan but also for the reign of peace and friendship between these two countries themselves."

The Soviet insistence on withdrawal of Indian troops from Hajipir and Kargil heights was not only in keeping with its new stance of putting India and Pakistan on par but also pointed to its desire to placate Pakistan at the cost of India. It now wanted a dialogue between India and Pakistan for settlement of the dispute about Kashmir. It no longer considered it to be a closed issue.

Soviet representative in India were at first reluctant to admit this shift in Russian stand. When the author drew the attention of a Tass correspondent stationed at New Delhi to this fact and asked the reason for the shift in Soviet stand, he tried to evade the question. But when pressed, he blurted out,

“Soviet Union had been at the beck and call of India for ten years. What have you done to solve Kashmir problem during that period. You have neither fully integrated that state by extending the Constitution of India to it nor have you changed the complexion of its population. How long you expect the Soviet Union to take India’s chestnuts out of fire in Kashmir ?”

Almost the same thing was repeated to Sanjiva Reddy, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, when he led an Indian Parliamentary delegation to Soviet Union in 1968, by more authoritative quarters in almost identical language. He told this to the joint meeting of the two Houses of the Indian Parliament after his return to New Delhi. Reference to change in complexion of population of the Kashmir valley was very significant. This is what late Sardar Patel had in mind when he wanted the refugees from N.W.F.P. and Punjab to be settled in the Kashmir valley but was overruled by Nehru. Soviet leaders too tried to impress upon Nehru the need of change in the complexion of population of Kashmir a number of times. A top Russian-knowing Indian diplomat who acted as interpreter for Nehru during his last visit to Soviet Union told the author at Belgrade in 1970 how Khrushchev impressed upon Nehru to shift some of its population to other parts of India and settling people from other parts in Kashmir as Russia had done in the case of its Central Asian republics. The failure of Nehru to heed this practical advice of Patel and Khrushchev lies at the root of continuing weakening of Indian position in Kashmir.

President Ayub on the other hand was too practical a man not to take advantage of the changing mood of the Soviet leaders. As he has candidly written in his autobiography, “If we could not establish normal relations with all our three big neighbours, the best thing was to have an understanding with two of them (Soviet Union and China). They might have their internal differences but we need not

get involved in that. This was a vital element in our thinking. It was on this basis that I set out to normalise our relations with the People's Republic of China and Soviet Union ”*

The change in the Soviet attitude, which is not much different from that of U.S., in regard to Kashmir has persisted in spite of the developments which led to Soviet Indian Friendship Treaty of 1971 and the Indo-Pak war in December of the same year. This is clear from the new stand of the Communist Party of India regarding Kashmir which reflects the Soviet mind on India.

Pak aggression on India that began with a pre-emptive air attack on Indian air bases on December 3, 1971 was mainly aimed at securing Kashmir and some other Indian territory in the west, as a compensation for the loss of east Pakistan. President Yahya Khan of Pakistan started the war only after he had mentally written off east Bengal. This is clear from the evidence he gave before the War Commission appointed by the government of Pakistan after his fall. He is reported to have told the Commission presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan that he wanted to withdraw the bulk of Pak forces in east Bengal before starting the war. He did withdraw all but one squadron of Pak air force from there. But he could not withdraw the army because of Indian blockade. He later tried to get the Pak army out of Bangla Desh on December 9, with the consent of Government of India which promised its safe passage from Bangla Desh ports to Karachi. But Bhutto persuaded him not to do so by assuring him that communist China and the U.S. were going to intervene militarily in favour of Pakistan.

That Pakistan concentrated its fire on the western front particularly on the Kashmir front, is clear from the casualty figures released by the Government of India. While only about 1300 Indian Jawans and

* *Friends not Masters* by Ayub Khan, p. 118.

officers died in the operation in Bangla Desh during the December war, the Indian casualties on the western front exceeded four thousand. It goes to the credit of defence forces of India that they foiled determined and persistent Pak attempts to push into Jammu and Kashmir state through Chhamb and Uri. But there is no denying the fact that the Pak army succeeded in occupying strategically important 60 square miles of thickly populated and fertile Chhamb belt which it has managed to retain through Simla Agreement.

Indian victory in the December war resulting in liberation of Bangla Desh, surrender of over 90,000 Pak troops and occupation of more than five thousand square miles of Pak territory in the west did create a situation in which Pakistan could have been effectively eliminated from Kashmir and way cleared for its full and final integration with the rest of India.

But that was not to be. The political leadership of India let down the people and gallant armed forces of India once again. The Agreement between Indira Gandhi and Bhutto reached at Simla on July 3, 1972, re-opened the entire Kashmir issue with Pakistan as a party to it. It marked the reversal of the stand that India had taken at U.N. and outside all these years that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in Kashmir except that it had committed aggression and occupied a part of that state which it was India's right and duty to get vacated.

12

THE WAY OUT

The agreement signed at Simla by Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in early hours of July 3, 1972 marked the culmination of the bungling in Kashmir. Instead of utilising the convincing victory won by the Indian armed forces in the December war for setting the Kashmir issue at rest, Indira Gandhi converted the military victory into political defeat by re-opening the Kashmir issue and explicitly accepting Pakistan as a party to it. This virtually put back the Kashmir issue where it stood on January 1, 1949.

The crux of the Kashmir problem from its inception is that Pakistan has occupied by force about 30,000 square miles of the territories of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state which legally and constitutionally belonged to India by virtue of the Instrument of Accession executed by Maharaja Hari Singh in October, 1947. The question was how to get back this territory from Pakistan.

There was no question of Pakistan having any claim or *locus standi* in that part of the state including Kashmir valley which remained with India after the ceasefire of January 1, 1949.

The only realistic and logical stand of India at Simla should have been an unequivocal demand for vacation of Pak aggression and return of 30,000 square miles of occupied territory to India in return for vacation of Pak territory occupied by the Indian

armed forces in the war of 1971.

But Indira Gandhi and his Kashmiri advisers like D.P. Dhar had given away the Indian case even before the Simla Conference began. D.P. Dhar when he visited Islamabad as special envoy of the Prime Minister to prepare the ground for Simla summit was reported to have conveyed to Bhutto that India would be willing to concede his demands about vacation of Pak territory and release of the prisoners-of-war if he was prepared to accept the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir as international frontier between India and Pakistan. Dhar returned with the impression that Bhutto was agreeable to this suggestion.

Bhutto after having known the mind of India went on a West Asian tour to consult his Islamic friends. He pleaded with them that he could stand up to India only if they promised him massive monetary and military help. After having got firm commitment of help, he planned his strategy for Simla. He came there determined not to accept the line of control as international boundary and relinquish his claim to Kashmir on the basis of its being a Muslim majority area. The Simla summit, therefore, virtually failed to arrive at any agreement. But after the failure had been broadcast to the world, Bhutto had a mid-night exclusive meeting with Indira Gandhi in which he was presumed to have given some verbal understanding to her. Thereafter the Simla agreement was signed.

Article IV of the Agreement stipulated that "in Jammu and Kashmir the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides *without prejudice to the recognised position of either side*. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or use of force in violation of this line." Article VI of the agreement further stipulated that "both governments agree that their

respective heads will meet again and in the meantime the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalisation of relations including the question of repatriation of prisoners-of-war and civilian internees, *a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir* and the resumption of diplomatic relations.”

It is clear from these two Articles that the Simla agreement not only re-opened the Kashmir question but also it clearly made Pakistan a party to the final settlement of that question. This completely nullified the declared and often-repeated stand of India that Kashmir was not negotiable and that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in Kashmir.

This dismal performance of Indira Gandhi at Simla which enabled Bhutto to convert the military defeat into political astuteness and success of Pak diplomacy on the one hand and total bankruptcy of statesmanship and lack of patriotism on the part of Indira Gandhi. It amounted to a betrayal of the Indian people and armed forces.

After having signed that surrender and having brought the Kashmir question to where it stood in 1949, there were only two courses open to the Government of India. Either it should have declared publicly that it had given up its claim to 30,000 miles of Indian territory occupied by Pakistan in the war of 1947-48 and taken steps to fully integrate the state by scrapping separate Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and extending the Constitution of India to it in full. The other course was to implement Dixon proposal by ordering a plebiscite in Kashmir valley which would have put the professions of Sheikh Abdullah and his tribe of Begs and Kasims about secularism and loyalty to India to test and settled the issue of Kashmir once for all.

The first approach would have been a secular approach. The second approach would have the advantage of being rational and in keeping with the

commitments of Nehru even though they had no validity in law.

The Prime Minister and her advisers had neither the national outlook to adopt the first approach nor the courage of conviction and loyalty to the professed principles demanded by the second approach. She, therefore, decided to bungle once again in pursuit of the parochial and communal approaches to the Kashmir issue, the tone and patterns for which had been set by Nehru.

The current dialogue between Sheikh Abdullah and his allies on the one side and Indira Gandhi and her emissaries as the other for a political settlement of Kashmir is a case of pathological communalism and parochialism masquerading as nationalism and secularism on both sides. Sheikh Abdullah, as is clear from the foregoing study, has nothing to do with Indian nationalism and secularism. His strong point on the basis of which he built his position in Kashmir valley ever since his debut in politics in 1930 has been his capacity to rouse religious and communal passion of Kashmiri Muslims through recitation of Koranic texts in a melodious voice in the course of his speeches and his tirade against the non-Kashmiris, particularly the Dogra Hindus, whom he had always been presenting as exploiters and aliens, in Kashmir. This is the basis of his negative Kashmiri nationalism as distinct from Indian nationalism. His only ambition is to become the undisputed master of Kashmir. He never had any interest in Jammu, Ladakh or for that matter in the part of state now under Pak occupation. His recent professions and protestations about the unity of Jammu and Kashmir state are hypocritical and deceptive. Unity of the "House that Gulab Singh built" came to an end the day Maharaja Hari Singh abdicated under the pressure of Nehru who echoed the wishes of Sheikh Abdullah. It is too late in the day to talk of the unity of that state now.

His belated acceptance of accession of the state

to India as irrevocable and his willingness to give up the demand for plebiscite provided he is put back in power under conditions as they existed in August, 1953 when he was dismissed and arrested is motivated by two considerations. The first is the realisation that Pakistan may not last long and that even if it continued to exist for some time his fate in Pakistan would be no different from that of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Autonomy and freedom enjoyed by Kashmir within India is much more solid and real than the autonomy enjoyed by the states of Pakistan. The condition and status of the so-called "Azad Kashmir", which has nothing to do with Kashmir at all, is too miserable and low as compared to that of Kashmir within India to inspire any enthusiasm even in a noted communalist like Beg.

The second and more pressing factor for his tactical change of stance is the growing popularity and strength of youthful Maulana Farooq, the chief priest of Kashmiri Muslims and President of the pro-Pak Awami Action Committee. Sheikh Abdullah is aging. He is losing grip on Kashmiris. If he does not get power now, he may never get it and his ambition to die as Sultan of Kashmir may be buried along with his mortal remains.

Furthermore as a clever and unscrupulous politician he might be thinking that once he gets back to the saddle on his terms, he might be able to enlarge his powers and stage a successful coup on the lines of his planned coup that failed in August, 1953.

Having burnt his fingers once, he is no longer interested in keeping Jammu and Ladakh under his charge. According to circles close to him he is prepared for virtual separation of Jammu and Ladakh if he is assured of full power in Kashmir valley.

Indira Gandhi has realised that she had been outwitted and out-maneuvred by Bhutto. He has repudiated even the verbal assurance he was report-

ed to have given to Indira Gandhi at Simla about accepting the line of control as international boundary by declaring at Chitral that no Muslim was bound to honour any commitment given to a *kafir* i.e., non-Muslim. His activities and utterance since Simla Agreement have totally belied the hopes of even incorrigible friends of Bhutto and Pakistan in India. The feverish rearming of Pakistan which is now militarily much stronger than what it was in 1971 and planned military moves for a new confrontation with India to grab Kashmir by force have unnerved Indira Gandhi. Her innate cowardice has begun to take the better of her bravado.

Indira Gandhi is also conscious of the fact that she may not remain Prime Minister of India for long. Failure of Nehru to settle Kashmir problem in contrast to Sardar Patel's success in handling with success 500 and odd princely states in two years has continued to lower Nehru's place in history ever since his death. His daughter considers it her filial duty to do something to settle the issue before she too is thrown into the dust-bin of history.

Nehru was trying to rehabilitate Sheikh Abdullah before he died in 1964. Indira Gandhi has taken up the threads where he left them, unmindful of the fact that the situation has undergone a sea change since then. Her inborn Kashmiri parochialism and communalism have also been influencing her approach and attitude towards Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah. Like her father, her policy in regard to Kashmir is out and out parochial and communal. She is incapable of adopting a national or rational approach to the problem.

The long-term result of the current parleys with Sheikh Abdullah, whatever its immediate result may be, is bound to be dangerous and disastrous for India. Whatever concessions Sheikh Abdullah may wrest from Indira Gandhi in regard to Kashmir will become the model for other states in which regionalism and parochialism are raising their heads. How

can any government at New Delhi take exception to the demands of Shiv Sena and Tamil Sena regarding Maharashtra for Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for Tamilians after giving official recognition to the demand of Kashmir for Kashmiris? What is at stake is Indian nationalism and Indian unity.

What is worse, any settlement with Sheikh Abdullah is not going to improve things in Kashmir or strengthen Indian position vis-a-vis Pakistan and pro-Pak elements. On the other hand it is going to further strengthen the hold of Maulana Farooq on Kashmiri minds and encourage Pakistan to hasten the implementation of its plan for another confrontation with India.

The real headache for India in Kashmir is the total indoctrination of Kashmiri mind with Pak ideology. The policy of appeasement of Kashmiri separatism adopted by Nehru in 1947 has continued to be the sheet-anchor of Indian policy regarding Kashmir ever since. Its net result has been total alienation of Kashmiri youth from India. According to Shamim Ahmed Shamim, M.P., who represents Srinagar in Parliament and is considered to be the spokesman of Sheikh, a majority of Kashmiris today are not for India. They are not even for independent Kashmir. In his own words "today Kashmiris are not asserting their cultural identity. They are asserting their religious personality. This is very unfortunate, but this actually is the case. After 24 years Bangla Desh has realised that Islam cannot be the common factor. Kashmiris find themselves in a situation where they think they have a greater affinity with Punjabis and Pakistanis than they have with their Indian brothers."*

This is the situation in the Kashmir valley in spite of the fact that the rest of India has been fleeced to give Kashmiris a most favoured treatment. Per capita income in Kashmir valley as per capita cons-

**Himmat* weekly, November 10, 1972.

umption of food, cloth and even liquor is about the highest in the Kashmir valley, except the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bombay.

The reality is that the problem presented by Kashmir and its people is primarily emotional. It is neither constitutional nor economic. So long as the Kashmiri people are emotionally tuned to Pakistan, no amount of appeasement in economic or constitutional terms can improve things. If the experience of last 27 years is any guide, the policy of appeasement and pampering of Kashmiri separatism is going to be even more counter-productive in the days to come. Therefore any settlement with Sheikh Abdullah is bound to further complicate the situation in Kashmir and become a signal for new troubles in some other states.

Then what is the remedy? Should the things be allowed to drift or should something be done to set the mischief in Kashmir at rest on a lasting basis. A reply to this question demands a clear understanding and enunciation of Kashmir problem.

The problem of Kashmir is a direct result of artificial partition of India in 1947. If the rationale and logic of partition was to be strictly followed, not only Kashmir valley but also all the five crore Muslims in India today should have gone to Pakistan. Is that solution feasible and desirable after the separation of Bangladesh which has exploded the concept of Islamic nationalism as distinct from territorial and cultural nationalism? The logic of Bangladesh points to further disintegration of Pakistan which cannot be postponed for long. But for the absence of a clear political objective in 1971 war, this would have become a reality by now. But thanks to inner contradictions of Pakistan rule and authoritarian rule of Bhutto, the time for further disintegration of Pakistan is fast approaching. The demand for self-determination for Pakhtoonistan and Baluchistan are irredentist demands and not secessionist demands. Afghanistan is the national homeland

of Pakhtoons and Iran of Baluchis. There is therefore no analogy between them and Kashmir, the whole of which is part of India. Not an inch of Kashmir proper lies on Pakistan side of the ceasefire line. Rather certain areas like Uri now included in Kashmir province are Punjabi-speaking and would be happy to get out of Kashmir.

Ultimate solution of the Kashmir problem, therefore, hinges upon the ultimate solution of the problem posed by Pakistan itself. That problem will be settled soon enough if Bhutto continues to pursue his policy of confrontation towards India and Afghanistan. The Government of India should use their energies to tackle that problem rather than wooing Sheikh Abdullah.

In the meantime two things need to be done in regard to Jammu and Kashmir state. The first is to dismiss the government of Kasim and put the state under an able administrator through a spell of President's rule. Mir Kasim and the ruling Congress party in Kashmir have forfeited their right to rule the state once they allowed the Government of India to enter into parleys with Sheikh Abdullah and Beg who question the representative character and legitimacy of the present Kashmir state Assembly and Kashmir government. Mir Kasim has been behaving as a stooge of Sheikh Abdullah and his minions and not as a self-respecting elected representative of the people.

The spell of President's rule should be utilised for clearing the Kashmir administration of the corrupt and anti-national elements. Kashmiris need above all a clean and firm administration. The way the Kashmiris have been granted freedom to abuse and humiliate the armed forces and the tourists during the last 10 years in the name of liberation has made them impervious to reason and sane advice. It should be clearly understood that, as things are, most of them are pro-Pakistan and anti-India. But Kashmir is part of India not because of them or

Sheikh Abdullah but because of the Instrument of Accession and our armed forces. Any settlement with Sheikh Abdullah is not going to make any difference in this situation. First things must come first. Kashmir is vital for the security of India. It has been part of India geographically and historically all through the ages. It is the cradle of Indian culture. Its people are the inheritors of a great heritage which has nothing to do with the Arabism which was imposed on them by force. Had India adopted a really national approach to Kashmir, the people of Kashmir would have realised their real self and become one with the rest of India long ago. That task has been rendered difficult by the communal and parochial policy of Nehru and his successor. But it is never too late to mend. A short spell of President's rule can be used to correct the past mistakes.

Scrapping of the separate Constitution of Kashmir and extension of the Indian Constitution in the making of which representatives of Kashmir, including Sheikh Abdullah, had a hand, is the essential pre-requisite for undoing the mischief and mistakes of the past 27 years. There can be no question of a different nomenclature for the head of the state and government, or mode of their appointment in any state under the Indian Constitution.

After the Jammu and Kashmir state is integrated with the rest of India and brought on par with other states in all respects, steps should be taken to re-organise it. Had Jammu and Kashmir state been brought within the purview of the first States Reorganisation Commission, it would have surely recommended its division into Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh as it recommended the division of Hyderabad state.

That step must be taken now. The people of Jammu and Ladakh which are distinct entities have been demanding fuller integration with the rest of India since 1947. They must be separated from

Kashmir. Ladakh must be made a Union territory and Jammu can become a separate state like Himachal Pradesh. From the point of view of area, population and resources it is as viable as Himachal Pradesh and much more viable than Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur.

Kashmir has been a distinct region of India in every way all through the history cut off from Jammu and Ladakh and Pak-occupied northern and western non-Kashmiri parts of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state by high Himalayan ranges, the vale of Kashmir has a distinct personality of its own. Kashmiri is a developed language and has been rightly included in the eighth schedule of the Constitution as one of the regional languages of India. It is a measure of the communal approach of the powers that be in Kashmir that Kashmiri language has not been given its rightful place in Kashmir to prevent its cultural links with the rest of India asserting themselves. Urdu is as alien to Kashmir as it is to Bangladesh or for that matter to Punjab and Sind.

From the economic point of view Kashmir is quite viable stretching from Verinag, the source of the Jehlum to Mahura near Baramula, this largest valley of its kind in the world with an area of about 3000 square miles and a population of over twenty lakhs can become the most prosperous state of India in a few years time if it is given a really good, clean and firm administration.

With Muslims constituting 95 per cent of its people, the communal overtones and the body of Hindu domination can be laid to rest once it is made a separate state of India with all the autonomy that the Constitution of India has conferred on the states. If need be the quantum of this autonomy can be increased in the light of the experience of Centre-state relations since the Constitution came into operation and other special circumstances of this secluded and frontier state.

Such a course will demand evolution of two or

more political parties in Kashmir valley as in the rest of India which might complete freely in a free and fair election for securing a majority in the Kashmir legislature. If the Constitutional provision regarding both of allegiance to the Constitution is strictly enforced and the anti-national forces are dealt with a strong hand, there is no reason to believe that the separate legislature of Kashmir will not behave in a responsible way.

Democratic institutions have their own logic and compulsions. Once the democratically elected legislature and government come into being Kashmir under the Indian Constitution and full trust is reposed in them by the Central government, the different parties and their governments in Kashmir may become as jealous guardian of that Constitution and powers flowing from it as the parties and legislatures in other states

And if at any time any party or government in Kashmir misbehave under foreign instigation, the Government of India can step in under the provision of the Constitution of India. In any case risks involved in making Kashmir a separate state and entrusting a democratically elected government there with the same power as enjoyed by other state governments is much less than the risk involved in putting the clock of history back in a bid for a settlement with Sheikh Abdullah to fulfil his ambition to die as Sultan of Kashmir.

In any case, India must keep its powder dry to meet the Pak challenge which may come soon enough with the clear objective of putting an end to this artificial creation which, so long as it exists, will remain a standing menace to the peace of Asia and the world. Once the emotional pull is gone even Kashmiris like Maulana Farooq will find it profitable and advisable to live in peace with their environments and stop fire-eating which can only burn them and their "paradise on earth".

KASHMIR FOR SALE?

Or, already sold out to those who till the other day were condemned as traitors ?

Balraj Madhok, the stormy petrel of Indian politics, focuses on the people, places and happenings that moulded the destiny of "The house that Gulab Singh built" since Independence.

His appraisal, though highly controversial, is refreshingly candid and pragmatic.



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